

HISTORY

# Was Del Webb in the movies?

## Sun City developer had Hollywood ties

By Ed Allen  
SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT  
NEWSMEDIA

Del Webb is known as a successful businessman, as well as co-owner of the New York Yankees, but his connection with movies was strictly as an investor, not as an actor.

His first contact with Hollywood came about as a golf outing with Bing Crosby and screenwriter Jimmy Grant. Relax-

ing in the clubhouse afterward, Mr. Crosby urged Mr. Webb to invest in their new film "so they could do it right." Mr. Webb wrote out a check on the spot for \$100,000, and the film, "The Great John L." about the greatest boxer of that time, went on to become a smash success — beginning Mr. Webb's interest in movie production as a hobby.

This and other little known facets of Del Webb's life come alive at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, 10801 Oakmont Drive, Sun City. The mu-

seum's Speakers Bureau provides talks for local groups on the lives of Del Webb, Jim Boswell and John Meeker, as well as the stories of how Marinette, Sun City and Sun City West came to be.

To arrange for a speaker, contact the museum at 623-974-2568.

The museum is open for visitors 1-4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. There is no admission charge, but donations are gladly accepted.

**Editor's Note:** Mr. Allen serves on the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum Board of Directors.



Del Webb during a visit to Sun City, above, and the movie poster for "The Great John L."

# Death takes Sun City's founder

Del E. Webb, founder and chairman of the board for the Del E. Webb Corporation, died Thursday in the Mayo Clinic at Rochester from complications following exploratory surgery. He was 75.

His body was cremated Friday in Rochester, and his ashes scattered over his beloved Arizona, in accordance with his wishes.

Born May 17, 1899, in Fresno, Calif., to Ernest and Henrietta Fortcamp Webb, he was equally at home with a hammer or a baseball as a boy.

WHEN the senior Webb's construction company declared bankruptcy, his young son quit school to work as a carpenter weekdays and pitch semi-

professional games on Sundays. However, a seige of typhoid fever and an injury while sliding into home base reduced the youth's chances for an athletic career.

Seeking a new climate and new opportunities, he moved to Phoenix and found work with a small contracting company. Despite a worthless Friday paycheck from a disappearing contractor, the 29-year-old carpenter opened a modest construction business in July 1928.

Thus was born the Del E. Webb Construction Co., with total assets of one cement mixer, 10 wheelbarrows, 20 shovels, and 10 picks.

HOWEVER, he was a bright man with competent

employees, and his business boomed.

He specialized in the construction of commercial buildings, schools, homes, and hotels. In the 1950s, the company entered the development field, acquiring land, building and selling homes, and planning commercial sites.

In 1945, Mr. Webb fulfilled a boyhood dream by joining Dan Topping in buying the New York Yankees. This found him in a dominant role at major league council tables as a leader in solving American League and baseball realignment, expansion, and legislative problems.

UNDER the two owners the Yankees won 15 American League championships and 10 World

Series crowns. However an opportunity to sell his Yankee interest to CBS in 1965 saw the contractor close a 20-year ownership career.

His love for sports never was relinquished. He joined Phoenix business friends in the early '30s to establish the Phoenix Open and once shot a 67 in an opening program to have his name written above champions Byron Nelson and Ben Hogan, pros of the day.

In 1960, the Del E. Webb Construction Co. became the Del E. Webb Corporation and launched the world-famous Sun City retirement community.

WITH corporate headquarters in Phoenix, the Webb interests soon included airlines, banking,

mining, manufacturing, and oil. Major hotels are centered in Hawaii and the West, but firm projects expand to Iowa and Florida.

He was an officer and director of Bing Crosby Producers, Inc., the Sun Country Broadcasting Co., Arizona Airways, and Arizona Brewing Co.

Hotels include the Sahara and Mint in Las Vegas, the Sahara-Tahoe in Lake Tahoe, Newport Inn at Newport Beach, Calif., Kuilima Hotel in Oahu, Hawaii, Primadonna Club in Reno, and the TowneHouse and Mountain Shadows here.

Survivors include his wife, Toni, Phoenix, and a brother, Halmer, North Hollywood, Calif.

# NEWS-SUN

The Combined YOUNGTOWN NEWS and SUN CITY SUN

*Arizona's Pioneer Retirement Community Newspaper*

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3 Sections



**▲ THREATENED: CHELSEA HOUSE LIVERY STABLE/LONGWORTH COMPLEX** The flat-roofed, rusticated concrete block structure (above, left) was built between 1905 and 1906 near the train depot in Chelsea, Mich., so that travelers had a place to hitch horses. The building was later converted into an automobile repair shop and storage facility for the larger showroom next door. In 2008, after the structures had sat vacant for six years, the city's Downtown Development Authority purchased them and proposed demolition in order to create a parking lot. But the stable and showroom stand in a historic district recently added to the National Register, offering some hope that the structures may be saved.



**◀ THREATENED: SAHARA HOTEL AND CASINO** Built in 1952 by Del Webb and operated by Milton Prell, this Moroccan-themed destination on the Las Vegas Strip fast became a favorite of the Rat Pack, which often dined at the hotel's House of Lords steakhouse and filmed scenes on site for the movie *Ocean's 11*. In 2007, Los Angeles-based SBE entertainment group purchased the building, intending to restore it. But the company shuttered the Sahara in May, citing economic hardship. Company officials say they are still exploring uses for the structure, but preservationists fear it may ultimately be razed.

ABOVE: ELLEN THACKERY; BELOW: COURTESY LAS VEGAS CONVENTION AND VISITORS AUTHORITY



Joe Cole  
Business and Financial Editor

# Roots of the Webb legend may never be uncovered

Encanto Residential Park was brand new.  
So was the Security Building.

Phoenix' first families were either making preparations for or en route to their summer homes for vacations at Iron Springs, near Prescott, the society pages of The Arizona Republican reported.

The Arizona Biltmore hotel, at \$2.2 million a giant project, was just entering construction.

Goodyear was boastfully introducing pneumatic automobile tires containing fiber cord made of cotton grown in the Salt River Valley and C.P. Stephens was a DeSoto dealer.

It was summer 1928, and somewhere in the Valley a young carpenter named Delbert Webb was swinging a hammer for a building contractor and about to go into business for himself.

The California-born son of a builder, his promising professional baseball career cut short by a bad bout with typhoid and/or an arm or shoulder injury, was on his way to founding the Del E. Webb Corp., a multimillion-dollar company that was to come to run hotels and casinos, develop entire communities and build giant office towers and hospitals and public structures of almost every sort.

A legend was in the making.

As with most legends, though, there were no announcements. The Del Webb legend must be real, because its roots are buried in murky obscurity.

Indeed Webb did come here from California to play baseball, arriving sometime in early 1928, and no doubt he did swing a hammer on construction jobs.

The mist creeps in about here, when we start looking for details about when and under what circumstances Webb became his own boss.

Company lore has it that he was working on a grocery store under construction sometime in July 1928 when his boss, a contractor whose name has been either lost or expunged from the historical files, skipped out. Webb's pay-check bounced.

As legend has it, the store was a Bayless Payless market, and J.B. Bayless, father of A.J., asked young Del the carpenter to take it over.

He did, and Del Webb, contractor, was in business. Accounts later have him recollecting that he came into possession of a small concrete mixer; 10 wheelbarrows, 20 shovels and 10 picks.

About here is where legend and history start to get confused.

The site of that supermarket isn't recorded anywhere that we or the Webb corporate public relations minions have been able to find.

That Del Webb was in business as a contractor in 1929, and probably in 1928, is established in the 1929 Phoenix city directory, listing "Webb Del bldg contr 218 N 9th." Street, that was.

The 1929 Arizona State Business Directory lists "Webb Del E. 230 N. 9th" under contractors and builders.

(The 1930 city directory lists building contractor Del E. Webb with an office at 1633 W. Jefferson and home at 510 W. Fillmore.)

That established, the greater challenge lies in determining where that corporate incubator market was.

Several hours of poring through microfilm of The Arizona Republican and The Arizona Gazette reveal that Bayless, Safeway Pay-n-Takit, Peerless and Piggly Wiggly were the big grocery chains here.

Bayless had pure cane sugar for 64 cents for 10 pounds (in bulk) and Honey Maid graham crackers at 30 cents for a two-pound box; Safeway had Thompson seedless grapes at three pounds for a quarter, the grocery ads said.

The ads didn't list the addresses of the stores then, though.

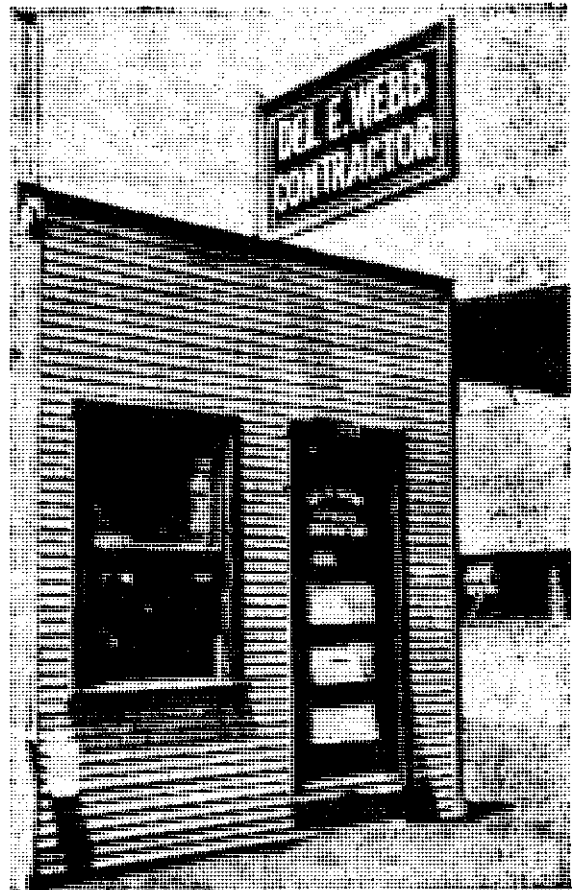
That made it difficult to trace a clue from an early job file that has survived all the years in the Webb corporation's growth.

That file lists in September 1928 a job of fixtures and repairs on the Bayless No. 4.

(It also showed a January 1929 date for the Bayless No. 11.)

Paydirt washed away history-digger eye-strain when the microfilm spun to Page 6 of

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Del E. Webb's first office at 218 N. Ninth St.

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VF - WEBB, DELBERT E.

ARIZONA REPUBLIC APRIL 9, 1978

OVER

## More about *Roots of the Webb legend*

Continued from Page D-17

The Arizona Republican for Saturday Morning, Aug. 25, 1928.

A news item, with picture, reported the opening that day of the Bayless No. 8 at Grand and 11th Avenues to serve the Five Points area. No. 8? Where was 4?

The article reported that plans called for two more stores to open that fall—one in Glendale and the other at Seventh Street and Indian School Road.

The latter, it was said, would be called No. 4 — to take the place of the Gilbert store of that number, which had been sold.

The article about store No. 8 reported that it was built on specifications furnished by the Bayless organization.

The contractor was not named in the piece, the omission a huge exception to the practice of those days.

It could well be that young Del Webb worked on that job, and the unnamed contractor was the one who dropped out on the later job.

The answer may never be found. Most who might remember 50 years ago are gone.

J.B. Bayless, founder of the chain who installed his son, A.J., as the head of the fruit and vegetable section of Bayless Payless No. 8, is gone. So is A.J., who started today's chain in 1930 after his father sold out to the MacMarr chain in 1929.

Webb did indeed build for A.J. Bayless, the first job apparently the A.J. Bayless No. 2 in 1931, built in 27 days at Central and Moreland because Bayless wanted to beat a competitor to a grand opening. (That store was torn down in 1971 to make way for a freeway.)

Webb went on to build homes in the Encanto

area and elsewhere in Phoenix, then branched out to northern Arizona and southern Arizona and California, taking on bigger and bigger jobs.

The point of all this serves only to establish that the Del E. Webb Corp. is in fact in its 50th year, as its switchboard operators have been answering calls for the past several months.

It's just that nobody know for sure the exact company birthdate.

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# Del E. Webb dies; builder of Sun City

Del E. Webb, 75, who built a small Phoenix contracting business into the Del E. Webb Corp., one of the nation's largest construction firms, died Thursday in Rochester, Minn.

Mr. Webb, a former co-owner of the New York Yankees, underwent lung surgery for cancer at the Methodist Hospital in Rochester in March. He returned to Phoenix, but flew back to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester the third week of June.

During a checkup, Mayo doctors did exploratory surgery and he died from complications following the operation.

In accordance with Mr. Webb's will, there will be no funeral service. His body will be cremated today in Rochester, and his ashes spread over Arizona.

Residents of Sun City, which was developed by the Webb corporation, may hold a memorial service, a company spokesman said.

Mr. Webb was chairman of the board of the corporation, which owned hotels, office buildings and land developments. He founded the company here in 1928.

Mr. Webb as a young man wanted to become a professional baseball player,



Del E. Webb

but this dream was thwarted by injury and illness.

His love of the game, however, led him to become co-owner of the New York Yankees during the late 1940s and 1950s.

Born in Fresno, Calif., Mr. Webb's heritage was construction and baseball. His father was a building contractor and an amateur baseball player.

When Mr. Webb was 14, his father went bankrupt. At 16, young Webb quit school and went on the move, working

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as a carpenter during the week and playing semi-professional ball on weekends.

His ball-playing days came to an end at 25 when he was injured in a slide into home base. This was followed by a severe siege of typhoid fever that left him with an ailing throwing arm and frail physical condition.

