

Westley and Susan Furbush



Origins in Smithfield

The Furbush family's roots run deep in Smithfield, particularly for Susan (Merry) Furbush. She spent her childhood on East Pond Road in Smithfield, Maine with her two older sisters, Linda and Cindy and two younger brothers, David and Larry. Her family property, initially owned by her grandmother, Eleanor Francis Merry Capener, was later gifted to Susan's parents, David and Sally Merry. Smithfield holds a special place in the hearts of Susan's extended family, including uncles, aunts, and cousins, who continue to own property and call it home. Currently, Susan, her mother, two of their children, all four of her siblings, and a few cousins are part of the Smithfield community.

"Our family has ties to our community in many ways," Susan says. "My father, David Merry Sr., served on the Planning Board Committee for several years. He always attended town meetings and he would debate articles each year that he had a strong position on whether he wanted the article to pass or to be voted down. I am not aware that he missed any town meetings." David Merry passed away Sept. 4, 1998. A year later on Sept. 18, 1999, the newly built Smithfield Sand and Salt Building was dedicated in his memory. "That is quite an honor for our family and a memory for future generations to see and hear about," says Susan.



Salt & Sand Shed Dedicated to David Merry Sr.



David & Sally 40th Wedding Anniversary



David's Mother, Eleanor with Furbush Twins



Sally & her mother, Helen Freeyes

As a child Susan and her brothers, David and Larry were junior grange members under the direction of Priscilla Hartford and Erla Merry. "I don't know how they did it, but they kept us in order," Susan says. "Priscilla, Earla, my mother, and Norma Bulmer would drive all of us kids to Augusta for the Maine State Grange events that we participated in. We had to all dress alike and wear dresses and suits," she recounts. "I remember hating to wear a dress and to this day I still dislike wearing dresses. We were always told we did a great job. Many years ago, when I was an adult, I had a conversation with Priscilla about junior grange and we both laughed together, and she said she never realized how much I disliked wearing dresses. That was a fun conversation for sure."



**Susan and her siblings
David Jr., Larry, Cindy & Linda**



Susan, and her siblings a few years later

Susan and Wes

Susan shared that one of her most cherished memories from her high school years was the annual opening of the Sunbeam Roller Skating Rink in the spring. The rink, owned by Lloyd and Vivien Ireland, was a popular gathering spot for local kids from Smithfield, Mercer, Rome, and nearby towns. It was at the rink where Susan met Westley Furbush Jr.

Westley (Wes) Furbush is the youngest of Westley Furbush Sr. and Rosie Furbush's five children. He grew up in Rome, Maine, with his siblings Archie, Sherry, Deborah, and Susan.



Wes & his siblings Archie, Deborah, Susan, & Sherry

Susan and Wes dated through high school, and both worked at Camp Somerset in Smithfield during the summer of 1977. On July 7, 1979, not long after Susan's high school graduation, they married at the Smithfield Baptist Church, and hosted their reception at the Grange.



At the time they were married, Wes, being a year older than Susan, was already working full-time. After graduation and marriage, Susan started work at Dexter Shoe Co., but left after a few years to work for Paradis Appraisal Service in Oakland and Waterville. It was soon after this they decided to make Smithfield their family's permanent home.



Wes & Susan love spending time with their grandchildren

“We were young parents to our first child Westley III and we both knew we wanted to make our forever home in Smithfield.” Susan explains. “Even though Westley’s family had moved to Oakland he had stronger ties to the small-town life.”



Susan with Justin & Derek



Westley, Susan & Baby Wes



**Derek, Justin, & Cousin Dylan
riding with their Grandfather**

Wes dedicated over 20 years to Warren and Kincaid Corp in Smithfield, working on road maintenance, gravel and sand transportation, dirt road grading, and equipment mechanics. “Each Christmas if it was bad weather, snowing or sleeting, Wes always made sure his designated roads were plowed before stopping for a break. It was just something he did as he always cared about the people that were traveling on the roads and never put himself first,” Susan said. “We would prepare a dinner plate... for him if he had a chance to stop for a few minutes before having to head out again.”

His commitment to the community extended beyond his day job, as he took on the role of Sexton for the Town of Smithfield, overseeing the maintenance of local cemeteries.

The Family Grows

When their son, Wes III, was 8 years old, Susan gave birth to twins: Justin and Derek. “This is when his quiet only child life ended and a lifelong bond began between him and his brothers,” Susan recounts. “They followed him everywhere he went whether he liked it or not.”

Wes and Susan decided it would be best if she stayed home to take care of the children until the twins started school, which meant Wes working weekends and evenings to support the family. Susan often relied on her mother to help her with the children during this time, especially during Wes III’s sports games. Susan shares that she and her mom would take turns chasing the busy twins around during the game so each could have uninterrupted time to watch. Today, Susan only half-jokes that she “not really sure if either of them actually got to see much of the game” but were “there to support him and that was the important part.”

