

MEMORIAL

Robert J. Kalthoff

November 11, 2002

Russell Dale Flick

Dr. Robert J. Kalthoff, 76, died at his Port Huron, Michigan, summer home on August 30th. Trained at medical schools in Milwaukee, Detroit, New York and Cincinnati, Bob practiced psychiatry in Clifton until the late 1960s and taught at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine's Psychiatry Department until 1975. After serving in the U.S. Air Force he was honorably discharged as Captain in Puerto Rico in 1954.

An accomplished pianist and generous host, Bob also possessed what brother George Rieveschl terms, "a good business mind." With his colleague Dr. Paul Ornstein, Bob patented an innovative information retrieval system and founded *Access Corporation* in 1963. He served as president of the company until 1997, sponsored national seminars and inaugurated several other businesses. He published more than one hundred papers and one book in the field in addition to receiving several national awards.

Bob's wife, Nancy Kalthoff, preceded him in death in 1994. Survivors include two daughters, three sons, and seven grandchildren.

Bob's Literary Club career spanned thirty-five productive years in which he came with eleven full-length and five budget papers. His approach was eclectic: music, history, art, the world of high finance, data retrieval and computer technology. He never forgot that, "There are long memories on Fourth Street," and he altered Tolstoy's adage, "A book (or Literary Club paper) is its own destiny."

Bob excelled at employing memorable quotations to brighten his papers. In "From Entrepreneur to Nontrepreneur," June, 1987, Bob compared the new breed of entrepreneurs to bank robbers, "...they always return to the scene of the crime." In "Meddler on the Roof," November, 1984, "Men fight not to control assets, resources, markets or technology, but each other." Two lengthy papers, "It's Too Soon Not To Panic," March, 1975, and "Lack of Familiarity Breeds Lack of Contempt, or Jellyside Down," February, 1997, covered the crash of 1929 and Roosevelt's Senate Banking Committee.

Music and the lives of famous musicians were two of Bob's passions. "Out-Takes, of Faces on the Cutting Room Floor," May, 1979, humorously explained the techniques of correcting famous bloopers made by leading musicians during live concerts and recording sessions. He employed the memorable quote as his theme, "The quest for the Illusion of perfection." Bob probably holds the Club record for the most concise Budget paper of all time – ten lines.

Bob's fascination with the life of Sergei Rachmaninoff was covered in his two papers, "Don't Shoot the Piano Player, He's the Only One We've Got, or the Literary Club and the First Amendment," February 1990, and his last paper, "The Man who Hunted Three Hares," March, 2001. Exhausting research was personalized with insights provided by his close friends and mentors Leon and Madam Conus, colleagues of Rachmaninoff predating the Russian Revolution until the maestro's death in 1943. Thus he spun a rich, vivid history with words.

Not the least of Bob's contributions to our fellowship was music for the Holiday Observances. Members who are high on the roster will recall, if they have not suppressed the pre-Kalthoff musical segments of the celebrations: a lone violin playing carols, a wavering in-house quartet and, of course, the uncertain rendering of carols by the whole group. Bob, with a year of studying choral conducting at Julliard under his belt, changed all that.

Volunteer brothers assembled by the two Steinways, first on Grandin Road and then at 550 East Fourth Street, submitting to his rigorous, demanding: "Watch the conductor?" "Pick it up!" "Shhh, softly, softly." Bob led them into the more esoteric areas of Holiday music as well as the traditional ones. His programs balanced the jolly and reverent. One chorus member has commented on how he was able to convey his enthusiasm for and the essence of each piece, no matter how distinct. With necessary addition of a few semi and genuine pros, the finished product rivaled that of Fred Waring or Mitch Miller.

It would be nice to think on every Monday of our Holiday Observances, way up on high, Bob in his red velvet conductor's coat, is leading a highly disciplined heavenly host singing "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht."

Respectfully submitted,

Herbert F. Curry, Chairman

Russell Dale Flick, Contributor