

#1: July 4th, 1974 – The Day Del Webb Died

July 4, 1974 was the day Del Webb died. The day the Webb Corporation was changed forever. He had great employees working for him, many you will meet in coming posts, but none could fill the void he left. He was the front man for the band, the energy behind the hundreds of projects they did.

When he died, there were countless accolades. Memorials by those who knew, respected and loved him. None more poignant than the following tribute in Jubilee written by Doug Morris, president of the Sun City taxpayers association.

“ I hope his spirit never rests – that it continues on the winding streets, that it motivates those with the task of translating the genius of the vision into the reality for those who reach 65 or older who may feel the challenge is over.”

“I hope his spirit never rests. For then whose voice would come to us on the breeze that drifts over the land of Arizona. Whose voice would say, “I built you a Sun City, but only you can fulfill its promise? “



“As we celebrate and honor the life and death of Del Webb, one cannot ignore the Irony of the sign that was ever-present on his desk.”

Del was 75 years old when he died. He went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester MN for exploratory surgery for lung cancer and died from complications following the operation.

His death was sudden and unexpected. He was in great physical condition and was health conscious. The stories are well documented of his disdain for smoking and forbid it in his office. The “no smoking” signs were ever present.

While serving as president of the museum I was giving a tour and as we were leaving the Del Webb room, the comment was made Del was just like Donald Trump (long before he became president). I smiled and said, “Not quite, Mr. Webb built things.”

The simple truth is Del Webb’s companies were one of, if not the biggest, commercial builders in the country. Their projects over his 50 years number 300, many of them massive. Some, as you will see, were unique and well ahead of their time. Brilliant in both design and scope.

Beyond his life, his legacy has lived on in ways most know little about. In 1960, he formed and began privately funding the Del E Webb Foundation. To this day, they exist; they promote and engage in charitable, educational, medical services, and medical research of a public nature.



“Del’s memory lives on with the bronze statute standing at the Bell Recreation Center. He was beloved by those first moving to Sun City and those sentiments have carried on for nearly 60 years.”

These brief words have barely scratched the surface of Del Webb. His life was filled with accomplishments. Our goal is to help insure Del, his company and those who worked with and for him live on in more than just street names.

Hopefully we will do justice to the legacy he left us. More importantly, we hope you will stay with us on this journey of a lifetime by the man who gave us so many incredible memories.

Thank you for reading. The Del Webb Sun Cites Museum is dedicated to the preservation of his life and all he gave us.

Bill Pearson