At the urging of friends, Mr. Webb moved to Phoenix and got a job as a carpenter with a small contractor.

One day, while working on the construction of a small grocery store, his paycheck bounced and his employer disappeared. The grocer asked Mr. Webb to take over the job.

Thus, in 1928, was born the Del E. Webb Construction Co., with total assets of one cement mixer, 10 wheelbarrows, 20 shovels and 10 picks.

Mr. Webb's ability to figure jobs closely, to obtain competent men to help in expanding, and his knack for getting along with people began to boost his business.

He specialized in the construction of commercial buildings, schools and homes, keeping activities localized in Phoenix until the mid-1930s when he opened an office in Los Angeles.

When World War II broke out, Del E. Webb and Co. was the largest construction firm in Arizona and ready to handle government contracts. His company built in record time some of

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(Four Sections, 96 Pages)

# THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

More  
about

# Del Webb dies; developer of Sun City

(Continued from Page A-1)

the largest of the West's military installations, including airfields, Army and Navy training bases, hospitals and prisoner-of-war camps.

Other work followed. The company built plants in 20 states for the Kraft Food Co., erected the Union Oil Center and the Texaco Building in Los Angeles, the Beverly Hilton and the Union Bank Building in Beverly Hills, among other major projects.

In the early 1950s, Mr. Webb diversified. His company entered the development field. It acquired land, built and sold houses, and developed shopping centers, motels and complete communities.

"I just apply baseball to business and it works," Mr. Webb once said.

He became a baseball owner in 1945 when he, millionaire Dan Topping and Larry MacPhail bought the New York Yankees of the American League for \$2.8 million.

Mr. Webb and Topping bought out MacPhail in 1947 for \$2 million. During the 17-year period from 1945 through the 1962 season, the Yankees won the World Series 11 times.

Mr. Webb's business interests extended to oil, banking, mining, hotels, airlines, and manufacturing.

In the nation's missile and space research program, Webb crews built multi-million-dollar housing projects at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado and at the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

His housing developments dot the landscape from Arizona to California and Florida, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and North Kansas City, Mo. His firm built the complete city of San Manuel in southern Arizona for copper miners.

The corporation's hotel group includes the Hotel Sahara and the Mint Hotel in Las Vegas; the Sahara-Tahoe in Lake Tahoe; Newporter Inn, Newport Beach, Calif.; Kulima Hotel, Oahu, Hawaii, Primadonna Club in Reno, Nev., and the TowneHouse and Mountain Shadows here.

In 1973, the corporation had approximately \$100 million in new contracts.

Outside of baseball, Mr Webb's chief sports interest was golf. He once played to a five handicap, and one of his great moments in golf came when he shot a 67 in the Phoenix Open program to have his name written above



As co-owner of the New York Yankees, Del Webb, center, chatted with longtime Yankee manager Casey Stengel, left, and the late George Weiss, general manager.

those of defending champion Byron Nelson and Ben Hogan, who had 69 and 70, respectively, that day.

In the Phoenix Open he played with such celebrity amateurs as Bob Hope, Dean Martin, Forrest Tucker and band leader Lawrence Welk.

In addition to being chairman of the board of the Webb Corp., he was an officer and director of the Bing Crosby Producers, Inc., of Hollywood, the Sun Country Broadcasting Co., Arizona Airways and Arizona Brewing Co., Inc., all of Phoenix.

Arizona Republican Party chairman Harry Rosenzweig, co-developer with Webb of the Rosenzweig Center — where the Del Webb Corp. has its headquarters — and a friend of Mr. Webb's since 1928, mourned his loss.

"I think his loss is a great one not only to people in Arizona but through-

out the country in which he had so many friends," Rosenzweig said.

Sen. Paul Fannin, R-Ariz., also voiced his admiration for Mr. Webb and his sadness at his passing.

"Del Webb was the personification of the American success story," Fannin said. "Few men have started more humbly or achieved greater success and acclaim. He was a builder and an innovator and it is a high compliment to him that the concept of his retirement communities has been widely copied.

"Del and I were friends for more than 40 years. With his passing, Arizona has lost one of its foremost citizens, and I have suffered a deep personal loss."

Mr. Webb is survived by his wife Toni of Phoenix, and a brother, Halmer J. Webb, of North Hollywood, Calif.



Del Webb, at left, greets residents at early event in Town Hall.

## Of Webb footprints, this is deepest

Del Webb, who considered Sun City one of the greatest accomplishments in his long, successful career as a developer, didn't live to see the community he started celebrate its 15th anniversary.

Death overtook the founder and board chairman of the Del E. Webb Corporation last July 4. The 73-year-old builder, who began as a carpenter, succumbed to complications following exploratory surgery for lung cancer.

Webb first worked with his father's construction company in California. But

when the firm went bankrupt, he left school to work as a carpenter during the week and pitch semi-pro baseball on Sundays.

TYPHOID fever and an injury from a slide ended his dreams of a baseball career, so he traveled to Phoenix and began working with a small construction company. In 1928, he opened his own firm.

Although he started small, the construction industry was booming and, in time, so was the Del E. Webb Construction Co. He built commercial buildings, schools, homes, and hotels. In the 1950s the company entered the development

field, acquiring land, building and selling homes, and planning commercial sites.

Meanwhile, in 1945 Webb had reentered the sports world as he joined Dan Topping in purchasing the New York Yankees. While he was co-owner the Yankees won 15 American League championships and 10 World Series; they won their last pennant in Webb's final year as an owner, 1964.

In the 1930s he had helped establish the Phoenix Open golf tournament and once shot a 67 in one of the opening rounds.

IN 1960, as the company launched Sun City, the firm became the Del E. Webb Corporation. Webb interests soon included airlines, banking, mining, manufacturing, and oil. He was an officer and director of Bing Crosby Producers, Inc., the Sun Country Broadcasting Co., Arizona Airways, and Arizona Brewing Co.

Major Webb hotels included the Sahara and Mint in Las Vegas, the Sahara-Tahoe in Lake Tahoe, Newporter Inn at Newport Beach, Calif., Kuilima Hotel in Oahu, Hawaii, Primadonna Club in Reno, and the TowneHouse and

Mountain Shadows in Phoenix.

Webb's business skills enabled him to take the dream of an active retirement community and turn it into reality. In Sun City, that dream probably exceeded even his own wildest expectations.

He always remembered to pay tribute to those who settled here, however. As he was so widely quoted, "Concrete, steel, and lumber can make the buildings, but people make the community. Together, we can realize a way of life unprecedented in America."



# **Del E. Webb, on the cover of Time magazine August 3, 1962, with a shuffleboard court behind him in the artist's drawing, revealed nationally what and who he is:**

Del Webb, the hulking, slope-shouldered, long-striding, 63-year-old, who hates to be called Delbert, could not stand the life in one of his own Sun Cities for more than a few days, or a few hours.

Though he has earned some unexpected gratitude for his retirement centers, he is better known for more rough-and-tumble activities: as co-owner of the New York Yankees, as one of the largest single builders in the U.S.

**THE JOURNEYMAN.** A restless barnstormer by trade and temperament, he was born in Fresno, California. His mother was the daughter of a German farmer who built one of California's first irrigation systems. His father was the son of an English evangelist. But most of Del Webb's early exposure to religion came from his father's three sisters.

"Those old ladies were so religious, they squeaked," he says. "I had to go to Sunday School and church and goddamnit, I wanted to play ball. They thought baseball was trafficking with the devil, so when I finally went out to play, I had to do it now and then under an assumed name."

His father, a building contractor and amateur ballplayer, passed on to him the tools of his two trades, a carpenter's saw and a fast ball.

By the time he was 10, Del knew his way around the scaffolding or the infield with equal aplomb. "I can't remember not being captain of the team," he says. "When we choose sides for a pick-up game, I was always one of the guys who did the choosing."

When he was 14, his father went bankrupt and Del hit the road two years later. "I've been on the move ever since," he says. "It gets in your blood and you can't stop."

Weekdays he was a journeyman carpenter on construction jobs; weekends he played semi-professional ball. Webb hit nails and nailed hitters all over the West, from Calgary down to the Mexican border, developing at the same time a taste for old bourbon and young ladies.

During World War I, he worked on the Oakland shipyards. When it was over he married his childhood sweetheart, Hazel Church. The marriage broke up in 1952 and last year Webb married pretty brunette, Toni Ince, 41, buyer for the Bullock's Wilshire department store in Los Angeles.

**20 BOURBONS A DAY.** Del Webb's baseball days ended in 1925 with a crunch of cracked ribs and torn ligaments sliding home from second on a short single, followed by a bout of typhoid fever that brought his weight down from 204 pounds to 99 pounds.

When he was on his feet again, he landed a job with a small contractor in Phoenix. One day, when he was working on the construction of a new grocery store, his paycheck bounced and his employer disappeared. The owner asked Webb to take over the job and the Del E. Webb Construction Company was born.

Its total assets, one cement mixer, ten wheelbarrows, twenty shovels and ten picks. By 1935, this was a \$3,000,000 business.

With World War II, the Webb company moved into the big time and built most of the air stations and military installations in Arizona and Southern California. Among current projects: he is building with George A. Fuller Company, a \$62 million Minuteman Missile silo complex in Montana, and with Humble Oil Company, he is working on an estimated 375 to 500-million community

covering 15,000 acres southeast of Houston, which will house the employees of NASA's new center for manned spacecraft.

World War II also made another marked change in Webb's life. He was laid up with something the Army diagnosed as the flu and a doctor was routinely taking his personal history.

As Webb tells it, "When I told him I drank from 10 to 20 bourbons a day, he damn near dropped his teeth. He said I ought to cut down but I told him I'd damn well quit, and I did." And not another drop of whiskey has passed his lips since that day. "All that time I spent drinking, I could now spend working."

Del Webb works even when he plays. The New York Yankees, which he bought with Dan Topping and Larry Macphail, for \$2,000,000, in 1945 (he and Topping bought out Macphail's interest for \$2,000,000 in 1947), serve him well as a developer of new business via free passes, casual meetings in the ballpark and just plain publicity.

The golf course is another fertile source of new contracts and big deals; Webb belongs to no less than 14 golf clubs around the country, shoots in the high 70s.

**NO SMOKING.** Supervising his diversified \$75 million empire in which he stepped up recently from president to board chairman in a move to make more room at the top, Webb logs between 50,000 and 125,000 miles of flying a year. Last year he flew out to Los Angeles, talked to Long Beach officials about building their 1976 World's Fair, then to Santa Monica where his company is in charge of a \$55 million redevelopment program. Then he was off to Manhattan for Old Timers' day at Yankee Stadium.

He has three full-time hotel suites: In the Beverly Hilton (which he built), the Mountain Shadows Resort in Phoenix (which he also built) and Manhattan's Waldorf Astoria (which was built in 1930-1931 when he wasn't looking).

In each of them he keeps complete wardrobes as well as caches of clothes in half a dozen other hotels around the country.

All toll, he owns 150 suites, 90 pairs of shoes (plus 52 pairs of golf shoes), numberless outsized shirts (17 3/4 neck, 37 sleeve), snarles of 58-inch ties (normal length is 52) and "a helluva lot of hats."

Webb is a nut about smoking. All his desks bear metal signs saying "No Smoking" and he means it. And about standardization, Webb offices are run according to the blue book, which specifies even what kind of desk calendar pads are to be used and what kind of lettering must be on the door. "Rules"

One employee who drove a tan car when Webb wanted all company cars to be black, found his sedan had been removed from the parking lot and repainted while he was at work.

Webb is too busy to spend much time at his retirement cities, but he did manage to spare a day last week to talk with a group of medical researchers about the establishment of a research center for gerontology at Phoenix' Sun City.

"When I see what we've built," he says, "it's the most satisfying thing that's ever happened to me. An old fellow came up to me once with tears in his eyes and thanked me for building Sun City. He said he was planning to spend the happiest years of his life here."

The mere thought of staying put so long makes Delbert Eugene Webb profoundly uneasy.



SUNSET casts its final glow over the Sun City Sun Bowl where thousands attended the Sunday evening memorial service for Del E. Webb. Photos by Paul Terry

## Sun City Pays Final Tribute In Del Webb Memorial Service

By Charlene Paraniuk

Sunday, July 14 was a quiet evening. It remained so even while thousands filled the Sun Bowl to pay tribute to Sun City's founder and builder - Del E. Webb.

And while lightning from a distant storm flashed in the background, the eulogies began with representatives from the three Sun City civic organizations and an old friend, Senator Barry Goldwater, delivering remarks.

"What a wonderful way to say goodbye to a friend," said Senator Goldwater of the sun setting across the Arizona skyline.

He said he wondered what Del Webb would want him to say. "He would want me to be honest. He had a passion for honesty without showing it," said Goldwater. "I knew him first as a carpenter and then as a passionate baseball lover. He devoted interest to all forms of

athletics," continued the senator.

This devotion to athletics and recreation is apparent through the numerous rec centers set up for residents of Sun City. Speaking in behalf of the Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc., a non-profit Arizona Corporation, which owns and operates the various centers, William Kent, vice president of its board of directors, said Del Webb never failed to be present at the dedication of each center including the Sun Bowl.

"Del Webb also recognized that people must have a voice in their affairs," explained Earl Clore, president of the Home Owners Association.

"We can take timber, steel, and concrete to make buildings," proclaimed Clore, "but it takes people to make a community. So with the passing of Mr. Webb, it behooves us to rededicate our efforts to keep Sun City the most fantastic



SENATOR GOLDWATER says goodbye to an old friend.

retirement community in the country."

