

JOHN FRANCIS DOWNES

John F. Downes, 93, died Friday after a brief illness. He was a lifelong resident of Syracuse and a parishioner of St. Michael's Church on Onondaga Hill. His grandfather, Michael Fitzgibbon, who was a member of the Syracuse Fire Department and is cited at length in the historical volume *Pioneer Irish of Onondaga County*, emigrated from Ireland in 1853 with his wife and family and settled in the Syracuse area.

Mr. Downes served 15 years as Director of the Citizens Foundation of Syracuse and for 10 years as Director of the Syracuse Rosamond Gifford Foundation. He graduated from St. Bonaventure University in 1935 as salutatorian of his class and was selected for the Alumni of the Year Award in 1973. He held various offices in the St. Bonaventure Alumni Association. He also received an MS degree from Syracuse University.

Prior to these directorships, he taught high school in North Syracuse and East Syracuse. In 1940, he graduated from a school conducted by the Rome Army Air Depot where civilians were taught how to receive, store, and issue Army Air Force supplies. He taught classes of new employees and wrote training manuals. He became director of the school and established Army Air Force branch schools in Bangor, ME and Indian Orchard, MA. In 1943 he was inducted into the Armed Services and was assigned to the Army Air Force where he worked in the manpower office of the Air Service Command.

John is survived by his second wife, Virginia McGarry Will Downes. They met in 1926 when they became neighbors on Park Avenue. After her husband, Bernard Will, died in 1985 and John's wife, Margaret Barrett Downes, died in 1990, they renewed their acquaintance and became fast friends and companions.