

Don T. Patrick Steele remembered

'It was a blessing or divine guidance that got me into this business'



It was his father's death at age 14 – and the family's lack of life insurance – that gave **Don T. Patrick Steele** the notion to become a life insurance agent.

It was his Irish roots extending back to County Cork, Ireland, that brought out a deep shade of emerald green in his wardrobe, car and even his outlook on life.

And, it was his admiration for the Northwestern and his personal belief in the insurance product that led five of his children to follow him into the insurance business.

On December 29, 52 years after he joined the Northwestern, the company's favorite Irishman passed away at his home in Dubuque, Iowa.

He was 83 years old.

'Answer to my career problems'

"My father's death taught me two lessons," said Steele, an associate of the Jim Schmitz agency, in the March 1970 issue of *Field Notes*.

"First, how uncertain life is, and second, how much and how seriously our product is needed.

"The more I was exposed to what I could do to help peo-

Above, the Steele family in 1995, clockwise from bottom left: Pat, Brigid, Mary Kay, Ellen Steele Allare, Mike, Timothy Emmett with their parents Don (green jacket) and Helen. Inset: Pat Steele, age four, receives his first insurance policy in 1955 from former President Edmund Fitzgerald (right), as his father and former Vice President Grant Hill look on.

ple be semi-independent, and to be compensated in proportion to my efforts, the more I felt this was the answer to my career problems."

Steele was a tireless promoter of the Northwestern and the need for life insurance – a trademark that did

as much to distinguish him in Dubuque as his shamrock colored clothes.

"It's amazing to me how many calls I get that are referred leads from people I don't even know," Steele said of his image.

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Steele...

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"That's what makes our business easy, if you can keep people referring you all the time - the day is only so long and you can see only so many people.

He had an unshakable faith that sent him to Mass every day (he called it "my Client Builder") that did much to distinguish him in the community.

"We are selling an intangible and dealing with unknowns. It takes faith and sincerity to make people realize their responsibilities."

Still, one might debate whether his liberal use of green also played a role.

By his own accounting, he had over 25 green sport coats, a green car emblazoned with "Top O' the Morning," and one of the biggest and best St. Patrick's Day parties in Dubuque.

'An Irishman's first visit to the Vatican'

Soon after he joined in 1946, he attended his first annual meeting, an event that had a profound impact on him.

"My first Annual Meeting was like an Irishman's first visit to the Vatican," recalled Steele in a 1967 issue of *Field Notes*.

"I came back with renewed determination to better myself."

The first sign that his efforts were paying off came in 1953, when Steele was invited to his first Million Dollar Round Table.

Four years later, he qualified for the Top 20 for the first time - a feat he repeated in 1959 and from 1962-'68. He also was runner up in lives in 1964.

Along the way, he was a perennial qualifier of the 100 lives club, Plus 33 QI, the NQA, NSAA, as well as an attendee of the Recognition Dinner (1962-'79, 1981-'82, 1984) and the Leaders Lunch.

In 1954, he was appointed district agent in Dubuque, a post he held until 1980.

"I have found most successful men in the life insurance field seem to have a good philosophy in life and a strong faith," said Steele.

"I think my faith is most helpful to me because I am selling and promising benefits for the future and it is this conviction that gives my prospects the

confidence to follow my recommendations."

'Top O' the Morning'

Shortly after WWII **Joe Thompson Jr, CLU, Al Granum, CLU,** and Steele, who were classmates at Career School, decided to invite several other "up and coming" agents to form a study group.

They named the study group for Steele's virtually trademarked greeting, "Top O' the Morning."

It would eventually include many of the company's most respected agents. (See *The Northwestern Columns*, July 17, 1998)

Steele attributed no small part of his success to the study group.

To many, no accounting of Steele's life would be complete without recognizing the recruiting legacy he left behind.

His son, **Pat Steele, CLU, ChFC**, is a district agent in Dubuque. Daughter, **Ellen Steele Allare, CLU, ChFC**, is the former President of SAI. Son, **Mike Steele, CLU, ChFC**,

is a special agent in Dubuque; Daughter, **Brigid Steele** works in Agency's Meetings Division. And his deceased son, **Timothy Emmett Steele** was a special agent with the Hoopis agency.

"Dad never really pushed the insurance business. But we saw how much he loved his work, and the message was clear," adds Pat, who followed his father as the district agent in Dubuque.

"During the course of my work," Don T. once said, summing up his feelings for the career, "it's been pathetic to find people in walks of life who are locked into something they are not happy with; life is passing them by.

"I think it was a little blessing or divine guidance that got me into this business.

"I don't think I'd want to do anything else."

Notes and cards can be sent to:

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1998 CALENDAR YEAR TOP 20

R. David Sprinkle, CLU, ChFC (Condrey)	... \$111,174,967
Daniel E. Brunette, CLU, ChFC (Derrickson)	... 98,931,054
Richard L. Hartmann, CLU, ChFC (McKeever)	... 97,874,864
James W. Ikard (Hearst)	... 84,758,634
H. Stanley Mansfield Jr., CLU (Hearst)	... 79,849,180
Hayes Holderness (Condrey)	... 60,423,801
Thomas G. Lipscomb III, CLU (Hames)	... 55,909,498
Charles Melvin Jr., CLU, ChFC (Worrell)	... 51,819,746
Louis J. Cassara, CLU, ChFC (McTigue)	... 51,755,931
Thomas D. Lenci Jr., CLU, ChFC (Pierz)	... 49,454,874
Douglas A. Dawson (Nick)	... 48,297,037
F. Weldon Baird, CLU, ChFC (Bullock)	... 47,197,439
Keith Wagner (Kerrigan)	... 45,785,970
James E. Whistler, CLU, ChFC (Bleakley)	... 43,348,452
Ira Hermann, CLU, ChFC (Templin)	... 42,948,730
Michael L. Finkelstein, CLU, ChFC (Nemec)	... 42,534,720
Bradley J. Baune, CLU, ChFC (Bohannon)	... 41,435,937
David H. Hilton Jr, CLU (Hassan)	... 40,984,940
Andy M. Schwartz (Stone)	... 40,900,401
Robert J. Burnside, CLU, ChFC (Teague)	... 40,343,288

1998 CALENDAR YEAR DI LEADERS

Randall Peck (Hodgkins)	... \$22,524,435
Charles T. Cruse (Angell)	... 8,458,836
Steven W. Barlow, CLU, ChFC (McQueen)	... 8,275,946
Daniel E. Brunette, CLU, ChFC (Derrickson)	... 7,813,444
Thomas A. Jacobs, CLU (McTigue)	... 6,920,364
Scott T. Penning, (Ertz)	... 6,718,647
Jeffrey A. Manthey, CLU, ChFC (Bohannon)	... 6,540,396
Richard T Romano, CLU, ChFC (Hornsby)	... 6,231,161
Steven L. Hale, CLU (Goodwin)	... 5,943,814
Mike Campbell (Goodwin)	... 5,881,690