

Walter Friedrich Patenge, son of William K. (1856-1930) and Sophia Ernestine (1860-1929) (Eichemeyer) Patenge, was born 19 September 1898, Bay County, Michigan. Walter's father was a Prussian born immigrant who came to America with his parents about 1880. The Patenge family settled in Bay City where Walter, one of 9 children, was born. Unfortunately, two of the Patenge sons, John Henry "Henry" and August Louis Alfred "Alfred", died young. Henry, born 1900, succumbed to tuberculosis in 1918. Alfred, born 1893, died in 1922 of heart problems.

Walter registered for the World War I Draft 12 September 1918. He was employed as a Timekeeper for "Industrial Works" in Bay City. Walter was described as single, of medium height and build with brown eyes and light brown hair. The 1920 US Federal Census enumerated Walter as living in Bay City, residing with his parents and working as a Timekeeper.

Lansing State Journal, June 27, 1922

Walter attended and graduated from Michigan Agricultural College (MAC later became Michigan State College and then Michigan State University) in 1923.

Lansing State Journal, April 17, 1926

FOREMEN'S CLUB TO OBSERVE BIRTHDAY

Fourth Anniversary to Be Marked By Banquet, Graduation for Industrial Classes

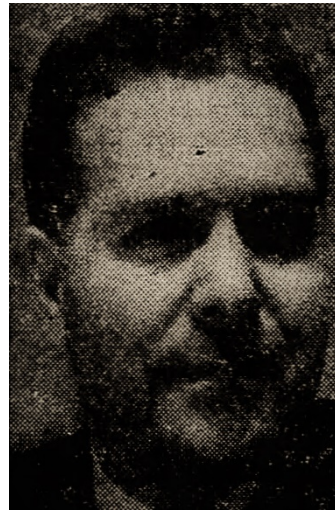
Members of the Foremen's club will observe their fourth anniversary and members of the industrial leadership classes sponsored by the Y. M. C. A. will receive their diplomas at a banquet to be held at the guildhall, Tuesday evening at 6:45 o'clock.

The program as arranged has for the principal speaker Dean W. Kelley, president of the Ingham County Bar association. Mr. Kelley will speak on "The Meaning of Social Democracy". T. E. Jerrard, of Durant Motors, Inc., will be the toastmaster, and C. E. Bement, of the Novo Engine company, will present the diplomas to the graduates of the leadership classes, who have completed the longest and most intensive course ever offered here.

Three-minute talks will be given by W. J. DeBeaubien, Walter Patenge, N. J. Gibbons, and D. D. Clark, who are members of the class and community singing will be led by H. H. Hardy, with C. Nevison Roberts at the piano. A special delegation will be here from Jackson, where a foremen's club was recently organized, with the assistance of the Lansing club.

M. A. C. students of Bay City, who have returned to their homes during the past week are: Elizabeth Bassingthwaite, Alice John-dro, Leah McGilvery, Grace Mitchell, Marie Routell, Jessie MacKin-non, Eldred Jereaw, Helen Mc-Cullough, Evelyn Madison, Harry McKenzie, Stanley Paczinski, Ar-thur Beckley, Harold Henninger, Cora Kelley, Walter Patenge, Verne Braman, Zora Staudacher, Carl Boehringer, Clara Boehringer, Noel Fullen, Marion Butterfield, Arthur Ludowski, Howard Bezenah, Irma Loessel, Evangeline Mattison, and LeRoy Kelley.

Lansing State Journal, October 25, 1953



1951 Okemos Tomahawk, Page 7,
Walter and Elvera Patenge

He married Elvera Dorthea Raby 19 September 1924, Lansing. Elvera was the daughter of Frederick (1876-1918) and Josephine (Schwartz) (1878-1944) Raby. The 1927 Lansing City Directory listed Walter with Elvera, residence 927 N. Chestnut, and him employed as an engineer for Michigan Screw.



