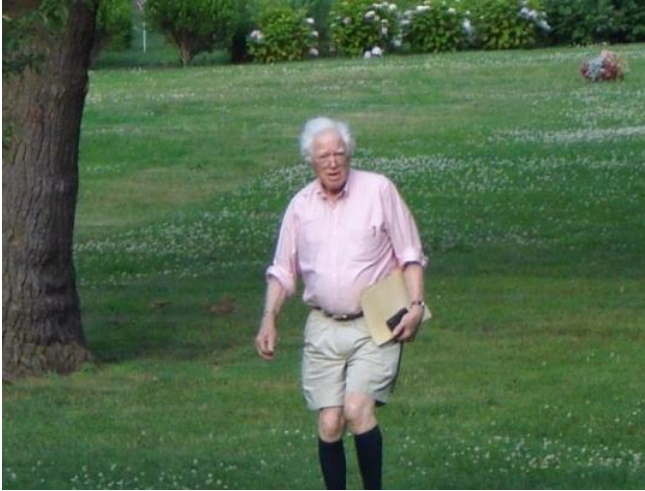


Casie de Rham, at 86; attorney worked tirelessly for community



Mr. de Rham worked to strengthen and expand Mount Auburn Hospital into a widely respected source of comprehensive care.

By [Stewart Bishop](#)

Globe Correspondent / February 26, 2011

Casie de Rham always believed that if life was kind, one should give back to the community. Perhaps his greatest contributions could be found at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston, or three blocks from his front door, at Mount Auburn Hospital.

For almost half a century as a president, trustee, and treasurer, Mr. de Rham, a resident of Cambridge, worked to strengthen and expand his city's oldest hospital into a widely respected source of comprehensive care.

“Over the course of his nearly 50 years of service to the hospital, Casie set the standard as a dedicated and committed trustee,” said Jeanette Clough, Mount Auburn’s president. “He had much to do with shaping Mount Auburn Hospital into the rich community resource that it is today. He also served as a wonderful mentor to the next generation of hospital leaders.”

During his decades of work for Mount Auburn, Mr. de Rham served on the hospital’s finance and development committees, where he gained a reputation for a wise and sharp mind and an incessant work ethic.

“He lived 48 hours in a 24-hour day,” said Jim Dwinell of Hobe Sound, Fla., a friend and former trustee. “He would go to great lengths to understand any issue or problem. He had a mind like a trap, with good sense and fair judgment.”

Mr. de Rham's joy in helping others was evident to those who knew him. Wearing a broad-brimmed hat, he would stride into the hospital on his way to do what he could to better the facility and community.

"I think he felt it was really important to give back," Dwinell said.

Casimir de Rham Jr., an attorney and philanthropist of Cambridge and Webster, N.H., died Feb. 6 at the hospital of stroke-related complications. He was 86.

Born in New York City, Mr. de Rham spent early childhood in Tuxedo Park, N.Y., and New York City. He attended the Malcolm Gordon School in Garrison, N.Y., and graduated in 1942 from St. Mark's School in Southborough.

Mr. de Rham enrolled at Harvard, but enlisted in the Marine Corps in December 1942 and subsequently enrolled in the ROTC, which led to his transfer to Yale in June 1943 under the V-12 Navy College Training program. He later returned to Harvard and graduated in 1946.

In 1943, Mr. de Rham met Elizabeth Evarts at a charity dance she had organized in New York City. Introduced by a mutual friend, Mr. de Rham asked her what he could do to help with the event. Elizabeth replied he should dance with a girl who wasn't getting any attention, which he did. Casie and Elizabeth were married two years later at St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City. [Continued...](#)

The de Rhams settled in Cambridge, where Mr. de Rham attended Harvard Law School, graduating in 1949. Mr. de Rham then joined the Boston law firm of Palmer, Dodge, Gardner & Bradford (later Palmer & Dodge).

Apart from his active duty in the Marine Corps Reserve, Mr. de Rham was at Palmer & Dodge for almost 60 years, specializing in estate planning and tax law. He was a partner from 1956 to 1994 and was of counsel until 2008, when he moved to Hemenway & Barnes in Boston, where he remained for the past three years.

Although Mr. de Rham enjoyed success in his profession, he was most passionate about his charitable endeavors.

"He always told us, 'If you've got a good brain and good health, you owe something back,' " said his son Rufus, of Kent, Conn.

Some of Mr. de Rham's most cherished work was with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston.

“The Boys and Girls Clubs has lost a dear friend, and the youth of Boston have lost one of their most dedicated advocates,” said Josh Kraft, its president.

Mr. de Rham was a member of the clubs’ board of directors from 1956 to 2003 and was its secretary from 1972 to 2003. He had also served on its senior advisory board since 1994.

“He was really proud of that,” Rufus said of his father’s work with the Boys and Girls Clubs. “He in particular wanted to make sure kids that didn’t have much would have a place to go to give them a chance at opportunity.”

Another organization to which Mr. de Rham donated considerable time was the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown. Mr. de Rham was a charter-signing member.

“He was there from its preinception,” said Michael Conforti, the institute’s director. “He was a very longterm trustee who represented the institutional memory in the best interest of the Clark.”

Mr. de Rham helped guide the institute from a grand private collection to one of the country’s most important centers for research and higher education in the visual arts.

“Casie was here at all the important moments,” Conforti said. “He always worked hard at encouraging that expansion. He was just a wonderful, warm human being. He had a pragmatic, practical sense about himself that was totally unpretentious, and he had the authority to have several pretensions, but didn’t. And he was loved because of it.”

Mr. de Rham also was a trustee and chairman of the board of the Commonwealth School in Boston from 1958 until 1987; was a trustee of St. Mark’s School from 1962 to 1974; served as director of the Women’s Educational and Industrial Union for 24 years; and was trustee of the Little Harbor Chapel in Portsmouth, N.H., for nearly 50 years. He also served on the New England regional committee of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

In Cambridge, Mr. de Rham was a director and trustee of the Cambridge Trust Company, and a trustee of the Cambridge Community Foundation, where he worked on the distribution committee. He was an active member of the St. Botolph Club, the Cambridge Country Club, and the Cambridge Tennis Club. He was a Mason and member of the Harvard Lodge, and a member of the American Legion.

One of Mr. de Rham's favorite places was the little house in Webster, N.H., designed by his wife, that he built with his sons in the early 1970s. After summers spent living in tents, hauling lumber, and toiling, the de Rhams finished construction. Mr. de Rham found the home relaxing and peaceful, and he and his wife escaped there most weekends.

Besides his son Rufus, Mr. de Rham leaves his daughter, Elizabeth, of Cambridge; two other sons, Henry of Portland, Ore., and Jeremiah Evarts of Bristol, R.I.; and seven grandchildren. His wife died in 2008.

A memorial service will be held at Christ Church in Cambridge, on April 16 at 3 p.m.

Stewart Bishop can be reached at sbishop@globe.com. ■

© Copyright 2011 Globe Newspaper Company.