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There was very little ordinary about David Vaughan.

The 82-year-old investment advisor/philanthropist with more than \$1 billion entrusted to his care was not a household name when he died Thursday. But certain circles of this community will remember David Vaughan with the laser-like precision of his own photographic memory.

"David's slogan was: Always do the right thing," says David Vaughan Investments Inc. current president Will Williams. "That emanates through this whole firm."

He says Vaughan told his people to work hard, represent their clients' interests and be patient and disciplined in the investing process. If they did, he predicted they would succeed ... and his advice could be applied



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beyond business matters.

"Look, he was a financial guy," says RLI president and CEO John Michael. He remembers Vaughan as the financial adviser who provided the company with an average 14 percent return per year for the last 25 years on its investment portfolio. And he remembers the fact-filled nature-lover always ready with a smile and a story. "It seems like he has both sides of the brain."

"He was a Renaissance man," sums up WTVP Channel 47's John Morris. He remembers Vaughan as a donor and board member — and the avid fan who viewed all 19-and-a-half hours of Ken Burns' documentary on jazz. Twice. "The thing about David was that he had so many interests — and he mastered so many of those interests."

On the one hand, he was a sharp-shooting hunter, a 27-year member of Rice Pond Pre-

serve. Vaughan used his own collection of 150 Bernard Van Norman wildlife carvings to arrange last year's exhibit at Lakeview Museum because he thought the local woodcarver was underappreciated.

On the other, he was a child-charming softy, a magnet for the wild birds that ate out of his hand. David Vaughan Investments had an employee designated to distribute birdseed and corncobs at its office in Forest Park Nature Preserve. On the weekends, Vaughan did it himself.

"The remarkable thing about my dad was that despite his success, he was very sensitive, respectful and gracious to anyone," said David Vaughan Jr., a doctor who now lives in Orlando. "Regardless of whether it was the chairman of Caterpillar or a homeless person, he



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treated them the same way."

While he was indeed successful enough to socialize at that level, Vaughan is probably best remembered for the way he spread his wealth to those who needed it most. He was not particularly fond of the black-tie galas frequently associated with major charitable giving. Yet along with his wife, Anne, he was recently honored by Easter Seals because of their efforts on behalf of WTVP, Opera Illinois, Peoria Art Guild, and other not-for-profits. According to Morris, their philanthropic style is both strategic and purposeful.

"So many people think of us as being supporters of the arts, but we are committed to supporting a wide variety of causes, such as social services and nature conservancy," Anne Vaughan says.

For example, Vaughan served as Eureka College's board president for three years. A devoted fan of Eureka alum Ronald Reagan, he became a close friend of Reagan's daughter Maureen. So the Vaughans designed and funded the Ronald Reagan

Peace Garden to cement the former president's legacy here.

"They didn't only pay to construct it," says former Eureka College president Paul Lister. "I've seen the two of them out there working in it."

The Vaughan children remember the extraordinarily personal level of their father's philanthropy. At Christmas, he would order \$4,000 worth of crisp \$2 bills, then set them around the kitchen table folding each one into triangles small enough to stuff into Salvation Army kettles. Then he would give each child at the Children's Home a \$20 bill to buy gifts for their own friends and family. At high school graduation time, Vaughan

scanned the newspaper for the names of leading graduates. Those headed to Eureka College would receive a \$1,000 scholarship check in the mail. One mother broke down in tears during the phone call to the financial aid office when she learned it wasn't a joke.

"He was very creative and imaginative in his giving," says daughter Julia Rodgers, who now lives in California. She recalls how her son's preschool teacher had a car that broke down. Because he respected the woman's work, "He sent her some money to buy her a reliable used car."

Such thoughtful zest is one reason many find it hard to handle his sudden death. While Vaughan was diagnosed with

lung cancer in June, he spent most of the summer in Michigan. Returning just before Labor Day, tests results on Tuesday revealed his death was imminent. Long-time friend/client and fellow philanthropist Esther Cohen was on her way over to the house with a plate of muffins at the time he died Thursday afternoon.

"It was a great loss to the whole community," she says. "He was the most completely charitable man I've ever met."

And there is nothing ordinary about that.