Lansing State Journal, April 7, 1933

In 1933 Walter became vice-president and sales manager for Wohlert Corporation, Lansing. Years later Walter and his partner, lawyer Harry Hubbard bought Wohlert Corporation. He remained for the rest of his employment career until he sold his interest to his son, Rolland and his nephew, Kenneth E. Patenge.

CHANGE NAME OF LOCAL MANUFACTURING FIRM

Announcement of the change of the name of the Bates Wohlert company to the Wohlert corporation was made Friday. Fred Wohlert is president and general manager of the firm under the new set-up. Walter Patenge is vice president and sales manager; C. R. Wieber, secretary-treasurer, and H. D. Hubbard and L. J. Hildebrandt, directors.

Long history

Wohlert traces its history to Aug. 11, 1896, when Madison F. Bates and Ransom E. Olds invented and patented the first gasoline engine. Other steps in the company's evolution:

■ Bates forms a partnership with James P. Edmonds and launches the Bates and Edmonds Motor Co. in 1899. It later was renamed Wohlert Corp. in 1933 for partner Fred Wohlert Jr., who became the sole stockholder in the 1930s.

■ In 1902, Bates and Edmonds build the "Bull Dog" stationary gasoline engine.

■ During the 1940s, the Patenge family gains control following the rise of company sales manager Walter Patenge, a former General Motors executive. Patenge recruits his nephew, Kenneth Patenge, also from General Motors, in 1947. Kenneth Patenge becomes the company's sole owner in 1985.

■ The company diversified over the years, building diesel engines for trucks, such as the REO Speedwagon, and tractors. It en-



Photo courtesy of Wohlert Corp.

Turn-of-the-century truck: Lansing's first express delivery service, started in 1907, used this 1904 Bates runabout to distribute packages.

tered the aeronautics field in 1972.

■ Today, Wohlert is the largest

independent manufacturer of fly-wheel ring gears in the United States.

[<<Click to read a newspaper history of Bates and Edmonds Motor Co. to Wohlert Corporation>>](#)

Executive's Wife Dies

**Mrs. Elvera Patenge, 49,
Succumbs at Home;
Rites Tuesday**

Mrs. Elvera Dorothea Patenge, 49, wife of Walter F. Patenge, president of the Wohlert corporation, died at her home, 5545 Park Lake rd., early Friday morning after a lingering illness.

Mrs. Patenge had just returned from St. Lawrence hospital Thursday.

She had been a lifelong resident of Lansing and was active in the Trinity Lutheran church. She was a member of the church's Ladies Aid society and Valparaiso guild of the church.

Besides her husband, surviving are a son, Rolland W.; a daughter, Lois D.; a brother, Herbert L. Raby, and one granddaughter, all of Lansing.

Funeral services will be held at 1 p. m. Tuesday at Trinity Lutheran church. Rev. Phillip Schroeder will officiate. Burial will be in Glendale cemetery.

The body is at the Estes-Leadley funeral home.

The Patenge's had 2 children, Rolland and Lois, both graduated from Okemos High School. Walter and Elvera were generous supporters of Okemos Schools and the community will be forever grateful.

Elvera, born 1906, died at her home 2 September 1955. She was interred Glendale Cemetery, Okemos, Ingham County.