Like Kent and Clore, Doug Morris, president of the Sun City Taxpayers Association, expressed a profound loss at Webb's death. Unlike the other speakers, though, Morris spoke of Webb as a

continuing force rather than a passing one.

"I hope Del Webb's spirit never rests," Morris said. "For then, whose voice would come to us across the Arizona land he loved so passionately."

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# NEWS

10¢ **SUN** July 16, 1974

## Webb eulogized in final tribute

More than 5,000 Sun Citians filled the Sun Bowl Sunday to pay their final tribute to Del E. Webb, the man whose concept of a new lifestyle for retirees led to the founding of Sun City 14 years ago.

They heard Sen. Barry Goldwater, a friend of Webb's for more than 40 years, recall how the two men met and describe the late developer as a man who "contributed as much to Arizona as any one man."

Sun Citians also heard tributes by officials of three local civic groups and the president of the Del E. Webb Corporation, Robert Johnson.

SENATOR Goldwater recalled meeting Webb when he was a carpenter, noting he and his brother gave Webb the first contract he ever had—a remodeling job on a Goldwater store in downtown Phoenix.

Tracing Webb's career, the senator then turned to the developer's concept for Sun City, calling it "the most remarkable idea for a community any man in our country ever had."

"He was a perfect gentleman, although he liked to play hard," Goldwater said. "He had dedication, honesty, and a great faith in the enterprise system that made him successful."

"WE THANK the Lord we had the opportunity of knowing him," the senator concluded, "and realizing the great things he's done for us."

Johnson described his former employer as "my mentor, my model." Webb "enjoyed life thoroughly and had a vibrant, great enthusiasm for the future," Johnson said.

Earl Clore, president of the Homeowners Association, asked Sun Citians to "rededicate their efforts to keeping Sun City the kind of city that Del Webb would be proud to have his name associated with."

BILL KENT, vice president of Recreation Centers of Sun City, noted the rec center facilities as yet another unique characteristic of Sun City and paid tribute to "the man who made it all possible."

"I never knew Del Webb," said Doug Morris, of the Sun City Taxpayers Association. "I also never saw a human mind or soul, but I can see their accomplishments. And I can look at Sun City and know Del Webb."

Noting that this feeling was contrary to the usual memorial speech, Morris asked that Webb's spirit never rest.

"I HOPE his spirit continues to be in the winding streets of Sun City, continues to motivate those with the task of translating the genius of his vision into reality, continues to goad those that reach 65, 70 or older who may feel their challenge is over."

Morris, noting that Del Webb "made our coming together irresistible," concluded that Webb's spirit never rest so his voice will always say to the people here, "I built you a Sun City, but only you can fulfill its promise."

The huge crowd, obviously moved by Morris' talk, heard tenor Carl Schlaegel sing "America, the Beautiful" before Father Palmer Plourde pronounced the benediction.

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*City Republic 7-15-74*

## 5,000 honor Del Webb in services at Sun City

SUN CITY — They came by the thousands — the silver-haired men and women — to pay tribute Sunday night to Del E. Webb, the late founder and developer of this retirement community.

The summer sun waned and twilight took over as the Sun Bowl filled with an estimated 5,000 persons at the memorial services for Webb, who died at the age of 75 on July 4.

Sen. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., traced his 40-year friendship with Webb. He talked about Webb's association with baseball and his career as a carpenter who made good.

"I think the dominant thing I remember about him was his passion for honesty," said Goldwater. "After he became a businessman it was a thrill to watch him. He started on nothing but American initiative, willingness to work, and devotion.

"Then he got the great idea of Sun City. I think this is the most remarkable community — and idea for a community — that any man has had in the history of our country.

"As a native of this state, I think I can say he has contributed as much to Arizona as any one man — not just in a material way but in a spiritual way of providing a continuation of the good life for people who have earned it."

There were other speakers.

Robert H. Johnson, president of the Del E. Webb Corp., said he worked for Webb 40 years and would continue to do so.

"He was my mentor and model," said Johnson. "Webb was an aggressive leader, a man who demanded as much from those who worked for him as he demanded from himself. He was a vibrant person, and he lived each day fully with great enthusiasm for the present and the future."

Earl Clore, president of the Sun City Home Owners Association, credited Webb as a "man of vision for having changed our life-style and given us a chance to spend our retirement years in a way we can enjoy them."



Republic photo  
Sen. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., eulogized Del E. Webb Sunday.

William Kent, vice president of the Recreation Centers Inc., spoke of the "recreation facilities, the lakes, the golf courses and even our very homes as remembrances of Webb. We are thankful for the special way of life he made available for us."

Doug Morris, president of the Sun City Taxpayers Association, said he hoped Webb's "spirit never rests. I hope it continues to motivate those now vested with the task of translating the genius of his vision into realities as startling as he saw them, as practical as he made them.

"I hope the spirit of Del Webb never rests — for then whose voice would come to us on the breeze that drifts over the land of Arizona — whose voice will say 'I built you a Sun City, but only you can fulfill its promise.'"

# Sun City founder dies

Del E. Webb, founder and chairman of the board for the Del E. Webb Corporation, died July 4, 1974, in the Mayo Clinic at Rochester, Minn., from complications following ex-

ploratory surgery. He was 75.

His body was cremated in Rochester, and his ashes scattered over his beloved Arizona, in accordance with his wishes. Born May 17, 1899, in Fresno, Calif., to Ernest and Henrietta Fortcamp Webb, he was equally at home with a hammer or a baseball when he was a boy...

He moved to Phoenix and found work with a small contracting company. The 29-year-old

carpenter opened a modest construction business in July 1928.

Thus was born the Del E. Webb Construction Co...

He specialized in the construction of commercial buildings, schools, homes and hotels. In the 1950s, the company entered the development field, acquiring land, building and selling homes, and planning commercial sites.

In 1945, Mr. Webb fulfilled a boyhood dream

by joining Dan Topping in buying the New York Yankees. This found him in a dominant role at major league council tables as a leader in solving American League and baseball realignment, expansion and legislative problems.

His love for sports never was relinquished. He joined Phoenix business friends in the early '30s to establish the Phoenix Open and once shot a 67 in an opening

program to have his name written above champions Byron Nelson and Ben Hogan, pros of the day.

In 1960, the Del E. Webb Construction Co. became the Del E. Webb Corporation and launched the world-famous Sun City retirement community.

With corporate headquarters in Phoenix, the Webb interests soon included airlines, banking, mining, manufacturing and oil.

## Officials tribute Webb

(July 16, 1974)

More than 5,000 Sun Citians filled the Sun Bowl Sunday to pay their final tribute to Del E. Webb, the man whose concept of a new lifestyle for retirees led to the founding of Sun City 14 years ago.

They heard Sen. Barry Goldwater, a friend of Webb's for more than 40 years, describe the late developer as a man who "contributed as much to Arizona as any one man."

Sun Citians also heard tributes by officials of three local civic groups and the president of the Del E. Webb Corporation, Robert Johnson.

Senator Goldwater recalled meeting Webb when he was a carpenter, noting he and his brother gave Webb the first contract he ever had—a remodeling job on a Goldwater store in downtown Phoenix.

"He was a perfect gentleman, although he liked to play hard," Goldwater said. "He had dedication, honesty, and a great faith in the enterprise system."

"We thank the Lord we had the opportunity of knowing him," the senator concluded.

Johnson described his former employer as

"my mentor, my model." Webb "enjoyed life thoroughly and had a vibrant, great enthusiasm for the future," Johnson said.

Earl Clore, president of the Homeowners Association, asked Sun Citians to "rededicate their efforts to keeping Sun City the kind of city that Del Webb would be proud to have his name associated with."

Bill Kent, vice president of Recreation Centers of Sun City, noted the rec center facilities as yet another unique characteristic of Sun City and paid tribute to "the man who made it all possible."

"I never knew Del Webb," said Doug Morris, of the Sun City Taxpayers Association. "I also never saw a human mind or soul, but I can see their accomplishments. And I can look at Sun City and know Del Webb."

Noting that this feeling was contrary to the usual memorial speech, Morris asked that Webb's spirit never rest.

"I hope his spirit continues to be in the winding streets of Sun City, continues to motivate those with the task of translating the genius of his vision into reality."

## EDITORIAL

(July 9, 1974, News-Sun)

...Webb was a retiring sort of fellow who never lost the common touch. And he had a surprisingly keen interest in the well being of the large numbers of people whom his corporate empire touched directly or indirectly.

Webb did not conceive the Sun City retirement idea. But as a corporate administrator he had a happy faculty for surrounding himself with creative men—and he had vision...

As an earthy guy, he made friends easily. As a generous fellow who made his generous gestures without fanfare, he acquired the admiration and gratitude of many folks...

We're just making a guess, but we think that at the end of the line Del Webb would look upon Sun City as the major accomplishment of his fantastic career.

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# THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

○ (Section B) Page 1  
Saturday, July 13, 1974

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## 2nd wife gets \$1.5 million in Del Webb will

Construction magnate Del E. Webb provided a tax-paid \$1.5 million to his second wife and \$75,000 a year for life to his first wife in a will filed Thursday and scheduled for probate in Los Angeles Aug. 2.

Webb, 74, died July 4.

His Del E. Webb Corp. was involved in construction, contracting, retirement community development and hotel ownership.

The bulk of his estate, which is still to be evaluated, goes to the Del E. Webb Foundation in Phoenix.

The will also provides that his second wife, Toni Ince Webb, will get \$10,000 each month until the estate is settled. She has residences here and in Los Angeles.

His first wife, Hazel L. Webb, now lives in the Webb-built Sun City retirement community. The couple was divorced.

A spokesman said the will is being probated in Los Angeles because Webb's lawyer lives there.

Webb's brother, Halmar, North Hollywood, Calif. and five Arizona and Nevada corporate officers of the Del E. Webb Corp. were bequeathed \$100,000 each.

The officers are W. P. Collins, George W. Reeve, W. J. Miller and Fred P. Kuentz, all of Phoenix, and Jess W. Hinkle of Las Vegas.

Two nieces, Margot Weber and Candice Ballou, both of Los Angeles, will each receive \$25,000. The executor of the estate, Robert H. Johnson of Pasadena, Calif. will receive \$150,000.

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EDITORIAL:

# In Memoriam

In person, he seemed like one of the last of the strong, silent tall men out of the West - personified so well in movies of the Thirties and Forties by Gary Cooper, John Wayne and Joel McCrea - transplanted into the finest of business suits and flying the fastest of jets to amble among the world's sophisticates.

In results, his was a great economic and sociological success.

In vision he was a radical futurist, moving restlessly and energetically in pursuit of his next challenges and the further progress of his fellow men.

His works have left many great physical memorials to his period among us, but none so lasting or so treasured by him as the intangible vitality and way of life that he helped to spark in his beloved Sun City, Arizona.

The death last week of Del E. Webb leaves us with a sense of great loss, but with an even greater sense of gratitude for the legacies he has left to us and the example he has set for us. From the time he began his Horatio Algeresque climb from a sickly, underweight young carpenter through great business triumphs until his death on July 4, 1974, he lived his life as a great and stimulating adventure.

His legend frequently outran but never outperformed his reality. This lean, erect man with his slow but persistent strides moved ever forward. His reserved manner often hinted of aloofness or even arrogance, but he could be the most disarming and persuasive of conversationalists when the subject moved from housing, hotels, office buildings - the serious concerns of his present and future - to topics that for him represented diversion - his early days in Phoenix, his long romance with baseball and, strangely enough, politics.

Though for many years he maintained simultaneous homes in New York, Los Angeles and Phoenix - with triplication of clothing, toothbrush and shaving materials to lessen luggage burdens - he remained a Phoenician at heart. For him the good things of life were intertwined inextricably with his mutually favorable relationship with Arizona. And he looked back with a great and warm fondness upon the friends and events of his rise from obscurity in the Arizona sun.

His early dreams of becoming a baseball star were never realized, but he was one of the most successful team owners in the history of professional sports. Financially, he and Dan Topping pulled a series of marvelous moves, buying with colorful Larry McPhail the New York Yankees (with Webb acquiring half-interest in the Yankees for less than \$2 million) just before baseball could emerge from its World War II doldrums, operating the team on a highly profitable basis for 20 seasons, selling Yankee Stadium for much more than they had paid for the whole franchise, and then selling the team to CBS for \$14 million just before the Yankee team collapsed like the One Hoss Shay. On the field, his Yankees won 15 pennants and 10 world championships during 20 seasons, dominating the sport as no other has been dominated. Despite the coups in buying and selling of the Yanks, Mr. Webb, because of his genuine love of baseball, regretted the sale. He missed his years in the baseball world.

His interest in politics was a low-profile affair. But what he knew about politics could fill several books that will never be written. Many people knew him to be a friend of Presidents Johnson and Nixon, but few realize he was a close student of national politics, with his attention drawn particularly to the United States Senate. There his closest friends tended to be unspectacular, powerful Senators with extraordinary influence within the Senate - Dick Russell, Bob Kerr, Warren Magnusson, Arizona's Carl Hayden. Although his political orientation was that of a conservative Democrat, probably his greatest admiration was reserved for Franklin D. Roosevelt - not surprising for a man who rose from the economic shambles of the Thirties to great fortune. Del Webb was one of the rare businessmen who truly enjoyed visiting Washington.

Mr. Webb was a complex man, and at times paradoxical. Though generally rather austere in his food tastes (with a marked preference for steak), he loved Chinese egg rolls. Although he was normally a fierce competitor in the business world, he gave considerable assistance to his long-time friend (and frequent telephone conversationalist) Howard Hughes as the great American enigma moved into Las Vegas and became a major competitor of Webb interests there. For irony, there is the memory of the blunt "No Smoking" sign in his office among the baseball memorabilia, viewed in the light of his death from complications associated with lung cancer.

