

NEWS OBITUARIES

Robert Ferderer was driven to do good works

● The retired 3M executive lived a life of volunteerism, putting countless hours into his St. Paul community.

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By **TIM HARLOW**
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Robert J. Ferderer was frequently late for dinner, but he always had a good excuse. After putting in a full day's work as an executive at 3M in Maplewood, Ferderer spent evenings and weekends serving on various state and community boards, coaching youth baseball and hockey teams, volunteering as a mediator, doing mission work and pitching in on other causes that made St. Paul's East Side a better place to live.

He ran unsuccessfully for mayor in St. Paul in the early 1970s, but he did win a seat in the Minnesota House, where as an Independent-Republican, he represented District 64A from 1973 to 1975. He also served as campaign treasurer when Arne Carlson ran for governor and was elected in 1990, said his wife of 52 years, Gerry, of St. Paul.

"He never lay on the sofa," she said. "He was the busiest guy you'd ever seen. ... I don't know how he did it all, but he just felt committed to do it."

Ferderer died Dec. 30 from complications of Parkinson's disease while at the Woodlyn Heights Health Care Center



Robert J. Ferderer

in Inver Grove Heights. He was 75.

Born in St. Paul, Ferderer graduated from Johnson High School in 1952. He'd played

football, baseball and basketball there, setting the stage for an athletic lifestyle in which he was an avid handball player. He was a fixture at the YMCA and St. Paul Athletic Club where he worked out and "recharged himself," family members said.

He developed a strong work ethic early in life and worked to put himself through the University of St. Thomas, where in 1956 he earned a bachelor's degree in political science. He returned to his alma mater in the 1970s to get a master's degree in counseling and psychology. He was a lifelong learner and in recent years was taking classes there and at St. Catherine's University in St. Paul on topics such as theology and spirituality, his wife said.

Ferderer started as a salesman for 3M in the late 1950s and worked his way up to director of communications and government affairs. He

retired from the company after 34 years.

He invested countless hours into his beloved St. Paul community. In the 1960s, he served as president of the Phalen Area Community Council, the Johnson Area Hockey Association and worked to save a play field at Arlington Avenue and Arkwright Street in St. Paul from being turned into high-density housing. In later years he served as a volunteer with the nonprofit Minneapolis Mediation. There he helped those who didn't speak English negotiate contracts and work through legal issues. He also did work for the American Arbitration Association, his family said.

"Bob was a man of principle, and all who knew him were the better for his acquaintance," former state Rep. Michas Ohnstad wrote in a tribute posed on Ferderer's guest book page

ALSO NOTED

David Murbach, 57, who for 26 years scouted 80-foot spruces from the air and ground to find the perfect Christmas tree for New York's Rockefeller Center, was found dead in his West Palm Beach, Fla., apartment. A long-time friend said the horticultur-

ist died from heart disease after suffering from high blood pressure.

at www.startribune.com/obituaries.
He coached baseball teams for the American Legion Post in St. Paul and youth teams in Eagan for more than 30 years. He was a substitute teacher in the 1980s at St. Paul's Central High School. He volunteered at St. Joan of Arc Church in Minneapolis where he was part of the BeFriender ministry and he went on two mission trips to Guatemala to work on building projects for the underprivileged. Ferderer ended his life of volunteerism by donating his brain to the University of Minnesota Medical School for research into Parkinson's disease, his family said.

In addition to his wife, Ferderer is survived by sons Robert Jr. of the Woodlands, Texas; Peter of St. Paul and Andrew of Burnsville; a daughter, Beth Campbell of Minneapolis, and nine grandchildren. Services have been held.

ist died from heart disease after suffering from high blood pressure.

In addition to his job as holiday tree finder, Murbach designed and maintained horticultural displays throughout the center.

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