1988

Tampa Historical Society Loses its President, Samuel I. Latimer

Sunland Tribune

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Samuel I. Latimer, president of the Tampa Historical Society and former news anchor for WFLA television and radio, died May 28, 1988, at the age of 76 years.

“Sam” took office at the last annual meeting of THS, and devoted almost full time to his duties in his last months. The Society was moving forward under his outstanding leadership.

His death saddened the Tampa Bay region and especially his friends in the historical group.

Both The Tampa Tribune and St. Petersburg Times carried detailed obituaries on the prominent broadcaster and historian, excerpts of which follow:

Mr. Latimer was with WFLA television and radio for 25 years. He was the first news anchor for the station (now WXFL) when it went on the air in 1952. He later served as news director before retiring in 1977.

“He was one of the top newsmen in the area,” said Mike Foerster, public information manager for Hillsborough County and a former reporter for The Tampa Times. “I remember seeing his broadcast on Channel 8. He had a no-nonsense type of delivery . . . before the ‘pretty boy’ era.”

Born in Minneapolis, he came here 46 years ago from Bradenton.

He was past president of the Jesuit High School Dad’s Club, St. Joseph’s Hospital Development Council, Elks Little League, Sigma Delta Chi (Society of Professional Journalists), and the DWI Counter Attack
Program, a court-administered program for drunken-driving offenders. He was also a member of the board of Tampa Catholic High School.

He received the president’s award from the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce in 1971 for his work as a member of the Hillsborough County Industrial Development Authority. He also received the Liberty Bell Award from the Hillsborough County Bar Associations in 1973 for outstanding community service.

In 1984 he was appointed by Gov. Bob Graham to the Governor's Constituency on Children’s Services, which studied juvenile problems in the state.

Survivors include his wife, Lois P., Tampa, who also is active in the Tampa Historica Society; two sons, Randall S. and Craig M., both of Brandon; two daughters, Rosalind Simpson, Brandon, and Rebecca Pfeiffer, Tampa; two sisters, Dorothy Latimer, Tampa, and Marguerite Marunda, Apollo Beach; and seven grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Christ the King Catholic Church. Interment was in Garden of Memories.