NEWS RELEASE

J.M. Smucker Announces Death of Paul H. Smucker

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ORRVILLE, Ohio, Dec. 18 /**PRNewswire**/ -- The J. M. Smucker Company, Orrville, Ohio (NYSE: SJMA and SJMB), announced today that Paul H. Smucker, the grandson of the company's founder, Jerome M. Smucker, and the Company's current chairman of the executive committee, passed away on Thursday, December 17, 1998. Mr. Smucker was 81.

Mr. Smucker had worked for the Company continuously since 1939, except for his service as a naval officer in the Pacific Theater during World War II. Upon his return from the service, Mr. Smucker became the Company's general manager, a position he held until assuming the office of president in 1961. In 1970, he assumed the additional role of chairman and chief executive officer. In 1981, Mr. Smucker turned over the role of president to his eldest son, Tim Smucker, who then succeeded his father as chairman in 1987. Also in 1987, Mr. Smucker's younger son, Richard Smucker, became the Company's president. It was at that time that Paul Smucker assumed the position of chairman of the executive committee, where he remained active in helping to direct the Company's strategic decisions. Tim and Richard Smucker have continued in the roles of chairman and president, respectively, since 1987 and have been responsible for the Company's day-to-day operations.

Under Paul Smucker's leadership, The J.M. Smucker Company grew from a small, regional jam and jelly manufacturer to a company of international scope. Today, it is the nation's preeminent producer of branded preserves, jams, jellies, and other fruit spread products, health and natural foods beverages, ice cream toppings, and natural peanut butter. Perhaps more importantly, Mr. Smucker's example and leadership made the Company not only a commercial success but also a well-respected employer, supplier, and customer. The Company's

recognition last year by Fortune magazine as one of the best places to work in America was due in no small part to the influence and example of Paul Smucker. As Dr. Henry Copeland, the retired president of The College of Wooster, said of Mr. Smucker when conferring upon him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1988:

> Your relations with your employees are exemplary, and years before the phrase had been coined, you practiced "management by walking around," maintaining close contact with each of the company's employees, no matter where they might be positioned within the corporate structure, no matter the shift on which they worked. In response, your employees rate your openness and respect for their individuality and integrity as among the most telling of your leadership qualities. Moreover, the high standards of excellence which you have always set for yourself and which reflect a fusion of your personal, business and religious values, inspire in others a unique sense of their own responsibility for carrying on a tradition of excellence.

In announcing Mr. Smucker's passing to the employees of The J. M. Smucker Company, Tim and Richard Smucker made the following comments:

> We know that we do not need to tell any of you what Dad meant to us and to everyone with whom he came in contact. He was a business and community leader of the finest kind, but most of all he was a father, friend, and an inspiration. He cared deeply about our Company and each and every one of its employees, and we know that each of you felt the same way about him.
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> Dad will be missed. But rather than dwell on his passing, let us instead celebrate his life and his accomplishments. And, in particular, during this holiday season, let us focus our thoughts as we know Dad would want all of us to do -- on our families and our friends and the blessings in which we all share. These were the things that mattered most to him and we can think of no better way to honor him than to follow his example whenever and however we can.

Mr. Smucker was a graduate of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Miami as well as from The College of Wooster. He served for many years as a director of Kellogg Company and First National Bank of Orrville and as a trustee of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. He was also a longtime director of the Grocery Manufacturers Association and remained active in trade and industry activities throughout his life. Mr. Smucker played a leadership role in the founding of the Wayne College branch of Akron University in Orrville and at

the time of his passing was serving as president of the Orrville Campus Foundation. Among the many awards received by Mr. Smucker were the Charles E. Wilson Award from Religion in American Life and the Ohio Governor's Award. Mr. Smucker was a member of the Christian Science Church in Wooster, Ohio.

Mr. Smucker is survived by his wife of 58 years, the former Lorraine Smith, by his daughter, Susan Smucker Wagstaff, and son-in-law, Reid Wagstaff, of Carmel, California, his son, Tim, and daughter-in-law, Jennifer, of Orrville, Ohio, and his son, Richard, and daughter-in-law, Emily, of Medina, Ohio. He is also survived by eight grandchildren and three great- grandchildren, and by his sister, Marcella Smucker Clark, of Scottsdale, Arizona.