

Obituary News

Blue Cross Founder Dies At 75

Homer Edgar Wickenden, 75, of 5 The Byway, Bronxville, died yesterday in Lawrence Hospital of Parkinson's disease.

Mr. Wickenden, who became general director of the United Hospital Fund in 1929, was instrumental in establishing what is now Blue Cross in New York City.

While a young social worker, he had read of an experiment begun in 1929 at Baylor University Hospital in Texas. The hospital had entered into an agreement to provide prepaid care at small cost to a group of schoolteachers. It was the beginning of Blue Cross, out of which grew Blue Shield to help pay doctors' bills.

Mr. Wickenden thought New York City needed some sort of plan like Baylor's to provide such care, not just for the

needy, but for persons of moderate means willing and able to pay a reasonable price for it.

With support of the late Dr. Sigismund Schulz Goldwater, Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia's energetic commissioner of hospitals, Mr. Wickenden appointed a Hospital Survey Committee to investigate the possibility of such a plan.

Within two months, the Associated Hospital Service of New York had been organized with Mr. Wickenden as secretary, and the United Hospital Fund had obtained donations of \$15,000 from the Commonwealth Fund and \$5,000 from the Josiah Macy Jr. foundation to finance its beginning.

Before he died, Mr. Wickenden was to see Associated Hospital Service of New York, thereafter called Blue Cross Plan (after the Baylor experiment), grow from five boroughs of New York City to include 12 surrounding counties, Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland, Sullivan, Greene, Ulster, Putnam, Dutchess, Columbia, Orange and Delaware.

Mr. Wickenden continued as general director of the UHF until 1940. From 1941 through 1943, he was simultaneously administrator of the New York Medical College and the Flower and Fifth Avenue Hospitals.

From 1944 to 1956, he was vice-president and secretary of the National Health and Welfare Retirement Association.

Mr. Wickenden was born in Toledo, Ohio Dec. 20, 1890, son of the late Thomas R. and Ida Consaul Wickenden. He obtained the degree of bachelor of philosophy in 1912 from Denison University in Granville, Ohio. He received a master's degree from the University of Louisville and attended Columbia.

He took greatest pride in being a member of the Board of

Education in Bronxville and had served as its president. He was first president of the Common Welfare Fund and a member of the Family Service in Bronxville.

A resident of Bronxville since 1936, Mr. Wickenden was a member of The Reformed Church.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Elmira Bears Wickenden; two daughters, Mrs. Jack (Ann) Walters of Simsbury, Conn., and Mrs. Alan (Ruth) Abel of Woodland Hills, Calif.; two brothers, Dr. Thomas Wickenden of Short Hills, N.J. and Dr. Arthur Wickenden of Oxford, Ohio; three sisters, Mrs. Justin Wroe (Ida) Nixon of Pomona, Calif., Mrs. Leslie (Ruth) Winans of Ashland, Ky. and Mrs. Fred (Dorothy) Klag of Toledo, and five grandchildren.

Mrs. John Box

Mrs. Lillie J. Box of 65 Ramsey Ave., a Yonkers resident for 70 years, died Sunday at the Professional Hospital. She was 87.

Mrs. Box was born in England Feb. 11, 1873, a daughter of the late Edwin and Hetty Hooper, and came to the United States as a child.

She was married in Honesdale, Pa., to John Box, an employe of Alexander Smith Inc., who died in 1942.

Mrs. Box was a member of the United Pentecostal Church of Yonkers.

Surviving are a daughter, Mrs. Hetty Smith of Yonkers; two sons, Ernest Box of Yonkers and Paul Box of St. Louis, Mo.; two sisters, Mrs. Mary Griffin of Yonkers and Mrs. Annie Myers of Oxnard, Calif.; three brothers, Edwin Hooper of California, Charles Hooper of Kingston, Pa., and Ernest Hooper of Durban South Africa; eight grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

Thomas J. Cave

Thomas J. Cave, 75, of 98 First St., died Sunday in Lawrence Hospital.

A resident of Yonkers since 1927, he was born in New York City, only child of the late Thomas and Sarah Cave.

He attended schools in the Bronx, was graduated from Fordham Prep and attended Southwestern University in Tennessee, where he was a member of Kappa Sigma.

He was a communicant of St. Barnabas Church and a member of its Holy Name Society.

Mr. Cave, who retired 10 years ago, was a builder here, operating his own business. He built many houses in the McLean Heights section.

Mr. Cave is survived by his wife, the former Margaret Mary O'Gorman, whom he married July 23, 1912, in Newburgh, N.Y.; a daughter, Miss Rita Cave, and a son, Robert, of the home address, and a daughter, Mrs. Carl (Virginia) Schmidt of 15 Randolph Road, White Plains.