

Tuesday, April 16, 1981

# Executive-college link Businessman still trades favors

By Corinne Abatt  
staff writer

Harold L. Kohlmeier of Birmingham and Miami University of Ohio have been trading favors on and off for a good many years.

Frequently, since he graduated in the mid-20s, it has been Kohlmeier who's been on the long end of the giving, although he modestly might dispute that.

But come May 10, graduation day at the university in Oxford, Ohio, Kohlmeier, as he is known to friends, will be given an honorary doctorate in recognition of his continuing efforts on behalf of the university.

He said that at least once a year, frequently more often, "I've returned to the campus to share my experiences with the students in recognition of what the university so graciously gave to me."

And it's experience in the business world that Kohlmeier, as a guest lecturer, shares with such vigor. After working his way through college, this native of Urbana, Ohio, earned his B.A. degree in June 1924 and went to work for Goodrich "as a blooming young chemist." From Goodrich he later moved to sales with Sohio and later that spent 18 years with Ford Motor Company, retiring in the mid-'60s as purchasing agent. After that he formed his own marketing and sales consultant firm, first in partnership with Reginald G. Carey and later as Kohlmeier and Associates.



Harold Kohlmeier trades favors

HE MAINTAINS AN office on the lower level of his home on Hazelwood, and his conversations are frequently interrupted by long-distance business calls in which he assures a client that the shipment will be on time or that all the packaging details have been taken care of.

Some of his close associates in the Miami University business school recently threw him a challenge that he picked up on with his customary unwavering enthusiasm. They wanted to visit with business

executives here, establish closer ties and learn how to prepare business graduates better for the future.

Kohlmeier said, "This is really a short-sleeves deal. They're coming for ideas, views, to hear what's expected of kids coming out of college, how to prepare them for business employment, and what these executives see in the way of changes and requirements down the road."

If this first try at establishing closer relationships between the academic and business world goes over well, Kohlmeier foresees many more of the same in other parts of the country.

When he began to consider how to structure the three-day visit, Kohlmeier called on his good friends and Miami alumni from this area, Sheldon Vell and Skip Knaus. Together, the three mapped out plans for the April 15-17 visit.

The Miamians, Bill Moekel, dean of the School of Business Administration, Harry Brooks, assistant dean, Institute of Business and Educational Services, and John Delbois, vice president of development and alumni affairs, will be experiencing a healthy slice of the metropolitan-area business climate.

ON THE FIRST DAY they had lunch with a group of top-level Ford executives and dinner in Birmingham with 12 leaders from various professions. Represented among the dozen were sportscaster Dave Diles, Louis McKenzies of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra

and restaurateur Harris Machus, just to illustrate the variety of viewpoints.

Yesterday, the Miami contingent visited with Fisher Body executives. In the evening they met with the Miami alumni from this area to gather more information from a variety of sources.

One of the other parts of the three-day program is a visit with Michigan Bell Telephone executives to find out about career opportunities there.

"We're really bringing the university out into the business world to gain advice from these leaders," Kohlmeier said.

His carefully typed lists of names of those who accepted invitations to meet with the Miamians sounds like a "Who's Who" list of Midwestern businessmen, starting with corporation presidents. Kohlmeier said he shares his own business experience with the students, "because it gives the kids some insight."

His personal belief is that communication skills are one of the most important requisites for success.

TO REINFORCE COMMUNICATION skills among businessmen, he moderated, as a hobby, the Birmingham Forum for 16 years. That group gives members an opportunity to develop public-speaking skills.

"I tell the students," he said, "you really start learning the day you step off campus. There's nothing more important than the element of conversation — that is the relationship you have with others."

And then aware that he was indulging in a bit of philosophy, he added, "The richest treasure we have are our friends."

And friends are something Kohlmeier has been gathering all his life through his non-stop contributions to community life, such as housing or working on fund-raising drives for Detroit-area hospitals, the United Foundation, YMCA drives and stewardship programs for his church. He was vice president of the state YMCA of Michigan and spent 25 years in volunteer work for the "Y." He has also been active in the Bloomfield Open Hunt for many years including being a director of the club.

In 1964, he was given the Ford's Good Citizen award, and in 1974 Miami University gave him the Bishop Award for Meritorious Service.

Kohlmeier is an avid golfer, gardener and family man. He frequently visits his two married daughters and their families, Paul and Nancy Rohrich of Akron, Ohio, and Phyllis and George J. Smith of Lexington, Ky.

The man who faces life with a ready smile, a light step and a quick sense of humor treasures friendships and likes challenges.

When told that his agenda for the business seminar looked extremely well-organized, he replied offhandedly, "It better be."

## datebook

**THE WESTERN** Wayne Oakland County Board of Realtors will sponsor a free home-buying seminar 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 21, Redford Community Center Building, 12121 Hemingway, west of Beech Daly south of I-96 and north of Plymouth. The seminar is geared to familiarize prospective buyers with home buying procedures and related subjects. Reservation required by calling 478-1700. The board has conducted six seminars in the past attracting more than 1,400 interested persons. A kit on background materials on homebuying will be handed out during the two-hour session. Questions encouraged.

**THE OAKLAND** County Chamber of Commerce will conduct its third annual Secretaries Luncheon noon-1:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 21, at the Banquet Room of the Pontiac Silverdome as part of the chamber's observance of National Secretaries Week April 19-25. Terry Hueneke, vice president U.S. Field Marketing for Manpower Temporary Services, will be the keynote speaker. Tickets available by calling 335-6148. Reservations required.

**A FOUR-DAY** seminar on introduction to microprocessors will be April 20-23 at the Holiday Inn in Southfield sponsored by the Intel Corp. For more details, call Adrienne Firman at 353-9920.

## Firm offers buy now—build later package

"Buy now — build later" is one local real estate company's idea for beating inflation. Herald Ruben, president of General Realty Co. in Southfield, said his firm is offering hundreds of building lots in Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties on five-year land con-

tracts with a minimum down payment of 10 percent.

General Realty is a division of the Southfield-based Republic Development Co.

"For as little as \$10,000 in some locations, new owners can begin building at any time,"

Ruben said.

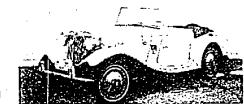
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- IRA AND KEOGH PLANS

**THREE LOCATIONS**

**APRIL 22** Hillcrest Country Club  
7:30 P.M.  
50 S. Groesbeck, Mt. Clemens

**APRIL 25** Dearborn Inn  
10:00 A.M.  
20301 Oakwood, Dearborn

**APRIL 28** Northfield Hilton  
7:30 P.M.  
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Troy

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