



Van Van Konynenburg

May 19, 2002

Van Francis Van Konynenburg local television pioneer and humanitarian, died on May 16, 2002. He was 98 years old. "Mr. Van", as he was known to his associates, graduated from the University of Wisconsin and joined the Minneapolis Tribune's national advertising staff in 1929. He entered the broadcasting business in 1934 as a salesman at WTCN radio and by 1944 was Vice President and General Manager. In this capacity, he helped pioneer television in the Twin Cities and established Channel 4 at WTCN-TV in 1949. In 1952, WTCN purchased WCCO Radio and the WCCO call letters were expanded to cover both radio and television. Van served as chief operating officer and later as Chairman of the Executive Committee until his retirement in 1976. Although Van was very successful in the business arena, he is also remembered for his active civic affairs. He was associated with the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Minneapolis Downtown Council, Urban Coalition and Human Relations Commission, Guthrie Theatre Foundation, Advertising Club of Minnesota, Minnesota Association for Retarded Children and was a voice and support in the community for both the disabled and for veterans. He volunteered at Abbott Northwestern Hospital from his retirement until he was almost 90. Van was also known as an advocate of women to key positions and was the recipient of the Gold Knob award in 1962. This award was presented to him "for opening the most doors" to working women in that year. It was stated that his company had the only woman program director in this

area and one of the few in the country. Van carried the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi in his wallet and lived his life in accord with the prayer. He leaves us a legacy which invites us to live the principles and ethics he lived: creativity, focused energy, pride and belief in yourself, integrity, compassion, humility, and great insight mixed with a delightful sense of humor. He loved to surprise friends with unusual gifts bearing a Dutch motif. His avocations were many - flying, painting, fishing, bird identification, accordion playing, singing, swimming, and walks in his bare feet through the grass in his impeccably kept yard. Van was married to his beloved wife, Jane Radford who preceded him in death in 1996. No immediate relatives survive him. Van and Jane's wish to live for the rest of their lives in the home they built in 1939 was fulfilled. Close personal friends, Patti ``Yin" and Scott Simpson, Alyne Pedersen, and longtime caregivers, Jane, Rachael, and Mary attended to Van with love in his final hours. We offer special thanks to the many people who have been involved in different capacities in the care of the Vans as well as the many thoughtful visits from friends during the Vans last years. A Service will be held at 2:00 PM on Tuesday, May 21 at Lakewood Cemetery Chapel, 36th and Hennepin Ave. S., Minneapolis. Visitation before the service from 1:30 until 2:00. Interment immediately following the service at Lakewood Cemetery. Memorials may be given to the charity of your choice or to the Minneapolis Foundation in Francis' name. Washburn-McReavy Edina Chapel 952-920-3996