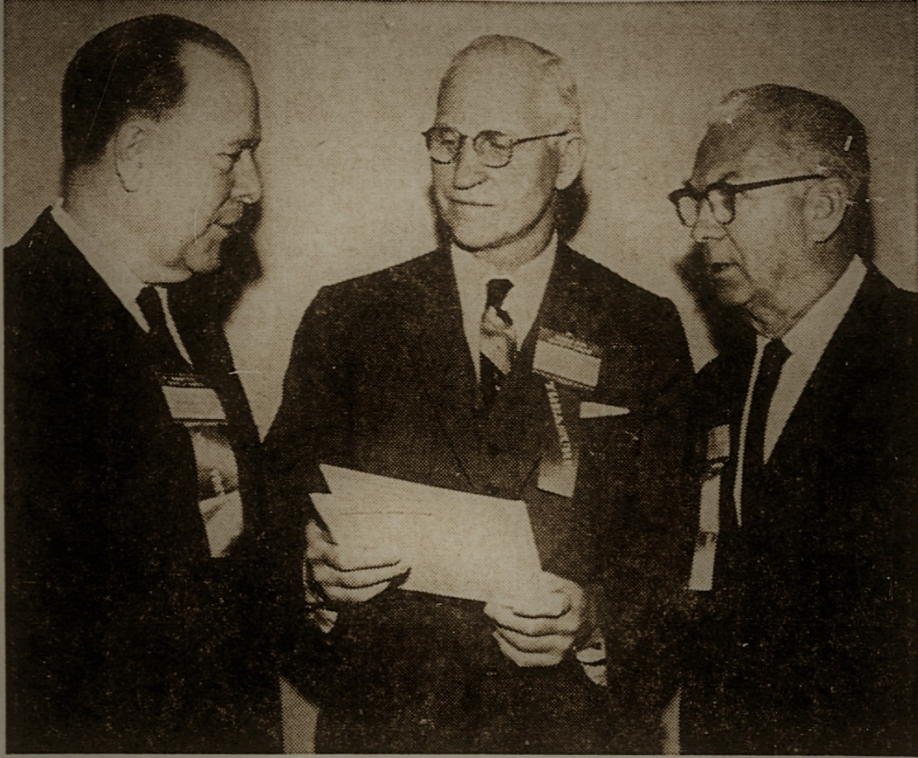
Lansing Kiwanian Urges UN Support

GRAND RAPIDS, Nov. 28 (AP)—Walter Patenge, Lansing industrialist and 1951 district governor of Kiwanis, International, said here last night that failure of the United Nations "would set the world back a generation and doom the most promising venture in co-operative world government."

He spoke at a meeting of Kiwanis leaders on the subject of Kiwanis objectives for 1951, chief of which is support for the United Nations.

Patenge said Kiwanis opposes socialization of business and the professions and condemns what he called "loose fiscal policy of government."

Walter was involved in Lutheran Church organizations (founder of Ascension Lutheran Church in East Lansing, MI), Kiwanis International, Chamber of Commerce and on various local boards.



STATE C. OF C. OFFICERS— State Chamber of Commerce at Walter Patenge, left, Lansing, a former director, was named vice president of the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce at the annual meeting here. Fred Marin, center, was re-elected treasurer. The two conferred with Harry R. Hall, right, executive vice president, during the morning session. (State Journal Photo)

Walter married, 7 November 1957, Lansing, Miss Leone Elethea Belleville. Leone, daughter of Clarence Chapman (1881-1949) and Elethea (Johnson) (1887-1967) Belleville, was born 16 May 1907, Michigan. Leone graduated from University of Michigan in 1930 and was employed for many years by William Goodyear and Company, an Ann Arbor, Michigan department store, first as a saleslady and then as a buyer.

Walter and Leone over the next 25 years became well known donors and benefactors to local school, church and community endeavors.

Lansing Michigan

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Patenge Honeymooning at 'Homestead'

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Patenge are now honeymooning at the famous "Homestead" in Hot Springs, Va., following their marriage Thursday.

The bride is the former Leone Bellville of Manchester. The ceremony was performed Thursday morning by Rev. George Nickelsburg at the Ascension Lutheran church. It was a small, private wedding.

Mrs. Albert Heustis attended the bride and Kenneth Patenge, nephew of the bridegroom, served as best man. The Patenge's will return to their country home at 5545 Park Lake rd., Nov. 18.

Mr. Patenge, treasurer of the Lansing company, has two children, Rolland Patenge, a son, and Mrs. Richard Kuntz, his daughter (the former Lois Patenge.)

