

The *Brooksie Koopman*, a Vespoli M2 eight, was dedicated on March 27, 2010

Brooksie Koopman

When the *Brooksie Koopman* is launched, it is lifted off a state-of-the-art rack system, carried down the ramp to a modern floating dock, and rowed by a crew that has worked out with world-class equipment in a clean, safe, well-lighted and ventilated training room in the Dee Campbell Rowing Center.

T.C. Williams High School Crew is based in the finest boathouse on the Potomac, and one of the few in the nation owned by a public school. Part of the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), the Dee Campbell Rowing Center is operated through a unique partnership between ACPS and the Alexandria Crew Boosters Club. Unlike other school facilities, it has no permanent staff or administration, relying on coaches and volunteers. Until 2004, there was no single person responsible for overseeing its maintenance and upkeep, and the boathouse was showing signs of wear to be expected of a building in daily use on the shore of a tidal river.

That year, the ACB Board added the new position of "facilities liaison" and made the inspired choice of Brooksie Koopman, a crew parent with strong roots in the community and involvement in school and civic affairs. Brooksie went to work with energy, efficiency and enthusiasm, surveying the facility and talking to parents, students and coaches. She made a list of items that needed attention, from general maintenance to major repair and replacement, discussed the list with the facilities staff at ACPS, and took charge to see that the improvements were made.

For the next five years, Brooksie was on a mission, working with ACPS on repair, maintenance and improvements, setting priorities for major capital projects and helping shepherd them through the budget process. Her volunteer support for the crew program was hardly limited to the boathouse. Beginning when her daughter joined the team in 2001 and continuing through her two sons' years rowing for T.C. Crew, Brooksie was always there, making sure things were running smoothly.

Big projects like managing a boathouse are nothing new to Dorothy Brooks Koopman. A Connecticut native, she came to the Washington area with a masters degree in urban studies and co-founded an energy consulting company. Today she devotes her energy to community affairs. She is currently chairman of the Alexandria Library Board, and her work at T.C. Williams was recognized in 2008 when she was nominated for Northern Virginia PTA Volunteer of the Year.

Brooksie Koopman passed the baton to a new ACB facilities liaison this season. Her accomplishments can be seen every day in the boathouse. But perhaps the best measure of her success is that the organizations and teams that use the Dee Campbell Rowing Center share a renewed sense of pride and ownership in this facility. That's the real legacy of Brooksie Koopman, and the reason T.C. Williams crews will be honored to row the eight-oared shell that bears her name.

