

# ELS

*Elegant Lifestyles Magazine*

FEBRUARY 22, 2007

Terry and Robert Mulcahy



Bob and Terry Mulcahy, rear center, pose with their seven children, five in-laws and 11 grandchildren on Bob's 70th birthday.

## Spotlight Focus on the family

By **ROBIN SUERIG HOLLERAN**  
Recorder Community Newspapers

**M**endham has only two traffic lights – almost unheard of in a New Jersey town this day and age. However, when the signal in the center of town near the landmark Black Horse Tavern was installed in 1971, an effigy of then-mayor Robert E. “Bob” Mulcahy III, only 34 years old at the time, was found hanging from the post the next morning.

Politics are not for the weak of heart. But fortunately for New Jersey, Bob, current athletic director at Rutgers University, was undeterred.

Still today, Mendham Borough reaps the benefits of actions taken by Bob Mulcahy and his fellow members of the Borough Council. The group of elected officials started the senior citizen building, oversaw the construction of the multi-family development known as The Commons, began many youth programs that continue today, approved the construction of West Morris Mendham High School to accommodate the community's growing population, and

installed the now much-appreciated traffic light on Main Street near The Black Horse Tavern.

“I’ve always believed strongly in public service. It hasn’t always been easy, but I’ve met a lot of wonderful people and I like to think I’ve been able to improve lives in some way,” said the unassuming Basking Ridge resident who left a third-generation family-owned home building business for a full-time career in the public light.

After spending 11 years in local politics as a Democrat in the very-Republican community of Mendham, Mulcahy was recruited by the Brendan Byrne Administration. After holding a number of positions in Trenton, he was named the first commissioner for the newly formed Department of Corrections. Ten days later, an inmate took a woman hostage at Rahway Prison and began making demands.

“It’s very unnerving to have someone tell you that a sharpshooter has the hostage-taker in the cross-hairs of a gun and then ask if he should pull the trigger,” he said. “Fortunately we were able to

resolve the situation through negotiations.”

One thing led to another and after serving as Byrne’s chief of staff, Mulcahy was tapped for the position of president and CEO of the N.J. Sports and Exposition Authority, which had seen three CEOs revolve through their doors over the previous three years. At the time, the arena was just a hole in the ground.

Mulcahy stayed for 19 years, and as the head of the sports authority, managed the Meadowlands complex of Giants Stadium, Continental Arena and the Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, Monmouth Park in Oceanport, the state aquarium in Camden, and the Convention Center in Atlantic City.

During his tenure, he oversaw the construction of the arena as well as the new Atlantic City Convention Center; helped bring the Jets, Giants and Devils to New Jersey; created the Kickoff Classic football game; lured the 1994 World Cup soccer matches and the 1996 men’s basketball Final Four to the Meadowlands; and organized the Pope John Paul II visit, among other things.

During much of this time, he and his

wife, Terry, raised seven children, three sons and four daughters, in Mendham, where they lived for 37 years and had at least one child in the Mendham Borough public elementary school system for 29 years. The Mulcahys, who met at Lake Mohawk where both of their families had summer homes, are fortunate that six of their seven grown children live within 12 miles of their current home in Basking Ridge (one son lives in the Boston area).

The Mulcahys take pride in being family-oriented, and the walls and shelves in their home stuffed full of framed photographs bear witness to this. Yet the logistics of arranging a family gathering can be difficult for anyone, much less for one composed of 25 immediate members (seven children, five spouses, 11 grandchildren and themselves). For this reason, the Mulcahys have a standing holiday tradition, called a Day of Sharing, that involves no presents, but rather hours of family time celebrating the spirit of the Christmas season.

During the warmer months, the couple enjoy playing golf at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, where Bob is also on the board of directors, or if the season is right, he will venture to the Pequest River in northwestern New Jersey for quiet solitude and hopefully a few nibbles from a good-sized trout. But the month of July is reserved for the entire family again when they reconvene at a large vacation home in Cape Cod. Last year on May 23 they all celebrated Bob's 70th birthday together.

