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RICHARD D. HOLLAND, OMAHA LEADER, PASSES AWAY

Renowned Omaha community leader and philanthropist Richard D. Holland passed away August 9, 2016 at his home after a short illness. He was 95. Holland will be remembered for his joy of life, his wit, sense of humor, and curiosity about life along with his generosity, care and love for others and his community.

Holland is survived by daughters Barbara Kral, Hawaii; Mary Ann Holland, Omaha; Nancy (John) Christie, Ft. Worth, Texas; five grandchildren, Victoria Fontenot, Caleb Christie, Joseph Christie, Jennifer Kral, and Nicholas Kral and one great-grandchild, Mason Fontenot. He is preceded in death by wife, Mary; Son, Richard D. Holland, Jr; parents, Edward Lewis and Ellen Dean Holland; and siblings, Jean Saumur, William Holland and John Holland.

The Omaha native was born July 2, 1921. Holland graduated from Omaha Central high School and Omaha University (Now University of Nebraska at Omaha). He majored in chemistry, but left his studies to serve in World War II where he was a Captain in the Army Chemical Corps. After military service Dick returned to Omaha University to major in Art. He was a college fencing champion and a co-author of a weekly *Gateway* school newspaper column titled "Political Scenery," a role that inspired Dick's life-long appreciation and fascination with politics.

Dick married Mary McArthur in 1948. The couple moved to their family home near 80th and Pacific in 1957, where they lived all their lives. In 1957 Holland helped establish the Holland, Dreves, Reilly advertising agency. In the late 1970s, the agency changed its name to Swanson Rollheiser Holland Inc. and had become the second largest agency in Nebraska when Dick retired in the mid-1980s.

As early Berkshire Hathaway investors with Warren Buffett, Dick and Mary became ardent supporters of many Omaha-area arts, education and medical projects. Holland believed that, because of his means, philanthropy was his duty.

While Holland will be remembered for his profound impact on the causes he supported, one of his largest was the Holland Performing Arts Center, which opened in downtown Omaha in 2005. The facility was named for the couple because of their generous financial gift to the building—the largest civic donation in Omaha at that time. Holland was vice chairman of the Omaha Performing Arts board of directors at the time of his death.

“Dick will be remembered for his warmth, sense of humor, fierce intelligence and curiosity, and most of all, for his profound impact on our community. A generous philanthropist, his unwavering passion to make life better – from the arts to the education of children – was exemplary. He was a dear personal friend and I will miss him deeply” said Joan Squires, Omaha Performing Arts President.

Dick initiated The Holland Lecture Series in 2005 to address a variety of important ethical and global issues. In 2014 he formed, as Chairman, the Holland Children’s Movement and Holland Children’s Institute as a comprehensive program and plan to overcome the problems of educating disadvantaged children in Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

The large and diverse list of organizations benefitting from Holland’s generosity includes (in part): Omaha Symphony, Opera Omaha, Joslyn Art Museum, Partnership 4 Kids, Child Saving Institute, Completely KIDS, North Star Foundation, Jesuit Middle School, College of Saint Mary, Creighton Prep, the Nebraska Nature Conservancy, the Sorrell Center for Health Science Education at UNMC, the University of Nebraska Medical Center Cardiology Research Laboratory, the Mary and Dick Holland Regenerative Medicine Program at UNMC, the Holland Computing Center at The Peter Kiewit Institute, UNO Athletics and Omaha by Design.

“Richard Holland was a charter member of America’s greatest generation. He became a leading member of the Omaha community with a passion for the arts and supporting policies and programs to improve the lives of children and families in poverty. His support for universal prenatal care, increasing the minimum wage and quality early childhood care for working families have created new hope for thousands of children in Nebraska,” said John Cavanaugh, longtime friend and Building Bright Futures Executive Director.

A grateful community responded to the Hollands’ generosity with a number of awards. In 2004 they were inducted into the AKSARBEN Court of Honor, awarded annually by the AKSARBEN foundation to recognize outstanding community efforts. Dick is also the recipient of a NEBRASKAlander award, the Governor’s Arts Award, Sower Award, Grace Abbott and Horatio Alger awards. The Hollands are also recipients of the United Way Citizen of the year and the Nebraska Philanthropic awards.

Holland played an active role on several boards until his death, including Omaha Performing Arts Society, Vice Chairman; Opera Omaha, Vice chairman; Omaha Symphony. He was also the Chairman of the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures.

Holland expressed reluctance to recognition for his civic work, saying “What I am doing is giving back to the community, a partial payment for those who educated and supported me.”