

Politician, philanthropist Gossard dies

By Crystal Thompson
Special to The Denver Post

Bill Gossard, a political leader and philanthropist, died Friday at his Denver home. He was 83.

A memorial concert will be at Boettcher Concert Hall on Dec. 14.

Gossard was born Dec. 6, 1913. He was a second-generation Colorado rancher, a decorated war veteran and a member of the Colorado House of Representatives, representing Craig. He served in leadership positions on the boards of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, the Central City Opera and the steering committee for the Scientific and Cultural Facilities Tax District.

Gossard served in the Army during World War II, earning a Member of the British Empire medal from the United Kingdom. He was also cited by King Olaf of Norway for outstanding assistance in the resistance effort.

In 1948, he married Carol Kreus-

ser of Indianapolis. They moved to the Craig area in 1950 where he managed the 35,000-acre Gossard Ranch for 32 years.

In 1960, he was elected to the Colorado State House of Representatives as the representative for the 22nd District. He served four terms and served as chairman on several committees including the House Standing Committee on State Affairs. In 1970, he was the Republican candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives in the 4th Congressional District.

Following his move to Denver in 1982, he made many contributions to the Colorado cultural community. He served on the board of the Central City Opera House Association and was recognized for his role in the recovery and success of that organization upon his retirement, when he was designated chairman emeritus by the board of directors.

"Without Bill Gossard, it's entirely possible there would be no

Central City Opera today," said Dan Ritchie,

chairman of Central City Opera. "At a time when the opera had major financial problems, even closed down one season, Bill and Atwell Gilman came to the rescue and saved the opera. Bill helped build the organization again and did a great job of leading the revitalization of the opera."



Gossard

Gossard served as a trustee for the Denver Symphony Association, seeing it through bankruptcy and eventually became the Colorado Symphony Orchestra.

His lifelong friendship with former governor John Love began in 1962, and the families have re-

mained close ever since. "Bill would be the last one to want anything flowery said," Love said. "But he was a great citizen — serving in government and supporting so many important cultural activities. I think Bill lived his life the way most of us would like to live ours."

He was a member of the Colorado Symphony Association, the Mesastra Society, the Denver Country Club, the Heritage Society of the Colorado Historical Society and the Petroleum Club, and was a Patron of the National Wildflower Center. He is survived by his wife, Carol, of Denver, and his sister, Gloria, of Steamboat Springs.

Contributions may be made to the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, 821 17th St., Suite 700, Denver 80202; the Central City Opera Association, 621 17th St., Suite 1601, Denver 80202; the Hospice of Metro Denver, 425 S. Cherry St., No. 700, Denver 80222-1234; or a charity of choice.