

Westford's Gordon Seavey left a lasting legacy

By SHARON F. WEITZ
Sun Staff

WESTFORD — The small office off the kitchen, that only last month hummed with activity, is hushed.

The typewriter lies silent and a thin layer of dust sits on the brim of the shiny black top hat worn in so many Apple Blossom Festival parades.

Gordon B. Seavey — local historian, town benefactor, conservationist, journalist and world traveler — died on Monday morning his *Westford Wanderings* and world travels ending at age 91.

"I've lost him and now I must gather myself together and go on, for his sake," said Barbara Seavey, his wife of 48 years. "Gordon was quite a guy. He loved his town greatly and was a wonderful friend and husband to me. His loss is devastating to me and to so many people."

Seavey died at Emerson Hospital of complications from pneumonia. He had been hospitalized for about two weeks after suffering from a bad head cold and severe congestion. In Seavey's last weeks of life, Barbara Seavey almost never left his side.

"I wanted to be there every minute," he said. "On Sunday, I knew he wasn't getting better and I stayed throughout the night. On Monday morning, he slipped away."

Seavey was born Oct. 25, 1905 and raised in Westford in a small house across from Town Hall. He attended Frost Elementary School and graduated from Westford Academy in 1922 as class president. He then attended Lowell Commercial College and, after graduation, studied journalism at Boston University.

In his one-page curriculum vitae, Seavey describes himself: "Journalist for over 70



In his one-page curriculum vitae, Gordon B. Seavey describes himself: "Journalist for over 70 years. World traveler."

SUN FILE PHOTO

years. World traveler." It is a brief, but accurate, description of an incredibly diverse life.

Seavey was editor and publisher of the *Belmont Citizen* weekly newspaper for 32 years. With his nurturing leadership, the publication won numerous professional awards, including the community service award from the New England Press Association for his coverage of the town's 100th anniversary.

Seavey's journalism career began long before his days in Belmont. While at Westford Academy, Seavey was writing for the *Westford Wardsman*, and was a correspondent for the *Lowell Courier-Citizen* and *Ayer Public Spirit*. He later wrote historical features and opinion pieces for *The Sun* and other area publications.

"Gordon loved to write,"

Barbara Seavey said. "It was one of the many joys in his life."

He was a member of the National Newspaper Association, serving as president from 1964-1965, was co-founder of the New England Weekly Press Association and past president of the Massachusetts Press Association.

Before his journalism career in Belmont, Seavey worked in the accounting department of United Fruit Co. in Banes, Cuba, and founded of Arlington Oldsmobile in 1933.

Seavey will be forever remembered in Westford as a magnanimous benefactor. He donated his time, energy and fortune to First Parish Church United of Westford, of which he was a faithful member, to Roudenbush Community Center, to Westford public schools and to the town itself.

Completed this fall, Fellowship Hall at the church was built largely thanks to Seavey's generous donation of \$300,000, accumulated

from years of savings and wise investments that began with six shares of General Motors stock in 1933. In September, the 3,150-square-foot central meeting room of Fellowship Hall was dedicated as the "Gordon B. Seavey Room."

A \$10,000 donation in 1992 from the Seaveys to Roudenbush Community Center allowed for the renovation of the former Frost School into a day care center. A photograph of one of Gordon Seavey's classes from his days at Frost hangs on a wall in the entry way.

He was a Westford Academy trustee for more than 50 years and a Westford cemetery commissioner for six years.

A memorial service will be held Dec. 28 at 11 a.m. at Seavey's beloved First Parish Church United. Barbara Seavey did not want her husband's family and friends to forever associate the Christmas season with his death.

"We will celebrate his life," she said. "It is a life worth celebrating and remembering."