



Robert B. Irwin

November 4, 1926 - July 23, 2018

Robert B. Irwin went home to be with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on Monday, July 23, 2018. A celebration of life for Bob, 91, of Tyler, will be held on Thursday, July 26, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. in the Green Acres Baptist Church Chapel with Dr. David O. Dykes officiating.

Mr. Irwin was born November 4, 1926, in El Dorado, Arkansas, to Ada Barnard Irwin and Raymond Alexander Irwin. He was the youngest of five children. The family moved to Texarkana, Arkansas when Bob was four years of age. In an effort to help support the family, he started a magazine route at the age of six selling the Ladies Home Journal and the Saturday Evening Post. He later became a morning and evening paper carrier at 14 years old while attending high school.

His athletic activities began in the 9th grade with participation in football, basketball, and track. As co-captain of the basketball team his senior year, he helped take the team to the state championship. The summer following high school he played semi-professional baseball in Texarkana.

Bob joined the Navy and taught trainees in San Diego, California toward the end of World War II. Following his military service, he attended the University of Arkansas in 1946 and studied architecture and dentistry. He found his true calling in business, however, and graduated with a BA in 1950. During a visit

to see his sister in Tyler, he met Ed Lindsey of Lindsey and Newsom Insurance Adjusters and joined the firm of 16 total staff members. He returned briefly to Little Rock, Arkansas, to marry his college sweetheart, Joan Glasgow. Joan Irwin died in 1989.

Shortly thereafter he was transferred to Lufkin where their first daughter, Diane, was born. In 1953, he moved to the Palestine office as Manager and daughters Jeanye and Ruth were born. The family moved to Beaumont in 1956 where Irwin rapidly developed the Golden Triangle area, opening offices in Port Arthur and Orange. He became Regional Manager in 1966 and supervised newly acquired offices in Jasper, Victoria, Harlingen, and Corpus Christi soon followed by larger offices in Dallas, San Antonio, and Houston.

Bob bought Jim Newsom's share of the company following his sudden death in 1968 and returned to Tyler as Vice President and General Manager of the firm. In 1970, Ed Lindsey named him President and General Manager and Irwin built the corporate headquarters at Brookside and Shelly Drive. He continued developing offices in San Angelo, Abilene, Amarillo, Lubbock, and Midland in addition to operating in Arkansas and Louisiana. He purchased the remainder of the company after Ed Lindsey's death in 1974.

Irwin stressed participation by all personnel and the strength of the company grew through the Quality Control Program he developed and continuing education. Through Bob's leadership the company became known for retention of outstanding personnel and loyalty to him and to the firm. He had leadership roles in the State Association of Independent Insurance Adjusters, the International Institute of Loss Adjusters and National Association of Independent Insurance Adjusters.

The statement, "Bob Irwin trained me" was always spoken with pride by the members of the company because they knew he was committed to quality

and the highest integrity. His gift was the ability to motivate people to strive to perform their very best.

Under Bob Irwin's drive and determination L&N ultimately swept the Eastern half of the United States until there were 2500 employees in 168 offices across 32 states. In 1987 Irwin sold Lindsey and Newsome Insurance Adjusters to Richmond, Virginia based Markel Corporation and Fairfax Financial Corporation of Toronto, Canada. The company quickly grew to more than 400 offices in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Europe.

Tyler became the hub of an international corporation as Irwin remained President of the merged firms, both domestically and internationally, until his retirement in December, 1990. Cunningham Lindsey now operates in 47 countries.

Following his retirement, he established Robert B. Irwin Enterprises and continued using his business talents through investments, the purchase of Manpower, Inc. and The Sportster. Because he felt so blessed and believed strongly in giving back to the community, he became a major philanthropist to virtually every service and educational organization in Tyler. Always believing in the importance of a good education, he sent many young people to study at the university of their choice or gave individuals the underwriting to open a business of their own.

He contributed to Hospice by providing a patient care wing and followed with the Pat Oge Center for Living. He was instrumental in establishing the Eisenhower Golf Tournament with President George Hamm at The University of Texas at Tyler and was actively involved for the duration of the tournament. He established endowed chairs and scholarships from his support of the UT

Tyler Patriot Classic. He was an underwriter of The Children's Park; established the Robert B. Irwin Family Internal Medicine Clinic (Center for Diabetes Care & Gastrointestinal Clinic) at UT Health Center; the middle school building at All-Saints School and donated the land for the Meadow Lake Retirement Community.

He and his wife, Mary, were named the first Honorary Chairmen of the 2001 Cattle Baron's Gala. They were also named 2004 Patriots of the Year by the University of Texas at Tyler for his contribution toward a baseball and softball complex on the university campus. He felt the field would serve as an important tool in developing a healthy student life atmosphere. Bob was a member Emeritus of the UT Tyler Development Board, a current member of the Cowan Center President's Circle, the President's Associates, and a charter member of the Heritage Society. One of the original founders of Hollytree Country Club, he was also a long-time member of Willow Brook Country Club. He was a former Director of the Rose Festival and a member of Friday Night Dinner Club.