Walter F. Patenge To Head Community Chest Drive

By **JUDITH BROWN**
State Journal Staff Writer

Walter F. Patenge, president of the Wohlert Corp., was named general chairman of the 1970 United Community Chest campaign Tuesday evening.

The announcement was made by Starr H. Keesler, president of the Chest board of directors, during the board's monthly meeting.

A graduate of Michigan State University, Patenge has served as president and general manager of Wohlert for the past 26 years. He has been active in Community Chest fund drives and other civic affairs for many years.

In 1967, Patenge received the Community Service Award, presented annually by the Greater Lansing Chamber of Commerce.

Patenge is past president of Lansing General Hospital, Greater Lansing Safety Council, Greater Lansing Chamber of Commerce and the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce.

He is also a member of the Michigan Society of Mental Health, Michigan Higher Education Advisory Authority and the National Budget and Con-



WALTER F. PATENGE

sultation Committee of the United Community Funds and Councils of America.

SUCCEEDS HARDEN

A resident of East Lansing, Patenge succeeds Dr. Edgar L. Harden as campaign chairman. Under Harden's leadership last fall, a total of \$1,933,964 was raised for Chest agencies.

In other action, board members appointed Herbert DeJonge, director of the Michigan Department of Commerce, to a three-year term on the Chest board.

A maximum of \$725 was appropriated from the Chest's capital funds account to purchase paint for the Boys' Club of Lansing. The work will be done by volunteers from Michigan State University.

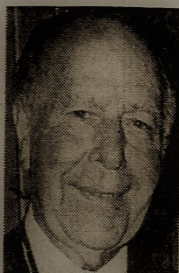
MERGER CONSIDERED

Board members also discussed the possibility of merging with the Community Chests in Eaton Rapids and Charlotte and authorized Chest officials to meet with Eaton County representatives to pursue the matter.

Salvatore J. Sagolla, executive director of the Chest, reported that the Big Sisters organization had applied for membership in the United Community Chest.

Keesler pointed out there was not enough money to fund another agency at the present time, but recommended that Chest officials hear the request. Board member Stannard Baker was appointed chairman of a committee to meet with Big Sisters representatives.

Patenge honored for contribution to medicine



Walter Patenge

It was a genuine surprise when Walter F. Patenge received the medal of service that bears his name.

"I just shook when they called my name," he told a reporter after he was honored during the convocation for the entering class of the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine.

PATENGE WAS among four recipients of the award Friday in the MSU Erickson Hall Kiva. The award was named for the Lansing industrialist and has been

awarded to a number of persons recognized nationally for their contribution to osteopathic medicine.

MSU President Clifton Wharton described Patenge as a "person who has indeed given far more than he has ever received, to the community, to society, to this, his Alma Mater, and to the College of Osteopathic Medicine."

As the first and only president of the Michigan Osteopathic Medicine Advisory Board, he has set the standard for generous support of osteopathic medicine, Wharton said.

PATENGE HELPED established the osteopathic medical college which admitted its first class eight years ago.

He is a past president of Lansing General Hospital board of trustees. A 1923 graduate of MSU, he was a founder of the MSU Alumni Association, served on its executive board and received the distinguished alumni award from MSU.

Others receiving the award Friday were Dr. Theodore Cooper, U.S. assistant secretary of health in

the Department of Health, Education and Welfare; Dr. Maynard Amelon of Detroit and Dr. James O. Watson of Columbus, Ohio.

AMONG THOSE who were honored with the Walter F. Patenge Medal in the past were Leonard Woodcock, United Auto Workers president; John A. Hannah, former MSU president; Dr. Wilbur J. Cohen and Caspar Weinberger, former HEW secretaries, and Florida Congressman Paul G. Rogers.

Walter died 14 May 1984, Ingham County. Leone died 3 September 1989. They were interred Mt. Hope Cemetery, Lansing.

