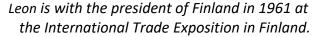
## J. Leon Chandler

(1922 - 2004)

After graduating from high school in Missouri and a year of business school, he came to Cortland as a 19 year old to visit his cousin. That cousin was Cortland State football coach Carl "Chugger" Davis for which the Cortland State Athletics Administration Building is named after. While visiting, Leon answered an ad in the local newspaper for an accounting job with the Cortland Line Company. He started work in 1941 a few days after the December 7th attack on Pearl Harbor. After about a year working at the Cortland Line Company, he found himself attached to Douglas MacArthur in the Philippines as an Army Signal Corps cryptographer.

After the war was over, he returned to Cortland and continued working for the Cortland Line Company until his retirement in 1992. During those 50 years, Leon Chandler put Cortland on the world map demonstrating and teaching fly fishing.







Leon (I) with Ted Williams (r) a good friend and fishing partner.

He was given the unofficial title of "America's Fly Fishing Ambassador." His visits behind the Iron Curtain to Poland and Hungary, at the invitation of the U. S Department of Commerce, found him demonstrating US fishing tackle to hundreds of thousands of international trade show visitors. Perhaps his greatest personal influence to the sport of fly fishing came with numerous visits to Japan starting in 1972. Prior to his demonstrations and clinics throughout Japan, there were perhaps only 300 fly fishers in Japan. By some estimates, there are now over a half million.





This picture was taken at the fair in Poland described by the newspaper article on the left.

Leon Chandler served as National President of Trout Unlimited for two years in 1979 & 1980 and served as an at-large National Director for 22 years. In 1988, he was inducted into the National

Fishing Hall of Fame as a legendary angler. A quote from Leon Chandler as he attended the re-naming of the Fall Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited to the Leon Chandler Chapter several years ago says a lot. "When I have a chance, I tell the city fathers of Cortland that Cortland Line Co. does more to promote the name "CORTLAND" than anyone else. If you ask a fisherman in England, Iceland, Australia,



Russia, Japan, South Africa--or most any other place in the world--what the name "Cortland" means, he will tell you it means *fine fishing lines*. He doesn't know, and perhaps doesn't care that there is a city in upstate New York named Cortland. When I was traveling overseas a lot, I sometimes

had people ask

"Was the Company named after the City, or was the City named after the Company?"

While his work called him to all corners of the world, his home in Homer on Ferndale Lane served as a launching site for frequent visits to his favorite local fishing locations such as Factory Brook, Tully Lake and Preble Creek. There currently is a New York historical marker along the banks of Factory Brook in Homer.



Leon fishing with his grandson Stephen

Leon's story and pictures were provided by his son, J. Kim Chandler.