Several of their children also have volunteered their time on local boards and councils, as well as have served in Washington, D.C., for various New Jersey politicians. Along with the family photographs are those of the many people, from popes and presidents, to prominent business people, and other widely recognized citizens who have crossed the Mulcahys' lives over the years. "Because I've been in the sports and entertainment business, we've been able to have experiences that might not have been available otherwise," Mulcahy said.

Both Mulcahys clearly have enviable reserves of energy and have managed to devote time to many other causes. Bob has served as a member and chairman of the Board of Governors for the Cathedral Healthcare System, on the National



**Bob joins announcers Mike Francesa, left, and Chris Russo, right, during WFAN-Radio's broadcast of Rutgers' stunning 28-25 victory over No. 3 Louisville Nov. 9.**

Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame, as chairman of the Thoroughbred Racing Commission and director of First Morris Bank, on the board of trustees at Delbarton School, and more recently on the board of the Atlantic Health System. He is also active at the Catholic Center at Rutgers University and was honored with the Alumni Medallion by Villanova University in 1981.

Terry focused her energies in other directions by serving on the school board at Mendham Borough, opening a needle-point shop called Mendham Stitchery (now known as Mrs. Stitches), teaching children's religion classes at St. Joseph's Church of Mendham for 25 years, singing in the choir at St. James Church in Basking Ridge the past six years, staying active as an alumna of the College of New Rochelle, and serving on the White House Conference on Family during the Carter Administration. Her alma mater honored Terry with the Ursula Lauris citation for promoting the traditions of the school.

"With all his talent, Bob had a lot of job offers over the years that would have paid a lot more than what he was doing," Terry said. "But that wasn't what he was interested in."

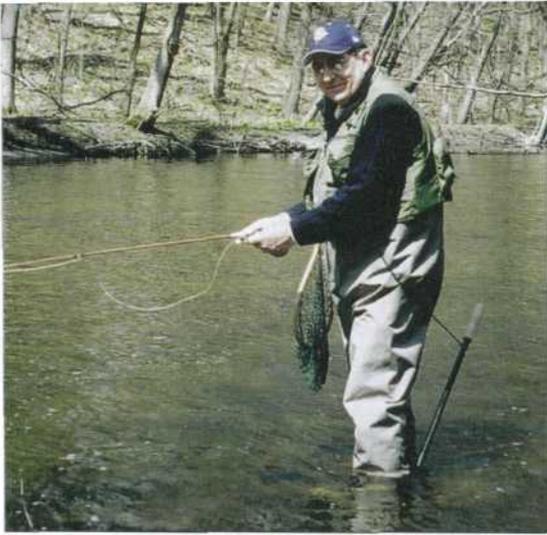
And then in 1998, at age 61, when most others would be slowing down with their eye on extra hours at the golf course, Bob took on what many considered an impossible task – the role of athletic director of Rutgers University at a time when its pro-

grams had lost \$31.5 million over the previous 10 years and attendance at the football stadium was generally less than half capacity.

Fast forward seven years and Rutgers football has emerged from a perpetual loser to a team with an 11-2 overall record for 2006, a national ranking of 12th in both the Associated Press Top 25 and USA Today/Coaches Top 25 and a first-ever bowl-game victory in the inaugural Texas Bowl against Kansas State. The team also was honored in January by the N.J. Legislature for its achievements.

However, it was a bumpy ride toward the top with a vocal group frequently challenging Rutgers' (and Mulcahy's) stubborn determinism to remain a Division I sports program while losing so much money. Early in Bob's tenure, the school self-imposed a two-year probationary period while facing sanctions from the National Collegiate Athletic Association and stripped away 20 scholarships in 10 sports after discovering that 40 athletes between 1997 and 2001 had been ineligible or improperly certified. Rutgers' Scarlet Knights football teams also had lost 19 games by 40 points or more over the past seven seasons at that point.

"Running the athletic program at Rutgers is much like having your own franchise. There's a \$40 million budget and 30 teams to manage including recruiting, scheduling, hiring of coaches and whatever else it takes," said Bob. "You



**Bob Mulcahy enjoys trout fishing in the Pequest River near Buttzville.**

also get quite involved with kids and sometimes their problems too."

