

North Shore business, community leaders honored by Essex National Heritage Commission

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Photo courtesy of the Essex National Heritage Commission

Michael Rutstein (center), owner and captain of the Salem-based replica schooner, *Fame*, poses with his "Pioneer in Partnership" award at the Essex National Heritage Commission's annual fall meeting. Rutstein is pictured with Annie Harris, executive director Essex National Heritage Area, and Rich Yagjian, president of the Essex National Heritage Area.

By Ryan Mooney, Town Correspondent

The Essex National Heritage Commission, an entity dedicated to preserving, promoting and enhancing public awareness of historic and cultural resources in the 34 communities of Essex County, met for its annual fall meeting last week, where a number of local business and community leaders were recognized for their work.

Recently re-elected U.S. Rep. John Tierney, of Salem, awarded Congressional citations to Michael Rutstein, captain of the Salem-based schooner, *Fame*, the Danvers Rail Trail Advisory Committee, and Salem's House of Seven Gables.

The Essex National Heritage Commission annually presents "Pioneer in Partnership" awards to individuals and organizations that exemplify the spirit of collaboration, and recognizes those who build partnerships and celebrate the historic, cultural and natural resources of the 500-square-mile region north of Boston.

"The real importance of the Essex National Heritage Area lies not in our being first or best in historical events, but in what remains today," Annie Harris, executive director of the Essex National Heritage Area, said in a statement announcing the awards. "It is our mission to knit this region together, to help people make connections between their lives and these sites, and to engage the larger public in sustaining these places."

Rutstein, who owns and operates *Fame*, a full-scale replica of the original *Fame*, which was a Chebacco fishing schooner that became a warship during the War of 1812, was recognized for "providing the children of Salem with a wonderful opportunity to experience first-hand the adventures of sailing aboard a replica Salem privateer." The *Fame* offers daily tours of Salem Sound from Memorial Day through Halloween.

The Danvers Rail Trail Advisory Committee was recognized for its work to develop the Danvers Rail Trail, a roughly 4.3-mile corridor of land that was once part of the now defunct Essex Railroad. The Rail Trail Advisory Committee has spent the past three years revitalizing the trail - used by the public for biking, walking and other recreational activities - through things like resurfacing efforts and the installation of new signage.

The House of Seven Gables in Salem - which served as the inspiration for Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1851 novel of the same name, and constitutes its own historic district on the National Register of Historic Places - was recognized for its collaboration with Essex Heritage in providing unique learning opportunities for Salem's Latino youth, connecting the city to their heritage through programs such as "[The Caribbean Connection](#)."

"There are members who understand the importance of having an entity that can transcend city and town boundaries," Tierney said. "That can allow us to do bike paths and walking paths, and cultural and historical and educational events that really strengthen our economy. That draws people together and educates our students all at the same time...it has a huge impact."



Photo courtesy of the Essex National Heritage Commission
Peabody Mayor Ted Bettencourt spoke to those in attendance at the Essex National Heritage Commission's annual fall meeting.

More than 100 people attended the meeting on November 8 at Brooksby Farm's Smith Barn in Peabody, where 10 individuals were also elected to serve three-year terms on the 150-member Board of Commissioners that supports Essex National Heritage.

Among them were Claudia Chuber, director of community affairs at Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Phil Conway, of Conway Cahill-Brodeur Funeral Home in Peabody, [Tom Gould](#),

Peabody City Councillor and owner of Treadwell's Ice Cream on Margin Street, and Rosario Ubiera-Minaya, executive director of the Salem Education Foundation.

"On behalf of the park service I really want to thank Essex Heritage for everything that has been done both with us and throughout the region," said Michael Quijano-West, superintendent of Salem Maritime National Historic and Saugus Iron Works National Historic sites. "Because this is an example of a fabulous partnership. And they have done a wonderful job."

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