



Robert J. Odegard

September 20, 2013

Odegard, Robert J. Age 92, of Naples, FL, passed away peacefully Friday, September 20, among family and friends, following a full life of service to community, state, and country. A devoted son, brother, husband, father, farmer, naval officer, automobile dealer, legislator, stockbroker, and celebrated fundraiser for the University of Minnesota, Bob's charisma and persistence propelled him to the top of every field in which he endeavored. With his wife Barbara at his side, Odegard engaged leaders from Minnesota's highest echelons in business, politics and education. In 2000, he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree in recognition of his distinguished career at the University of Minnesota Foundation. In the late 1950's, when Leonard Dayton introduced Bob to Elmer L. Andersen, his life changed. "I was so impressed with him that I ran for the legislature myself, and won." Bob served in the Minnesota State Legislature from 1958 - 1960 where he was voted "Most Promising Member of The House of Representatives," and he ran as the Republican Party candidate in the Sixth Congressional District in 1962. With fundraising support from Wheelock Whitney and Minneapolis Star and Tribune Publisher Otto Silha, Bob ran again in 1964. Hired by Mr. Whitney in 1966, he moved from his hometown, Princeton, to Minneapolis where he worked at the investment firm now known as Dain Bosworth until 1970. That year, another political colleague, Roger Kennedy, persuaded him to accept the responsibilities of executive director of the University of Minnesota Foundation. Odegard found his calling at the University. "Education is the

Lord's work. The entire concept of a university is so useful to society, I can't think of anything more important. I had done a variety of things in the years since I graduated that were helpful to me when I returned. I knew people in the automotive business, the agricultural world, the political arena, and the investment business." Under his vision and leadership, the University of Minnesota Foundation significantly increased its annual giving and set new national standards for philanthropy in higher education. Bob's first attempt to retire was cut short, and he was called back to the Foundation for another two years, proudly handing the reins to Gerry Fischer, whose historic leadership carried the Foundation into the new millennium. A 1938 graduate of Princeton High School, Odegard received a Bachelor of Science in agricultural economics from the University of Minnesota in 1942 and entered the U.S. Navy as an ensign. During officer's training, he met and married Barbara Perkins, a student tour guide at nearby William and Mary College. He shipped out on the USS Rogers in March of 1945 and witnessed the signing of the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay in September, returning to San Diego at the rank of Lt. J.G. Following his service he managed the family businesses in Princeton with his father until 1966, concurrent to his political career. Over the course of his rich and varied career, Bob served as a director of over 20 business, civic, and foundation boards, including the Naples Trust Company, Public Television KTCA Channel 2, Voyager Funds, Norwest Bank, Old St. Anthony, and American Hardware Mutual Insurance Co. Golf was a lifelong passion, and he was a longtime member of Wayzata Country Club in Minnesota and Audubon Country Club in Naples, FL. Odegard was preceded in death by his wife, Barbara Perkins Odegard, in 1999, his son, Stephen James Odegard in 1996, and his wonderful companion Marge Nordbye in 2007. He is survived by his sisters Ruth (Donald) Crassweller of Duluth, Phyllis (Bruce) Thompson of Corte Madera, CA., and Bette (Rich) Bunger of Princeton, daughter Susan Odegard (David) Wood of Mt. Gretna, PA, son Kevin Odegard (Susan Casey) of Minneapolis, MN, daughter Nancy Odegard of Santa Monica, and loving grandchildren Kate Youngman and Kelsey

Youngman of San Francisco, CA, Jessie Odegard of Burlington, VT, and Jenny Odegard of Brooklyn, NY. Florida services will be held at Bob's favorite place, the pool at Arbor Trace, 1000 Arbor Lake Dr. in Naples, FL on Sunday, September 29 at 2 p.m. Minnesota services will be held at Wayzata Community Church in Wayzata, MN on Friday, October 11 at 10:00 a.m. Burial at Oak Knoll Cemetery in Princeton, MN at 2 pm. Friends are invited to gather afterward at the Casey-Odegard home at Spectacle Lake for light refreshments. Memorial gifts in Bob's honor may be sent to the Odegard Scholarship Fund at the University of Minnesota College of Design. University of Minnesota Foundation, PO Box 860266, Minneapolis, MN 55486-0266. Family condolences can be sent to Susan Wood, 204 Birch Ave, PO Box 72, Mount Gretna, PA 17064. Arrangements with Washburn-McReavy (612) 781-6828

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