

Guthmann was 'a great, great citizen'

CPA who served on several St. Paul boards dies at 95

By Frederick Melo
fmelo@pioneerpress.com

Howard Guthmann still checked in at work into his early 90s, decades after most accountants retire. But friends and family say his greatest accomplishments came from serving the St. Paul community on civic board after civic board.

Guthmann, a former chairman of the St. Paul school board and the St. Paul Port Authority, also served as past president of the St. Paul Jaycees, the Ramsey County Historical Society and Capital City Trolley, which ran a downtown St. Paul trolley service from 1995 to 1998.

Guthmann died Dec. 6, a week after celebrating his 95th birthday. Mayor George Latimer

HOWARD GUTHMANN, 9A

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> Howard Guthmann

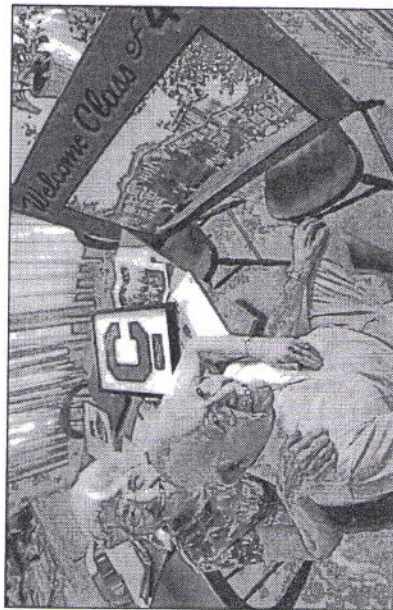
appointed Guthmann to the board of the Port Authority in 1988, where he served until 1996. Guthmann chaired the board before stepping down to spend more time on Capital City Partnership, a business group developing a promotion and marketing plan for St. Paul.

"I learned so much from him," said Latimer, who served on the school board in the 1970s when Guthmann chaired it. "There was no one who was more of a straight-shooter than Howard. I never heard him speak a word that was impulsive, prejudiced or out of anger, but always deliberative and fair. ... We've lost a great, great citizen."

By the 1960s and '70s, politicians from both major parties sought Guthmann's blessing as they mulled running for office, and he played a critical role in passing the city charter that created St. Paul's "strong mayor" system.

Guthmann also served as a board member with the Rotary Club of St. Paul, the St. Paul Charter Commission, the board of directors of Regions Hospital and the Elder Learning Institute/University of Minnesota.

Inducted into the Central High School Hall of Fame in 2006, he was a co-founder of the St. Paul Public Schools Foundation, the Friends of the St. Paul College Foundation and the Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth. He became a Boy Scouts scoutmaster at 18 and later council president, eventually playing a critical role in the development of the North Star Museum.



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Howard Guthmann and his wife, Betsy, are pictured in September 2016, when their high school, St. Paul Central, celebrated its 150th anniversary. Howard Guthmann died Dec. 6 at age 95.

um of Boy and Girl Scouting. He was active in Unity Church-Unitarian of St. Paul for over 65 years and twice served as its board chair. In 1992, Guthmann was part of the St. Paul United Way board that refused to pay

\$100,000 in annual dues to the United Way of America while the national organization was under federal investigation for spending excesses.

Guthmann retired last year at the age of 93 from Wilker son Guthmann CPAs, where

he worked for 70 years. According to his obituary, which was published in Sunday's Pioneer Press, his certified public accountant certificate is No. 452. Certificates today number well past 28,000.

He was the second-eldest member of Imnijiska, a fraternal organization composed of former members of the St. Paul Jaycees and the Jaycee Wives. Guthmann and his wife, Betsy, submitted the winning entry for the group's name, which means "white rock," during the group's inaugural party on the St. Croix River in 1958.

Composed of consummate volunteers, Imnijiska completed "absolutely no service projects," said Guthmann, interviewed in a Pioneer Press article about the society in June 2016. "Are you kidding? The general rule is that there's no rules. It's just for fun."

Guthmann, who moved from Mendota Heights to an assisted-living facility in June, suffered macular degeneration, so his daughter called him at 3 p.m. daily with stock updates. He was involved in three different stock clubs, said his family, and his mind was lucid until the end.

In fact, one of his final organizational acts was to recruit students to teach classes at the assisted-living facility, and then have seniors teach each other.

Guthmann is survived by his wife of 65 years, Betsy; children Susan Henry, John Guthmann, Debra Ternus and Patricia Haresch; 11 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

John Guthmann is the chief judge of the Ramsey County District Court.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Friday at Unity Church, 733 Portland Ave.