

## **Jerry and Billie Needham**

It was 1946. WWII had ended and a young married couple from Idaho, Jerry and Billie Needham arrived in Rochester. Jerry had just completed his doctorate degree in microbiology at the University of Minnesota and took a position with Mayo Clinic. Due to his graduate studies in microbiology, Jerry was not called into military service.

This move to Rochester turned into a lifetime career at Mayo Clinic. Dr. Needham had the distinction of being appointed one of the first Deans of the Mayo Medical School.

With her degree in music and education, Billie was an elementary school teacher but after moving to Rochester she focused on raising their children and continued to be active in music and volunteering. She assisted with the first bell choir at Christ United Methodist Church beginning in 1962 and for 20 years assisted with the extended hand bell program.

In the early 1950's they made their first contribution to the Community Chest along with supporting community music groups and theater.

Jerry has been active in Boy Scouting serving as volunteer and board member (their son is an Eagle Scout). Jerry has been bestowed with the Silver Beaver and Silver Antelope adult recognitions. Billie was a Girl Scout leader for their daughter. She also served on the Rochester Family Y board in the 1960's.

Billie has the distinction of being the longest serving volunteer auxiliary member of the Rochester Methodist Hospital. She continues to maintain the historical and archive records of the hospital. Jerry was a founding board member of Rochester Methodist Hospital serving for 25 years; serving as chairman for 10 of those years.

In 1996 they moved to Charter House. At Charter House, they have both volunteered by serving on various resident committees and served on the resident council.

Next year Jerry and Billie will celebrate 70 years of marriage almost all of those years spent in the Rochester community and always giving back as volunteers and contributors.

They have witnessed the evolving changes of United Way. Jerry explained, "We like giving to one place (United Way) and helping many programs." "We are impressed with the many volunteers!"

It has been 12 presidents, 5 wars and 10 recessions since 1952 when Jerry and Billie made their first gift to United Way always being sure to give, advocate and volunteer.

**Jerry and Billie truly live the words - LIVE UNITED.**

