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Chronicle-tribune

Richard S. Simons

Story

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Posted: Thursday, February 14, 2008 12:00 am



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Richard S. Simons, 87, a Marion civic leader and Indiana author and historian, died Tuesday in Marion General Hospital.

Simons, who owned and operated Richard Clothing Co. in Marion for many years, was born on July 26, 1920 in Marion. He was the son of Phillip and Tillie (Bernstein) Simons. He graduated from Marion High School in 1938 and in 2006 was selected in the first group of Marion High School graduates for inclusion in the Marion High School Hall of Distinction.

Simons graduated with a bachelor's degree in Journalism from Indiana University, Bloomington, where he had served as managing editor of the Indiana Daily Student newspaper. He was first employed as editor of the Winchester, Indiana News from 1942 to 1944, prior to becoming editor of the Tipton, Indiana Daily Tribune. He worked in Tipton from 1944-1948 and headed a committee that planned and raised funds to build the Tipton hospital.

Simons had an interest in Indiana politics and served as the Secretary to Hobart Creighton when he ran for governor of Indiana against Henry F. Schricker.

He moved to the Indianapolis Star, where he was employed as a feature writer on the newspaper's Sunday's magazine. This allowed him opportunities to travel to Egypt, Korea and Germany where there were stories that had a Hoosier connection. He returned to Marion in 1954 to assume the responsibility for management of the family-owned Richard Clothing Company, until he retired in 1988. He continued to write regularly for the Indianapolis Star magazine until the early 1980's. As part of his work for the newspaper, he wrote a lengthy series of

Patsy Jane (Freeman) Hobbs

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articles on Indiana Rivers, which was assembled and published as a book, "The Rivers of Indiana," published by the Indiana University Press in 1985. He received the Governor's Award of Excellence for the publication of this book. He also co-authored, with Ball State University professor Francis Parker, the history of the "Railroads of Indiana," also published by the Indiana University Press in 1997.

Simons served in numerous civic organizations in Marion and Grant County, as well as state and national organizations. He served 20 years as a trustee of the Indiana Historical Society and was its president for two terms. He was also a regional director of the National Railway Historical Society. Locally, he served on the board of trustees of Marion General Hospital and was its president during a period of expansion in the 1970s.

He was a long-time member of the board of trustees of the Marion Public Library. He also was a member of service fraternities, Sigma Delta Chi and Alpha Phi Omega and social fraternity, Sigma Alpha Mu.

He was honored as a Distinguished Graduate of Indiana University and in 1994 was named a Sagamore of the Wabash, the highest civilian

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31						

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recognition by the governor of Indiana. He was currently serving as the official Grant County Historian in a program administered by the Indiana Historical Society.

He was a 50-year member of the Marion Kiwanis Club and was cited in 2007 as its Kiwanian of the Year. He was a charter member and past president of the Marion Philharmonic Orchestra, past president of the Mississinewa Arts Council, a former director of the Grant County Society for Crippled Children and Adults, former director to the Grant County Historical Society and was a charter member of the Mississinewa Battlefield Society and founder of the Hoosierland Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.

As a historian he had been a contributing writer for the Encyclopedia Britannica, the "Indiana in World War II" project and contributed to the writing in "Readings in Indiana History" and "This is Your State Government." He also served on the board of advisors at the Minnetristra Cultural Center in Muncie, and was a member of the Governor's Commission for Indiana Territorial Sesquicentennial and a member of the advisory committee on Indiana Statehood Sesquicentennial.

Simons is survived by Rosmarie, his wife of 50 years; their daughter, Charlotte, Olympia, Washington and two grandsons, Taylor Smith-Simons and McKenna Smith-Simons, both of Olympia, Washington. He was preceded in death by his parents and his younger brother, Robert, who died in the European Theater in World War II.

Visitation will be at 9 a.m. until services on Friday in Owen-Weilert-Duncan Funeral Home, Marion Chapel, 2722 South Washington Street, Marion.

The funeral will be at 11 a.m. Friday at the funeral home. Burial will be in Estates of Serenity cemetery.

In lieu of flowers please make memorial contributions to the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America, 386 Park Avenue South, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10016 or Marion General Hospital/Cardiac Care Unit, 330 North Wabash Avenue, Marion, Indiana 46952.

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