

Robert A. Stranahan Sr. Dead; Founded Champion Spark Plug

Retired Board Chairman of Concern Built Hobby Into World-Wide Business

TOLEDO, Ohio, Feb. 9 (AP) —Robert A. Stranahan Sr., who built a hobby into an industrial empire, died today at his estate here. He was 75 years old.

Mr. Stranahan, the founder and board chairman of the Champion Spark Plug Company, had been ill for several months.

He started making spark plugs as a hobby in Boston in 1908. He had just been graduated from Harvard, where he completed a normal four-year course in about half that time.

His parents, who managed the Tremont Hotel in Boston, helped Mr. Stranahan and his brother Frank, get started in the spark plug business. Frank operated a Boston bicycle shop.

After two years, and \$22,000 in debt, the Stranahan brothers decided to move to the Midwest, where the automobile industry was getting its start.

From a small shop over a Toledo laundry, the Champion Company grew into an industry with plants here and in Cambridge, Ohio; in Detroit; Hallertown, Pa.; Burlington, Iowa, and Mexico, Brazil and Australia.

In addition to his association with the Champion concern, Mr. Stranahan was board chairman of the Woolson Spice Company for nearly forty years, and from 1924 to 1948 was chairman of Stranahan Harris & Co., investment bankers.

He was a civic leader here and was given an honorary degree by the University of Toledo.

Besides his interest in the spark plug company, he was a generous contributor to the Republican party. As a delegate to the Republican convention in 1952 he was a supporter of the unsuccessful bid of Senator



United Press International
Robert A. Stranahan Sr. in photo made some years ago.

Robert A. Taft for the Presidential nomination.

He was a thirty-third degree Mason and maintained an active interest in sports, particularly golf. He was instrumental in bringing the National Open to the Inverness Country Club here.

One of his sons, Frank, is a prominent professional golfer.

Survivors include four children from his first marriage, to Agnes McColl — a son Robert Jr., president of Champion, and three daughters, Mrs. W. W. Knight of Toledo, Mrs. William E. Jones of Long Beach, Calif., and Mrs. Youka Troubetzkoy of Paris and New York.

Also surviving is his widow, the former Mrs. Page Ellyson Lewis; two children of this marriage, Frank, the golfer, and a daughter, Mrs. Harold Holmyard of Darien, Conn.; his brother, Frank; a sister, Anna, fifteen grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.