
Roger T. Larson Community Leader

Born: October 28, 1925 on a farm near the Swedish community of Wausa, Nebraska

Parents: Ted and Alveda Larson, both offspring of Swedish immigrants

Siblings: Older brothers Russell and Robert, younger sister Marilyn

Education: Attended one-room schoolhouse, B.A. in Business Administration, University of Nebraska

Real jobs: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Student Union, KFOR Radio, Board of Directors of Wells Fargo

Volunteer Highlights: In the past 50 years, Roger has served on the boards of more than 40 organizations in Lincoln; often as president. These include Bryan LGH, Lincoln Public Schools Foundation, Downtown Lincoln Association, Junior Achievement, Lincoln Children's Museum, Lincoln Food Bank, YMCA and United Way.

Rest of the Story: After a stint in the Air Force near the conclusion of WWII, Roger attended UNL on the GI bill; a fateful decision because at UNL he met his future wife, Shirley Lallin. After a whirlwind romance, they married in 1950.

Roger and Shirley wasted no time establishing a family and settling into the Lincoln community. His volunteer effort with the Lincoln Jaycees caught the eye of Lincoln radio executive Dick Chapin, who offered him a job in sales at KFOR in 1953.



With Shirley's support and management of the home, Roger's career flourished. During the next 40 years, he built an incredible sales staff: Gay Cole, Vince Collins, Roger Dodson, Red Abels, and an on-air staff, including Brad Hartman, Scott Young, Cathy Blythe, Dale Johnson, Ward Jacobson and Chuck Stevens that made KFOR the dominant radio station in the area.

Defining Moment: In 1964, Roger suffered a massive heart attack. After miraculously beating the odds and surviving the night, doctors told Shirley that he might live another five years. Incredibly, he went on to thrive and devote himself to his family and Lincoln community.

Second career: Roger retired from KFOR in 1991, capping a 39-year career. In 1993, Jim Stuart, Jr., asked him to join the staff at the National Bank of Commerce, now Wells Fargo.

Family: Roger and Shirley have three grown children and five grandchildren. Ted and Susie Larson are parents of 3-year-old Uta and expecting their second child in June. Tom's children are 16-year-old Kalie and 11-year-old Will. Susan and Rich Rodenburg are parents of Max, 10, and Jack 7.

As Roger Sees It...

Roger Larson says he feels very fortunate to have come to Lincoln, first to the University, then to live and work. His attitude toward community involvement is rooted in his Swedish family heritage. He simply believes it is his duty and responsibility to work to improve his community and society in general, and to make things better for future generations.

"Three things have been important in my life—my family, my work, and my civic duty. My fondest hope is that I will be remembered as someone who contributed to the general advancement of the quality of life in Lincoln, and good example for my family and others to follow."

—Roger T. Larson, May 2001