When Wes wasn't working, he would often ask Susan to go for rides and she agreed happily, loading the kids in the vehicle and head out to only discover his "ride" would consist of going to each cemetery to see how high the grass was getting so he would know when they needed to be mowed and trimmed again. "He definitely took pride in making sure they looked nice," Susan says.

Dreams and Tragedy

Wes and Susan lived in a mobile home across from her parents during those early years of marriage but held onto a shared dream of building a log cabin home. In 1988, with the help of their families, Wes and Susan started construction. With the help of family and friends, they completed the outside structure in 1989 and moved in a year later. However, in October 1990, just four days after settling into their new home, Wes was driving home from work when another vehicle crossed over into his lane, hitting him head on. Wes sustained broken bones and a concussion.



"We didn't have phone service because they were not scheduled for another week or two for the installation," Susan says. She recalls being so scared that she stayed awake for several days after the accident making sure he was okay.

The challenges weren't over, though. "We spent just about every cent we had on the house so we didn't know what we would do because Wes was the sole supporter for the family," Susan explains. However, Susan and her mother Sally had purchased knitting machines the prior year and were selling hats, mittens, sweaters, doll clothes, and potholders at craft shows for side income. "Luckily had a few [craft shows] scheduled in the upcoming weeks," Susan says. "My mom wouldn't take any of the profit and gave it to me for the rest of that year. It certainly helped us immensely."

Despite the challenges that followed, including Wes's recovery, the community rallied around them. A benefit supper organized by the Smithfield Grange showcased the small-town kindness that left a lasting impact on their family. "This is where it matters when you live in a small-town community like Smithfield," Susan says. "[The benefit dinner] wasn't something that we asked them to do, they just did it. I remember seeing so many people there and lots of people that we didn't know cared about us. It was unbelievable what they did to assist our family. That was over 33 years ago but we will never forget the kindness of the Grange members along with everyone that attended that night to help our family."

Wes would go on to start a new career delivering U.S. mail, maintaining his role as Sexton, and ultimately retiring after many years of dedicated service.

Susan's Career

Before Susan re-entered the workforce, she took classes at KVCC, then, in 1994, she began her career with the State of Maine Judicial Branch at the Skowhegan District Court in Skowhegan, Maine as an Assistant Clerk. "I was later promoted to a supervisory position as an Associate Clerk," she says, "After several years, I took more college classes to earn my Clerk's Certification in hopes to further my career within the Judicial Branch. In 2012, I became the Clerk of Court for Somerset County Superior and the Skowhegan District Court. I feel fortunate to work at a place that I enjoy, and I have had the opportunity to work with many wonderful people over the past 30 years," she explains.

Present Day

Susan still works full-time and divides her time taking turns going to the grandchildren's events, quilting, crafting and crocheting. These days, Wes still keeps busy during his retirement, and he enjoys going to TriPond Variety Store in Smithfield for a cup of coffee while socializing with the local men each morning. He enjoys and looks forward to stopping by to visit his mother every week. But above all else, the Furbush family cares about family.

"Anyone that knows Wes and I are aware that we value family more than anything and we are extremely proud of each of our 3 sons and their families," Susan says. "Westley III and his wife Alix, Justin and his wife Tammy, and Derek and his wife Nichole. They work too hard and long hours just like their dad did before his retirement. All three brothers have a close bond, and they are very supportive of each other and won't hesitate to speak up and stick together without being asked." Susan says this loyalty is a family trait, inherited from their grandfather.

"They would do anything for Wes and I and even with their busy schedules," Susan explains. "They often call or stop by if only for a few minutes. We are lucky to have 7 grandchildren that range from 2 to 20, Our oldest to youngest are: Kayla, Meraina, Savannah, Rowan, Beckett, Fayth, and Lizah. The boys and their wives seldom miss any type of event for their own children."

Wes III owns his own company, SKS Furbush Logging LLC and his wife Alix works for Beeline Cable as a secretary. Justin works for the U.S. Postal Service as a postal carrier and owns his own company, Furbush Plowing and Lawn Care and his wife Tammy is a registered Nurse and works at Maine General in Augusta. Derek works at Waste Management as the Operation Manager and his wife Nicole also works at Waste Management as the Operation Specialist. Justin also serves on the Board of Selectmen as 3rd Selectmen and is also Sexton for the Town of Smithfield. "It's a full circle," Susan says. "Each of our boys worked for Wes when he was Sexton and now that he is retired he fills in some for Justin, mowing cemeteries when needed."

Wes and Susan love living in Smithfield and being a part of this community. The Furbush's have contributed to this community in many ways, and it continues with their children and grandchildren!



The Furbush Family

