

#18: Del Webb's Sun City – Epilogue

Thanks to all who have stayed with me on this journey. It was always about getting to this closing segment. It's the one unwritten piece of history that needs to be stated clearly, unambiguously. I don't expect readers to blindly accept my premise; it is simply my take after years of reading and writing about Del Webb, The Man and the Company.

I have a very basic philosophy about what makes for a life well lived: It is never about what a man or woman can gather, accumulate or take from life...it's about what they are able to give back. It's why Del's story is so significant.

Delbert Eugene Webb: 1899-1974:

The one thing Del Webb appeared to understand better than others; it was never about him. As great, as compelling and as remarkable as his story was, his life's work was embodied in those around him; those he trusted to help shape the legacy; those he inspired to be more than they even thought possible.

His career spanned nearly 50 years. The projects are too many to list. The quality of work was as good as or better than any builder that ever lived. He made a fortune. He made others around him wealthy. His reputation preceded him. People genuinely liked him. Sun City residents loved and adored him.

Life for Del was never about any of those things. He was a proud man, but always remained humble. He was a quiet man and always let his actions do his talking. He loved when those around him got the credit and the accolades they deserved. There wasn't an arrogant bone in his body.



The memorial of Del Webb pointing the way at the Bell Recreation Center is a tribute to his vision. What we know now is, there was so much more to Del Webb, The Man and the Company. His ultimate contribution to a life well lived.

As much as this story has been about Las Vegas, the New York Yankees, massive building projects that employed tens of thousands, coming back from the brink of failure and the rise to one of the best of the best, it wasn't the end game. It was so much more.

This story's header was "Del Webb's Sun City" for a reason. What was built here was the ultimate exclamation point on a life well lived. It was the culmination of a life's work; the story of Del Webb, The Man and The Company that changed a nation.

It would be redundant to name names; it took a massive effort for Sun City to succeed. It will never be repeated. New communities are different, but that's a discussion for another time.

All of which brings me to this final point: Del Webb, Jim Boswell, Robert H Johnson and John Meeker had a higher calling. Anyone with the proper skills can build houses, shopping centers, office buildings and the like. No offense to good contractors, but Sun City was something wholly different.

They wanted to leave a lasting imprint; one that set them apart. They wanted to create a community where there was more than just a bunch of homes, one with a way of life that would give seniors something to look forward to, hunger for. They exceeded beyond anyone's wildest imagination.

The Webb Corporation changed a nation and forevermore shaped a concept, an industry that has spread across the country. No matter how new or how nice, no one has done it better or more affordably. To this day, Sun City is still the model for efficiency and effectiveness.

Upon his death, he provided for his first wife Hazel and his second wife Toni. The vast majority of his assets were put into the Del E. Webb Foundation. It was intended to fund hospitals and research. To this day, they have donated millions of dollars to worthy causes. Even more amazing, they will continue to do so for years to come.



Del Webb's legacy is embodied in what he gave us. His efforts should never be forgotten or reduced to a street named after him. The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum is dedicated to preserving his life's work and all those who contributed to changing a nation with the creation of Sun City Arizona. Thank you Del, you will never know how much you and your team changed all of our lives.

It should come as no surprise Robert Johnson and James Boswell also have foundations. They were exceptionally good men of strong conviction and dedicated to creating and leaving more than they ever took from life. Del, Bob and Jim, long after their deaths are still giving back.

Since Sun City's opening, seniors buying and living in the community have enjoyed a quality of life they never expected or anticipated. Every one of us owes a debt of gratitude to Webb and those that built it. The funny thing is, none of them wants or needs your/our thanks. Given what we know, they would much rather see us pay it forward.

It's exactly why this effort was so easy for me. I was simply trying to do my part in helping carry the message and the legacy of Del Webb, The Man and The Company forward. Hopefully I have achieved that in some small measure.

Carry on, folks, carry on.

Bill Pearson