Neal Ormond

Neal Ormond, 80, a business and community leader whose exemplary life of service benefited our nation and the Aurora area in particular over the past half century, died Sunday, July 25, 1993 at McAuley Manor in Aurora. He was born February 3, 1913 in Yonkers, New York.

In his early years, he was the youngest regular radio announcer in the country, for stations WOOR/WHAS in White Plains, New York, a columnist for the Yonkers Herald Statesman, an accomplished director of community theater in Westchester County, New York, and national president of Gamma Tau Delta fraternity. A graduate of New York University, he served in the U.S. Naval Reserve and became a partner in the management consulting firm of Martin H. Ray and Associates in 1953.

During the next seven years, he was selected by the federal government to assist in launching newly established agencies. Following passage of the National Reemployment Act, he served as labor relations and compliance director for the Code Authority of the Rayon and Silk Dyeing and Printing Industry in six eastern states. In 1939, the U.S. Department of Labor named him first administrator of the Fair Labor Standards Act in New York State.

On June 1, 1940, he married Margaret Ray of Yonkers, New York at St. Joseph's Church in Bronxville, New York.

In 1940, as a member of the management team of Ray Associates and Todd and Brown, Inc., which had the contract to design and build the massive Kingsbury Ordnance Plant to load ammunition for the burgeoning war effort, he played the key role in the creation of the supporting town of Kingsford Heights, a city built from scratch in less than a year's time upon a 20 square mile area of farmland near LaPorte, Indiana. The town provided homes, a hospital, schools, library and all the necessary infrastructure for the 12,000 workers and additional 21,000 family members. The project required Mr. Ormond to secure twenty million dollars of funding from federal sources and rank among the four largest projects ever constructed in the U.S. for defense workers. During this time, one of his partners was Walter O'Malley, and one of his first employees was Charles Finley, both of whom later went on to become executives in professional baseball.

During the war, he also served without pay as a consultant to federal agencies, such as the Training With Industry Branch of the War Manpower Commission, the War Production Board, and the National Housing Agency.

In 1943, he brought his family to Aurora where he became Assistant to the President of Lyon Metal Products and a member of the company's active committee. He was elected Vice President of Personnel Relations in 1954 and served in this capacity for twenty-five years until his retirement.

During this time, he was numerous awards and the respect of both management and labor for being an outstanding champion of business ethics and social justice, and a leader in developing innovative employee benefit programs. At the time of his retirement, he was made an honored member of the United Steelworkers of America in recognition of his achievement in promoting effective labor-management relations.

For the past fifty years, he has been recognized as an outstanding leader in both business and philanthropic causes throughout the Fox Valley, holding prominent positions on boards and committees of numerous civic, educational, professional and charitable organizations.

He was active in the founding of the Aurora Foundation in 1948 and served in many leadership capacities, including the position of Senior Director at the time of his death. In addition to being president of the Foundation from 1970-73, he initiated and chaired the scholarship committee for many years. His fund raising and administrative efforts over the years served as a platform for scholarship support that has grown from a modest $600 in 1949 to over $2 million to date.

He was elected to the Valley Industrial Association's board of directors in the early 1980's and served as its chairman from 1988-70. At the time of his death, he was active on the Council of Past Chairmen, and last June 2 was presented with a special award of distinction by the VAI for his contributions to their organization.

He was active as a director for almost twenty-five years of the Kane County Tuberculosis Association, and for thirteen years served as president of that organization, which later led to the formation of the Sangamon Association of North Central Illinois that now serves seven counties.

Active on the board of the Catholic Social Services Agency since 1946, he served as president during the 1950's and most recently was a member of the Senior Directors Council. He also served on the Fox Knoll Board of Advisors.

