

Robert Lyman Cottrell

Miami '54

Oxford Cup Roll No. 046

Fortunate indeed was Beta Theta Pi that Bob Cottrell's career plans and the Fraternity's management needs coincided in 1991 when the Board of Trustees invited him to serve as Administrative Secretary. As a result, his firm hand led to the establishment of a professional management approach to fraternity administration, and his vision and perseverance brought about the funding and construction of the new Foundation and Administrative Office.

Raised and educated in Southwest Ohio's Oxford-Hamilton community, Bob is the son of a Miami University professor. A Phi Beta Kappa, he graduated *summa cum laude* in economics from Miami where he was an Air Force ROTC *Distinguished Military Graduate*. On active duty in the mid-'50s, he flew single-engine jets.

As a youth, he bagged groceries at the local Kroger store, a relationship which ultimately led to his advancement to executive positions with the Cincinnati-based firm.

In his distinguished career with Kroger, he was promoted to vice president, Store Operation Service, in 1964; vice president, Corporate Procurement and Trade Relations in 1977; vice president, Distribution Administration 1979, and vice president, Wholesaling, and chairman of the Board of Foodland Distributors in 1984.

After leaving Kroger in 1988, he established Cottrell & Associates, a management consulting firm to the food industry, and served on an interim basis as senior vice president of operations for Circle K Corporation.

As a Beta, he was chapter president. He stayed close to Alpha chapter as president of the house corporation for two terms and as district chief, which led to his election as vice president and a member of the Board of Trustees, 1971-74. Following his term as Administrative Secretary, 1991-98, Bob was director of the Beta Theta Pi Foundation, 1998-99, and currently serves on the Foundation Board of Directors.

Not content to be idle during retirement, Bob has taken a leading role in Alpha's \$400,000 chapter house renovation.

As a family man, he and his wife Nancy, a Kappa Kappa Gamma and Miami graduate, are parents of three sons, all Miami Betas: Philip F. '78, Robert S. '79 and Richard F. '80.

As a concerned citizen, he was a trustee of the Ft. Hamilton-Hughes Hospital, 1977-85, providing financial leadership for a \$42 million expansion; trustee and president of the Board, Hamilton Community Home Assn., 1979-86; elder, trustee and chairman of the finance committee, Hamilton Presbyterian Church, and chairman, of the Butler County Children's Services Board, 1993-99.

For Miami University, he was chairman, Advisory Council of the School of Applied Science; vice chairman and trustee, Miami University Foundation, and a member of the Advisory Council of the School of Business and the Resource Development Board. In 1989, he received the John E. Dolibois Alumni Award for service to the University.

Upon learning of Bob's selection to receive the Oxford Cup, one member of the Foundation Board sent a congratulatory note which readily embodies the former Administrative Secretary's management philosophy: "You have never attempted to take all the credit for achievements which could understandably have been only yours to receive. Instead, you have been more than willing to share and give credit to all those people who did the work and succeeded because of your excellent instructions. That is one of the signs of a good leader. You have truly *earned* this award."

L.E. (Erv) Johnson, Idaho '53, Editor, The Beta Theta Pi