The football program was Mulcahy's first priority when he took over the helm of the athletic department. One of his first moves in 1999 was hiring Greg Schiano, a New Jersey native, who was then defensive coordinator at the University of Miami. The charismatic Schiano at 34 was the youngest collegiate head coach who inherited a team with flunking players and a four-year record of 1-27. It took some serious persuasion to attract the right talent to the fledgling team, but in 2005, they had their first winning season in 13 years with a record of 7-5.

"I consider myself a pretty good judge of character and wanted to find people that reflect the right values. Coaches these days are mentors, disciplinarians, teachers and role models for the kids. It's a big responsibility," said Bob.

The football situation was further complicated for the Mulcahy family when their youngest child, Deidre, decided not only to attend Rutgers University while her father was taking over the lagging athletic program, but also to date the quarterback. Terry said in the beginning there were games when the Scarlet Knights were losing so badly, the fans would redirect their frustration at Deidre and they would have to move her out of the stands.

In spite of the rough start, the Mulcahys have always loved Rutgers sports. "The Meadowlands was exciting too, but that was more about the business of revenues and paychecks. College sports get very emotional; it's an entirely different type of atmosphere with kids involved," said

## A resolution

On behalf of the entire New Jersey Legislature, Senate President Richard J. Codey (D-Essex) last month presented the football team of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, with a joint ceremonial resolution to commemorate their remarkable achievements during the 2006 football season. The resolution, sponsored by Codey, Assemblyman John McKeon and Assemblyman Mims Hackett, lauded the Scarlet Knights for their 11-2 season and first bowl championship.

"This year the Rutgers football team managed to surpass all of our wildest expectations and galvanize the entire state with some nail-biting, hard fought victories. They brought national attention to our state and were a huge source of pride for all of us. In honor of all their successes, and what are sure to be many more in the coming years, we are proud to salute them with this resolution," said Codey.

Rutgers was one of only 14 teams in the nation to record 11 or more victories during the 2006 season. The 11 wins tied a single-season record for the Scarlet Knights and enabled them to become only the fifth team in Big East Conference history to reach that figure in a given year. The team was ranked No. 12 in both the Associated Press Top 25 and the USA Today/Coaches Top 25 polls. The No. 12 ranking is the highest in the university's history, eclipsing its No. 15 standing in the final Associated Press poll in 1961.

Additionally, Codey presented individual ceremonial resolutions to Rutgers President Richard L. McCormick, Athletic Director Robert Mulcahy and Head Football Coach Greg Schiano for their stewardship of the team's successful season.

"We thank Senate President Codey and his colleagues in the Senate for their gracious recognition of this remarkable team, which brought national visibility to Rutgers and our state and intensified New Jersey citizens' pride in their state university," said McCormick.

Schiano has been recognized as the Liberty Mutual Coach of the Year, the FWAA/Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year, the Walter Camp Football Foundation Coach of the Year, Big East Conference Coach of the Year, and the Home Depot National Coach of the Year.

"The Rutgers football team would like to thank Senate President Codey and his colleagues in the Senate for honoring our team," Schiano said. "It was an exciting season and to see the entire state of New Jersey show its tremendous support and pride is overwhelming."

Codey noted that in addition to amassing numerous accolades on the field, the Scarlet Knights also sparked a wave of pride throughout the Garden State – selling out stadiums, area hotels and restaurants, inspiring signs along state highways, and increasing enrollment interest at the university.

Terry.

Terry and Bob attend every Rutgers football game (home and away), most basketball games, and a multitude of other sporting events, making weekends from Labor Day through Memorial Day particularly hectic. But Rutgers is bouncing back and selling season tickets like they never have in the past. A new men's basketball coach Freddy Hill (son of a Rutgers baseball coach by the same name) was recently hired and is expected to reinvigorate that program as well.

"I believed we could create a program that could co-exist with a great university and take pride when I hear positive

remarks about the teams' behavior," said Bob. "Rutgers' teams are for the people of New Jersey and should be ones they can feel proud of without having to look to Philadelphia and New York."

As the hopes of smoother sailing loom in the future, a canvas hanging above the Mulcahys' fireplace mantel takes on special meaning. Bob received the painting of the first college football game ever played (Rutgers against Princeton in 1869 which Rutgers won 6-4) some 20 years ago in gratitude of his support of college athletics. Perhaps it was an omen of the hard-fought successes that so recently have come to the school.