He was a charter member and past president of the Valley Personnel Association, and a charter member of the Aurora Jaycees. In addition, he has been active in the Kiwanis Club, the Aurora Country Club, the Aurora Lodge of the R.O.L.E., the Loyal Order of Moose, the Montgomery VFW Post 7432, the American Red Cross, the Aurora and Illinois Chambers of Commerce, the Illinois Manufacturers Association, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the American Management Association. For the past fifty years, he has been an active parishioner and lay leader at Holy Angels Church.

He was a key organizer and director of many successful fundraising projects in the Aurora area, including serving as industrial division chairman of the Aurora Joint Hospital Fund Drive that raised $6 million in 1966.

In 1949 and 1950, he chaired the industrial division during the campaign to raise funds for the building of Macmorn Abbey at a new site in North Aurora.

He was very active in various projects of the Aurora United Way, and its predecessor "Red Feather" organizations and he served as a member of the Finance Division of the United Community Services from 1959 to 1969.

In 1974, he was elected chairman of the Aurora YWCA Board of Trustees and he directed their $2 million fund drive for a new facility.

He was also active in major fund drives for Aurora University and Holy Angels Church, and in the successful efforts to establish what is now Waubonsie Community College, the Quad County Urban League and the Corridor Partnership for Excellence in Education, and to locate Fermilab in Batavia and the Illinois Math and Science Academy in Aurora.

His work was recognized with numerous awards and citations. In 1986, he and his wife, Margery, were jointly honored by the Aurora Lion's Club as recipients of the Community Service Award for their many contributions to improve the moral and social growth of the community. In 1987, the couple received the Aurora YWCA Club Service to God and Fellow Man Award for the influence they had on education, labor, social service and governmental endeavors over more than forty years. In 1985, Aurora University conferred upon him its first honorary doctor of humanities degree of his life of philanthropic service, and in 1990, he was presented with a distinguished service award by Catholic Bishop Arthur J. O'Neil recognizing his work since 1946 for the Diocese of Rockford.

Survivors include five children, Neal (Mary Clark) Ormond III, of Aurora; Martin R. (Andrea) Ormond, of New Hartford, New York; Nancy R. (Donald Jr.) Murphy, of Batavia, Illinois; Paul A. (Susan) Ormond, of Toledo, Ohio; Richard W. (Gayle) Ormond, of Palm Desert, California. Also two brothers, Douglas and Joseph Ormond, of Yonkers, New York and three close brothers in- law, John Ray, of Natick, Massachussetts, Alan Ray, of Gloucester, Massachusetts and Roger Ray, of Bethesda, Maryland; 16 grandchildren, Neal IV, Laurel and Christen Or mond, all of Aurora, Kelly, Christopher, Paige and Kerry Ormond, all of Hart frog, New York; Paul, Michael, Karen, Beth and Brian Murphy, all of Batavia, Illinois, Nicholas and Chase Ormond, both of Toledo, Ohio and Carolyn and Alexander Ormond, of Palm Desert, California.

He was preceded in death by his wife of nearly 50 years, Margery Ray Ormond; his parents, Neal and Loretta Ormond and his sister, Alma (Ormond) Lano.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Wednesday, July 28, 1993 at 10 a.m. at Holy Angels Church. The Fr. Joseph Lesinski will officiate. Internment will be at Mt. Oliver Cemetery.

Visitation will be on Tuesday, July 27, from 3 to 5 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. at The Holy Chapel, where a liturgical wake service will be held at 6:30 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that donations in Mr. Ormond's name be made to the Neal and Margery Ray Ormond Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o The Aurora Foundation, 111 W. Downer Place, Aurora, IL 60505.
Aurora community leader
Neal Ormond dead at 80

By Steve Lord
BEACON-NEWS STAFF

Aurora
One of Aurora’s finest citizens is dead.
Neal Ormond, 80, philanthropist, community and business leader, and a worker for social justice, died Sunday at McCauley Manor in Aurora. He was born Feb. 3, 1913 in Yonkers, N.Y.

