

Kenneth P. McCutchan

Mr. Kenneth McCutchan, pioneer in the radio broadcasting field, community historian, and art collector, died Friday, August 16, 2002. He was born April 21, 1913, and lived the first 78 years of his life on property purchased from the U.S. government by his great-grandfather, Samuel McCutchan, in November 1835. In 1991, he moved to Solarbron Retirement community.



The family history sparked his lifelong interest in community history and led to his authorship of six books, *From Then 'Til Now: The Story of McCutchanville* (1969); *A Pictorial Study of the Old Vanderburgh County Court House* (1972); *Saundersville: The English Settlement* (1978); *At the Bend of the River: The Story of Evansville* (1982); *Dearest Lizzie* (1988); and *Old Tales Retold* (1996). While researching the first book, he came across the legend of Isaac Knight, which he developed into a fascinating children's book published by Greenwich Book Publishers of New York.

Mr. McCutchan was a member of Central High School's Class of 1931 and in 1970 was named to its Distinguished Alumnus Hall of Fame. He graduated from Evansville College in 1935, and in 1979 received the University's Alumni Certificate of Excellence.

He also was elected to UE's Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1987, and subsequently served as vice president of the Academy in 1992.

Mr. McCutchan served with the Army Corps of Engineers in North Africa and Europe during World War II. After the war, while still in Europe, he enrolled in the Sorbonne in Paris and earned a certificate in French language and culture. When he returned to the United States, he became a veteran's counselor and produced a radio show targeted to assisting service personnel in finding postwar employment. Through that program, he was invited to help launch a new radio station, WIKY. Mr. McCutchan was the first on-air voice on August 4, 1947, and worked there for 26 years in all areas of the station -disc jockey, special programs and news.

For five years, during its heyday, Mr. McCutchan was the house emcee at Mesker Amphitheater, and served as the on-stage host for many of the great musical entertainers of the '50s and '60s. He was a member of the Evansville Community Players and had lead roles in many of its productions. He had been an in-demand public speaker and, for a time, wrote a weekly column on area history for *The Evansville Courier*. Mr. McCutchan served on the boards of numerous local and state organizations, including 15 years with the Conrad Baker Foundation, actively working to preserve and restore the Old Courthouse in Evansville. In 1988, he received the Conrad Baker Foundation Governor Orr Award for Historic Preservation. He also received the Preservation Alliance Achievement Award in 1989. Mr. McCutchan was a life member of the Indiana Historical Society and had served on the Editor's Advisory Committee for *The Indiana Magazine of History* at Indiana University.

In addition, Mr. McCutchan had been chairman of the Official Board of the McCutchanville Methodist Church, president of the McCutchanville Cemetery Association, president of the Ohio-Wabash Valley Historical Society, board member of the Wesselman Nature Center, board member and chairman of the history committee of the Evansville Museum of Arts and Science, member of the Vanderburgh and Southwestern Indiana Historical societies. He also had taught classes in local history at the University of Evansville.

A man of many interests, he painted for pleasure and collected the works of Indiana artists, amassing what was probably the largest private collection of Hoosier art in Southern Indiana. He gave a large portion of his collection to the University of Southern Indiana for display and use as a teaching collection. He also collected the works of Indiana writers and gave much of that collection to Historic New Harmony. USI's Rice Library Archives is the repository of many valuable historic manuscripts from Mr. McCutchan's collection. The University of Southern Indiana recognized his lifelong service to his community and his contributions to the University by conferring an honorary Doctor of Letters on him in 1996.

Kenneth is survived by his cousins, Carol B. McCutchan of McCutchanville, Ind., Ellen McCutchan of Evansville, Ind., William M. McCutchan of Evansville, Ind., Susan Huck of Evansville, Ind., Louise Tiedeman of Plantation, Fla., and James Peva of Indianapolis, Ind.