



Ashley H. Clague



KIWANIS CLUB OF ANN ARBOR

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ASHLEY H. CLAGUE

1902 - 1977

Ashley H. Clague was one of eight children, born in a Michigan mining town of Ishpeming. He dropped out of school at the sixth grade when his father was injured in a mine accident, and the family required the working assistance of all of the children in order to subsist. Already, he was characterized as a responsible boy who would accomplish whatever he set out to do.

Ann Arbor became his adopted town at age 20. He lived there as a community builder for more than half a century. He started working in an auto parts plant, where he met the only girl he ever dated. They enjoyed a marriage of 46 years, lasting until the death of his wife.

Ashley left the factory to work in a grocery, in which he became a partner and, ultimately, sole owner. Throughout his business career, he epitomized the slogan of Kiwanis, "We build." Ashley joined the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor in 1930, and two years later, was made chairman of the Kiwanis Crippled Children's Project at University Hospital, a role he continued for 19 years, steadily building the program by attracting support of Kiwanis Clubs throughout Michigan.

In 1940, a group of citizens drafted Ashley to run for the Ann Arbor School Board, to which he was reelected for 15 years, in two of which he was Board president. During these years of rapid city development, a new high school and numerous other schools were constructed under his leadership and inspiration.

During these same years, Ashley served as a director of a bank and on numerous civic boards and committees, always helping to build a better community. In 1955, Ann Arbor High School bestowed on him an honorary high school diploma, which was followed, in 1974, by an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Eastern Michigan University.

In later years, Ashley turned his energies to making children's toys and games in his basement workshop. With the help of friends and financial backing from Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor, he built more than 150,000 toys, games and puzzles which he gave to hospitals and schools throughout the United States and foreign countries. In recognition of his service to children and the community, a playroom at Mott Children's Hospital was named in his honor, as was also Ann Arbor's newest junior high School.

Ashley's life was one of building--better schools, hospitals, parks, community. In 1977, he was asked by a friend to review his life, which he reluctantly did, but concluded, "Now let's look to the future."