

James Gadsden Holmes



COLUMBIA - James Gadsden Holmes, 87, a retired Columbia business leader who devoted much of his life to civic, community and church service, died Tuesday, March 3, 2009, at his home after a long illness.

A native of Columbia, he was the eldest son of James Gadsden and Minnie Lee Farmer Holmes. He attended the Columbia Public Schools, including what was then University High School. He graduated with honors, earning a bachelor's degree in English, from The Citadel, in Charleston in 1942. That same year he entered the U. S. Army as a Second Lieutenant, and, after completing basic training, went overseas.

Serving in the European Theater for most of World War II, he closed that chapter of his life at the rank of captain. During the war, he served in the 71st Artillery Brigade in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. He was awarded a bronze star, a purple heart and seven campaign stars. He came home to South Carolina after the war, returning with a lifelong love for Italy, its language, its art and its people. He made several trips back to Italy over the next 65 years.

In Columbia, he became president of Columbia Office Supply Company, the firm his father founded. Under the younger Holmes' leadership, Columbia Office Supply became an interior design, office furnishings, equipment and printing concern.

Mr. Holmes also founded and published *The Key to Columbia*, a weekly guidebook to the capital city. Later, he became a document expert, after earning a master's degree in grapho-analysis from the International Grapho-Analysis Society in Chicago, Ill.

He led many civic and community leadership posts, including being President of United Community Services, member of its board of directors and chairman of its Agency Relations Division; chairman of the Greater Columbia Community Relations Council; Lieutenant Governor of the S.C. National Office Products Association; President of the Columbia Sales Executives Club; President of the Columbia Better Business Bureau; President of the Columbia Kiwanis Club; President of University Associates; chairman of the Richland County Red Cross Blood Center; lecturer in salesmanship and personnel affairs for the University of South Carolina's Extension Division; instructor in Grapho-Analysis; Columbia Citizens' Education Center; Secretary, S.C. Chapter of the International Grapho-Analysis Society; chairman of the Conventions Committee and Downtown Council and vice president of the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce; coordinator of the Provisional Training Course, Columbia Junior League; chairman of the Industry Division, The United Fund and vice president and treasurer of the Columbia Town Theater.

A lifelong member of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, he was the church's treasurer for 28 years, served as its junior and senior warden, on its vestry and as chairman of its Stewardship and Finance Committees. For more than 20 years, he taught an adult Bible study class on Sunday mornings. He also was a diocesan lay preacher, a delegate to several diocesan conventions and a guest speaker on a cross section of topics to local, diocesan and national groups. He served as chairman of the diocese's Department of Evangelism and on the national board of trustees of the Episcopal Radio and TV Foundation.

His parents, his brother, Dr. Charles Rutledge Holmes and sister, Minnie Holmes Murray and his wife of 42 years, Anne Keene Searson Holmes, predeceased him.

Surviving are his wife, Arlene Marie Holmes of Columbia; daughters, Anne K. Holmes, Cecile S. Holmes (Jace Holloman) and Laura Masem, all of Columbia and his son, James G. Holmes (Beth Gordon Holmes) of Woodland Hills, Calif.; four granddaughters, Caroline Amelie LeBoeuf of Charleston, Anna Leah and Isabel Gordon Holmes, both of Woodland Hills, Calif., and Leeann Marie Leonhardt of Columbia, and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

The family also extends special thanks to Tri-County Hospice and Palmetto Home Health Services.

The family requests that memorials be made to either The Salvation Army, (where Mr. Holmes was a longtime volunteer) 6108 Two Notch Road, Columbia, SC 29223; Carolina Children's Home, 3201 Trenholm Road, Columbia, SC 29204 or to one of his favorite charities.

Services will be 3 p.m. Sunday, March 8, 2009, at Trinity Cathedral with burial following in Elmwood Cemetery. The visitation will be Saturday, March 7, 2009, from 4 to 6 p.m. at Dunbar Funeral Home, Devine Street Chapel.

Please sign online guest book at www.dunbarfunerals.com.