

Book club learns about 'The American Spirit'



Residents Betty Lincoln and Richard Raczowski deep in discussion during the recent book club meeting at Allerton House. PHOTOS COURTESY OF LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Deirdre Anderson and Allerton House residents during a Q&A about McCullough's "The American Spirit."

Local Historical Society joins Allerton House residents for read-along

Valerie Sturtevant
Special to Wicked Local

Deirdre Anderson, executive director of the Hingham Historical Society, recently guided Allerton House in Hingham's book club through David McCullough's "The American Spirit: Who We Are and What We Stand For." The presentation was the first of its kind in the book club. Anderson supplemented McCullough's ideas with stories of his partnership with the Hingham Historical Society. Over 20 residents attended, including Anderson's own mother, Kathleen, who is also a member of the club.

"When activities assistant Liz Chapin told me the residents voted to read McCullough's collection of speeches, I was elated," said Anderson. "McCullough's support of the Hingham Historical Society has been transformative. His exuberance for history and the American identity appears not only in the words he writes, but the ones he speaks, as well. It's a privilege to share with the Allerton House community what we have learned from David."

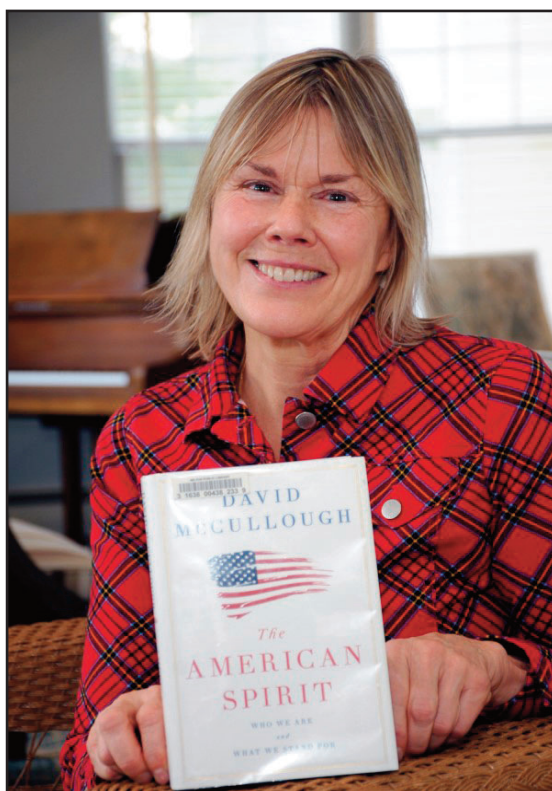
McCullough is the most honored historian in the U.S., owning two Pulitzer Prizes, two National Book Awards and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

His recent book reveals what unites, rather than divides, the American people, through a series of his past speeches. Many residents found the reading not only engaging, but also something they could learn from.

"I have to admit, I love reading fiction," said resident Betty Lincoln. "Fiction stories tend to keep me interested. But McCullough's book has kept me engaged with every following sentence. It's like I'm reading for fun, but learning, too, which is key at my age. And Deirdre did such a great job of taking the topics in the book further with her incredible knowledge."

Betty's not wrong. Education is key in the prevention of Alzheimer's and other related dementias. Harvard Medical School professor of neurology Rudy Tanzi, who discovered the genes that are connected to Alzheimer's, stated education helps to form new synapses, or neurological pathways, in a recent interview with Harvard Magazine. The more synapses, the more defense one has against Alzheimer's.

"We're always trying to incorporate healthy habits into our activities," said Allerton House activities assistant Liz Chapin. "But we want to make sure that activities are also engaging. No one wants to feel like they're in school. Although Book Club



Allerton House in Hingham's activities assistant Liz Chapin smiles with her copy of "The American Spirit."



Deirdre Anderson poses with her mother, Kathleen C., who is a resident at Allerton House in Hingham.

began reading this book in January, our residents are already loving the balance of learning with fun social discussions. Deirdre's presentation had a great turnout, as well."

Allerton House in Hingham's Chapin smiles with her copy of "The American Spirit." The book club brings together residents

who enjoy a variety of topics and great discussions.

"I love book club," said resident Richard Raczowski. "The folks at Allerton House do such a great job at helping every single one of us feel welcomed with activities that match all our diverse interests. It's just one more thing I love about living here."

Allerton House in Hingham has provided traditional assisted living and memory care services to South Shore residents since 1997. As a part of Welch Senior Living, they are committed to high-quality service and caring for residents like family. To learn more about Allerton House, visit www.allertonhousehingham.com