Mr. Webb's success in great part resulted from three characteristics - unusual and optimistic vision, a willingness to take big chances, and an insistence on quality in his company's performance. All of these are particularly in evidence here at Sun City. And by them we shall long remember Del E. Webb. **W.G.B.**



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DEL E. WEBB

## Del E. Webb Dies At 75

Del E. Webb, founder of Sun City and chairman of the board of the Del E. Webb Corporation, died July 4 in Rochester, Minn.

Mr. Webb, who was 75, had undergone surgery for lung cancer in March. He returned to the Mayo Clinic for a checkup late

in June. Death was due to complications resulting from further surgery.

In accordance with his will, no funeral was held. His body was cremated and the ashes scattered over Arizona.

Born in Fresno, Cal., Mr. Webb quit school at 16, working as a carpenter during the week and playing semi-professional baseball on weekends. He sustained an injury at 25, followed by a severe case of typhoid fever. He came to Arizona, working as a carpenter for a small

contractor. While working on the construction of a grocery store, his paycheck bounced and his employer disappeared. The grocer asked the young carpenter to finish the job. Thus was born, in 1928, the Del E. Webb Construction Co. Commercial, school and home construction followed. A Los Angeles office was opened in the mid-Thirties.

By World War II the company was the largest construction firm in Arizona and many government contracts followed, including those for airfields, Army and Navy training bases, hospitals and prisoner of war camps. The company also built plants for Kraft Foods, the Union Oil Center and the Texaco Building in Los Angeles, the Beverly Hilton and Union Bank in Beverly Hills. In the

Fifties, the corporation developed shopping centers, motels and entire communities.

He became a co-owner of the New York Yankees in 1945, selling in 1964.

Sun City, Arizona, opened in January, 1960. There are many and varied housing developments in California, Florida, Missouri, and Iowa, as well as the entire town of San Manuel, Arizona.

Among the corporation's hotels are the Sahara and Mint in Las Vegas; the Sahara-Tahoe at Lake Tahoe; Newporter Inn, Newport Beach, Calif., Kulima, Oahu, Hawaii; Primadonna Club, Reno; Towne House and Mountain Shadows, Phoenix.

Mr. Webb is survived by his wife Toni of Phoenix, and a brother, Halmer J. Webb, of North Hollywood, Calif.

# Death takes Sun City's founder

Del E. Webb, founder and chairman of the board for the Del E. Webb Corporation, died Thursday in the Mayo Clinic at Rochester from complications following exploratory surgery. He was 75.

His body was cremated Friday in Rochester, and his ashes scattered over his beloved Arizona, in accordance with his wishes.

Born May 17, 1899, in Fresno, Calif., to Ernest and Henrietta Forthcamp Webb, he was equally at home with a hammer or a baseball as a boy.

WHEN the senior Webb's construction company declared bankruptcy, his young son quit school to work as a carpenter weekdays and pitch semi-

professional games on Sundays. However, a seige of typhoid fever and an injury while sliding into home base reduced the youth's chances for an athletic career.

Seeking a new climate and new opportunities, he moved to Phoenix and found work with a small contracting company. Despite a worthless Friday paycheck from a disappearing contractor, the 29-year-old carpenter opened a modest construction business in July 1928.

Thus was born the Del E. Webb Construction Co., with total assets of one cement mixer, 10 wheelbarrows, 20 shovels, and 10 picks.

HOWEVER, he was a bright man with competent

employees, and his business boomed.

He specialized in the construction of commercial buildings, schools, homes, and hotels. In the 1950s, the company entered the development field, acquiring land, building and selling homes, and planning commercial sites.

In 1945, Mr. Webb fulfilled a boyhood dream by joining Dan Topping in buying the New York Yankees. This found him in a dominant role at major league council tables as a leader in solving American League and baseball realignment, expansion, and legislative problems.

UNDER the two owners the Yankees won 15 American League championships and 10 World

Series crowns. However an opportunity to sell his Yankee interest to CBS in 1965 saw the contractor close a 20-year ownership career.

His love for sports never was relinquished. He joined Phoenix business friends in the early '30s to establish the Phoenix Open and once shot a '67 in an opening program to have his name written above champions Byron Nelson and Ben Hogan, pros of the day.

In 1960, the Del E. Webb Construction Co. became the Del E. Webb Corporation and launched the world-famous Sun City retirement community.

WITH corporate headquarters in Phoenix, the Webb interests soon included airlines, banking,

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He was an officer and director of Bing Crosby Producers, Inc., the Sun Country Broadcasting Co., Arizona Airways, and Arizona Brewing Co.

Hotels include the Sahara and Mint in Las Vegas, the Sahara-Tahoe in Lake Tahoe, Newporter Inn at Newport Beach, Calif., Kuilima Hotel in Oahu, Hawaii, Primadonna Club in Reno, and the TowneHouse and Mountain Shadows here.

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**DEL E. WEBB 1899-1974**

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# NEWS - SUN

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*Arizona's Pioneer Retirement Community Newspaper*

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Tuesday, July 9, 1974

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4A News-Sun - Tuesday, July 9, 1974

# Editorials

## Farewell to Del Webb

Del E. Webb's life ended Thursday at age 75—and an extraordinary life it was.

Webb was the American dream come true. He came to Phoenix in the late 1920s with a hammer, a saw, the skill to use these tools, and less than a handful of dollars. A combination of utilization of these skills, ability to convince others that he could tackle large jobs effectively, vision, and luck catapulted him into millionaire status many times over.

He became famous as co-owner of the New York Yankees during that team's greatest years, as builder of huge military bases and stadiums, as the first corporation magnate to enter the Nevada gambling casino industry, and as the creator of the world's first major retirement community—Sun City, Ariz.

Webb was a retiring sort of fellow who never lost the common touch, and he had a surprisingly keen interest in the well being of the large numbers of people whom his corporate empire touched directly or indirectly. There was one time when the News-Sun editor contacted him by telephone while he was involved in a Yankee Stadium meeting—he not only answered the questions put to him, but he asked some of his own regarding this newspaper's progress. He was not personally involved in recent years in nitty-gritty decisions on Sun City, but he always was concerned that life here was the most conducive for the residents' happiness.

Webb did not conceive the Sun City retirement idea. But as a corporate administrator he had a happy faculty for surrounding himself with creative men—and he had the vision to stake his corporation's future on something new which had great prospects for success. While he may not have been tremendously innovative himself, he had great ability to make innovative ideas into free-enterprise realities on highly profitable levels.

As an earthy guy, he made friends easily. As a generous fellow who made his generous gestures without fanfare, he acquired the admiration and gratitude of many folks from many walks of life.

Mr. Webb was a man of substantial pride. When things got pretty rough at times in the past decade, he resisted pressures for a takeover by a conglomerate when mergers were the corporate style. In fact, he came out of retirement to resume the Del E. Webb Corp. presidential reins in order to protect the Webb name.

We're just hazarding a guess now, but we think it's a pretty good guess that at the end of the line Del Webb would look upon the Sun City way of life as the major accomplishment of his fantastic career.

And we'd guess that if Sun Citians were to express one sentiment upon his death, it would be a simple prayer—"God rest his soul."

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Phoenix, Friday, July 5, 1974

# THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

## The Del Webb story

Del Webb, who died yesterday at the age of 75, was a man who walked with kings but never lost the common touch. His biography in "Who's Who in the West" reports that he was a carpenter in Fresno from 1917 to 1926 and in Phoenix during 1927 and 1928. Not many tycoons are likely to recall such humble beginnings.

Webb also was proud of the fact that he played professional baseball to augment his income from 1916 through 1926. After a stay in the hospital he combined the technical skill of a carpenter with the competitive drive of a baseball player and went into business as a building contractor. The rest is history.

He built great resort hotels, planned and constructed fine office buildings, was part owner of the New York Yankees baseball team, erected employe housing at the Houston space center. His company became a multimillion-dollar corporation, listed in the New York Stock Exchange.

But nothing in his career, he told the Phoenix Rotary Club in 1973, gave him more satisfaction than creating the retirement community of Sun City.

"When residents who have come to Sun City tell me how happy they are to live there, to play golf and to enjoy the Arizona sunshine, it makes me feel good," he said.

Now boasting a population of 30,000, Sun City may well provide a

"new way of life" for 100,000 retirees in the decades ahead. The current investment in Sun City totals \$500 million, and the spendable income of Sun Citizens is estimated at \$175 million a year. The benefits to Arizona's economy are obvious.

Del Webb was a personal friend of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and hobnobbed with business magnates, governors and members of Congress. He knew scores of prominent athletes. He was a Democratic Party member, who took a keen interest in politics.

But his main interest was in people. Whether they lived in the White House, spent their time on a baseball diamond, or bought his houses in Sun City wasn't really important. What they thought and how they reacted was important to Webb.

The Del Webb Corp. has had its ups and downs. Once Webb was asked to contribute to a local museum.

"Last year we were on our backs," he answered. "This year we are on our knees. Next year we will be on our feet. Come and see me then."

The solicitor returned a year later and received a substantial contribution from a man who knew a city needs museums and schools and hospitals as well as hotels and apartment houses and office buildings. It is to his credit that Del Webb helped Phoenix acquire both.

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# Del E. Webb dies; builder of Sun City

Del E. Webb, 75, who built a small Phoenix contracting business into the Del E. Webb Corp., one of the nation's largest construction firms, died Thursday in Rochester, Minn.

Mr. Webb, a former co-owner of the New York Yankees, underwent lung surgery for cancer at the Methodist Hospital in Rochester in March. He returned to Phoenix, but flew back to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester the third week of June.

During a checkup, Mayo doctors did exploratory surgery and he died from complications following the operation.

In accordance with Mr. Webb's will, there will be no funeral service. His body will be cremated today in Rochester, and his ashes spread over Arizona.

Residents of Sun City, which was developed by the Webb corporation, may hold a memorial service, a company spokesman said.

Mr. Webb was chairman of the board of the corporation, which owned hotels, office buildings and land developments. He founded the company here in 1928.

Mr. Webb as a young man wanted to become a professional baseball player,

but this dream was thwarted by injury and illness.

His love of the game, however, led him to become co-owner of the New York Yankees during the late 1940s and 1950s.

Born in Fresno, Calif., Mr. Webb's heritage was construction and baseball. His father was a building contractor and an amateur baseball player.

When Mr. Webb was 14, his father went bankrupt. At 16, young Webb quit school and went on the move, working

## Editorial on Page A-6

as a carpenter during the week and playing semi-professional ball on weekends.

His ball-playing days came to an end at 25 when he was injured in a slide into home base. This was followed by a severe siege of typhoid fever that left him with an ailing throwing arm and frail physical condition.

At the urging of friends, Mr. Webb moved to Phoenix and got a job as a carpenter with a small contractor.

One day, while working on the construction of a small grocery store, his paycheck bounced and his employer disappeared. The grocer asked Mr. Webb to take over the job.

Thus, in 1928, was born the Del E. Webb Construction Co., with total assets of one cement mixer, 10 wheelbarrows, 20 shovels and 10 picks.

Mr. Webb's ability to figure jobs closely, to obtain competent men to help in expanding, and his knack for getting along with people began to boost his business.

He specialized in the construction of commercial buildings, schools and homes, keeping activities localized in Phoenix until the mid-1930s when he opened an office in Los Angeles.

When World War II broke out, Del E. Webb and Co. was the largest construction firm in Arizona and ready to handle government contracts. His company built in record time some of



Del E. Webb

Continued on Page A-18

The Arizona Republic

Phoenix, Arizona, Friday, July 5, 1974

More about

# Del Webb dies; developer of Sun City

(Continued from Page A-1)

the largest of the West's military installations, including airfields, Army and Navy training bases, hospitals and prisoner-of-war camps.

Other work followed. The company built plants in 20 states for the Kraft Food Co., erected the Union Oil Center and the Texaco Building in Los Angeles, the Beverly Hilton and the Union Bank Building in Beverly Hills, among other major projects.

In the early 1950s, Mr. Webb diversified. His company entered the development field. It acquired land, built and sold houses, and developed shopping centers, motels and complete communities.

"I just apply baseball to business and it works," Mr. Webb once said.

He became a baseball owner in 1945 when he, millionaire Dan Topping and Larry MacPhail bought the New York Yankees of the American League for \$2.8 million.

Mr. Webb and Topping bought out MacPhail in 1947 for \$2 million. During the 17-year period from 1945 through the 1962 season, the Yankees won the World Series 11 times.

Mr. Webb's business interests extended to oil, banking, mining, hotels, airlines, and manufacturing.

In the nation's missile and space research program, Webb crews built multi-million-dollar housing projects at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado and at the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

His housing developments dot the landscape from Arizona to California and Florida, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and North Kansas City, Mo. His firm built the complete city of San Manuel in southern Arizona for copper miners.

The corporation's hotel group includes the Hotel Sahara and the Mint Hotel in Las Vegas; the Sahara-Tahoe in Lake Tahoe; Newporter Inn, Newport Beach, Calif.; Kaulima Hotel, Oahu, Hawaii, Primadonna Club in Reno, Nev., and the TowneHouse and Mountain Shadows here.

In 1973, the corporation had approximately \$100 million in new contracts.

Outside of baseball, Mr Webb's chief sports interest was golf. He once played to a five handicap, and one of his great moments in golf came when he shot a 67 in the Phoenix Open program to have his name written above



As co-owner of the New York Yankees, Del Webb, center, chatted with longtime Yankee manager Casey Stengel, left, and the late George Weiss, general manager.

those of defending champion Byron Nelson and Ben Hogan, who had 69 and 70, respectively, that day.

