

## **Aurora Ciccariello Leydon**

Born in Gaeta, Italy in 1927, Aurora Ciccariello Leydon was three years old when she moved to East Cambridge. Her family and many of her neighbors spoke Italian, so it was Cambridge teachers who taught her English. They also encouraged a lifelong love of learning.

Aurora went to work after high school, and in keeping with the expectations of her family, used some of her earnings to pay for her brother's college education. Eventually she married, moved to Winchester and raised four children. When her youngest started preschool in 1974, Aurora began to fulfill a long simmering ambition: to earn a college degree.

She enrolled as a part-time student at Northeastern University's Burlington campus. Twelve years after she began taking classes, she earned an Associate in Science Degree. After a long hiatus due to illness, part-time work and travel, Aurora resumed her dream and in 2006 – 32 years after enrolling in that first college class – she graduated from Northeastern University with a Bachelor of Science degree, Magna Cum Laude. She was 79.

In stark contrast to her own protracted journey to a college degree, Aurora made sure her children were fully supported to pursue higher education after high school. She believed in the intrinsic value of education, but also understood its power as a gateway to opportunity. It is a fitting legacy that a scholarship in her name will enable another young person from East Cambridge more direct access to their educational goals.