

Named Endowed Funds

The Allen Spafford Memorial Fund



“Of the people who helped build Cloquet, Allen L. Spafford was one who stood out from the rest.” (Source: Cloquet Pine Knot, January 1996, Spafford was Cloquet catalyst).

The Allen Spafford Memorial Fund was established by his one, Allen Spafford Jr. (class of '39) and his wife, Barbara, and by his daughter, Ann Spafford Herbert (class of '43).

The fund is a tribute to their father and a recognition of his service to the Cloquet community. Throughout his life in Cloquet, Spafford worked to make the city a better place to live for all residents. As a manager and vice president of the Wood Conversion Company (Conwed) he was instrumental in the growth and prosperity of the business for more than 40 years.

As a member of the Park Board for more than 20 years, he was a driving force behind many Cloquet parks, neighborhoods and recreational facilities.

Born in 1896 in Illinois, Mr. Spafford was educated at Culver Military Academy and the University of Wisconsin, graduating with honors in 1920 as a chemical engineer. He moved to Cloquet in 1921 with his wife, Virginia. He was hired to provide technical leadership at the Wood Conversion Company. In this capacity, he was the Wood Conversion Company's first manufacturing employee.

Commercial success of Balsam Wool was followed over the years by capacity increases, pulping refinements and product line expansion (Nu-Wood, Tufflex) through all of which his quiet hands-on management style and strong personal relationships with employees at all levels contributed to the company's growth. He retired in 1961 as vice president of manufacturing.

Mr. Spafford died in 1965 (from a stroke, enjoying a cribbage game with friends at the golf club), only four years into his retirement.

As you look around Cloquet, Mr. Spafford's legacy is much in evidence. Following World War II he was the driving force, for example, in the land acquisition, plotting, installation of the roads and utilities necessary to create the Sunnyside and Golf Course Additions and the sale of the lots to employees and others at cost; his concept was that with their manual skills and by working together nights and weekends, employees could end up with nicely built and nicely located homes without the need for heavy financing. Appropriately he was one of the original directors of the Community Memorial Hospital located on Sunnyside.

A member of the Park Board since 1946, Mr. Spafford focused his energy after his retirement toward acquiring donated materials and enlisting volunteer skilled help to create new Park facilities; notably the Pine Valley Ski Area, the Dunlap Island Park fields for the community junior baseball program and even new flower beds in Pinehurst Park. In a September 30, 1982 speech given at a flag pole dedication ceremony at the Dunlap Island Park, now named for Mr. Spafford, Joe King, Conwed Vice President of Manufacturing, remembered him as a “leader in Cloquet affairs – although much of his work in this area was behind the scenes and he avoided public recognition for his contributions.” (Source "The Conwed Mill News", September, 1982)