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UNH Alumni Association Honors L. Franklin Heald, UNH Carilloneur and Dedicated Volunteer

By Maggie Paine
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November 12, 2002

DURHAM, N.H.-- It's a UNH tradition: Every morning, the bells of the University of New Hampshire carillon ring out over the campus. From "Yankee Doodle" to "Regards to Broadway" to holiday music in December, the songs of the carillon have become a beloved part of UNH life. And for 50 years, L. Franklin Heald has been the man who makes the bells ring.

Heald recently stepped down from his position as official UNH carilloneur. The UNH Alumni Association held a celebration to honor Heald, a 1939 graduate, for his service, not only as carilloneur, but also as a devoted community member and volunteer.

"You have virtually committed your lifetime to the service of this university, your community, and your country," Gregg Sanborn, executive assistant to the president, told Heald at the celebration. "For all your service, we are extremely thankful."

Sanborn called the carillon music "a key component of the life of the university." "Thousands upon thousands of faculty, staff, students and community members have not only regulated their days by the carillon, but have enjoyed its music tremendously," Sanborn said.

The carillon, located in the Elliott Alumni Center, is the largest of its kind in New England. The computerized 246-bell system is wired across campus to Thompson Hall, where eight speakers broadcast the songs. The carillon can be played manually, using a keyboard much like that of an organ, and can be programmed electronically to play a wide variety of songs.
Ernie Gale, executive director of the Alumni Association, called the carillon "a treasure." But he was careful to remember Heald's many other contributions and accomplishments. Heald's generous nature and avid volunteerism have made him an invaluable member of the UNH community. While he was a student, Heald was very active in campus life: he was a member of the UNH band, competed on the track and cross country teams, was an Alpha Tau Omega brother and worked for the student newspaper and the yearbook.

Following graduation, Heald served in the Navy aboard the warship San Diego. Upon his return home, he continued to demonstrate his devotion to his alma mater. He has served as the treasurer for the class of 1939 since 1949. He was also a dedicated UNH employee, working for the UNH News Bureau. During his tenure as editor in chief of the alumni magazine, The New Hampshire Alumnus, the magazine was awarded the prize of most outstanding magazine in the country.

Heald is well known for his involvement with the Durham Crop Walk. He has raised nearly $13,000 for the event by baking and selling his famous oatmeal bread. Heald has also served his community in the following positions: assistant treasurer for the town of Durham, police photographer, chair of the Durham Historic District Commission in 1960, New Hampshire state representative for Durham in 1961, Durham-UNH fire commissioner, co-founder of the Active Retirement Association, and president of the Durham Ambulance Corps.

The Alumni Association has honored Heald in the past, awarding him its Profile of Service award in 1981 and its Alumni Meritorious Service award in 1987.

Back to UNH News Bureau