

W.W. 'Bill' Marsh, PR figure, dies at 81

■ Clients served during a career spanning four decades include major groups in the Northwest and a stint in academia

By TED MAHAR

of The Oregonian Staff

W.W. "Bill" Marsh, a major public relations figure in Oregon, died Friday, Feb. 23, 1986, of a heart attack at age 81.

From 1986 through 1993, Mr. Marsh taught public relations at Marylhurst College, where he instituted the Public Relations Certificate Program. The course culminated a career of more than 40 years.

After working in sales promotion and public relations at Western Airlines in Long Beach, Calif., and White Stag Manufacturing in Port-

land, he founded the W.W. Marsh and Associates public relations firm in 1954. His clients included Pan American Airways in Oregon and Southern Washington for 28 years.

He conducted public relations for the 1958 ballot measure to establish the Portland Development Commission and for the following 15 years was the commission's counsel for the South Auditorium Urban Renewal Site. In 1958-59 he was public relations director of the Oregon Centennial Commission.

His firm represented Kah-Nee-Ta resort and all tribal enterprises of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation for 20 years beginning in 1964.

He merged with Jay Rockey Public Relations of Seattle in 1970, forming Rockey/Marsh Public Relations. Clients included the Sheraton Hotel, Washington Square and the Pacific

Rim Trade Association. It became The Rockey Co. in 1986.

Marsh was a charter member of the Columbia River Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. In 1986 the chapter instituted a William W. Marsh Award. In presenting the first to Marsh, Lucy Z. Martin, of Lucy Martin & Associates, called him "the dean of public relations in Oregon. He set the standard for professionalism."

Marsh was born Jan. 17, 1915 in Hooper, Neb., and graduated in 1937



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from the University of Nebraska. As an undergraduate he helped raise funds for a student union building and became its first managing director two years after graduation.

On Nov. 1, 1942, he married Mary Hitchcock, his wife of 53 years and an actress in movies, television and Portland theater. He was in the Navy in the Pacific during World War II and was a gunnery officer on the USS West Virginia, a battleship.

A celebration of his life will at 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 6, at Finley's Sunset Hills Mortuary.

Survivors include his wife; daughters, Susan of Menlo Park, Calif., and Trisha Davidson of Beaver Creek; and two grandsons.

The family asks that remembrances be to the Boy Scouts of America, Cascade Pacific Council, or The Nature Conservancy.