

Scherer, Roger H.



87, died in his sleep, his wife Irma by his side, on August 14 at his home in Plymouth. Roger lived a full life, was a man of great faith

who loved and was immensely proud of his immediate and extended family. He provided vision and leadership to a successful family business, stewarding it from founders to the third generation. Roger was also a public servant, holding elected and appointed positions in government, civic organizations and on corporate boards and giving generously of time and treasure. Roger had many interests, all shared with close friends and family. Until recently, Roger never turned down an invitation to travel, golf, ski, spend an afternoon on a boat, drop a line from the beach, or devote a day to hunting. He was a great dancer - in demand at weddings - and he rarely walked away from a game of cribbage or 500. His road trips to ski Big Sky, Montana will be remembered by many. He skied his last run in March 2020. Some thought Roger a bit of a character.

Born on July 31, 1935, to Clarence and Julia (nee Rudolph) Scherer, Roger grew up in the city, but spent summers with his extended farm family in Medina and Hamel. He was always planting - apple trees, flowers, vegetables - and believed

"there is something peaceful about playing in the dirt and making helpless things grow". Roger was a proud product of Catholic schools and supported them throughout his life, attending primary school at St. Anne's in north Minneapolis and graduating from DeLaSalle High School, where he played on the 1953 undefeated state championship football team. Roger went on to graduate from St. John's University in Collegeville and developed a life-long appreciation for Benedictine values of common good, community, and purposeful work. He would later serve on St. John's Board of Regents, and the Board of the St John's School of Theology.

Most importantly at SJU, Roger made the 'best decision of his life', to propose to Irma Gentilini from Chisholm. Forever after he would marvel that she said 'Yes'. They married in 1959 and settled in Brooklyn Center where Roger built their first house on the Mississippi River. Roger and Irma were charter members of St. Alphonsus Catholic Church. Their family would grow to include seven children. The accidental death of daughter Lisa in 1977 was a tragedy that both tested and strengthened the family's faith.

Roger was a life-long learner. He earned a law degree from William Mitchell College of Law and later a certificate from Harvard's Officer-Manager-President (OMP) program. In between, he focused on business and public service, and adopted many hobbies, always challenging himself to try new things, from fiddle playing to crossbow hunting to raising chickens. He was always reading.

In 1959, Roger began working at Scherer Bros Lumber, the company founded by his father and uncle. He was named President/CEO in 1978 and retained that position until 1995, working alongside his brother Gary and cousins Mike and Greg to build the business and honor the founders' legacy. Roger's greatest achievement was in maintaining family harmony, recruiting and supporting new leaders, and transitioning the business to the third generation of family owners and managers. Nothing made him happier than watching his sons, nephew and their coworkers drive Scherer Bros to new levels of success. He also created a strong corporate governance system, putting in place a board that included independent directors. Roger was a true lumberman and played many leadership roles in the industry (e.g., Northwestern Lumber Association, National Lumber and Building Materials Dealer Association). Roger also served on several hospital boards, National City Bancorporation, and Lumber Mutual Insurance. He was committed to his Church, was on the Archdiocesan Finance Council, and a member of the Knights of Columbus and the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem. Roger was drawn to public service. While working at the family business, and with Irma's influence and discipline, Roger was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives for three terms. Never a politician, always a legislator, he cosponsored practical legislation, such as the public employee bargaining act, and laws protecting grey wolves and permitting charitable lotteries and private ownership of liquor stores, which he would proudly tell you are all still in force today. He also served 18 years on the Metropolitan Council, appointed three times by three different governors. He chaired the Board of the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, was a member of the Plymouth Planning Commission, and served as a director of the Legal Aid Foundation.

Roger counseled his children that life should be divided into different stages: first learn, then earn, then serve, and if there is time left, spend it thinking. He had a very active mind, was a prolific writer, and especially as his health started to decline, he took to committing his thoughts to paper on legal pads left all over his home. His reflections are a source of comfort to his family. In one of Roger's last notes, he borrowed from the folk song, "The Lord's been good to me. He's given me the things I need ... and a lot more: a good wife, a good life, and a large family of really good people of whom I am justly proud."

Roger was preceded in death by his daughter Lisa, his parents, and many relatives and friends. He is survived by his wife of 63 years Irma, children Rachael (Stephen Imholte), Peter (Ger), Kristopher (Georganne), Mark (Heather), Andrea (Bryan) Belton, and Maria (Collin Smyser); thirteen grandchildren: Laura (Jared) Lasonde, Sam, Giulia Imholte, Jacqueline, Hannah, Andrew, Ben, Lucy, Francesca, Henry, Claudia, Ronan Belton and Anna Smyser; and great-grandchild Jack Lasonde. He treasured his relationships with brother Gary (Carolyn) Scherer, sisters Donna Zitur and Jean (Paul) Wagener, sister-in-law Marina Gentilini, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

The family would like to thank all of those who made Roger's last few years comfortable and tolerable, particularly the team at Park Nicollet who coordinated his care. Mass of the Christian Burial will take place at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, September 2 at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church in Medina. Visitation will begin at 9:30 and lunch will follow. Roger will be buried in the Holy Name Cemetery next to his daughter. The family prefers memorials be directed to scholarships that have been established at DeLaSalle High School and St. John's University.

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