

# Brown helped library in its earlier days

Farmington Community Library became the first district library in Michigan, thanks to Robert Wendell Brown's "untiring efforts."

"The contributions which Wendell Brown made to the Farmington Community Library have had a significant impact on the direction of library service both within our community and throughout the state," said Beverly Papal, library director.

A longtime Farmington Hills resident, Brown, 87, died Saturday at Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, after a stroke.

A well-known attorney, Brown practiced in Detroit from 1926 to 1981, when he moved his practice to Farmington Hills. He retired in 1988.

Brown had long been a part of the Farmington library system's history. He helped the passage of the 1955

district library law, enabling communities to share financial responsibilities for providing library services. He also helped establish the Farmington Friends of the Library.

Brown's efforts on behalf of the library are documented in the Farmington Enterprise. In 1959, the paper devoted a story to Brown when he received a lifetime membership in the Friends group for his legal assistance in incorporating the group and his creation of an endowment fund from the Mary Deland estate.

In 1987, the Friends again honored Brown with a plaque recognizing his years of service to the organization, including six years as a board member and one as president. He also served on the Detroit Friends of the Library.

Brown's community efforts didn't



Robert Wendell Brown (left foreground), who died Saturday at 87, is shown cutting the ribbon on June 11, 1978, for the grand opening of the then-new 35,000-square-foot 12 Mile branch of the Farmington Community Library.

begin and end with the library. He was a past president of the Farmington Board of Education and a church elder.

Brown is survived by his wife, Barbara, two daughters, Bonnie Travis and Mary Fletcher; three grandchildren; and two sisters.

His body was donated to Wayne State University. A memorial service is scheduled for 2 p.m. Dec. 11 at the First Presbyterian Church of Farmington, 11141 Farmington Road.

Contributions may be made to the Friends of the Library, Farmington Community Library, 12741 12 Mile, Farmington Hills, 48111, or the Farmington Counseling Center at the First Presbyterian Church.

# 1st manager of Civic Theatre dies at age 77

It was Sept. 20, 1940, when Edward Hohler opened the doors to the Civic Theatre in downtown Farmington.

The longtime local businessman died Sunday at his home in St. Petersburg, Fla., after a lifetime in the movie theater business. He was 77.

Hohler first managed the community theater, then bought it in 1955 from a Detroit company, saving it from demise and operating it until 1974, when he retired.

Today, his son Gregory owns and operates the movie house, a historic highlight of the city's downtown business district.

Vacation continues today at the Heehey-Sundquist Funeral Home in Farmington from 1-5 p.m. and 7-9 p.m.

A funeral service will be held Friday at 10 a.m. at the funeral home. Burial will follow in St. Joseph Cemetery, Adrian, where Hohler was born and raised.

As a youth of 12, Hohler became involved in the business during the silent movie era. He continued his career by working at theaters in Lansing, Ypsilanti, Adrian and the Detroit area.

Hohler settled in Farmington after World War II, becoming a charter member of the Farmington Elks Club and a member of the Farmington American Legion Post 346 and the Farmington VFW Post 2269.

During the war, Hohler served as a Marine in the Solomon Islands and in China.

He moved to Florida after retirement.

He is survived by his son, E. Gregory Hohler, and two grandchildren, Jennifer and Jason.

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