

## PHYLLIS BENOIT

A quarter of a century ago in a courthouse located in Burlington, Vermont, while she was aiding a friend on an unrelated matter, Phyllis Benoit had the unexpected displeasure of not only observing a contested divorce hearing, but then also witnessing a judge rule his final orders from the bench. His orders decided the future lives of the members of a dissolving family. The disposition of the property as well as the determination of the children's issues were decided in a manner so contrary to each of the parties' perspectives that the parties sat stunned, initially, then with anger vocally cried out their frustrations to the judge, to their lawyers, to each other.

Phyllis thought there has to be a better way for humans to resolve their differences. Phyllis realized that mediation is the way! Mediation is the solution to conflict resolution!

Her next step was then to attend a course taught by Rose Hill Bagley who is the "the mother of mediation in N.H." As a mediator, Phyllis sees both sides of the story, and analyzes the situation, to mediate the differences to arrive at a solution. During her earlier years, Phyllis had volunteered with the Attorney General's office to mediate matters involving consumers' protection and businesses.

A teacher by profession, Phyllis is a former high school teacher, evolved to college professor, and now retired for several years. During these "retirement years" Phyllis continues to work as she mediates small claims actions, as well as disputes in marital matters. She finds that mediation is richly rewarding. Mediation solves peoples' problems, by a manner with which both parties can live, hopefully avoiding future litigation, all relatively inexpensively.

Phyllis and her husband have three children, and love to travel. They are celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary! Phyllis enjoys reading and playing Majong. Phyllis is an active and tireless participant with the endeavors of the Education Committee of the NHCRA.