

200 gather to mourn 'great loss' of Cairns

BY TOM BARR
STAFF WRITER

A "who's who" of Farmington-area leadership — past and present — turned out 200 strong Friday morning for the funeral of Floyd A. Cairns, the man known as Mr. Farmington Hills.

Mr. Cairns, who served 29 years as clerk in Farmington Township and Farmington Hills, died Aug. 16 of congestive heart failure at St. Mary Hospital in Livonia. He was 79.

The mourners who packed the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home for Mr. Cairns' funeral service included local politicians from the past 25 or 30 years, as well as today's elected and appointed officials.

"People, you have experienced a great loss with the death of Floyd Cairns," said the Rev. Allen Rogers of the First Baptist Church of Walled Lake, where Mr. Cairns worshiped.

Rogers, the main speaker at the service, also supplied some little-known facts about Mr. Cairns from a biography supplied by the family.

The future Farmington Township clerk entered the world on Nov. 5, 1914, weighing just 1 pound and 8 ounces, Rogers related. And he worked 25 years with not one day off on the family farm at 13 Mile and Farmington roads.

Mr. Cairns was certainly a man for Farmington Township — and later Farmington Hills.

He was born in the township, educated in the community's schools, worked on the family farm and then for the local government. At the time of his death, he was living in Farmington Hills with Leola, his wife of 56 years.

He was buried in the communi-



Cairns' funeral: Ron Cairns (left) of Westland and Ron Wich of Farmington Hills lead the pallbearers for Floyd Cairns.

ty — in the historic North Farmington Cemetery.

Up until he became clerk in 1956, Mr. Cairns ran a trucking company handed down from his father. His trucks hauled milk from Oakland County farms to the Wilson Dairy in Detroit.

One of his customers was the Farmington Township supervisor, who convinced him to run for public office. Despite this encouragement, he lost his first election by 60 votes to incumbent Harry McCracken in 1955.

But Mr. Cairns was appointed

clerk when McCracken resigned a few months later. He seemed to grow into the job, a colleague recalls, and stayed almost 30 years, as the Farmington area changed from rural township to bustling suburb.

He retired as city clerk at the end of 1984. The City Hall was named the Floyd A. Cairns Municipal Building a few years later.

Mr. Cairns' resume includes a few stints as acting township supervisor and acting city manager, as well as a long list of accomplishments on civic and governmental boards and commissions.

Some of his accomplishments include chairmanship of the Farmington Hills Historical Commission, tenure on the Scheduling Committee of the Oakland County Elections Commission, board member of the Farmington Area YMCA, and fund-raising chairman for the current YMCA build-



After services: Floyd Cairns' nieces, Carolyn Wich (left) and Kathy Rhodes, embrace after the funeral service in Farmington.

ing on Farmington Road.

He was a past master of the Masonic Lodge, past president of the Farmington Exchange Club

and a member of the Farmington Elks Club.

Survivors, in addition to his wife, include a daughter, Ginny

Steele of Troy; a son, Richard Cairns of Novi; numerous nieces and nephews; 11 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

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