

Donald M. Robinson (1925 - 2007) - Entrepreneur, Philanthropist, Photographer and Leader of the Jewish Community

Donald M. Robinson, entrepreneur, philanthropist, photographer, and leader of the Jewish community, died on June 25, 2017 in Boca Raton, Florida at the age of 91. Born in Altoona, PA to Alex and Leona Robinson, Don was raised in Pittsburgh and graduated from Taylor Allderdice High School. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy College Training Program to serve in WWII. He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of South Carolina and then completed his education at Harvard Business School. Upon graduation Don was commissioned as an Ensign and assigned to the USS General Harry Taylor where, as a 20 year old, he was the ship's disbursement and procurement officer, transporting troops from Europe. He rose to the rank of Lieutenant (junior grade) and completed his service in the reserves.

Entrepreneur

Don married the love of his life, Sylvia, in 1947 and started his career, joining his father and brother Harold (Buddy) Robinson in A. Robinson & Company, a wholesale tobacco and candy business. The company transitioned to supplying health and beauty products to supermarkets. In 1961 White Cross Stores was founded as a pioneer in discount drugstores with Don as President. Don's younger brother Sanford joined the new venture. White Cross was at the forefront of challenging fair trade laws in PA, winning a lawsuit brought by Gillette that opened the door to discount retailing. Under Don's leadership, the chain expanded across the eastern seaboard and was listed on the New York Stock Exchange. White Cross merged with Revco in 1972. Don continued his business career serving on the boards of other public companies and launching other ventures.

Don and Sylvia had two children, Stephen (Teresa) and Carol (Jeffrey Markel), and three grandchildren: Abigail Foster (Michael), Leslie Markel (Felix Berger), and Richard Markel. Family was all-important to Don and Sylvia, who planned many memorable vacations, most recently with their two great grandchildren.

Charitable and Philanthropic Activities

Don's business success enabled him to pursue a lifetime of charitable and philanthropic activities both in Pittsburgh and around the world. Nationally, he served as President and Chairman of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, National Chairman of the Interfaith Hunger Appeal, Chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, and as a member of the board of the United Israel Appeal and the Council of Jewish Federation and Welfare Funds.

In Pittsburgh, he served as the President of the board of the United Jewish Federation as well as a member of the board of directors of the Pittsburgh Symphony Society, WQED Public Television, Montefiore Hospital, The Rehabilitation Institute of Pittsburgh, The Jewish Healthcare Foundation, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, and the Associated Artists of Pittsburgh. In 1993 his efforts as Chairman of the Renaissance Campaign of the UJF raised \$54 million to transform

and rehabilitate the infrastructure of a dozen nonprofit organizations in the Jewish community.

Photography

Don had a lifelong passion for photography, which won him international recognition. His work was featured in the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and the Cornell Museum of Art, to name a few. Don's permanent collection of over 700 images is housed at the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, and his work is in numerous public and private collections.

Don explored all seven continents to capture the natural world, often accompanied by his wife and children. He embraced digital photography as a senior, sharing prints with family and friends up until the day he passed! Sylvia was his 70-year partner and shared in his endeavors and interests.

The funeral service will be at Temple Beth El Mausoleum in Boca Raton Florida on Monday, June 26 at 10:00 a.m. Family requests contributions be directed to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee at jdc.org, or the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at sama-art.org.