

GEORGE F. SKINNER
Major, USAF, Retired
Educator
Realtor
Class of 1946



George Skinner started kindergarten at the Harris School and continued straight through the high school, where he was on the student council, in the glee club and boys quartet, was a member of the track team AND — ta-dahhh, became the only senior sub on the J.V. basketball team!

Being a student at NHS during World War II, he was of a generation that expected to delay further education until after military service. However, the war ended just before his senior year, and brought a significant change in plans. George went to Harvard for his B.A., and then served in the Air Force during the Korean War. His distinguished service in the Air Force included receiving the Air Force Commendation Medal and the Good Conduct Ribbon, as well as being named outstanding NCO on three occasions, before being awarded a direct commission in 1959. He served a total of four years on active duty and 19 years in the Reserves.

After his active duty George attended George Washington University, acquiring his M.A., and he next embarked on a career in education. He had long admired William Pollard, both as a person and as a principal, and when Mr. Pollard took a chance on him as a teacher he accepted the position. After teaching high school history and geography for seven years, he became assistant principal at Newman Junior High. He remained in this position for two years and then became principal and held that position for seven years. In 1972

he became principal of Needham High School, where he stayed until 1987. When he was named interim principal at Pollard Middle School in 1997, he became the only person ever to act as principal of Newman, Pollard, and the high school.

After retiring from his principalship at NHS, George embarked upon yet a third career, in the real estate business, work which enables him to enjoy interacting with others. He feels that the genuine pleasure he derives from such contacts, being with younger people, and enjoying laughter, friendship, and service to others, provide him with the greatest rewards he can think of.

Aside from his work in the Needham schools, George has played an active role in the town. He has sent three children through the schools. He has been a town meeting member (18 years), a member and also chair of the Needham Youth Commission, chair of his church's administrative board, and a member of the Needham Business Association. He was recently elected President of the Needham Historical Society after having been a member for several years. He has also been active in the Needham Community Theater, the Tahanto Yacht Club, the Tahanto Association, his church choir and SPEBSQSA (the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America).

All of which has left him time to enjoy sailing, tennis, singing in general, his various collections, and travel. Needham High School is honored to present its Distinguished Career Award to George Skinner in recognition of his outstanding contributions to his town and his country.