



Hilmar Skagfield Sr. had lived in Tallahassee since coming to FSU for accounting studies in the early 1950s. He also served as consul general here for his native Iceland, whose flag is pictured here. Skagfield died Sunday at age 88. / Mike Ewen/Democrat files

A business owner, father and friend, Hilmar S. Skagfield was an avid supporter of the arts and helped the fledgling LeMoyne Center for the Visual Arts get its start.

"He was one of the early members of LeMoyne, he and his wife, Kristin," said Richard Puckett, LeMoyne's first director. "They attended every opening we had for a long, long time."

A native of Iceland, Skagfield, 88, died Sunday. He is remembered for his dedication to community and willingness to serve in an unusual way.

He moved to Tallahassee in the early 1950s with his wife and young daughter to study business at Florida State University. By the time he'd earned an accounting degree, Skagfield had decided to stay a little while.

"And somehow, I never went back," he said in a 2005 interview.

In 1980, a friend who worked for the Icelandic foreign ministry called to ask a favor. Florida was too big to cover with only a single consulate in Miami. The foreign ministry needed one in North Florida and Skagfield decided to accept the offer. He was named honorary consul that year and promoted to consul general five years later.

He helped travelers from Iceland with their passports and voting in elections back home and assisted those who had run-ins with the police, among other duties.

In 1966, he started Skandia Window Fashions in the back of his wife's dress-design business, Kristin's Studio of Fashion Design. Today, Skandia has 250 employees and facilities in Thomasville, Ga., San Diego, Calif., and Manitowoc, Wis. About 80 of them work at the Tallahassee plant.

The business produces blinds, shutters, shades and other window treatments, said Bill Hughes, chief financial officer, who has been with the company for 25 years.

"Skag always treated me as part of his family," Hughes said. "I have always felt like a part of the family business."

Roger Kaufman, professor emeritus of FSU, also recalled Skagfield's devotion to the community.

"He was an excellent and sensitive businessman, and his wife was the best partner one could imagine. Hilmar always had time and talent for others and our community," Kaufman recalled.

Skagfield helped arrange an exchange program between police in Tallahassee and Iceland, where the nation's police commissioner was a graduate of FSU.

He helped form the first Kiwanis club in Iceland. There are now more than 50 in the country.

Puckett remembers Skagfield's love of the arts.

"They collected quite a bit of art," Puckett said. "They weren't just interested in art and galleries. They attended a lot of things at the university, the symphony and the opera, too."

He met the couple in April 1964 when LeMoyne first opened.

"We will miss him," he said.

Hughes said arrangements were not final as of Monday. Skagfield is survived by his wife, a son and two daughters.