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Boston Post Cane Returning to Spotlight in Westwood

The last resident to be honored with the Cane was 2009, and a new recipient will be commended at the end of the month at Fox Hill Village.

By [Matt Perkins](#) [Email the author](#) January 8, 2012

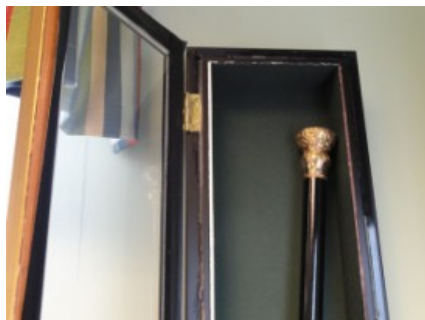
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It's been three years since a Westwood resident has been honored with [The Boston Post Cane](#).

But now, the Cane will return to the spotlight.

On Tuesday, Jan. 31 at 10 a.m. at [Fox Hill Village](#), Westwood Council on Aging director Pat Larkin and Westwood Town Clerk Dottie Powers will present the Cane to Westwood's oldest living resident, who is 103 years old. Powers requested that the recipient not be named prior to the ceremony later this month.

The Cane was last granted to Lottie Stern in November 2009, which marked the 100th anniversary of the cane's inception. Stern was 108 years old at the time; after her passing, Westwood officials began to look for the next oldest resident in town.

The Cane has a long-standing history both in New England and in Westwood. In 1910 David A. Hodgson, born in 1828, was the first Westwood resident to receive the Cane; his name is inscribed on the gold head of the item.

But the origins of the Cane date back to August 1909, when Edwin Grozier, publisher of *The Boston Post* newspaper, forwarded a gold-headed ebony cane to the Board of Selectmen in 700 towns throughout New England, according to the [Maynard Historical Society's website](#).

Grozier then requested that the canes be presented with compliments of the newspaper to the oldest male residents of the town, who could then use the cane as long as he lived or until he moved away. The cane, though, was to belong to the town and not the resident, and after the residents' passing or relocating, local officials could then pass the cane onto another resident.

The Boston Post later gave its blessing for women to have the Cane in the 1930s after women gained the right to vote in 1920.

Prior to the 2009 ceremony, Westwood's cane, which currently sits in a locked case behind Larkin's desk at the [Westwood Senior Center](#), had gone missing for a time.

Then, in April 2009, local resident Joan Swann, a member of the [Westwood Historical Society](#), brought a *Boston Globe Magazine* article profiling the Cane to the town's attention, according to the Town of Westwood's December 2009 Newsletter (a PDF of the newsletter is attached to this article). After searching for it, officials were able to find the Cane tucked away in a closet.

"Ours kind of disappeared for a while [...] we actually found the cane and I think the last one given out was in the 1980s," Powers said. "We didn't want to give the cane for fear of not getting it back. If someone moves away or passes away, you never know what's going to happen to it."

Instead of actually giving the Cane to a resident for use, Westwood now awards replica pins and holds a celebration, during which the honoree is photographed with the Cane.

"It's a nice history and it's one of those things that we want to keep the tradition going and honor our oldest residents," Powers said. "It's quite a feat to live that long."

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