

Accounting Historians Notebook

Volume 37
Number 2 October 2014

Article 15

October 2014

IN MEMORIUM: GEORGE ROUDEBUSH CATLETT (1917-2013)

Stephen Zeff

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/aah_notebook



Part of the [Accounting Commons](#), and the [Taxation Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Zeff, Stephen (2014) "IN MEMORIUM: GEORGE ROUDEBUSH CATLETT (1917-2013)," *Accounting Historians Notebook*: Vol. 37 : No. 2 , Article 15.

Available at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/aah_notebook/vol37/iss2/15

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Archival Digital Accounting Collection at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Accounting Historians Notebook by an authorized editor of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

IN MEMORIUM: GEORGE ROUDEBUSH CATLETT (1917-2013)

Stephen Zeff, Rice University

George R. Catlett, the senior technical partner of Arthur Andersen & Co. from 1962 to 1980, died on October 10, 2013 in Pewaukee, Wisconsin. He was born on August 14, 1917 in Fairmount, Illinois, where he grew up. He received B.S. and M.S. degrees in accounting from the University of Illinois and was hired in 1940 by Arthur E. Andersen to join his firm in its Chicago office. He did procurement work for the Army Ordnance Corps from 1942 to 1946, becoming a major. He rejoined Arthur Andersen & Co. as a manager, and, after Andersen died in 1947, Leonard Spacek succeeded him as managing partner.

Catlett became a partner in 1952. He served in the firm's St. Louis office from 1953 to 1958, following which he returned to the Chicago home office and in 1962 was elected chairman of the firm's committee on accounting principles and auditing procedures. He became Spacek's right hand, drafting his speeches, but he also spoke and wrote extensively himself. His long tenure as chairman of the committee ended in 1980, when he retired from the firm.

With partner Norman O. Olson, he wrote *Accounting for Goodwill*, which was Accounting Research Study No. 10 sponsored by the Accounting Principles Board (APB) in 1968. In 1973, Arthur Andersen & Co. published a collection of Catlett's and Olson's speeches and articles under the title, *In Pursuit of Professional Goals: Addresses and Articles 1960-1972*.

In 1965, Catlett succeeded Spacek on the APB and was as one of the most active members of the board until he stepped down in 1971, having served when the board issued most of its significant pronouncements. He was APB vice-chairman from 1968 to 1971. He was the lone dissenter in 1970 to APB Statement No. 4 on accounting principles, because he believed that the determination of what should be the objectives of accounting was an urgent matter that had not been settled in the Statement. He dissented to APB Opinion No. 17 on intangible assets, because he, like Spacek, believed that goodwill should be deducted from stockholders' equity. He would have dissented to Opinion No. 16 on business combinations, also issued in 1970, but for the fact that his negative vote would have scuttled the Opinion, and the board had agreed that both Opinions had to be approved else the SEC would have issued regulations.

(Continued on page 8)



(Continued from page 7)

Ever the gentleman, Catlett could disagree without being disagreeable. He staunchly supported Spacek's crusade to rid GAAP of optional treatments and to establish the objectives of financial accounting.

He was president of the Illinois Society of Certified Public Accountants in 1966-67 and was vice-president of the AICPA in 1976-77.

In 1982, he published a book on the Catlett families in Virginia and Illinois.

He married Martha Jane Beamsley in 1944. He is survived by four sons, their children, and a sister. His wife died in 2007.

(Continued from page 5)

theoretical aspects of modern solutions. The continuity of times is an important feature of the whole series of research".

Professor Kuter's textbooks are reprinted in the post-Soviet states.

Currently Professor Kuter has been finishing his monograph "Pacioli's Treatise "On the Accounts and Records "and Two Centuries Before..."

On the development of theory, methodology and practice of accounting, economic analysis and financial control in Russia // International scientific-practical journal. Accounting. Analysis. Audit. 2014, special issue, p. 42 – 43.

Prof. Cheryl McWatters Named First Non- U.K.-Based Editor for *Accounting History Review*

Professor Cheryl S. McWatters, the Father Edgar Thivierge Chair in Business History at the University of Ottawa/Telfer School has been appointed editor of *Accounting History Review*. Dr. McWatters is a long-time member of the journal's editorial board and becomes the first woman editor as well as the first non-U.K.-based editor at *Accounting History Review* since the journal's inception.

Dr. McWatters is active in a number of international research organizations in accounting, management and economic history, as well as serving as ad hoc reviewer for a wide variety of journals and conferences in these areas. She is an associate editor of *Accounting Perspectives* and a member of the editorial boards of

Journal of Operations Management and Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal. She previously was the associate editor and Interfaces editor of the *Accounting Historians Journal* and remains a member of its editorial board.

