

## **Pat Reese (Mrs. C. J. Reese)**

In contrast to Mary Dolph, there is plenty of material to be found about Pat Reese.

Pat and her husband, Jack, were a prominent Muskegon couple who never had children and devoted their time and resources to area civic and charitable projects.

Pat was a former head of the local Red Cross, and in 1966 she received an international honor medallion from the national Red Cross organization. She was named Citizen of the Year by the B'nai B'rith in 1961, and won the city's Outstanding Citizen Award for her Red Cross and United Appeal work.

She was active in the Women's Division of the Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce, the Service League and the Muskegon Woman's Club. She also served on the boards of the Central United Methodist Church and the Michigan Aeronautics and Space Association.

Perhaps, most notably, in May 1954, Pat became the first woman campaign chair of the Greater Muskegon Community Chest Drive, a fundraiser now run by the local United Way organization. It was believed that Pat might have been the first woman to lead a major fundraising campaign in a U.S. city. The 1954 campaign surpassed each of the drive's previous fundraising totals.

In September of that same year, Pat was chosen for the honor of christening an Air Force jet "City of Muskegon" as the highlight of a Dawn Patrol at the Muskegon Airport. Nearly 3,000 people were on hand to greet more than 250 pilots who flew into Muskegon for the event. The jet was stationed at Selfridge Field at the Air National Guard Base in Harrison Township, Michigan.

Pat's husband was a longtime executive at Continental Motors. Jack was promoted from VP to President in 1939. Jack often told the story that when he was a young man, it had been the custom of manufacturing executives to wear their hats in the office. Therefore, he wore a hat when he became a manufacturing executive. It's a custom he kept his whole life. From when he got up in the morning until he went to bed at night, he wore his hat.

Pat was similarly known for frequently dressing up with earrings and accessories. But she was also known to wear pants, play cards, and go hunting and fishing at the corporate lodge in Bitely, MI, where she acted as the consummate hostess to the guests of Continental Motors. Those guests included other business executives, generals, and their families.

For years, Pat and Jack lived in a small apartment on the top floor of the Occidental Hotel in Muskegon. They also owned a permanent home in Grosse Point, MI.

Jack stepped down as Continental Motors President in 1967. In 1968, he and Pat were honored at a special community appreciation dinner at the L. C. Walker Arena and were named "Mr. and Mrs. Muskegon."

At Jack's death in 1972, he and Pat left nearly \$600,000 to various agencies and local philanthropies, including Reese Playfield, a 13-acre city park named after them. Pat died in 1976 at the age of 65. In 2001, the United Way Day of Care focused on sprucing up the park named after her and her husband.

termittent light from a flash- City, Mo., May 10-13. coin lent the war Biblical

PAT REESE IS A NATIVE OF HASLETT, MICH. GRADUATING FROM HASLETT HIGH SCHOOL. LATER FROM INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COLLEGE OF FT. WAYNE, INDIANA.

PRESENTLY THE WIFE OF A MUSKEGON INDUSTRIALIST, WAS MARRIED DEC. 19, 1931. THEY HAVE NO CHILDREN.

SHE DEDICATED MANY YEARS OF HER LIFE TO THE LOCAL RED CROSS CHAPTER. SHE WAS CHAPTER CHAIRMAN HERE IN 1956-57 AND FROM 1957-60. SERVED ON THE RED CROSS'S 17-STATE AREA ADVISORY COUNCIL.

IN 1955 HER ACTIVITIES WON FOR HER THE CITY'S "OUTSTANDING CITIZEN" AWARD.

BOARD MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH, ALSO OF THE MICHIGAN AERONAUTIC AND SPACE ASSN.

MEMBER OF THE WOMAN'S DIVISION OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE SERVICE LEAGUE AND THE MUSKEGON WOMAN'S CLUB.

HAS SERVED SIX YEARS ON THE RED CROSS BOARD AND THIS YEAR WAS ELECTED TO ANOTHER 3-YEAR TERM.

HOBBIES FOR THIS BUSINESS WOMAN ARE FISHING AND HUNTING.



MRS. C.J. "PAT" REESE  
THE HEART OF RED CROSS

ADRIAN BAKY

From the Muskegon Chronicle early 1960s.