Joseph Mason Rodgers was born in Bay Minette, Alabama, in 1933 and grew up in Montgomery. He received a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from the University of Alabama in 1956 and then served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey until 1958.

In 1966 Rodgers began what would become an extremely successful career in construction when he founded his own general contracting firm, and during his 13-year association with the company it grew to become one of the largest in the nation. He sold his interest in the Rodgers Companies in 1979 and since that time he has been associated with diverse business, political and civic endeavors.

In 1986 President Reagan appointed Rodgers as U.S. Ambassador to France and his four-year term was one of the longest for that position. It is said that he was the most respected and best liked ambassador to France since Benjamin Franklin.

Rodgers currently owns the highly successful J.M.R. Investments Corporation in Nashville, Tennessee. In addition to his financial success, he has been a tireless worker in civic and charitable activities, serving as a member of the board of directors of more than 25 of these organizations.

He is past chairman of American Constructors Inc., and Center Group Inc., and a former board member of the Nashville City Bank, Circle “S” Industries Inc., and Highway Service Ventures Inc.

Presently he serves on the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and the Tennessee Agricultural Development Commission. He is chairman of Americans for Responsible Government, Responsible Government for America, and State Jobs Training Coordinating Council for the Jobs Training Partnership Act.

Rodgers is a member of the board of the James S. Brady Presidential Foundation, Middle Tennessee Boy Scouts of America, National Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Salvation Army, U.S. Industrial Council, YMCA Endowment Foundation, Cumberland Valley Girl Scout Foundation, Merit Shop Foundation, and Randolph-Macon Woman’s College.

He was the recipient of the American Cancer Society’s John Tune Award in 1985 and was named Nashville Businessman of the Year by the Nashville City Bank in 1984. He has served as national president of Associated Builders and Contractors Inc., and received the Silver Beaver Award from the Boy Scouts of America in 1983.

During his distinguished career, Rodgers has been known as an excellent role model, dedicated to his country and his profession. In 1987 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Alabama, and was named a 150th Anniversary Distinguished Engineering Fellow by the University in 1988.

He resides in Nashville, Tennessee, with his wife, Helen. They have a son, Joseph Mason Rodgers, Jr., and a daughter, Jan Martin Rodgers.