In the Phoenix Open he played with such celebrity amateurs as Bob Hope, Dean Martin, Forrest Tucker and band leader Lawrence Welk.

In addition to being chairman of the board of the Webb Corp., he was an officer and director of the Bing Crosby Producers, Inc., of Hollywood, the Sun Country Broadcasting Co., Arizona Airways and Arizona Brewing Co., Inc., all of Phoenix.

Arizona Republican Party chairman Harry Rosenzweig, co-developer with Webb of the Rosenzweig Center — where the Del Webb Corp. has its headquarters — and a friend of Mr. Webb's since 1928, mourned his loss.

"I think his loss is a great one not only to people in Arizona but through-

out the country in which he had so many friends," Rosenzweig said.

Sen. Paul Fannin, R-Ariz., also voiced his admiration for Mr. Webb and his sadness at his passing.

"Del Webb was the personification of the American success story," Fannin said. "Few men have started more humbly or achieved greater success, and acclaim. He was a builder and an innovator and it is a high compliment to him that the concept of his retirement communities has been widely copied.

"Del and I were friends for more than 40 years. With his passing, Arizona has lost one of its foremost citizens, and I have suffered a deep personal loss."

Mr. Webb is survived by his wife Toni of Phoenix, and a brother, Halmer J. Webb, of North Hollywood, Calif.



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# Del Webb Dies After Operation



DEL E. WEBB

Del E. Webb, a rags-to-riches business legend in Phoenix, where he got his start in the building trade, died today in Methodist Hospital in Rochester, Minn., of complications following surgery.

He had undergone a lung operation for cancer in March. He was 75.

At the time of his death, Webb had built his 1928 assets of little more than a hammer and a saw into a nationally known building operation that included hotels, office buildings and land developments across the country.

He is survived by his wife, Toni, of Phoenix, and a

## Life Of Del Webb In Pictures—Page C-6

brother, Halmer J. Webb of North Hollywood, Calif.

A last wish, included in his will, was that there be no funeral. Accordingly, the body will be cremated in Rochester, and the ashes scattered over Arizona, the state in which he achieved his business success.

Del Webb was chairman of the board of Del E. Webb Corporation, which has always had its headquarters in Phoenix.

ONE OF HIS most successful ventures was development of the Sun City resort-

retirement community near Phoenix, launched in 1960 and now housing 32,000 residents.

The former co-owner for 20 years of the world-champion New York Yankees had returned to Mayo Clinic in Rochester for a routine checkup. Further surgery revealed additional complications.

Webb was born May 17, 1899, in Fresno, Calif., to Ernest and Henrietta Forthcamp Webb.

During his youth, the rangy Webb spent a great deal of time doing the two things he loved best: Working with a hammer and playing baseball.

WHEN THE senior Webb's contracting, sand and gravel business failed, Webb quit school to work as a carpenter weekdays and to pitch ball on Sundays for substantial semiprofessional fees.

The need to settle on one vocation or the other presented itself in the mid-1920s when Webb was hit by typhoid fever — contracted during an exhibition game at San Quentin prison — and his 6-foot-4-inch frame was reduced from 200 pounds to a skimpy 99.

He chose business over baseball and headed for Phoenix, with its dry climate.

He almost left again about a year later when a disappearing contractor left him stranded with a worthless paycheck.

IT WAS HERE destiny stepped in.

*The Phoenix Gazette* —

PHOENIX, ARIZONA, THURSDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 4, 1974

The owner of the grocery store which he had been helping to erect persuaded him to complete the job and in July 1928, he opened a modest construction business.

And in 1945 he got back into his favorite sport by joining Dan Topping in buying the New York Yankees. Five years later he brought the team to Phoenix for spring training, working out a swap in sites with the New York Giants.

Webb was one of only four lifetime members of the Phoenix Press Box Association and, by the time he

Turn to ●DEL, Page A-4

# Del Webb Dies After Operation

(Concluded from Page A-1)

bowed out of baseball for a second time in 1965 — through sale of his Yankee interest to CBS — he had become one of the game's most influential men.

**DURING THE** Webb-Topping ownership, the Yankees never had a profitless year. The men purchased the club, 450 men on active and reserve lists, and all Yankee properties, for \$2.85 million and sold two decades later for \$14.5 million.

In the 25 years prior to the Webb-Topping purchase the Yankees had acquired 14 pennants and 10 world championships, a record considered unparalleled and tough to beat. But the Webb and Topping years produced another 15 American League championships and won another 10 World Series crowns.

His devotion to sports did not end with the sale of the Yankees. He often maintained that without being able to slip away for an occasional round of golf he would never have been so successful in business.

With friends and associates including well known businessmen, athletes and entertainers, Webb often played golf with personalities such as Bob Hope.

**AND HIS ANNUAL** Del Webb's Sahara Invitational golf tournament at Las Vegas, Nev., grew in 15 years from a \$3,500 event to a 72-hole \$150,000 stop on the PGA fall circuit.

He joined Phoenix business friends in the early '30s to establish the Phoenix Open, which also grew impressively from a \$5,000 to \$150,000 tourney.

His love for the game is reflected in the fact most

Webb hotels offer golf play and Sun City has 10 regulation 18-hole courses.

Webb hotels include the Sahara and Mint in Las Vegas and the Sahara Tahoe at Lake Tahoe, Nevada. The TowneHouse in Phoenix and Mountain Shadows at Scottsdale attract national conventions and winter visitors. The Newporter Inn at Newport Beach, Calif., and the Hawaiian Kuilima on the northern tip of Oahu also are major Webb facilities.

**THE SAME** year Sun City was begun Del E. Webb Construction Co. became the Del E. Webb Corporation.

Webb put his company in joint-venture hotel and office building developments with the Prudential Insurance Company of America, and in a joint-venture Michigan land development project with Chrysler Realty, a subsidiary of Chrysler Motors.

Despite the firm's far-flung interests, Webb didn't leave his projects to others. He was constantly on the move surveying company jobs and developing new investments for the firm of which he was the largest shareholder.

He continued to be active in corporate management until stricken this spring and had returned to chair the firm's annual meeting for stockholders April 26 after the initial surgery.

**ROBERT H. Johnson**, an associate 40 years and now Webb president and chief executive officer, paid tribute to Webb as "a born leader" and said he will be sorely missed by a legion of employes and friends who admired him for his business acumen, his aggressiveness and his dedication to his company.

Webb had for years been active in support of the Boys Clubs of America and was a national director. He also had been honored in several cities for his civic activities and charitable contributions, and insisted his company representatives become active in similar affairs wherever they resided.



# DEL E. WEBB

The  
All American  
Arizona  
Legend

The press in covering the phenomenal accomplishments of Del E. Webb as he rose from teen-age carpenter to Chairman of the Board of a multi-faceted corporation with over 8,000 employees has hailed him as "An Amazing Arizona Legend" . . . "That master planner and builder" . . . "An institution — the best known of the big time developers" . . . "The nation's chief developer of retirement towns." He has been co-owner of the New York Yankees, a TIME magazine cover subject, the recipient of honors from universities he could not have afforded to attend in his youth.

Del Webb was born in Fresno, California in 1899. When his father's business suffered reversals he dropped out of school at the age of 13 and began working as a carpenter. In 1927, after several lean years, he loaded his old Nash car with his carpenter tools, his pitcher's glove, a few possessions and set out for Phoenix, Arizona.

His subsequent professional baseball career was cut short after a collision at home plate and a long bout with typhoid. After he recovered he again turned to carpentry and worked hard perfecting the skills of his trade. Del Webb was not only a good carpenter but he had a talent for figuring costs and time and a knack for gathering the best craftsmen around him. Thus a construction company was born.

In those early days the jobs came small, but he tackled them with enthusiasm and determination. First came grocery stores, filling stations and drug stores. Next came department stores, state

buildings, high school and college buildings. Eventually he was building military bases, hospitals, shopping centers and office buildings.

During these years Webb began dreaming about a new city, a town for people who were past 50, a complete city planned with their particular needs and desires in mind. In 1960 his planned city became a reality — Sun City opened to a responsive public.

The Del E. Webb Corporation, through the years, has gained national prominence, constructing major projects such as the New York Madison Square Garden, Los Angeles County Art Museum, Anaheim Stadium, the International Airport at Kansas City and the U.S. Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. In Phoenix, Webb's building team constructed the impressive Civic Plaza and the trio of skyscrapers comprising the Rosenzweig Center, which Webb co-owns and operates.

In recent years Arizona businesses, institutions and community service organizations have extended recognition to Del Webb for his many contributions to the state.

Of all his achievements and successes, the one which gives him the most satisfaction, the one he takes greatest pride in is Sun City. It's evident in the comradeship between Sun Citians and Webb during his frequent visits.

In his words, "When some Sun City resident, perhaps a total stranger, buttonholes me on a visit to say that life in Sun City has made his or her retirement years well worth living . . . well, to me, that says it all." □ □ □

FROM: Public Relations Department  
Del E. Webb Corporation  
3800 North Central Avenue  
P. O. Box 29040  
Phoenix, Arizona 85038  
602/264-8011

BIOGRAPHY

DEL E. WEBB  
Founder, Del E. Webb Corporation

Del E. Webb was a man whose career ranged from carpenter to board rooms, baseball sandlot to major leagues, boyhood friends to U. S. presidents.

The corporation of which he was chairman represents an equally impressive evolution. From a humble beginning in 1928 it has moved from simple construction to complex developments. Public ownership has been available on the New York Stock Exchange since 1963.

The company Del Webb founded is unique in its ability to develop and then build and manage a property, and equally well-known for hotel ownership and operation, as well as varied construction projects. While its major hotels are in the West, the Webb firm ranges from the East coast to Hawaii for land development, property management and construction.

Corporate headquarters are in Phoenix. Major Webb hotels include Nevada's Sahara and Mint in Las Vegas, the Sahara-Reno in Reno, and the Sahara-Tahoe at Lake Tahoe; Arizona's TowneHouse in Phoenix and Mountain Shadows at Scottsdale and the Newporter Inn at Newport Beach, California. Large managed properties include the Park Tahoe casino at Lake Tahoe and La Posada resort in Scottsdale.

Webb, before his death on July 4, 1974, put his firm clearly in the areas of businesses it embraces today--leisure, real estate and construction. In recent years the company has bolstered leisure investments by acquiring marina-oriented resorts on Colorado River lakes.

The firm which bears Webb's name is a reflection of the colorful and versatile growth of the energetic entrepreneur born May 17, 1899, in Fresno, California, to Ernest and Henrietta Forthcamp Webb.

(more)

The father found his rangy son equally at home with a hammer or a baseball. When the senior Webb's contracting, sand and gravel business came upon hard times, Del quit school to carpenter weekdays and pitch on Sundays for substantial semi-professional fees.

Typhoid fever in the mid-1920's reduced the 6-foot 4-inch, 200 pounder to 99 pounds, and idled the recuperating young man almost a year to reflect on the soundness of a dual career.

Choosing business over baseball, Webb left hopes of a major league career in Oakland, California for the new climate and new opportunities of Phoenix, Arizona.

He soon found steady work, but then bad luck seemed to appear. Holding a worthless Friday paycheck from a disappearing contractor, the 29-year-old carpenter decided to try to collect at least part of his wages on Monday, then leave for another city.

The owner of the Bayless grocery he had been helping to erect persuaded him to complete the job. With little more than a hammer and saw, and the ability and energy to use them well, Del Webb opened a modest construction business in July, 1928.

In 1945, when Mr. Webb fulfilled a boyhood dream by joining Dan Topping in buying the New York Yankees, he was guiding a company already known nationally for its contracting achievements.

By 1960, when the Del E. Webb Construction Co. became the Del E. Webb Corporation, it had launched the world-famous Sun City, Arizona resort-retirement community and was versed in hotel, office building and land development techniques.

In following years, Del Webb's associates and friends included businessmen, athletes and entertainers well-known in their fields. Bob Hope was a frequent Webb golfing partner.

Although home and business headquarters remained in Phoenix, his itinerary revealed a man constantly on the move, surveying company projects and developing new investments for the firm of which he was the largest shareholder.

(more)

The pride in which he conducted his business was reflected in hotels and other developments which still bear his name. That pride and loyalty has been shared by thousands of employees in Webb operations.

While far-flung interests precluded close local involvement, he was honored in several cities for his civic activities and charitable contributions, and insisted his company representatives become active in similar affairs wherever they resided.

When Webb bowed out of baseball for a second time in 1965 through sale of his Yankee interest to Columbia Broadcasting System, he closed a 20-year ownership career that saw him rise from a virtual major league unknown to become one of the game's most influential men.

His kind of participation saw him counsel closely with Topping in hiring and firing Yankee players, executives and managers, found him in a dominant role at the major league council tables, and a leader in solving American League and baseball re-alignment, expansion and legislative problems.

The Webb-Topping \$2,850,000 purchase of the Yankees, 450 men on active and reserve lists and all Yankee properties, was considered one of the greatest buys in baseball history. For two decades the baseball club never failed to return a profit. The sale to CBS was for \$14 million.

The Yankees had acquired 14 pennants and 10 world championships in 25 years before Webb and Topping took over, and the record of the Ruppert dynasty was considered unparalleled. Yet, from 1945-65, the Yankees acquired another 15 American League championships and won another 10 World Series crowns.

