

Farmington loses civic leader Vernon Fisher

Vernon P. Fisher, a long-time Farmington Hills resident who served as a member of numerous civic commissions, was buried June 29.

Fisher, 75, died June 27 after a year-long illness. In addition to his position as president and chairman of the board of Bass Construction Co., he was a Farmington school board member from 1955 to 1965.

His working knowledge of engineering fit into the direction of the school district, which was undergoing a period of expansion, colleagues remember.

"He was very level-headed. His contributions to the Farmington school district were many," said former trustee Bayard Tupper.

"During the 50s and 60s, we were asking more than 1,000 pupils to our two buildings had to be built. His engineering know-how saved the district thousands of dollars by heading off costly mistakes before buildings were started," said Tupper.

During his time on the board, he was concerned with such various aspects of education as the type of fuel burned in

buildings to the structure of the curriculum, according to colleagues.

ONE OF the continuing disagreements on the board at the time centered on the type of fuel used in the buildings, remembered Richard Peters, a former trustee.

"Occasionally we had some energetic disagreements," Peters said. "He thought that there should be no gas used as fuel in school buildings. I was of a contrary mind on that."

Peters advocated gas heat while Fisher maintained oil was the best fuel.

"There was no ill-will. I think our school board was in better condition than the present board is when they manage to agree," he said.

"Vernon served the community very well. He was very conscientious," Peters said.

"He contributed a great deal of common sense to our decisions," echoed Leland Clifford, a former trustee. "He was a very progressive individual."

In addition to his school board position, Fisher held every elective office in the Village of Wood Creek Farms Civic Association since 1941 until it became part of Farmington Hills.



VERNON P. FISHER

He was a member of Wood Creek Farms' charter and planning commissions. His commitments extended to his church as well as professional and recreational organizations.

FROM 1943, he was active in the

Franklin Community Church, Franklin Village. He was a member of the church's building commission, finance committee and board of trustees. He was a board member and the head of the church's ushers at the time of his death.

He was a member of the engineering fraternity, Theta Xi, since 1921. In 1930 he joined the Detroit Engineering Society. He belonged to the American Waterworks Association and the Association of General Contractors.

His interests went beyond his profession and his hometown. "His greatest achievement was living," said Mrs. Nancy J. Fanzini of Farmington Hills about her father's interests.

Books, art, horses and cars captured his interest, his family said. When his three daughters were interested in horses, he learned to ride and became an avid fox hunter. In

1955, he joined the Waterloo Hunt Club in Grass Lake. From 1961 to 1971, he served as its president.

Hunting pheasant also was a favorite sport. "I remember there were some days he'd go fox hunting in the morning and hunt pheasant on his way back home," said Mrs. Fanzini.

HIS LIBRARY included extensive sections on the American Civil War and Abraham Lincoln. Fisher collected lithographs and prints, favoring landscapes. He enjoyed hunting scenes, too.

Although his record collection concentrated on classical music, he took the time to listen to the rock tunes favored by his six grandchildren.

Graveling and tending to his Farmington Hills home also took up his time, said his wife of 52 years, Mrs. Grace Fisher.

The Fishers lived in Farmington Hills since 1942.

Guests in their home were left with Fisher's favorite saying, "Keep the faith."

"He was a generous man. He shared valuable things with anyone who was interested," said his daughter, Mrs. Mary Jo Andrews of Howell.

"He was a childhood figure," said Mrs. Margery Gandler of Novi, who admired her father.

Born in Lomax, Ill., Fisher attended the University of Iowa and earned a bachelor's degree in 1924. He was the WPA engineer for Des Moines County, Iowa from 1935-38. He was associated with Bass Construction from 1938 until his death.

SERVICES for Fisher were conducted at the Franklin Community Church, 3273 Normandy, Franklin. Memorial tributes may be sent to the Franklin Community Church.

Obituaries

FLORENCE NELSON

Florence L. Nelson, 87, of Farmington Hills, died June 21 in Chelsea Community Hospital. Services were June 24 in Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, with the Rev. Lawrence A. Kline of King Lutheran Church officiating. Burial was in Oakwood Cemetery in Farmington.

Mrs. Nelson was a 50-year resident of Farmington Hills. She was a housewife and retired as a machine operator from the Commonwealth Brass Co. Surviving are daughter, Helen Giacobazzi; sons, Jack and Glen; sister Edith Grunz; 10 grandchildren, and 17 great-grandchildren.

OLAF HEDDLE

Olaf J. Heddle, 72, of Farmington, died June 22 in Grace Hospital Northwest. Services were June 24 in Thayer-Rock Funeral Home with the Rev. James Cole officiating. Burial was in Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit.

Mr. Heddle retired from General Motors Corp. as a supervisor. He was

a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Detroit. Surviving are his wife, Edith; son, James; brother, Charles; sisters, Lorena Orth, Norma McQuade, Dorothy Sullivan and Betty Duffey.

HALLEN BELL

Hallen M. Bell, 90, of Farmington Hills, died June 27 in Botsford General Hospital. Services were scheduled for

July 3 in Oakview Cemetery, with the Rev. Craig S. Davies officiating. Interment is scheduled for Oakview Cemetery. Arrangements were made by Kinsey-Garrett Funeral Home.

Mr. Bell was an inspector in the meter department for the Detroit Edison Co. He retired in 1948. He served in the U.S. Army during World War I. Surviving is his brother, Adelbert E. Bell of Royal Oak.

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