



William G. Reed

1908-1989

William G. (Bill) Reed was born in Shelton, Washington, on February 3, 1908, the third son of Mark E. and Irene S. Reed. He was educated at schools in Shelton and Seattle, Culver Military Academy (Indiana), the University of Washington (A.B. 1929) and the Harvard Business School and planned to become a commercial banker.

Following the tragic death of his brother Sol Reed, he abandoned his banking career to work for the company founded by his grandfather, Sol G. Simpson. He was the third generation of the family to manage the company.

Bill Reed went to work for Simpson Logging Company (later Simpson Timber Company, now Simpson Investment Company) in 1931 as assistant to his father, Mark E. Reed, until the elder Reed's death in 1933. He then managed the business with his brother Frank, who assumed leadership of Simpson Logging Company.

In 1935, Reed married Eleanor Henry, the

daughter of Mr. Paul M. Henry, a Seattle businessman. Over the next six years three children were born: Susan Henry, William Garrard, Jr., and Mary Irene Simpson.

At the age of 34, Bill Reed volunteered to join the service after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. (He had served in the U.S. Army Reserve from 1929- 1937 following ROTC training in college.) He served with the U.S. Navy in Seattle and on Adak in the Aleutian Islands in Alaska. He attained the rank of lieutenant commander and received the Bronze Star for distinguished service as flag lieutenant to Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, Commander North Pacific Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

In 1942, Frank Reed and his family perished in a house fire and Bill succeeded him as president. He served as president until 1945, and again from 1949-1950. He became chairman in 1946, a position he held until his retirement in 1971.

Reed's ascension to president followed on

the heels of the acquisition of the Henry McCleary Timber Company in McCleary, Washington -Simpson's first venture outside of Shelton. This was to set a pattern of progressive leadership and bold growth that would define Bill Reed's career at Simpson. During his tenure with the company, Simpson grew from a small, one town timber operation to become a major international forest products company. By 1990, Reed's company consisted of 780,000 acres of timberland in California, Oregon and Washington; five sawmills; a plywood mill and a door plant; a paper treating plant; 11 pulp and paper mills; and 10 PVC resin and extruded plastic pipe plants.

Bill Reed was an enthusiastic supporter of the early Tree Farm program. In 1943, Simpson joined other timberland owners in the area in the formation of a cooperative South Olympic Tree Farm Company in Shelton. There, company foresters oversaw the gathering and threshing of selected seed and replanting of more than 176,000 acres of cut-over and young growth lands with seedlings.

In 1947, Reed expanded the company again with the purchase of redwood timberlands in Northern California. He made several other acquisitions there in the 1950s. When opportunities in Northern California seemed limited, Reed took the company into Chile and Canada. At one-point Simpson operations stretched from Puerto Montt, Chile, to Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan.

In 1951, with the purchase of the Everett Pulp and Paper Company in Everett, Washington, Reed introduced Simpson into pulp and paper manufacturing as a balance to its solid wood business. Other ventures followed, including a merger with Lee Paper Co. of Vicksburg, Michigan, and a joint

venture with Crown Zellerbach in what is now Simpson's Humboldt Pulp Mill in Eureka, California.

In 1967, Bill Reed saw the plastics industry as a means to diversify into new markets. That year, the Timber Company purchased the Gil-Wei Manufacturing Company, a small Eugene, Oregon, extruder of thermoplastic pipe, primarily used for irrigation. In 1990, Pacific Western Extruded Plastics Company was Simpson's only non-wood business.

Reed retired as chairman of Simpson in 1971. He remained a member of the board of directors until 1984. In 1980, Reed was elected a Fellow of the Forest History Society.

In addition to his leadership duties at Simpson, Bill Reed served as a director of several other Seattle-area companies for many years, including Seattle-First National Bank, 44 years; SAFECO Insurance Company, 41 years; The Boeing Company, 29 years; PACCAR, Inc., 23 years; Northern Pacific/Burlington Northern, 21 years; and Rayonier, Inc., 11 years. He was also active in a number of community service organizations including United Way of King County, Seattle Art Museum, Pacific Science Center, Seattle Opera Association, Seattle Foundation and Virginia Mason Research Center.

Bill Reed died October 20, 1989, at the age of 81. By November 1990 his family had grown from his wife Eleanor, and the three children to include nine grandchildren and three great grandchildren.