

Obituaries

Chris Conrad was radio pioneer

He developed major two-way company

BY JEFF TINDALL

The Cincinnati Enquirer

Two-way radio pioneer Chris Conrad died Sunday evening in Lehigh Acres, Fla., after heart failure. The longtime Cincinnati was 84.

Mr. Conrad, who was forced to drop out of high school in the 1920s to help support his family, went to work for Crosley Radio in 1934. When Motorola introduced the two-way police radio in 1941, Mr. Conrad installed the first system for the city of Reading's police department.

He quickly gained fame as the "Radio Man" in the police and fire communities throughout Cincinnati.

"He built one of the largest two-way radio companies in the country from scratch," said his

son, Robert Conrad of Okeana, Ohio. "Up until the mid-'50s, if you had a two-way radio you knew Chris Conrad."

Mr. Conrad worked as broadcaster Waite Hoyt's engineer for many years at Reds games, and helped Paul Dixon with his "Man on the Street" program for WCPO-AM.

In 1952, he left WCPO to devote more attention to his business, and today CTI Mobilcomm is "the sixth-largest Motorola two-way radio dealer in the country," Robert Conrad said.

Mr. Conrad was active in the Kolping Society, and spent "a tremendous amount of time" with his children, his son said.

Despite his lack of formal education, "to know my father you'd think he was very well educated," Robert said. "He taught me how to work, how to live."

Also surviving are his wife, Anna; a daughter, Julie Zaenkart of Okeana; four stepsons, Stephen

Wessels, of Cincinnati, Herman Wessels, Richard Wessels and Anthony Wessels, all of Colerain Township; three brothers, Joseph Conrad of Clifton, William Conrad of Mount Airy and the Rev. Simon Conrad of St. Michaels, Ariz.; five sisters, Theresa Kyde of Mount Orab, Lillian Kurtz of Morrow, Sister Mary Rosetta of Notre Dame Academy, Covington, Margaret Flaughter of Fort Myers, Fla., and Mary Ellen Krems of Long Island, N.Y.; 18 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be 9 a.m. Saturday at St. Bartholomew Church, 9375 Winton Road with Mass of Christian burial following at 11 a.m. Burial will be in Venice Cemetery in Ross.

Memorials may be sent to Bill Mahrenholtz for the Kolping Society Endowment Fund at 1804 N. Aspen Drive., Mount Prospect, Ill., 60056-1635.