A true lover of nature, he was an avid hunter and fisherman. He had a fishing camp in Illiama, Alaska, but also fished rivers in Montana, Wyoming, and in England, Scotland, Argentina, Uruguay, Peru, and the Amazon River. He spent happy years hunting deer at his Las Vegas Ranch outside Cotulla, Texas; quail with friends at Quailridge, Georgia; bear in Alaska and elk in Wyoming. His knowledge of wildlife habits is legend and in his later years he was content in simply enjoying the beauty of animals and being outdoors. He was a "scratch" golfer and one of his favorite experiences was spending a month in Scotland with Scottish friend, David Chalmers, playing every golf course in Scotland.

With the enthusiasm of an explorer, he set his goal on seeing the world. He

circled the globe several times in the desire to see most of it. Joining him in his travels was second wife Norma Provost Irwin. When they weren't traveling, they spent time at the farm they shared at Woodville, Texas, or their home in Telluride, Colorado. His family expanded to include Provost sons, David and Tom. Norma Irwin died in 2000.

When President Rod Mabry of UT Tyler decided that the university needed to expand the sports programs, he went to Bob with a proposal. During the planning of the Irwin Baseball and Softball Complex, Bob and Mary Irwin decided to become "Team Irwin." They married in 2003 and continued Bob's philanthropic endeavors. Mary resigned as Vice-President of University Advancement a few months after their marriage to explore some places from her "bucket list" with Bob. Always the loving father figure, Bob added Mary's son, Jed Swink and his family, to his extended one. Jed, a pilot, flew for Bob several years after his retirement. The last decade has been spent closer to home enjoying the company of caring friends and family.

Bob and Mary are devoted to Sunday worship at Green Acres Baptist Church and supporting GABC's various outreach programs. It was rare that you didn't find them on Bob's "favorite pew." They are also members of Fred Smith's Sunday School class. A large part of Bob's time at home was spent in his favorite recliner praying for family and friends. His list was long. His life was a testimony to his faith and an amazing journey for over 91 years from a child newspaper carrier into the arms of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bob is survived by his loving family including his wife, Mary Irwin; daughters, Diane Harris, Jeanye Irwin, Ruth and Roman Kupchynsky, sons, Jed Swink, Tom Provost, David and Maria Provost; grandchildren, Brooke and Logan Steiner, Courtney and Doug Dexter, Allison Braund and Trey Harris, Kathleen and Roman Kupchynsky, Robert Kupchynsky, Heather and Clay Eiland, Erika Provost, and Robert Provost; great-grandchildren, Benjamin Steiner, Madeline

Steiner, Sophia Eiland, Theodore Eiland, and Shepard Eiland; and a multitude of much loved nieces and nephews.

Honorary Pallbearers: Jeff Buford, Dr. Jim Cotton, John Hills, Dr. Howard Patterson, Dr. William Starling, Fred Smith, Jim Culver, Ken Goates, Carter Gabriel, U.S. Congressman Louie Gohmert, William Wiley

Note: In the past 12 years of medical challenges, Bob was grateful to receive excellent

treatment from a host of outstanding medical professionals: Doctors Ben Bridges, Fagg Sanford, Charles Dickson, Jim Cotton, George Plotkin, Paul Detwiler, Stephen Rydzak,

Eric Madore and Paul Peters of Dallas and physical therapists: David Bulls and Alycia Whooton. The family would also like to thank caretakers Teresa High, Cristina Puentes, Vernetta Stevens, Amber Calloway, Rufina Barroso and Higinio Bocanegara.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Green Acres Baptist Church, 1607 Troup Hwy., Tyler, TX 75701; UT Tyler Athletics Department, 3900 University Blvd., Tyler, TX 75799; The Hospice of East Texas Foundation, 4111 University Blvd., Tyler, TX 75701 or the charity of one's choice.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUL **26.** 2:00 PM (CT)

Green Acres Baptist Church - Chapel
1607 Troup Hwy
Tyler, TX 75701

Tribute Wall

LM

“ Loretta Martinez sent a virtual gift in memory of Robert B. Irwin



Loretta Martinez - August 11, 2018 at 06:21 PM

KS

“ I spent many wonderful hours playing at the Erwin home in Palestine with Diane, Ruthie and Jeannie... always feeling accepted and loved by their parents. I am so sorry to hear of your loss but what a powerful legacy he leaves behind through the lives of his family. His aptitude for business and generous spirit will live on for many years.

You all are in my thoughts and prayers.

Karen Joyce Sheffer

Karen Sheffer - July 26, 2018 at 04:06 PM

AG

“ Ann Guin purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Robert B. Irwin.



Ann Guin - July 25, 2018 at 07:35 PM