

JOSEPH GRANGE SMITH

1911-1977

ON May 30 of this year (1977) our Society lost an unexcelled history enthusiast and leader, and Pittsburgh lost an outstanding citizen. Enthusiasm, friendliness, ability, and service are the words to describe this remarkable man who preferred to be called just plain Joe.

My knowledge of Joe is of but the brief last five years of his life when, after retiring from industry, he selflessly guided the expanding outreach of the Society as director of the Community Service Program and then as director of the Society.

Records of his earlier years amply reveal this native Pittsburgher's many contributions to his city. His life also touched national and even international affairs, always for the benefit of mankind. Following graduation from Georgetown University and the University of Pittsburgh Law School, Joe followed a career in the steel industry for thirty-five years. At the time of retirement he was vice-president of the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Company in charge of the purchasing, traffic, raw materials, and international divisions.

It almost seems, however, that Joe's industrial work was an avocation and that his true vocation was of being a family man and of serving his fellow men. Deeply religious, he was a director of the Catholic Institute of Pittsburgh and the Council of Administration of the diocese. He became a member of the Board of Trustees of Carlow College in 1945 and was board chairman for twenty-five years. Pope Paul VI named him a Knight of St. Gregory in 1964 and a Knight of Malta in 1972. This past May, while hospitalized, he was awarded in absentia the National Brotherhood Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

He was a founder and first vice-president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Pittsburgh, and served as trustee, vice-president, and board chairman of the Health and Welfare Association of Allegheny County. The list of civic jobs and affiliations can go on and on: a trustee of the Pittsburgh Council of International Visitors and of Pittsburgh Hospital; member of the Junta, the Duquesne Club, the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, and the Pittsburgh Field Club; officer of Serra International and a director of the Human Life Foundation.

Joe Smith had been a valued member and a trustee of the Historical Society for many years prior to 1972 when he joined the So-

ciety's staff, essentially on a volunteer basis, to head up a new Community Service Program. The six-year program was made possible by a grant from the Buhl Foundation. Shortly after the resignation of John Harpster in 1972, Joe became Director of the Society as well as continuing his supervision of the Community Service program. All of us know the results: a large number of attractive brochures, outstanding exhibits at the Society's headquarters and in public areas, an expanded speakers' program, encouragement of class visitations from area high schools, a doubling of the lecture series, promotion of library and archive use, a new balcony in the library to provide expanded shelving space, participation in bicentennial activities.

An outgoing man himself, Joe often worked so quietly that major accomplishments almost went unnoticed. During his tenure, the staff became truly professional, including a magazine editor with a doctorate in history, a trained librarian, a trained archivist, and a skilled curator of museum exhibits and visual aids. Docents appeared to help welcome visitors and to augment the staff; an intern program was set up with local colleges and universities. Whoever writes the definitive history of Pittsburgh will have to extend thanks to Joe Smith for his interest in increasing facilities for research and scholarship. The Society's nationally recognized glass collection continued its selective growth to complement Society member Lowell Innes's masterful book, *Pittsburgh Glass 1797-1891: A History and Guide for Collectors*, a 1976 publication funded by a Laurel Foundation grant to the Society.

One could not have worked closely with Joe during his brief five years at the helm of the Society without appreciating his administrative know-how, his keen mind, his deep historical knowledge, and his stimulating lectures. Perhaps the best memory, however, is that of walking quietly into the back of the auditorium while Joe held a class of students spellbound as he talked of the history of Western Pennsylvania. He loved youth, and loving youth, stayed young in mind and outlook. To him the future was promising. Our memory of him is golden.

NILES ANDERSON

Editor's Note: Mrs. Joseph G. Smith and the entire Smith family wish to thank everyone for their kindness following Joe's death. They especially thank those who have contributed to the Joseph G. Smith Memorial Fund.