Webb's devotion to sports never lagged. He maintained that without being able to slip away for an occasional round of golf during his grinding work schedule, drudgery would have overtaken him. The Del Webb Sahara Invitational in Las Vegas grew from a \$3,500 event to a major PGA golf tournament. Webb joined Phoenix business friends in

(more)

the early '30's to establish the Phoenix Open. Most Webb hotels offer golf play, and its Sun City has a dozen 18-hole courses.

Through the years, Webb donated time and funds to many events connected with sports, as well as to the Boy Scouts of America, and the Boys Clubs of America, of which he was a national director. He was awarded several honorary degrees.

Sun City, he often said, was the business innovation and investment of which he was most proud.

Before he died, Del Webb established the Del E. Webb Foundation to carry on his interest in charitable and civic contributions.

IC

# A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

to

## DEL E. WEBB

May 17, 1899 — July 4, 1974

July 14, 1974 — Sun Bowl — Sun City

- Organ Prelude ..... Erhman S. Reynolds  
Sun City Organ Club
- Opening ..... Jerry Svendsen  
Del E. Webb Development Co.
- Invocation ..... Reverend Ralph K. Kofoed  
President, Sun City Ministerial Association

### REMARKS:

- Robert H. Johnson ..... President, Del E. Webb Corporation
- Earl Clore ..... President, Sun City Home Owners Association
- G. Douglas Morris ..... President, Sun City Taxpayers Association
- William B. Kent .. Vice President, Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc.

### ADDRESS:

- "My Friend, Del Webb" ..... The Hon. Barry Goldwater  
United States Senator
- "America, The Beautiful" ..... Carl Schlaegel
- Benediction ..... Father Palmer H. Plourde  
Sun City Ministerial Association
- Organ Postlude ..... Ehrman S. Reynolds

*"The builder of a house has more honor than the house, for every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God." — Hebrews 3:4*



DEL E. WEBB  
MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

July 14, 1974

ORGAN PRELUDE ..... 7:30 - 8:00 PM

SVENDSEN:

GOOD EVENING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. WE COMMENCE THIS  
MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO DEL E. WEBB WITH THE INVOCATION  
BY THE REVEREND RALPH K. KOFOED, PRESIDENT OF THE  
SUN CITY MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION.

Invocation

SVENDSEN:

SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE DEL E. WEBB CORPORATION IS THE  
FIRM'S PRESIDENT, ROBERT H. JOHNSON.

JOHNSON:

I JOIN YOU TONIGHT, NOT JUST AS PRESIDENT OF THE DEL E. WEBB  
CORPORATION, BUT AS A HUMBLE FRIEND OF A GREAT MAN, DEL WEBB.  
HE WAS NOT ONLY MY CLOSE FRIEND, BUT MY BUSINESS ASSOCIATE  
FORTY YEARS. AN AGGRESSIVE LEADER, YET A RETIRING AND  
COMPASSIONATE MAN, HIS PASSING JULY 4TH WAS A PROFOUND LOSS  
TO HIS FAMILY, HIS THOUSANDS OF FELLOW WORKERS, AND HIS LEGION  
OF FRIENDS, NUMBERING IN THE THOUSANDS RIGHT HERE IN SUN CITY.

JOHNSON, CONT'D

BECAUSE WE HAVE HEARD A FEW SMALL EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN .  
ABOUT WHAT MIGHT BE THE FUTURE OF SUN CITY NOW THAT MR. WEBB  
IS NO LONGER WITH US, I WANTED ESPECIALLY TO BE HERE TONIGHT  
TO TELL YOU THIS:

WE WILL CONTINUE OUR INTEREST IN, AND OUR DEVELOPMENT OF,  
SUN CITY. NO CHANGES WILL BE MADE FROM THE PLANS FIRST  
ENVISIONED BY MR. WEBB FOR A CITY OF LASTING BEAUTY.

WE OF THE WEBB CORPORATION WOULD SAY....WHAT FINER MEMORIAL  
COULD THERE BE TO DEL WEBB THAN SUN CITY AS IT IS TODAY, AND  
AS IT WILL CONTINUE!

IN LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF THE DEL E. WEBB CORPORATION, WHICH  
WAS HIS LIFE, MR. WEBB PLACED HIS WEBB STOCK IN THE WEBB  
FOUNDATION, WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO ITS TRUSTEES TO VOTE THE STOCK  
CONSISTENT WITH POLICIES PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED.

SUCH WAS THE LEGACY OF DEL WEBB FOR SUN CITY AND FOR HIS  
COMPANY.

SVENDSEN:

OFFICERS OF THE SUN CITY ORGANIZATIONS SPONSORING THIS  
MEMORIAL ON BEHALF OF ALL RESIDENTS WILL SPEAK AT THIS TIME.  
REPRESENTING THE SUN CITY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION,  
PRESIDENT EARL CLORE.

CLORE:

GOOD EVENING. THANK YOU FOR COMING FOR THIS TRIBUTE  
TO MR. WEBB.

AS YOU KNOW, THE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION HAD PLANNED A  
DEL E. WEBB DAY LAST SPRING, WHICH HAD TO BE CANCELLED  
BECAUSE OF HIS ILLNESS. WE WERE VERY DISAPPOINTED AT THE  
TIME BECAUSE WE FELT THAT SUN CITY'S LOVE FOR ITS FOUNDER  
SHOULD BE EXPRESSED, BUT TOO MANY TIMES WE ARE SLOW IN  
DOING THE THINGS WE KNOW SHOULD BE DONE.

YOUR PRESENCE HERE TONIGHT WILL COMPENSATE TO SOME EXTENT  
FOR OUR LONG DELAYED TRIBUTE TO THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR  
THE GREATEST RETIREMENT COMMUNITY IN THE WORLD.  
THANK YOU FOR COMING.

SVENDSEN:

NEXT, SUN CITY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT G. DOUGLAS MORRIS.

MORRIS:

I NEVER MET DEL WEBB. NEITHER HAVE I EVER SEEN A HUMAN MIND OR A SOUL: BUT I KNOW THEM WELL BECAUSE I CAN SEE THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. IN THAT WAY, I CAN LOOK AT SUN CITY AND KNOW DEL WEBB.

AT A TIME LIKE THIS, IT IS CUSTOMARY TO SAY, "MAY HIS SPIRIT REST: BUT "CUSTOMARY" ISN'T A WORD THAT READILY ASSOCIATES WITH DEL WEBB. EXTRAORDINARY...UNIQUE...THOSE ARE WORDS THAT MORE SNUGLY FIT. SO...UNCUSTOMARY THOUGH IT MAY SEEM, I HOPE HIS SPIRIT NEVER RESTS. I HOPE IT CONTINUES TO WALK THESE CLEAN AND QUIET STREETS...CONTINUES TO MOTIVATE THOSE NOW VESTED WITH THE TASK OF TRANSLATING THE GENIUS OF HIS VISIONS INTO REALITIES AS STARTLING AS HE SAW THEM, AS PRACTICAL AS HE MADE THEM....CONTINUES TO GOAD THOSE WHO HAVE REACHED 60 OR 65 OR 70....YEARS THAT HE PASSED IN HIGH GEAR....WHO MIGHT FEEL THAT THE CHALLENGE IS OVER...CONTINUES TO ASK US TO PUT ASIDE PETTY DIFFERENCES THAT CAN CORRODE THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE NEW HOME THAT HAS ADOPTED US, AND TO HOLD FIRM TO WHAT HE KNEW SO WELL....THAT YOU CAN'T SPELL SUN CITY WITHOUT UNITY...CONTINUES TO REMIND US THAT YESTERDAY WE WERE STRANGERS....UNKNOWNNS IN ILLINOIS, MAINE, WISCONSIN, OREGON...AND TODAY WE ARE NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS BECAUSE HE

MORRIS, CONT'D

MADE OUR COMING TOGETHER IRRESISTIBLE.

2  
YES, I HOPE THE SPIRIT OF DEL WEBB NEVER RESTS....FOR THEN WHOSE VOICE WOULD COME TO US ON THE BREEZE THAT DRIFTS OVER THE LAND OF ARIZONA, WHICH HE SO PASSIONATELY LOVED...WHOSE VOICE WILL SAY: "I BUILT YOU A SUN CITY: BUT ONLY YOU CAN FULFILL ITS PROMISE".

SVENDSEN:

VICE PRESIDENT OF RECREATION CENTERS OF SUN CITY, INCORPORATED,  
WILLIAM B. KENT.

AS YOU KNOW, THE RECREATION CENTERS OF SUN CITY OPERATES MOST OF THE RECREATION ACTIVITIES IN OUR COMMUNITY, WHICH HAVE MADE SUN CITY THE MOST SUCCESSFUL AND UNIQUE RETIREMENT AREA IN THE WORLD.

DEL WEBB WAS ACTIVELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FIRST RECREATION FACILITIES IN THE EARLY 60'S, AND AS BUSY AS HE WAS OVER THE YEARS, TRAVELING THE COUNTRY, BUILDING, CREATING, DOING, HE ALWAYS FOUND TIME TO DEDICATE MOST OF SUN CITY'S SUBSEQUENT MAJOR FACILITIES, SUCH AS SUNDIAL CENTER, BOSWELL HOSPITAL, AND EVEN THIS SUN BOWL IN 1966.

TODAY WE HAVE MANY REMEMBRANCES OF HIM, AS WE USE THESE RECREATION FACILITIES, THE LAKES, THE GOLF COURSES, AND EVEN OUR VERY HOMES.

WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THE SPECIAL WAY OF LIFE HE MADE AVAILABLE FOR US AND FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION FOR THE MAN WHO MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE, DEL E. WEBB.

SVENDSEN:

THE MEMORIAL ADDRESS BY DEL WEBB'S CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND  
OF MANY YEARS....THE HONORABLE BARRY GOLDWATER, UNITED  
STATES SENATOR.

Sen. Goldwater

SVENDSEN:

JOHN F. KENNEDY SAID, "ASK NOT WHAT YOUR COUNTRY CAN DO  
FOR YOU, BUT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR COUNTRY.".....  
DEL E. WEBB WAS A MAN WHO DID JUST THAT. BECAUSE OF  
MEN LIKE HIM, WE HAVE AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL....

TENOR CARL SCHLAEGEL

Schlaegel - American the Beautiful

SVENDSEN:

WE WILL NOW HAVE THE BENEDICTION BY FATHER PALMER PLOURDE  
OF THE SUN CITY MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION.

Benediction - Fr. Plourde

ORGAN POSTLUDE



# DEL WEBB

THE LIFE OF THE SHOWMAN WHO SHAPED THE SOUTHWEST AND WALKED  
WITH THE FAMOUS AND POWERFUL IS REVEALED IN REDISCOVERED PHOTOS  
FROM THE COMPANY ARCHIVES.

BY STEVE BERGSMAN  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF DEL E. WEBB CORPORATION



Webb greets his fans, residents of Sun City.

**I**n 1960, *Sports Illustrated* began a story about Del Webb with this paragraph:

"When a man is half owner of the fabulous Yankees, hobnobs with the top people in both Washington and Hollywood, controls one of the nation's biggest construction companies, heads or sits on the board of forty-three corporations, has a partnership or major interest in thirty-one companies, belongs to fourteen clubs and has so much money that he almost never has to touch the dreary stuff, it puts one's teeth on edge to call him unknown. Yet it's an abashing fact that an overwhelming number of people still have never heard of Del E. Webb or, if they have, find his name only vaguely familiar and disembodied."

We've come full circle. It's thirty-one years later and seventeen years after Del Webb's death at age seventy-five. He's probably one of two or three of the most important captains of

industry who shaped the Southwest, and he is still unknown or only vaguely remembered. Webb, through his network of companies, was a key figure in the development of Las Vegas, Tucson and Phoenix.

His company, the Del E. Webb Corporation, is still based in Phoenix, but most residents have indeed disembodied the name from the founder. At its prime, the Del E. Webb Corporation was one of the biggest construction companies in the nation, building office buildings, homes, shopping centers, hospitals, government installations from coast to coast — and then beyond. The company's name was on projects in Illinois, Virginia, Michigan, Florida, Colorado, Kansas, Hawaii and even El Salvador and Honduras in Central America.

Oak Brook, Illinois, was a Del Webb Development, as was the Kansas City Athletics ball park, Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles, Madison Square Garden

in New York, Kulima Estates in Hawaii and Minuteman missile sites in Montana.

In the Southwest, he built the Hughes aircraft plant in Tucson, the Flamingo and Sahara hotels in Las Vegas, and such diverse places in Phoenix as Uptown Plaza, Chris-town Mall, Phoenix Country Club, the Phoenix Towers and Mountain Shadows Resort.

The Webb development that overshadows all others is Sun City, the first major retirement community in the country — an idea that not only transformed the Phoenix area, but had a major effect on the sociology of the vast numbers of Americans who had or would eventually approach "retirement" age.

Newspaper magazines and articles written about Del Webb in the fifties and sixties often referred to him as the "Bashful Barnum," a sort of delightful and powerful personage who kept out of the limelight. But this wasn't the case at all. Webb courted the rich, the famous and the powerful. He knew all



the presidents from Roosevelt to Nixon. FBI director Herbert Hoover considered him a good friend, while mobster Bugsy Siegel was a business associate. Howard Hughes was another friend and business partner. He played golf with a panoply of Hollywood stars and had a small business venture with Bing Crosby. In the world of sports, he was half owner of the single most important franchise in the country — the New York Yankees.