“This is a loss for Aurora,” said Marie Wilkinson, a community activist and leader, who worked with Mr. Ormond on many occasions. “He was a generous man. He always there when you needed him. He gave of his time, his material and his heart.”

“He was a real kind person,” said Albert McCoy, former mayor of Aurora and a member of the Aurora Foundation Board of Directors with Mr. Ormond. “He was constantly working on community projects for the betterment of Aurora. If he didn’t succeed the first time, he was around to see you the second time.”

Mr. Ormond moved to Aurora in 1943, with his bride of three years at the time, Margery. Before coming to Aurora, Mr. Ormond had already established himself as a successful public and private sector businessman. He even had worked as a radio announcer, a newspaper columnist, a community theater director and in the military while still living in New York.

He became assistant to the president of Lyon Metal Products and a member of the company executive committee. He was elected vice president of personnel relations in 1954, where he served for 25 years until retirement.

He won numerous awards and the respect of both management and labor for his work in personnel areas. At the time of his retirement he was made an honorary member of the United Steelworkers of America.

“We were on opposite sides, but he was the best management person I ever worked with,” said Earl Schroeder, a retired president of the United Steelworkers of America local at Lyon Metal. “He was very fair.”

He was active in founding the Aurora Foundation in 1948. He was president of the foundation from 1970 to 1972, and at the time of his death was Senior Director on the board. He started and chaired the scholarship committee for many years. Through his fund-raising efforts, the scholarship support grew from $600 in 1949 to more than $2 million today.

Other community work he was involved in included: the Valley Industrial Association board of directors and two years as chairman; a 25-year director of the Kane County Tuberculosis Association; the Catholic Social Services Agency board, as well as time as chairman; active member of the Aurora Jaycees, Aurora Kiwanis Club, the Aurora Country Club, Aurora Lodge of the Loyal Order of Moose, the Montgomery VFW Post, the American Red Cross, the Aurora and Illinois Chamber of Commerce, and a member and lay leader at Holy Angels Church.

He also was involved in major fund-raising efforts for both the Aurora YWCA and YMCA, as well as for Aurora University. He was involved in the effort to establish Waubonsee Community College.

His wife, Margery, who died in 1989, also was very involved in the community with her husband. The two were honored many times for their work together.

“He and his wife left a great legacy, both for their family and the city of Aurora,” Wilkinson said.
Foundation pays tribute to Neal Ormond

Honoring a lifetime of community service

The Aurora Foundation recently lost one of its closest and most beloved friends.

On July 25, 1993, Neal Ormond, whose association with the Foundation spanned nearly half a century, passed away after a brief illness.

Ormond spent a lifetime nurturing the charitable needs of others. His philanthropic interests touched many lives and organizations, yet none were more faithfully served by his devotion and generosity than The Aurora Foundation.

Through his insistent embrace, the Foundation developed into a true community resource, stretching itself to encompass a more comprehensive mission.

During the late 1940's, Ormond participated in a series of round-table discussions which were convened to consider the formation of a community foundation for the citizens of Aurora.

He assisted the fledgling foundation during its early years in numerous capacities. He then served as Director, Committee Chairman (most notably the Scholarship Committee), President, Senior Director, and Historian.

The Foundation’s newsletter, the Memorandum, was created under his direction. He also guided the Foundation’s successful transition from an all-volunteer organization to one administered by a professional staff.

No detail or task was too insignificant to command his full attention. Without fail, Neal Ormond gave consistently and generously of himself to further the ideals and the vision of the Foundation.

At the time of his wife Margery’s death in 1989, a memorial scholarship fund was established within the Foundation to assist the educational needs of area students. Neal’s name now will be placed alongside Margery’s as a lasting tribute to his lifetime of community service.

The Aurora Foundation has indeed been blessed through the dedicated efforts of Neal Ormond and will forever hold in highest regard his extraordinary and indispensable contributions to our organization.

Our sense of loss is profound.