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Louis Hill Jr., 92, former legislator and grandson of St. Paul railroad baron

Louis W. Hill Jr., 92, grandson of St. Paul railroad baron James J. Hill and a lifelong patron of the arts and charities, died Thursday at his home in North Oaks.

Hill represented part of the old 40th District in the Minnesota House of Representatives from 1937 to 1951. He always ran as an independent, with the campaign slogan "Keep Hill on the Hill." One of his most interesting jobs in the Legislature, he once said, was helping to centralize and modernize health care for tuberculosis patients. In 1949, Hill established the North Oaks Co. to

develop the private residential community. The land was once the experimental farm of his famous grandfather, who founded the Great Northern Railway. He was president of the North Oaks Co. from 1950 to 1987 and chairman of the board from 1957 until his death. He also was largely responsible for developing the St. Paul-Nagasaki (Japan) Sister-City Committee, the first of its kind in the country. The city-to-city relationship first was proposed in the early 1950s, when Hill met with President Dwight Eisenhower. They agreed that Japan and the United States needed some

person-to-person diplomacy. Hill traveled to Japan several times, and in 1987 the Japanese government awarded him the Order of the Rising Sun medal.

He was born in St. Paul, attended St. Paul Academy and graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. He majored in history at Yale University and studied at Oxford University in England for a year. After finishing college in 1926 he worked for the Great Northern Railway for four years in Minnesota, Washington, Oregon and Montana. In 1929 and 1930 he

worked for First National Bank of St. Paul and eventually became a director of the bank and First Trust Co. He was a director of First Trust for 55 years. Hill was a director and trustee of the Northwest Area Foundation, started by his father in 1934. He helped start the Grotto Foundation, and he helped his brother start the Jerome Foundation. He was treasurer of the Society for the Prevention of Blindness and treasurer of the Minnesota division of the American Cancer Society for 35 years, including two terms on its national board. He was treasurer of the Minnesota Historical Society

from 1934 to 1954 and held offices in the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Hallie Q. Brown Community House, the Selby District Commercial Club, the Community Chest program and the Scandinavian American Foundation.

His wife, Elsi Fors Hill, died in January 1990. He is survived by a son, Louis F. Hill, of White Bear Lake; daughters Johanna Hill, of Sante Fe, N.M., and Mari Hill Harpur, of Hawkesbury, Ontario; a sister, Maud Hill Schroll, of Woodside, Calif., and nine grandchildren. Services are pending.