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ROGER SCHERER Lumber exec, legislator, Met Council member

He lived a life of hard work, public service and gratitude

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Roger Scherer, who helped build Scherer Bros. Lumber Co. from a small mill on the Mississippi River in northeast Minneapolis into a regional producer of wood and building products, died at home on Aug. 14 at age 87.

Scherer rose from laborer in the 1950s to CEO in 1978 at a company that has grown to three lumber yards

and two manufacturing sites, employs 300 people and boasts revenue of \$225 million. The company was founded by Scherer's father and uncle.

Scherer was proud that his generation of management, including a brother and two cousins, achieved good results, as well as "family harmony" through the transition to rare third-generation family management and greater success.

"He was no showboat," said CEO Peter Scherer, Roger's son. "He focused on getting the job done. He worked well with his brothers, two cousins and others.

"When I was elevated to this role, he told me that it was not about what you do, but what is accomplished with others. And recognize their work. Take responsibility, not credit."

Roger Scherer valued his workers. He was proud of his decision in the 1980s, backed by his Teamster union yard workers, truckers and equipment operators, to buy out their pension plan from the underwater Central States Pension Funds and provide a plan that "turned out to be a much better benefit for our employees," Peter Scherer said.

Roger Scherer recruited Jane McCrossan, an executive with family-owned C.S. McCrossan construction, to the board 25 years ago as part of an effort to add independent directors.

"Roger believed the family served the business and not the other way around," McCrossan said. "You had to earn your job. There were no family entitlements. He was steady, genuine and about best practices in corporate governance."

Scherer, a Republican, served in the Minnesota House of Representatives from 1966-72, and was appointed and served 18 years on the Metropolitan Council. He was especially interested in public-employee bargaining, protecting gray wolves, and charitable lotteries, sewers and transit.

"His government involvement was [about] helping things work better," Peter Scherer said. "He was a fiscally conservative, socially moderate, practical guy."

Roger and Irma Scherer raised seven children in a house they built on the Mississippi in Brooklyn Center. As he aged, he grew in gratitude for his family and good fortune.

An athlete who enjoyed golf, skiing and dancing, Roger Scherer also planted trees, gardened, fished, read widely and doted on his grandchildren.

A graduate of DeLaSalle High School and St. John's University, he and Irma gave generously and without fanfare to education and other nonprofit causes.

Services will be held Sept. 2 at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church in Medina, near the farms where Roger Scherer's father and uncle grew up and where the city-raised Scherer spent summers as a youth.

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