

John Luetkemeyer, 88, state treasurer, CEO of Equitable Trust and civic leader

By FRED RASMUSSEN
SUN STAFF

John A. Luetkemeyer Sr., former state treasurer, chief executive officer of Equitable Trust Co. and civic leader, died Thursday of heart failure at his Roland Park Place residence. He was 88.

The longtime Homeland resident, who had resided at the Roland Park retirement community since 1990, was born in Cleveland and graduated from the Hill School in Pottstown, Pa.

"He was a banker's banker," H. Grant Hathaway, former chairman and chief executive officer of Equitable Bank, which later merged with Maryland National Bank, said Friday.

"John rose through the ranks to become one of Baltimore's outstanding bankers. He was a people person who could relate to both his employees and customers and thus developed a very loyal customer following for the bank," he said.

Mr. Hathaway said Mr. Luetkemeyer did everything with gusto and had a lifelong enthusiasm for Equitable Bank.

Mr. Luetkemeyer earned his bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1933 and attended Harvard Law School for one year before moving to Baltimore, where he began his 42-year banking career as a \$14-a-week runner at Equitable Trust Co.

Mr. Luetkemeyer advanced to teller and proof clerk and helped organize the bank's consumer credit department, the first at a commercial bank in Baltimore. Home-improvement and automobile loans now are regularly offered to the public by commercial banks, but when Mr. Luetkemeyer began his career, banks looked to large companies and investors for business.



1983 PHOTO

John A. Luetkemeyer Sr. twice received the Purple Heart and was awarded the Bronze Star for gallantry in action during World War II.

Former Equitable Bank Chairman Robert G. Merrick, who died in 1986, credited Mr. Luetkemeyer, whom he hired, with pioneering consumer banking and branch banks in Baltimore.

"I was for branches, but not quite as aggressively as he was. He wasn't responsible for getting us into it, but he was responsible for pushing it," Mr. Merrick said in a 1975 interview in *The Sun*.

The outbreak of World War II interrupted Mr. Luetkemeyer's career, and he joined the Marines in 1942, becoming a bomb-disposal expert. He twice received the Purple Heart, for bullet wounds in the Philippines and for shrapnel injuries in Malaya. In Malaya, he was awarded the Bronze Star for gallantry in action. He was discharged as a major in 1945 and returned to Equitable. That year he was named vice president.

Three years later he was made a bank director. In 1960 he was

efforts," he told *The Sun* in a 1978 interview.

Walter Sondheim Jr., a former Baltimore department store executive who is senior adviser to the Greater Baltimore Committee, said, "He was a man of enormous integrity and activity."

Mr. Sondheim described him as being a "very modest person in his business dealings with people.

"John was not only highly respected by his colleagues in banking but by the entire community. He was extremely useful. He provided helpful and sane advice to so many community activities."

For years, Mr. Luetkemeyer kept in shape by playing tennis and golf.

He was a member of the Bachelors Cotillon and the Harvard, Elkridge and Maryland clubs.

He was a member of Brown Memorial Woodbrook Presbyterian Church, 6200 N. Charles St., where a memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Tuesday.

Mr. Luetkemeyer is survived by his wife of 59 years, the former Anne McLanahan; a son, John A. Luetkemeyer Jr. of Baltimore; two daughters, Anne Luetkemeyer Stone of Baltimore and Jean Scott Prema of Colerain, Mass.; and five grandchildren.

William R. Samuel, 42, insurance salesman

Services for William R. Samuel, a former insurance salesman, will be held at 12:30 p.m. tomorrow at Ebenezer AME Church, at 20 W. Montgomery St.

Mr. Samuel, 42, was found fatally stabbed Sept. 13 under the portico of the landmark Basilica of the Assumption on Cathedral Street.

Known as Ronnie, he grew up in Southwest Baltimore and graduated from Carver Vocational-Technical High School, where he distinguished himself in football and baseball and was nominated

