

# *Obituary*

## ROBERT WARING STODDARD

Robert Waring Stoddard died on December 14, 1984, at his home in Worcester, Massachusetts, at the age of seventy-eight. Born in Trenton, New Jersey, on January 22, 1906, the son of Harry Galpin Stoddard and Janet Waring Stoddard, he was graduated from Worcester Academy in 1924, Yale University in 1928, and Harvard Business School in 1929. After graduation, he was employed by Wyman-Gordon as a laboratory helper and in various capacities that brought him in contact with every operation at the plant. He was named assistant works manager in 1931, works manager in 1938, vice-president in 1941, executive vice-president in 1951, president in 1955, and chairman of the board in 1967.

While at Yale, he attended a Communist rally. What he heard there made him a lifetime opponent of Communist philosophy and practice. Thereafter, he became an avid student of government and a dedicated exponent of the free enterprise system. He was one of the founders of the John Birch Society, an association he continued until his death. He opposed the intrusion of government into individuals' lives; his philosophy was simply that the function of government was to protect lives and property—to do those things that the people could not do themselves. He was an articulate spokesman for the free enterprise system, a staunch bastion of the far right against Communism, and a supporter and leader in conservative causes, both national and international.

This he did with understanding and unflinching good humor, readily appreciating that his stance was well to the right of many of his colleagues. When outvoted on a governing board on a question to accept or not some government funding pro-

gram of which he did not approve, he would reluctantly assent with the remark, 'Sometimes a man has to rise above his principles.'

Bob was fearless in defense of his beliefs. No one hated sham and pretense any more than he. He had a delightful sense of humor and an unending number of pat stories that he would quote to relieve the tension at some critical state in a discussion.

Bob Stoddard, while maintaining a low profile, was a tremendous force for good in the Worcester community. His position as chairman of the board of the Worcester Telegram & Gazette, Inc., of course placed him in the public eye. At various times, he was president of the Worcester YMCA and of the Associated Industries of Massachusetts. But Bob preferred to stay in the background — as a kingmaker, if you will. His advice was much sought after, as was his father's before him, and he was held in such respect that he was able to bring opposing factions together and accomplish results that perhaps no one else could.

His interests apart from business and government were legion. He was a big game huntsman. Exhibits in the halls of the Worcester Science Center are testimony to his marksmanship: an Indian Bengal tiger, wild buffalo from Africa, an Alaskan Kodiak bear. He was also a skilled fisherman, and every summer he would spend a month at his fishing camp on the Miramichi River in New Brunswick fishing for salmon. In addition, Bob was an expert photographer, and no one loved nature and the wild any more than he did. He was an airplane and helicopter pilot, and a good skier as well (indeed, on his seventy-fifth birthday he flew in his helicopter to Mount Wachusett and skied down one of their trails). He was an antique car buff. Regularly at the Harvard-Yale football game, he and Mrs. Stoddard would appear in their Rolls-Royce, in coonskin and fur coats, with the top down.

On October 7, 1933, he married Helen Estabrook. He and his wife have maintained a garden which is one of the show-

places of Worcester County and the scene of many delightful parties, including a memorable one of the Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves.

Bob's charitable and business associations are too numerous to mention. He was chairman of the Stoddard Charitable Trust, which has provided generous financial support to many Worcester organizations, including the American Antiquarian Society.

He became a member of the American Antiquarian Society in October 1963 and was a generous supporter. He was a member of the Council of the Society from 1965 to 1979, serving as Secretary for Foreign Correspondence from 1977 to 1979, and was a chairman or member of several of its committees.

Surviving him are his wife, two daughters, Judith King, and Valerie Loring, a sister, Marion Fletcher, and seven grandchildren.

Paris Fletcher

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