

'Generous' owner of Casa Ford dies at 84

By David Burge
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El Paso lost a business community giant on Sunday.

Wallace Moore "Wally" Lowenfield, the longtime owner of Casa Ford, died Sunday of cancer at age 84.



Lowenfield

"He was a true gentleman and loved people and loved serving them," said his son, Clay Lowenfield.

Wally Lowenfield bought the El Paso Ford car dealership in 1969 with four friends. They renamed it Casa Ford and moved it to its current location on Montana Avenue in 1972. He sold the dealership to his son, Clay, in 1996.

Besides being an icon in the local business community, Lowenfield was active in numerous organizations. He was president of United Way, the Boys & Girls Club, the YMCA and the Del Norte Club, among others. He was a lay reader at St. Clement's Church for more than 40 years and served as a member of the church vestry, including being the junior and senior warden.

"He loved being part of the community and serving the community and his family," Clay Lowenfield said. "He had so many friends. He respected the dignity of all people and never judged them. He loved meeting people and was truly interested in them.

"His greatest gift was his generosity. He was generous beyond his means. If he had one dollar left, he'd give that away."

Owner

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Wally Lowenfield got his hair cut at Baldwin's Barber Shop in Central El Paso for at least 15 years.

Bill Baldwin, co-owner of the shop, remembered Lowenfield for his kind, gentle nature.

"The advertisements for the dealership say, 'We're the nice guys,' and that's certainly true for Wally," Baldwin said. "He was always so kind and so respectful. He loved children and anytime there was a child in the barber shop, he'd light up and play cards with them or talk to them."

Lowenfield was born on Jan. 15, 1928, in Phoenix, but moved to El Paso with his parents, Helen-Moore and Ralph Albert Lowenfield, when he was 4.

He grew up in Kern Place where he attended Dudley

School and El Paso High School. He attended the Texas College of the Mines, served in World War II in the Navy and returned home to graduate from college.

He started his working career at Madera Lumber Co. working with his father. He left to start an insurance company with lifelong friend Walter Driver.

The Lowenfield/Driver Insurance Co. later merged with Belk Insurance in the 1960s. He sold insurance until getting into the car business.

Lowenfield served on the National Dealer Council for Ford Motor Co. from 1984 to 1988 and was the council's chairman in 1986-87 where he represented Ford dealers from all over the country.

He bought Sun Datsun in 1984 and renamed it Casa Nissan. He bought and sold other dealerships here in El Paso and around the country.

Lowenfield was preceded in death by his parents. He is sur-

vived by his wife of 61 years, Patricia Milliken Lowenfield; his brother Ralph Lowenfield (Sandra); his sister MaryAnn Andrews (Stafford) of Houston; and his sister Tilly Chandler of San Angelo. He had six children: PattiAnn Lowenfield; Connie Shaw (Roland) of La Jolla, Calif.; Clay Lowenfield (Rhonda); Kathryn Livingston (Sammy); Cole Lowenfield of Austin; and Jennifer Sliva (Stuart). He had 18 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

His life will be celebrated with services at 10 a.m. Wednesday at St. Clement's Church, 810 N. Campbell, and he will be buried at Memory Gardens.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Rescue Mission of El Paso and St. Clement's Church or School.

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