It was through his ownership of the Yankees that such titles as “Bashful Barnum” and “Webb of Mystery” were really applied, because for most of those twenty years as co-owner of the Yankees with Dan Topping, Webb was the silent partner while Topping was the front man. This is not to denigrate his role with the Yankees, which for the twenty years 1945 to 1965 won just about every pennant and most World Series — and was probably the most dominate sports team ever to play in this country. The Yankees functioned as successfully on the field as it did, because Webb made the back office operations successful by applying the practices of the business world to the sports world.

Roy Drachman, a patriarch of real estate deals in Tucson, was a former board member of the Del Webb Corporation. He first met Webb in the late 1940s and became an active business associate soon afterwards. According to Drachman, Webb wasn't as publicity shy as his public image had dictated. “He liked to have his picture taken,” Drachman says. “There was a newspaper reporter for the *Arizona Republic* that Webb hired to become head of his public relations department. One time this fellow had been instructed to show up at 11 o'clock on the first tee of a golf course Webb was playing because Webb was going to be with a movie star. When the reporter showed up, Webb said, ‘I don't know how these damn photographers know where I am, they are always following me around and taking pictures. It's kind of embarrassing, but, oh well, here they are.’”

Harold Crum, the last president of the Del E. Webb Construction Division and a close associate of Webb, recalls a speech he gave four years ago in which he said, “I could never argue



**Joe DiMaggio and Webb talk with reporters. An associate says Webb liked to have his photo taken.**



**Webb discarded his trademark fedora for a cap to match Bob Hope's.**



**Webb, top right, was a successful baseball player until a case of typhoid fever put him out of commission.**



**Allen Ludden, Jan Murray, Webb and Buddy Hackett pal around.**

that Del Webb was not a showman — he walked with kings, consulted with every president from FDR forward and founded friendships and business relationships among the greatest personalities of the twentieth century.”

Webb also wasn't shy about putting his name on his company, from the original Del E. Webb Construction Company to the Del E. Webb Corporation to individual units like Del E. Webb Management Company. For a while, his hotels were known as Del Webb's Sahara or Del Webb's Mint.

In a sense, he managed his name as well as he managed his business, but despite the monuments he constructed, even he couldn't prevent the Ozymandian treatment with which history has accorded him — a name of a company that has been severed from its founding father.

But, it's a good time to recollect the man and to some extent the myth, because history has a way of catching up on itself. The Del E. Webb Corporation will be publishing a history of the corporation, which should, at least in the Southwest, resurrect a memory and a memorable person. On a grander scale, Del Webb will live once again, this time in celluloid, as he becomes a character in an upcoming Warren Beatty movie.

Indubitably, Bugsy Siegel was the least honorable of all Webb's business associates, but their fates intertwined with the construction of the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas. Beatty stars in the movie version of Siegel's life, with Andy Romano, who had a recurring part in the *Hill Street Blues* television show, playing Webb — right down to his fedora and horn-rimmed glasses.

Delbert Eugene Webb was born May 17, 1899 in Fresno, California. His father, Ernest Webb was a contractor who operated a sand and gravel business on the side. He was also a fairly decent ballplayer and as a young man played on the same team with Frank Chance, part of the famous Chicago Cub double-play combination of Tinkers to Evers to Chance.

Del Webb followed in his father's footsteps, and cleat steps. As a teenager, Webb began working construction jobs and playing baseball. By



**Webb's construction company was born when the A.J. Bayless chain in Phoenix asked him to supervise the completion of one of its stores.**

the time he was thirteen, he was considered one of the best first basemen around Fresno and would play on semi-pro teams, picking up as much as \$2.50 a game — a good deal of spending cash for a youngster in those days.

Webb stood six-foot four-inches in his stocking feet and was as lanky as he was laconic. He had a thick head of wavy hair that seemed to recede farther and farther the more successful he became, which is probably one reason he developed such a deep affection for hats. A picture of him in his baseball uniform at seventeen shows no glasses, although by young adulthood his weakening eyesight demanded he wear them constantly.

When World War I came, Webb went to work at the Oakland shipyards where he was paid a premium, not necessarily because he was a good worker, but because he played on the shipyard baseball team. After the war, Webb led a somewhat nomadic life,

playing ball and working as a carpenter up and down the West Coast. One stop was Phoenix, where he swung his hammer for the construction of the Westward Ho Hotel.

He was a good enough ballplayer to play winter league with such hall of famers as Ty Cobb, Harry Heilmann, Rogers Hornsby and George Sisler. But, by the early 1920s his arm began to tire. He hung in the game until 1927 when a bout of typhoid fever almost killed him. His weight dropped from 204 pounds to ninety-nine; he was in bed for almost three months and it was a year before he was able to work.

Fred Kuentz, who worked with the Del E. Webb Corporation for thirty-six years, retiring as an executive vice president, says the illness was the changing point in his life. He had to give up his dream of playing baseball and decide what he wanted to do with himself. "He had a heck of a time recovering," Kuentz says, "and his

doctor suggested he come to Arizona for his health. He and his wife moved here in 1928."

Six months after arriving in Phoenix, he was the carpenter foreman for the A. J. Bayless grocery chain. As luck would have it, the contractor he was working with ran into financial problems and bounced Webb's paycheck. Webb asked the Bayless people if they would make good. They said they would on the condition that Webb would take over and supervise completion of the store. In July 1928, the Del E. Webb Construction Company was born.

**I**t was a hot time to own a construction company in Phoenix. The desert community had a population of just about 29,000 people, but it was already showing signs of growing quickly.

At first, Webb built the usual array of projects associated with a small

town: gas stations, stores and churches. Then as the town grew, the projects also got bigger — department stores for Montgomery Ward and Sears, more Bayless stores.

It was during the heart of the Depression that Webb's business really began to grow. By the early 1930s, Webb was doing about \$700,000 worth of business and by the mid-1930s, the company had reached the \$3 million level and was operating in twelve states.

Part of the reason for Webb's success during this time, was not only that he was operating in the Southwest and Southern California (he opened an office there in 1936) which were showing signs of growth, but a lot of construction jobs were federal projects and Webb had gone to Washington and Sacramento and formed close relationships with the people who had the power of imprimatur on construction projects.

He had met President Roosevelt and the two formed a bond — they were both bedridden for a time in their earlier years. Supposedly, Roosevelt told Webb, "An illness can be a turning point for a man. I was laid up four years and those years changed my thinking; in fact, changed this country's thinking."

Years later, Webb told sports columnist Red Barber, "I began to study it out, what the president had said about illness. I can see now my year was a big turning point, and without it, I wouldn't have gotten where I am."

While the 1930s were good to Webb, it was really the next decade with the advent of World War II that he solidified his reputation as a builder that could be trusted to get the big jobs done. As a result, Webb Construction was handed many lucrative wartime government contracts.

Webb's first major war contract was to build Fort Huachuca, one of fifty planned Army posts to be constructed across the country. The project had to be completed in ninety days at a cost of \$3 million. Webb knocked out the compound on time and on budget.

After Fort Huachuca came military compounds, air fields, hospitals, radar installations and Marine bases all over Arizona and Southern California.

One of the most memorable of

Webb's government projects was also one that now seems most disreputable — the Japanese Relocation Center at Parker which was to intern Americans of Japanese descent for the duration of the war. The camp was chosen because of its isolated location. Nevertheless, the government gave Webb three weeks to build 3,000 separate units for 10,000 Japanese-American internees.

Webb, who was building a project in nearby Blythe, brought down a convoy of tractors and was able to complete the job in less than three weeks — despite heat continually above the century mark.

Webb's company performed \$100 million worth of work for the government during the war years, employing 25,000 workers. Other wartime Arizona projects included Luke and Williams air force bases outside of Phoenix, an ammunition depot in Flagstaff, Yuma air support base and a prisoner-of-war camp in Florence. About the only military project Webb didn't do in Arizona was Tucson's Davis-Monthan Air Force base, although the company did lay the runways for it. Even into the 1950s, Webb's government jobs barely slowed down. According to Kuentz, Webb was building veterans' hospitals, expanding air bases, even constructing missile silos.

The 1940s marked the beginning of another phase of Webb's career and a return to one of his youthful obsessions.

**D**uring the war years, Webb had often crossed paths with Larry MacPhail, who was then toiling in the War Department but in the later 1930s was general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers. On one occasion, Webb commented he was once interested in acquiring a minor league team. MacPhail had bigger fish to fry. He was looking to put together a group to buy the New York Yankees which was on the selling block. MacPhail asked if Webb was interested and Webb replied "count me in."

In 1945, Webb, MacPhail and businessman Dan Topping, who had once owned the Brooklyn Dodgers football

team, joined forces to buy the Yankees for \$2.8 million, roughly the sum a second-rate ballplayer gets paid today to stand around in centerfield during warm summer months.

Two years later MacPhail was summarily bought out after a brawl in Baltimore when MacPhail, allegedly stewed to the gills, punched out some baseball executives.

There is a Yankee team picture in a cardboard box tucked away in the corner of the Del Webb headquarters today. It is the only team picture in a great number of boxes of photographs and documents pertaining to Del Webb. The picture is of the 1951 World Champion Yankees — the quintessential Yankee powerhouse. Just off center in the middle row, is a smiling, baby-faced rookie out of Oklahoma by the name of Mickey Mantle. His youthful grin is matched in the first row by a trio of spry ballplayers, Larry (Yogi) Berra, Phil Rizzuto and Billy Martin. Down four seats from Martin is the "ol' pefesser," Casey Stengel, with a surprisingly serious demeanor.

That year, 1951, was the hump year of five consecutive World Championship teams and those players represented not only immediate past glory but the future of baseball for the next decade. Except for 1946 (Webb's first full year as part owner), 1948, 1954 and 1959, the Yankees were pennant winners every year in the American league.

"Del Webb brought business practices to baseball," Drachman asserts. "Before him it was a business and it was a game, but primarily it was a game and not many people connected with the ball clubs had good business sense or good business practices, and Del Webb was a highly organized businessman. He had rules and regulations and he had them all down in what he called a blue book and baseball had nothing like that. He was very active and persuasive in getting business practices adopted by baseball generally and had a lot to do with the modernization of baseball."

Drachman's most ironic memory of Webb and his baseball enterprises took place in 1948. He and Webb were having dinner at a Tucson restaurant when

Webb looked at his watch and said, "I've got to meet someone at the train station." So Drachman drove with Webb down to the Tucson station. After about twenty minutes, the train pulled in and Casey Stengel hopped down from the cab.

"I remember," Drachman recalls, "Casey asked me if I ever go to the World Series. I said I go once in a while. And he said, 'You better figure on coming to New York because that is where it's going to be for now on.' He wasn't kidding, that's where it was for the next five years."

Webb used to kid that his sole contribution to the Yankees was the signing of Casey Stengel as manager.

With Webb behind the scenes, the team was vastly successful on and off the field, and Webb made money on the Yankees every year he owned the franchise with the big payoff coming in 1965 when he sold the team to CBS for \$14 million.

Kuentz notes, "Owning the Yankees was one of the greatest benefits for the company, because people would kill to get decent tickets. They would give you a construction job if you gave them tickets."

**P**eople would kill for a lot of things, most notably money. Although no one is really sure if mobster "Bugsy" Siegel was gunned down in a girlfriend's Beverly Hills apartment for money or for simply offending other mob captains. One persistent rumor that has never been proved is that Del Webb was with him the night before he died.

R. H. Johnson, who had worked with Del Webb for forty-eight years, ending up as president, chief executive officer and chairman of the Del E. Webb Corporation, says, actually Webb was with Siegel about a week before he was shot and there was speculation the hit was supposed to happen at that time, but whoever the assassins were saw an individual in the room — which was Webb — didn't recognize the person and backed off.

Webb wandered into the Bugsy Siegel mess when his company took on the construction of the Flamingo Hotel,



**Webb, named by a Los Angeles newspaper as one of the "Three Kings" of Las Vegas, owned The Mint hotel and casino.**



**Building The Flamingo in 1946 on the then-sparse Las Vegas Strip was Webb's indoctrination into the world of mobster Bugsy Siegel.**

the first really grand gambling palace in Las Vegas.

There are two stories of how Webb became contractor for the hotel. One is that he was simply hired to do the job when it was being planned. The other is, he took over the job as a favor to a bank that was loaning money on the project.

Webb would often say when he took on the project, the name Bugsy Siegel didn't mean anything to him, but "I sure found out in a hurry."

Kuentz says, "We didn't know about Siegel until after we started the project."

Recalling the late mobster, Kuentz comments, the company collected its progress payments from him every week "and he always paid in cash and he had a gun on the table when he paid." Webb also used to say Siegel paid up faster than just about anyone for whom he ever worked.

Johnson adds, "I always called him Mr. Siegel. One thing for sure you didn't have to have anything in writing with him. Once Mr. Siegel said 'let's do this,' that was the way it was."

Siegel once unnerved Webb by bragging he personally killed twelve people, then invoking the name of another Las Vegas gangster and exclaiming, "I'm going to kill that S.O.B. too." Seeing that his comments shook Webb up, Siegel told Webb, what has become a famous line, "Don't worry, we [mobsters] only kill each other."

Not all was copacetic with the Flamingo. At the time, it was a monster of a project and Siegel was pouring more money into it than his gangland operations could pump out. According to one of the researchers at the Del Webb Corporation, at one time it looked like Siegel was going to run out of money, so Webb, who was on the board of Valley National Bank, got the bank to lend him the dollars to finish construction.

A newspaper report months after Siegel's assassination reported, "Homicide investigators learned Siegel had borrowed \$1 million from a Phoenix bank to pay contractor Del Webb for construction of the gambling establishment."

The story then cryptically added, "The payments were overdue." On June 20, 1947, Siegel was gunned down, just six months after the Flamingo opened its doors.

