

## **Interview – Pershing E. MacAllister**

July 10, 2009

**Interviewer:** Dr. Philip V. Scarpino  
Director of Oral History,  
Randall L. Tobias Center for Leadership Excellence

**Narrator:** Pershing E. MacAllister

**Date of Interview:** July 10, 2009

Today is July 10, 2009, and I am interviewing Mr. Pershing E. MacAllister at his office located at the headquarters of MacAllister Machinery Company just off 30<sup>th</sup> Street on the near East side of Indianapolis. This interview, which is the first with Mr. MacAllister, is part of a larger project undertaken by the Randall L. Tobias Center for Leadership Excellence, located at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). The long-term goal of this project is to create an archive of oral histories with distinguished leaders on the subject of leadership. The project supervisors are Carol Madison, Executive Director of the Tobias Center; and Philip V. Scarpino, Director of Oral History for the Tobias Center. Dr. Scarpino is professor of history and director of the graduate program in public history at IUPUI.

Pershing E. MacAllister was born August 30, 1918, in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and he lived as a teenager in Milwaukee. He graduated from Carroll College, Waukesha, Wisconsin, in 1940. During WWII, he served five years in the U.S. Army Air Corps, separating from the service as a Captain. His specialty was armament, and his service included 27 months overseas with the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group in England, North Africa, and Italy.

Mr. MacAllister has earned a reputation for leadership in business and philanthropy and civic involvement. His father, Edwin W. MacAllister, founded MacAllister Machinery Company in Indianapolis, June 2, 1945. P.E. MacAllister took over the company in 1950 when his father became ill. He was officially named President in 1954. His son, Chris, assumed the Presidency of MacAllister Machinery in 1991. Mr. P. E. MacAllister held the title of Chairman of the Board of MacAllister Machinery Company in April 2009. He spent a number of years as President of the Indianapolis Capital Improvement Board, and he was a long-time President of the Indianapolis Opera. He chaired the Fine Arts Society of Indianapolis, and he served Carroll College in several capacities, including the Board of Trustees. He was also a Trustee of the Christian Theological Seminary. P.E. MacAllister has endowed a Chair in Religious and Biblical Studies and the MacAllister Fellowship at Carroll College. He co-endowed the MacAllister-Petticrew Chair of Old Testament Studies at Christian Theological Seminary. He established and largely supported the MacAllister Awards, which was the largest non-restricted vocal competition for opera singers in the United States. Mr. MacAllister has also given generously to numerous organizations, but especially the Indianapolis Symphony

Orchestra and the United Way. He served as campaign treasurer for Richard Lugar's two mayoral elections in 1967 and 1971 and as campaign chair for William Hudnut's mayoral elections (1976-1991) and his campaign for Congress.

P. E. MacAllister has earned a number of awards as recognition of his accomplishments, including Honorary Doctor of Laws from Indiana State University, Honorary Doctor of Public Service from Christian Theological Seminary, and an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Carroll College. In April 2009, the Indiana Historical Society honored him as an Indiana Living Legend.