

**Thelma G. Smith**  
**May 11, 1914 – September 21, 2007**

Thelma Smith was known for her great love of nature, a love of flowers, of trees, of birds. She passed away peacefully on September 21<sup>st</sup> at the Alcazar Hotel in Cleveland Heights, a place where she sometimes went for a change of scenery from her home in Mayfield Village. She was 93. Her late husband, Kent Hale Smith, was one of the founders of the Lubrizol Corporation and, among many civic activities, was once Interim President of Case Institute of Technology. He was also one of the developers of the Alcazar.

Thelma and Kent Smith made a substantial impact on a great variety of educational, environmental, museum and social service organizations in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. After Kent Smith died in 1980, Thelma Smith continued and expanded his legacy by giving through the trusts and foundations they had established. Gifts stretched from long established organizations like the City Mission to newly-created organizations like the Cleveland Foodbank and Idea Center. Her gifts were frequently based on the principle of *“helping people to help themselves”*. Thelma Smith lived a conservative, frugal life, and she expected recipients of her gifts to do the same.

Her greatest joy came from the peacefulness of weeding around the plants and flowers in her garden or simply sitting quietly in the woods. Occasionally she could be seen stopping to dig out a few weeds on the Case Western Reserve University campus which she found groundskeepers had missed. Following her interest in nature, she made major gifts to The Cleveland Museum of Natural History to preserve natural areas in Northeastern Ohio and to the Holden Arboretum.

Thelma and Kent Smith traveled widely to remote corners of the world. They particularly enjoyed Audubon camps and, after he retired from Lubrizol, spent a year in a little town in Portugal.

Thelma Smith lived, meditated and studied a deep, practical, ecumenical religious faith. She established an ethics chair at Case and many churches have benefited from her anonymous gifts. Her death does not end the charitable giving program followed by her and her husband. She leaves behind many substantial pledges, through the family’s trust, to such charities as Case, University Circle, Inc., Great Lakes Science Center, Vocational Guidance Services and the Fund for Our Economic Future. The latter represents a major interest she developed in recent years to give to economic development. *“After all, she said, “Kent and his brothers and friends were among Cleveland’s most successful early entrepreneurs, and we should be following the path they set out for us.”*