

# Time to go

## Veteran publicist retires from GM

By ALICE COLLINS

When Anthony G. (Tony) De Lorenzo joined the public relations staff of General Motors on Feb. 1, 1949, "the big emphasis was show biz...publicizing the product."

"My first assignment," the Birmingham resident said, "was concerned with planning our motorama. It was a show we took to five or six big cities to introduce the new cars. We had big luncheons and receptions."

"It's different today," said De Lorenzo on the eve of his retirement as vice president of public relations. "Our main concern has to be issues affecting the industry — the environment, fuel, safety."

"There's more sophistication on the part of the public today, and more maturity in business. It's the day of consumerism."

This is De Lorenzo's final week at GM. It's the last week he'll occupy the spacious office on the 14th floor of the GM Building on West Grand Boulevard. Just down the hall are the offices of GM Board Chairman Thomas Murphy and President Elliott M. (Pete) Estes.

HE'LL NO LONGER be arriving around 7 a.m., exchanging greetings with Leo Picuch, who has been selling newspapers in the building since before De Lorenzo came to GM. "Leo's a nice man. I'll miss him. I'll miss everyone." On Aug. 26 De Lorenzo celebrated his 65th birthday. His family and friends gathered around to help him celebrate. But for executives at GM, a 65th birthday has another meaning. Under the corporation's mandatory retirement policy, it's time to say goodbye.

While some may welcome it, De Lorenzo said Friday that for him "it's a very traumatic experience to retire. I don't disagree with the company's policy, but saying goodbye is still very painful."

De Lorenzo was elected a vice president effective Jan. 1, 1977 and is the senior vice president in terms of length of service as an officer. He's only the second vice president for public relations at GM and served under six chief executives beginning with Charles E. Wilson.

DE LORENZO isn't going into retirement. He'll leave GM on Aug. 31 and on Sept. 4 he opens the doors on his new public relations consulting firm — A.G. De Lorenzo Associates Inc. His wife Josephine, he said, will be secretary of the corporation.

His offices will be at 1700 Woodward, north of Long Lake, much closer to his Birmingham home than GM is.

His final week at GM includes winding up business "and a lot of partying." The first part of the week, he'll be in New York attending his last board meeting as a GM officer and a press luncheon has been planned there in his honor. "On Wednesday I'm going to have lunch with some public relations colleagues."

HE'S EXPECTED back in Detroit later Wednesday. The rest of the week "will include a lot of meetings, talking with people, making a few speeches. Friday night there'll be a dinner party at the Plaza."

"That Plaza is a great asset to the community. I've been there quite often," De Lorenzo said, "but I certainly have a hard time finding my way around there."

Chairman Murphy has nice things to say about De Lorenzo. "His wise coun-

sel and wide range of abilities," said Murphy, "have made him an extremely valuable part of General Motors."

And De Lorenzo has nice things to say about Murphy. "Today's sophisticated public likes to hear directly from the leaders of industry," said De Lorenzo, "and Mr. Murphy gets right into the public arena where the action is. His participation is great."

LOOKING BACK on his public relations career, De Lorenzo admits he'll never forget the GM-Ralph Nader episode that spread across the nation via television and the press.

Nader, an unknown Connecticut lawyer in the mid 1960s, wrote a book, "Unsafe at Any Speed," and launched an automobile safety crusade attacking the automobile industry and zeroing in on GM.

General Motors began an investigation of Nader that included tugging the crusader.

When Nader found out, everyone found out. GM issued a public apology to Nader and the lawyer sued and won a \$425,000 invasion-of-privacy suit against the corporation.

"I wasn't involved in the investigation," said De Lorenzo, "but I was heavily involved in the aftermath."

DE LORENZO's opinion of Nader today is: "He made a contribution, but he has extended himself a little thin."

Nader and De Lorenzo came face to face just once. "It was five or six months after it happened," said De Lorenzo. "It was at a cocktail party in Washington. A lawyer friend of mine introduced us."

"What did they say to each other?"

"We said 'hello'."

De Lorenzo was the second of seven children of Joseph and Annette De Lorenzo, who came to the United States from Italy early in this century. He was born on Aug. 26 in Edgerton, Wis., and spent his boyhood in Racine.

He was graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1936 with a bachelor of arts degree in journalism.

His father was a barber and taught young Tony the trade. His Wisconsin master barber's license still hangs on a wall at his home in Birmingham. His mother, now in her 90s, still lives in Wisconsin.

When he was at the university, he met another class member, Josephine Parolore of Madison. They were married in 1940, and have four children. Two of them followed in their father's footsteps.

ANNETTE M. De Lorenzo is vice president of a public relations firm in Chicago "and doing really well," and "Peter is a creative person for a production firm in Royal Oak."

Tony, Jr., lives in Troy and works for an automotive supply firm. And he races cars.

"Our daughter Josephine is our idealist," said De Lorenzo. She lives in England where she organized the Madonna Hereford, an agency that helps the handicapped.

Before joining GM, De Lorenzo spent a decade as a newsman and five years with a public relations firm. His first newspaper training came on the Racine Journal-Times while he was still in college and then he spent nine years with the United Press (now United Press International) in Madison, Wis., Milwaukee, Chicago and Detroit.

He served as automotive editor, Detroit bureau chief and Michigan manager for United Press from 1941-44. He joined Kudner Agency in 1944 and was assigned by Kudner to the public rela-

tions staff of the Buick Motor Division in Flint.

AFTER JOINING GM in 1949, he was named press, radio and television activities director in 1955. He became director of the public relation staff of GM in 1956 and a year later was elected vice president.

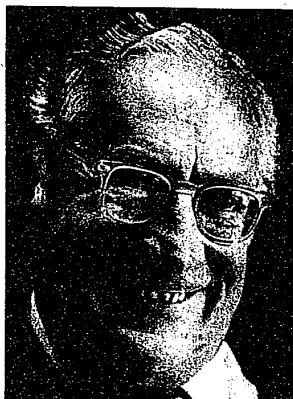
He's been active in community affairs throughout the years and the list of his memberships and activities is a long one.

Early this summer, De Lorenzo was invited to make the graduation address at Horlick High School in Racine — his alma mater.

"Well, you have discovered by now that the world isn't perfect," said De Lorenzo to the graduates. "I'm not worried that you will lose it up, but you're not going to make it perfect, either."

"You're going to do what people always have done with the world — live in it, and try to patch it up here and there."

"DISAGREEMENTS will come, as always, over where and how to apply the patches. I'm not going to presume to advise you about that."



General Motors top public relations man Anthony G. (Tony) De Lorenzo of Birmingham retires Friday after 30 years with the automobile industry giant. Next week he opens his own consulting firm in Bloomfield Hills. (Staff photo by Stephen Cantrell)

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