



JOHN A. GUNN

**Founder, President, and Chairman of the Board
Employers Mutual Casualty Company**

John A. Gunn was born June 26, 1861, in Canada and moved to the United States at age eight. Even though Mr. Gunn's formal education ended with the fourth grade, he became self-educated as the result of "avid reading and great retention." He was employed as an insurance salesman in Council Bluffs from 1880-1884, and then moved to Lexington, Nebraska, where he served as mayor while working in the farm implement business. In 1895, he moved to Des Moines as a general agent for J. I. Case Company, which built steam engines. Ten years later, he organized and later became President of Gould Balance Valve Company in Kellogg, Iowa, manufacturing valves for steam engines that were in use on farms, in industry, and in municipal plants.

As a businessman, Mr. Gunn became involved with health and property casualty insurance issues. In 1907 when health insurance was an emerging issue, he served on the board of directors of the Iowa State Traveling Men's Association, the nation's largest accident association for commercial travelers. Mr. Gunn was also very active in the Iowa Manufacturer's Association (IMA), the predecessor of the Iowa Association of Business & Industry, when property casualty insurance expanded beyond standard fire insurance. He was elected IMA Vice President in May 1911 and President in 1912. While serving as Chairman of the IMA Executive Committee in 1911, he was thrust to the forefront of activity as a founder of Employers Mutual Casualty Company (later known as EMC Insurance Companies). As a result, Mr. Gunn became an expert, an advocate, and a role model related to Iowa workers compensation legislation and to mutual insurance companies.

Mr. Gunn served as Vice President of the National Association of Mutual Casualty Companies from 1920 to 1935 and as director for the Chamber of Commerce and Central National Bank & Trust Company. He was well known for his generous service to numerous community organizations.

Mr. Gunn was chosen as EMC's first President and served with high ethical standards in that position until 1940. He resigned due to ill health and assumed the title of Chairman of the Board until his death in 1941. His EMC newsletter obituary read, "J.A. Gunn's eighty years were one life-long, gracious service in his family life, in his church connections, in his club, in his community affairs, and in his business relations. His valued contributions to the welfare of mankind will make his memory forever enduring... No man was more mindful of his opportunity for service, or more willing in the performance of his duties."