

## **WILLIAM "DIETZ" EULBERG - (PHS 1920)**

*Biography written by Dave Eulberg, June 2004*

"Dietz" Eulberg was born in 1900, raised in Portage and spent his whole life with the exception of a semester at Whitewater.

He was active in sports; football, basketball and baseball not only in high school but also after when he managed and played on basketball and baseball teams that would play in neighboring towns.

He graduated from high school in 1920 when he was 20 years old (held back a couple of times). He could have dropped out but really wanted his high school diploma.

In 1918, he started to work for his Uncle Adam Rebholz in Rebholz's men's store located in the old Mattke Shoe Store. He fell in love with retailing and remained in it for 61 years, going to the store up until the day he died.

In 1929, he and "Dince" O'Leary purchased the Leisch and Kreisch store and "Dietz" became sole owner in 1939. He also became President of Eulberg Brewery when beer came back in 1933. He ran both businesses until the brewery was sold in 1944. He was named President of First National Bank and saw great growth under his term. I still have business people tell me how he would OK loans even though the people did not have sufficient collateral. He did not believe in balance sheets but in people and trusted people and hoped they would succeed.

"Dietz" was probably best known for his philanthropy. While not extremely wealthy he always wanted to pay back to the community for the support it had given him. If I could name all that he gave to it would fill up several pages and actually I could not do that because so much was done by he and my mother that was never publicized which is what they wanted. For example, my mother's father was an engineer on the railroad, the railroad women's club (now torn down) was in terrible shape and no money to fix it. Mother (she did a lot too!) and Dad had it painted.

I will mention scholarships. He was one of the first people to see the need for scholarships and set up three: The Columbia County ARC goes to a graduate of a Columbia County high school graduate going into the field of education. The Marion Eulberg Scholarship goes to a Portage HS grad going into a medical related field and of course the "Dietz" Eulberg scholarship is awarded to a football player.

He of course is known for his famous Homecoming cheer. Every year he put on a pizza party for the team.

He was Exalted Ruler for the Elks for 11 years, state President of the Elks, President of Portage Rotary. His awards include Men's Retailer of the Year in 1964 by the Wisconsin Men's Apparel Club and one he cherished greatly was the award by the Portage Education Association because he believed so much in education.

I believe the thing that defines my father's character and why he should be in the Hall of Fame is his commitment to this city. He gave, gave of time, money and of love for the community. I still have people make comments to me about Dad even though he has been dead 25 years. He gave people starts in their businesses, their homes and our community has benefitted from his leadership.

In an interview shortly before he died he said, "Portage has been good to me. I hope I have been good to Portage." His epitaph could be "He was good for Portage".