

[Smith, Hurlbut William]

Hurlbut W. Smith, 86, dean of Syracuse area industrialists and president and chairman of the board of L. C. Smith & Corona Typewriters, Inc. died at his home, 1111 James St., at 6:35 last night.

Mr. Smith suffered a cerebral hemorrhage, which caused complete paralysis, a week ago. He had been active—he worked the preceding Friday—until the moment of his sudden illness, carrying on the duties of his multitude of business and civic interests.

Few names bear greater significance to the welfare and progress of Syracuse than that of Mr. Smith. His constructive energies up to and including his last days were applied along many lines of advance in industry and organized activities of the community.

While head of the typewriter manufacturing company, one of the largest in the world, he was at the same time actively affiliated with other large industrial organizations.

The list of civic groups and movements in which he was a leader is a long one, extending over a period of many years. He was chairman of the Syracuse Trust Co.'s Board of Directors and a member of the executive committee. He was director and member of the executive committee of the Crucible Steel Company of America and of the Great Lakes Steamship Co., Inc. He was also an official or director of various other corporations, including the Smith-Lee Co., Oneida, pioneer maker of milk bottle caps, of which he was for some time president.

The Onondaga County War Memorial building stands as a city and county monument to the memory of H. W. Smith's long and active interest in civic affairs.

Mr. Smith played a prominent and inspiring role in bringing the memorial into being. As chairman of the War Memorial Commission, named by the Board of Supervisors to take jurisdiction over its construction and operation, he gave unstintingly of his time and energy from the days when it was first proposed to its completion.

He had a deep heart interest in the creation of a memorial to the county's war heroes that would ever be a living symbol of the country's gratitude. Witnessing the fruition of the effort to bring this about gave him one of the greatest thrills of his life, he declared.

Members of his family called him "Bert" but his business associates referred to him as "H. W."

Since 1918 he served on the Board of Trustees of Syracuse University, from which he received the masters of arts degree in June 1921 and the degree of doctor of laws in 1951. At a special meeting on May 4, 1946 the Syracuse Board of Education named the city's technical-industrial high school "Hurlbut W. Smith Technical and Industrial High School."

[Smith, Hurlbut William]

He had been a public library trustee since 1924 and president of the library board since 1932. He was president of Elmcrest Children's Center, chairman of the Onondaga county chapter of the American Red Cross, director of the local ASPCA, vice-president of the YMCA and chairman of the financial committee of Betts Memorial Universalist Church.

He was the youngest son of Lewis Stevens and Eliza Ann Hurlbut Smith and grandson of William and Rebecca Bissell Smith, great grandson of Nathan and Elizabeth Stevens Smith and great-great grandson of Nathan Smith who came from England prior to 1700, settling in Milford, Conn.

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[Smith, Hurlbut William]

HURLBUT W. SMITH

The death of Hurlbut W. Smith, eighty-six years of age, in his home on December 16 took from Syracuse its first citizen, first in usefulness. It will be recalled that in 1928, Dr. Frederick W. Betts, pastor of the First Universalist Church in Syracuse, was voted the most useful citizen in a contest... Mr. Smith, a member of the Betts Memorial Universalist Church, rapidly rose to the identical position of honor and the entire city mourned his passing. He suffered a cerebral hemorrhage on December 9, from which he was unable to recover. He was born in Center Lisle.

Mr. Smith began work in the L. C. Smith Gun Company in Syracuse which his brother [Lyman C. Smith] had established in 1877, making breech loaded guns. He and three brothers [Lyman C., Wilbert L., and Monroe C. Smith] withdrew from manufacturing this product in 1888 to form the Smith-Premier Typewriter Company, becoming the treasurer. In 1903, the L. C. Smith & Brothers Typewriter Company was formed to manufacture office machinery, with Mr. Smith as treasurer, director, and member of the executive board. In 1914, he also became secretary and this factory soon became one of the largest producers of typewriters. He retired from active management in 1924. In 1926, the Corona Typewriter Company was absorbed and the new concern was known as the L. C. Smith & Corona Typewriters, Inc., the name which it continues to carry. He was compelled in 1933, in the depression period, which almost ruined the corporation, to return to its management, becoming president, treasurer and chairman of the executive board. It was impossible to secure bank loans at the time so Mr. Smith risked his life-savings for the recovery of the Company. His policy was the essence of faith—the Company must produce typewriters to survive and the typewriters could be sold. His faith saved the Company, but the policy of the previous management would have closed it. This has been one of the few large industries where the employees knew the man at the head. They bowled with him, addressed him as "H.W." and his office-door was always open to them.

Mr. Smith was a director and member of the executive committee of the Crucible Steel Company of America; chairman of the board, director and chairman of the executive committee of the Syracuse Trust Company; director and member of the executive committee of the Great Lakes Steamship Company.

He was a trustee since 1918 and chairman of the board and member of the executive committee of Syracuse University since 1922. He was a trustee since 1924 and president of the board of the Syracuse Public Library since 1932. He was also president of the board of trustees of Elmcrest Children's Center, chairman of the Syracuse and Onondaga County Chapter of the American Red Cross; director of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,

[Smith, Hurlbut William]

Syracuse, and vice president of the board of trustees of the Y.M.C.A. He also served as a trustee of the Theological School of St. Lawrence University.

In his final task of citizenship, Mr. Smith served as chairman of the committee on the Veteran Memorial and devoted energy, time and interest to the shaping of the \$3,000,000 living monument to the war dead—a marvelous building.

Besides being a 33rd degree Mason, he was a member of nearly every welfare organization in the city. He was always proud to say that the revivalist, "Billy" Sunday drove him into membership in the Universalist Church of Syracuse, during Dr. Betts' pastorate. The revivalist openly attacked Universalists in his tabernacle campaign in Syracuse and Mr. Smith responded with an immediate affiliation with the Universalist cause. His first wife, Mina Ruma Glazier, was a member of the Universalist Church and her death occurred in 1935. Mr. Smith served this church several terms as trustee, chairman of the board of trustees and chairman of the finance committee.

He was married to Mrs. Gladys M. Diefendorf of Brooklyn in 1936, who survives him. He is also survived by two stepchildren and five grandchildren; also by several nephews and nieces. Thousands visited the War Memorial on December 18 where the body lay in state. The funeral service was conducted in the Hendricks Chapel of Syracuse University on December 19 by Drs. Ellsworth C. Reamon of the Universalist Church; President William P. Tully and Dean Charles S. Noble of Syracuse University.

Thus endeth the mortal career of another great Universalist. He was great not by the fact of his wealth but because he served the most. The amazing feature of his career was that he was able to maintain an active interest in so much of the city's activities in addition to his management of a great industry.

His special bequests amount to \$317,700, including \$10,000 to the Betts Memorial Universalist Church and \$10,000 to Dr. Ellsworth C. Reamon, minister; upon Mrs. Smith's death, the residuary estate will go to Syracuse University, the Elmcrest Children's Center and the Community Foundation. Three-fifths will go to the University.

Empire State Universalist, Cortland NY, January 1952

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