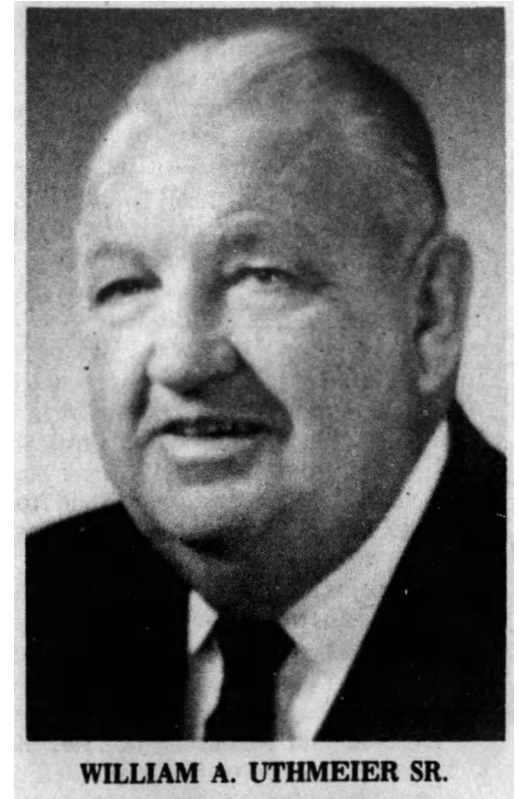


William "Tiny" Uthmeier
Nominated by Tony Uthmeier

William A. Uthmeier, known as either "Tiny" or "Big Bill," was born Feb. 18, 1902 in Marshfield and lived there all of his life. He received his education in Marshfield schools and on Oct. 16, 1924, he married Mary A. Rebsteck. The couple would have one son, William J. Uthmeier, Jr. His long career in the entertainment field put him on a first name basis with many of the nation's top showmen.

Uthmeier's indoctrination in show business came at an early age when his father, a local merchant, awoke him during the pre-dawn hours on a day the Dode Fisk Circus was to appear in Marshfield. Watching the elephants and horses that morning triggered a lifelong interest in circuses for the then 5-year-old Uthmeier, whose treasure trove of photos and snapshots, route books and posters, and miniature circus wagons built to scale grew to be one of the finest in the country. He was also a long-time member in good standing of the Circus Fans of America.



WILLIAM A. UTHMEIER SR.

During a career that saw him become Marshfield's No. 1 party-arranger, Uthmeier was at one time or another an official greeter, prop man, electrician, stagehand, menu planner, procurer of speechmakers and entertainment, ticket purveyor and fundraiser.

Uthmeier's interest in circuses and fairs may have started at the age of 5, but it was at age 8 that he finally began his business acquaintanceship with them. That's when he set up shop in the original Exposition Building and passed out fly swatters to fairgoers, courtesy of the Uthmeier general store.

A few years later Uthmeier began peddling show bills for the Adler Theater. When World War I exploded in Europe and the draft was making inroads on Marshfield's male population, the 15-year-old Uthmeier was drafted to fill the motion picture projectionist job since he was the only operator left in town. About that time, he secured a set of spotlights, teamed up with a drummer in the theater orchestra, and began hiring talent at the rate of "\$3 per man, \$3 for music, and \$3 for lunch."

The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus soon wooed away his partner, but young Uthmeier continued the production of his dance spectaculars which went under such billings as "The Electric Ball," "The Dance Beautiful," and "A Night in Tokyo."

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, or fairgrounds, Uthmeier, still only 15, obtained the harness racing program concession to augment the series of advertising programs he was promoting for

the stock companies playing the Adler. The same year he began “tacking” for the secretary of the fair on the cheese factory route, a job that entailed distributing the annual fair premium books. It was this job that led to the establishment of the Uthmeier Poster Service, the business that was to provide the bulk of his livelihood for the rest of his life.

Several years later while in Milwaukee with the then fair secretary R.R. Williams to book acts for the fair’s first night-time show, Uthmeier seized the opportunity to obtain the lighting rights for the show. After his marriage in 1924, Uthmeier began promoting ballroom dances in all of Wisconsin, northern Michigan, eastern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa, booking such well known orchestras as Wayne King, Isham Jones, Duke Ellington and Ted Fiorita. The depression ended that operation, but Uthmeier continued to promote special dances until World War II came along in 1941.

As far back as 1926 Uthmeier had added to his list of undertakings the job of part-time secretary of the Marshfield Chamber of Commerce and the presidency of the Marshfield Commercial Club, both forerunners of the present Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce.

Uthmeier’s association with the Fair became more involved in 1932 when he was named to the board of directors. The following year he became superintendent of concessions, following the death of Williams in 1946.

When the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce was reorganized in 1946 it was only natural that Uthmeier be named executive secretary, a position he held for several years. For two years he edited the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institute school bulletin and in 1947 was president of the Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce Executives.

Long active in the activities of Marshfield Elks Lodge 665, Uthmeier served as exalted ruler for four terms, was district deputy northwest grand lodge for two years, member of the grand lodge committee on credentials for two years, president of the Wisconsin Elks Association, and was chairman of the Wisconsin Elks “On to the Grand Lodge” committee for nearly 40 years.

Too young for World War I and too old for World War II, Uthmeier was active on the home front, serving as chairman of the North Wood County Red Cross and War Fund from 1940 to 1945 and state director of the Wisconsin War Fund from 1943 to 1945. He also served briefly as a deputy sheriff in the early 1940s.

During his storied career Uthmeier also served as president of the Marshfield Rotary, was executive secretary of the Marshfield Community Chest from 1946 to 1963, was twice president of the Marshfield Old Settlers Club, and also chaired the committee that promoted the observance of the 75th anniversary of the Great Marshfield Fire.

Mr. Uthmeier was also a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church, the Eagles Club, the Columbus Galleon Club, International Alliance of Stage Employees, Showmen’s League of America, Hot Springs Showmen’s Association, Gibtown Showmen’s Association, Circus Historical

Association, Outdoor Amusement Business Association, and was vice-president of Uthmeier Enterprises Inc.

William J. Uthmeier passed away at age 79 after an illness that lasted several months. His hard work and dedication to his community and its entertainment left a lasting legacy.