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Saturday

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WCCO veteran Lawrence Haeg dies

Lawrence F. Haeg Sr., 73, who made a career of broadcasting farm news in Minneapolis and went on to become the top executive at WCCO radio and television, died Thursday night in Scottsdale, Ariz.

He had been hospitalized after a series of heart attacks and had undergone bypass surgery Thursday morning.

Haeg was long known for his broadcasts on farm news and issues, but his interests ranged widely during the 35 years of his professional life in Minneapolis.

He was a state legislator for 16 years. He introduced a bill to establish the Hennepin County Park Reserve District and later became one of the district's first commissioners. He was president of the city's chamber of commerce and one of the first business advocates of a public mass transit system. In 1969 he led a group of Minneapolis businessmen on a mission to Moscow.

A former chairman of the Minneapolis Farm Forum, he was active in promoting agricultural interests.

He was a board chairman of the Minnesota Safety Council and a major fund raiser for Catholic charities in the area.

Haeg graduated from the University of Minnesota College of Agriculture and went on to become an official of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where he set up the first network broadcast of the secretary of agriculture in the 1930s.

As an agriculture department official, he urged broadcasters around the country to carry more news of the nation's complex farm programs.



Larry Haeg Sr.

In 1941 he went to work for WCCO radio and organized its Farm Service Department.

The next year he became the first president of the National Association of Radio Farm Directors, which he had organized.

In 1952 he became general manager of the station. In 1967 he assumed additional duties as executive vice president of Midwest Radio-Television, Inc., which operates WCCO. In July 1969 he was elected president and chief executive officer of Midwest Radio-Television.

Phil Lewis, vice president and general manager of WCCO radio, said Haeg's main characteristic as a broadcaster was his persistence in getting out the news of agriculture.

"He didn't have one of those great, resonant voices of radio," Lewis said. "He was interested mainly in news and getting it out and building up organizations of farm broadcasters."

Haeg was born in Plymouth and as a farm youth was elected township supervisor.

He is survived by his wife, Helen; five children: Lawrence Jr., assistant program director at WCCO radio; Thomas, a Minneapolis lawyer; Susan George, Minneapolis; David, Wayzata, a sales representative for WCCO-FM; Michael, a commodities broker in Kansas City, and eight grandchildren.

The funeral mass will be at noon Monday at St. Austin's Catholic Church, 4059 Thomas Av. N., Minneapolis. Interment will be at St. Joseph's Cemetery in Plymouth.