

## **Biography of Bill Wettergren**

We were asked to add information about our dad. I am sorry that I can not provide who his favorite teachers were or a favorite memory from his school years. I do know though that he was instilled with a passion for learning. Our dad, who graduated when he was 15 years old, wanted more than anything to be able to attend college. The family, at that time, was unable to send him.

Dad did not feel that he was cut out to farm so he became involved in the family dairy business for 23 years prior to becoming MSBA's executive secretary in 1950. He had become a St. Peter School Board member in his twenties. He served on the board for 14 years (13 years as chair) and the MSBA Board of Directors (2 years).

Also, during these earlier years, he was fortunate enough to play semi-pro baseball in southern Minnesota for 29 years and officiated high school and college football, basketball, and baseball for over 20 years. He officiated in the state basketball tournament seven times, five times in the championship game. He was very proud of his sporting years.

When Dad started for the MSBA, his first office was a room at the back of the stage at the St. Peter High School. The office moved a few times and increased from one secretary to many diversified staff. He was lucky enough to be at the ground breaking of the now existing MSBA building on Jefferson Avenue.

Dad initiated many firsts for education in the state. In 1952 the first area workshops were held throughout the state. He traveled over 2500 miles putting on these initial programs. We remember him being gone for most of the fall season (except, of course, for some hunting weekends). He was responsible for many writings and publications, including the JOURNAL which was the publication of the MSBA. He also expanded services and training. Their convention was always fun and informative to go to and has become one of the largest exhibits of school products and services in the Midwest.

I was fortunate to go to the Capital with Dad where he was a lobbyist. For many years he was the senior lobbyist in terms of years there. I have been told many times how respected he was on both sides of the aisle.

There were also state and national committees he served on. Along with being a member of committees for the different governors during his tenure and the MSBA Board of Directors for two years, he was asked twice to serve as the chairman of the National School Boards Association Executive Liaison Committee where he represented the executives of all 50 states. He was also a staff member of the first White House Conference on Education.

When retirement from the School Board came, Dad did not totally retire. He was very proud of serving as mayor of St. Peter. In the earlier years, he had also served St. Peter as the Chamber of Commerce president, was a Rotary member, and was also on the district committee for the Boy Scouts.

When Dad passed away, we were very surprised to hear from people around the country who had read of Dad's passing in the USA Today. That was certainly a tribute to a well-lived life of service to others.

I would like to mention our mother, Hazel, who helped Dad in all of his endeavors by supporting him and our family so he was able to make his dreams come true.

Ilene, David, Nancy, and I would like to again express our thanks to Myrna Schoeb (one-time secretary of Dad's) and the committee who bestowed this great honor on dad. We are very proud of him and all he achieved.