

# UNIVERSITY BENEFACTOR GEORGE SNELL DIES AT 79

BY KAREN FELDSCHER

George Snell, the Northeastern graduate whose multimillion dollar gifts helped finance the construction of the university's library and engineering buildings, died Dec. 27 at age 79.

Snell, a 1941 mechanical engineering graduate and a longtime university trustee, was Northeastern's largest benefactor, helping to finance the two major campus buildings as well

as professorships, scholarships and funds for library improvements.

"The entire Northeastern family is grateful to George Snell and his family for their loyalty and openheartedness toward this institution," said President Freeland, who attended Snell's Nantucket funeral. "His memory will live among us forever."

Snell and his wife, Lorraine, endowed two

professorships, one in engineering and one in health professions. In addition, they established endowed scholarship funds for undergraduate students and provided substantial funding to refurbish a reading room in the former Dodge Library. More recently, the Snells provided funding for the university's special collections in the library's archives.

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*George Snell*

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## George Snell remembered as 'simply a man who never forgot his roots'

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Northeastern officials said the construction of Snell Library, with Snell's help, marked a major turning point for the university.

"One of the most symbolic changes to this campus was when George made the gift that made the new library possible," said Richard Meyer, senior vice president for development. "Everybody just felt so different about the university once that new library was built."

Former president John Curry agreed. "The provision of that library is what turned us into a great university," he said.

Curry and others who knew Snell praised him not only for his generosity, but for his loyalty and modesty.

"He loved the university," Curry said. "He was simply a

man who never forgot his roots."

Former development chief Eugene Reppucci Jr., who had known Snell since the early 1960s, said Snell was "extraordinarily unassuming."

"He had a real interest in the university," Reppucci said, "but he liked to work behind the scenes. As a matter of fact, he was reluctant to have his name go on the engineering building. I had to tell him how important it was for him, as an alumnus, to set an example for others."

Born in Schenectady, N.Y., Snell spent most of his early years on Nantucket. After graduating from Northeastern, he moved to Independence, Mo., to work at a small-arms ammunition plant run by E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Co. Two years later the company sent him to the Chicago

to work with scientists at the University of Chicago on the Manhattan Project.

After serving in the Navy from 1944 to 1946, Snell moved to the Washington, D.C., area to begin work in the construction business. Over the years, the Snell Construction Corp. built many apartment buildings, hundreds of individual homes and several office buildings.

Elected to the Northeastern Corporation in 1967, Snell became a trustee in 1970 and was elected lifetime trustee emeritus in 1991.

Snell is survived by his wife, Lorraine, five daughters and 16 grandchildren. Memorial donations may be sent to the Nantucket Conservation Foundation or to the First Congregational Church on Nantucket.