This was Webb's last major job in Las Vegas until fifteen years later when the company got involved in the building of the Sahara Hotel. The company came to own the Sahara and Mint in Las Vegas plus other casinos in Reno and Lake Tahoe.

Webb's movement into gambling was probably what prompted him to sell the Yankees. Although Webb's position in the hierarchy of baseball was so esteemed that for years baseball execs ignored his business forays into Nevada. Baseball Commissioner Ford Frick once justified Webb's interest in casinos by noting the business arrangement was "strictly a real estate deal."

Johnson maintains the Yankee deal had nothing to do with Las Vegas. "That was simply a business proposition. Las Vegas had no bearing on it at all. At that time, Webb was a personal acquaintance with Herbert Hoover and we were given credit as running a very honest and forthright casino operation."

In 1970, a Los Angeles newspaper tagged Webb, along with Howard Hughes and Kirk Kerkorian, as "The Three Kings" of Las Vegas. Kerkorian, with the building of the MGM Grand, was somewhat of a latecomer to Vegas, but Hughes and Webb had been there for years and were old friends — despite Hughes' well-publicized eccentricities.

Maxine Newman, Webb's last secretary, recalls Hughes would call frequently on a private line into Webb's office and that no one was supposed to answer that phone. If Webb answered, then no one was supposed to be in the office.

Hughes would often call Webb or meet with him in the wee hours of the morning. "One time I met Mr. Webb at the airport and he looked rather tired," Newman recalls. "I said, 'you don't look like you feel good. What's the matter?' And he said, 'that goddamn Howard Hughes and his late night phone calls.'"

**T**he crowning achievement in the Del Webb story is unquestionably the development of Sun City, the first major retirement village built in the United States — if not the world — and one of the most admired

and copied real estate developments ever produced.

On a simplified level, what Sun City pioneered was non-institutional retirement dwellings, but the result was the sociologically trendsetting concepts of (and these have now become clichés) "retirement living," "active seniors," "senior purchasing power" and the project even gave impetus to the yearly migrations of what has come to be called "winter visitors."

It's not that other attempts at this hadn't been made before. There were numerous, sometimes scandal-ridden, retirement projects in Florida, but these were small, isolated developments. And, as Owen Childress, now on the board of the Webb Foundation and a former long-time employee of the company, remembers, the immediate impetus behind the development of Sun City, was Youngtown, Arizona, a small community that was built on the principal that no one under sixty was allowed to move in.

"I thought it was a tremendous idea and wondered why we hadn't thought of it before," Childress says. "Webb sent someone to Florida to review the retirement communities down there and one of the problems we saw was false promises that developers would make to people to get them to buy a house — that a recreation center or a golf course would be built."

Webb decided to build a large community (30,000 acres), but wary about what happened in Florida, he had all the amenities, golf course, swimming pools and shopping centers built first.

Childress got an inkling of how successful the project would be when in the early stages of development a retired couple from Oklahoma stopped to inquire about the construction. When the superintendent told them what was up, the couple decided right then and there to buy a lot. "They called me out there," Childress says, "and I said, 'we don't have a subdivision plot yet.' They said that was alright, 'we'll show you the approximate location of where we would like to have a lot and if you develop and there is one there, we'll take it.' It became a joke out there that I was the first salesman, because that was the

first sale we ever made."

To everyone's astonishment — even Del Webb's — there was a tremendous pent-up demand for a development like Sun City. Models were opened for sale on New Year's Day 1960 and more than 1,000 inquisitive people jammed the area to see the new homes. The line of cars on that first Sunday afternoon extended two miles. In the first weekend alone, 237 homes were sold. Before the month was out, 400 homes had been taken and plans were under way for a second group of 675.

Recognizing not only the success of Sun City, but its developmental importance to the nation, *Time* magazine put Del Webb on the cover of its August 3, 1962 issue. The cover story was titled, *The Retirement City, A New Way of Life for the Old*. Oddly enough, behind the cover portrait of Webb, was a stylized picture of a shuffleboard game — a cliched activity that no longer represented the active seniors of Sun City.

Webb was seventy-five when he passed away in July 1974. He was still a vibrant part of the company, holding the position of chairman of the board at his death.

Newman says, when he went into the hospital during the last days of his life, he would call the office every day, and talk to the president of the company. "He was active right up until he died."

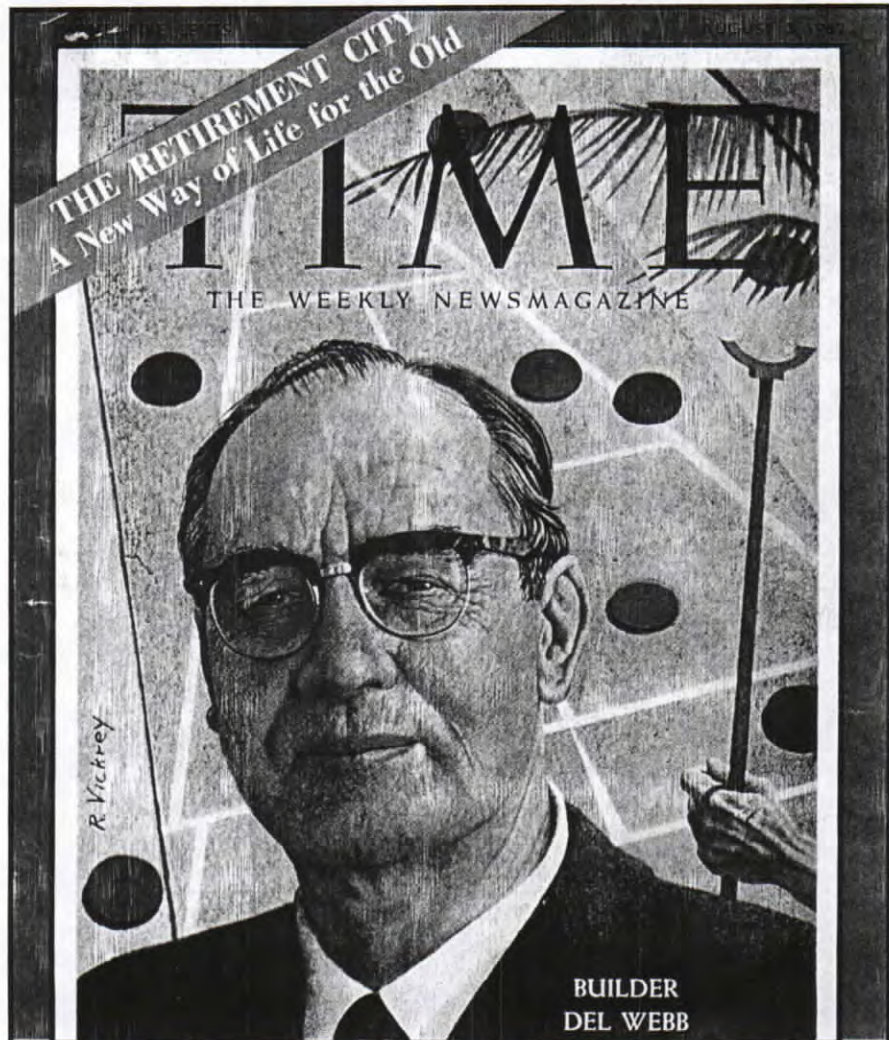
His company, the Del Webb Corporation, was never quite the same after his death and after painful, money-losing years in the 1980s, it is a smaller version of what it once was. Gone are the hotels, the casinos, the odd pieces of business that interested Webb. What's left is construction, where the company began, and retirement village development, where it pioneered a movement.

Many of Webb's developments and buildings are still around, including Sun City and now Sun City West, but few associate these projects with one of the pioneering entrepreneurs of the Southwest.

As Harold Crum noted at the December 6, 1987 dedication of the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital in Sun City West, "Mr. Webb was a legend in his time, the legacy he leaves approaches the true definition of American folklore." PM



The company built and eventually owned the Sahara in Las Vegas. Webb's casino ventures were strictly real estate deals, according to company officials.

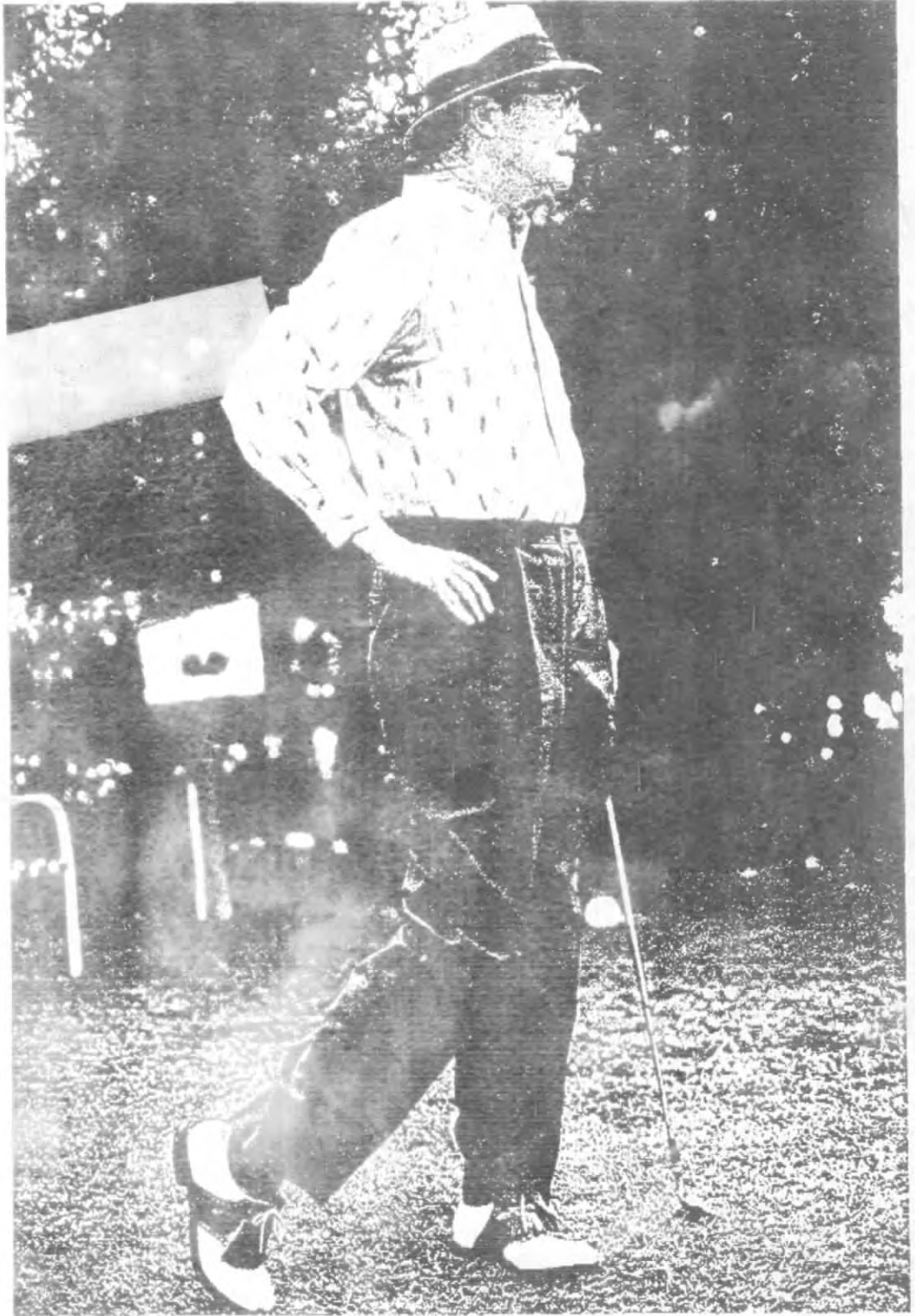


Del Webb's Sun City changed the sociology of life after retirement.

He isn't as rich as J. Paul Getty, nor as mysterious as Howard Hughes. On the

# DEL WEBB. THE BASHFUL BARNUM

By ARNOLD ESCHERICH and  
KIM T. LAWRENCE



PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL BRIDGES



other hand, Del Webb got to Vegas before anybody except Bugsy Siegel.

It's about 11 a.m., Sunday, 4th of July weekend. Del E. Webb, to whom Sundays are like any other day and for whom holidays hardly exist, sits stolidly for an hour behind his desk in his souvenir-laden office at his Beverly Hills mansion. He's regaling his interviewers with tales of a still-active 70-year life.

Using laconic phraseology laced with mild profanity and country-boy grammar, he's spoken of baseball and the once-proud New York Yankees he owned, of Harry Truman and Barry Goldwater and FDR, of Las Vegas and The Mob. Inevitably, with gentle prodding from the reporters, the conversation gets around to Howard Hughes.

Webb hesitates. But then he says, "Well, I've known Howard for 35 years and I consider him one of my closest friends. We've done a lot of his building. He has his peculiarities, but he's one of the shrewdest fellows I ever knew. You talk to him about a deal and he's got all the answers."

Then Webb's eyesight up—under his Bush of Imotion he's showing all morning—and he says, "Come to think of it, I'm supposed to tell Howard."

He picks up the phone and dial a number that connects him with Hughes' quarters on top of the Desert Inn Hotel in Las Vegas. Webb waits, but eyes twitching while the recipient's pencil hovers over a check pad. Webb says, "Hello, Howard. Where are you? Oh, that's all right. I thought, later, but he told me he had a change of plans. I'll be in Phoenix at 2 p.m. today and I'll be there two, three days."

He hangs up. The reporters ask where Hughes is.

"He's in" Webb says. "Been workin' all night."

The conversation reveals that Howard Hughes, whose gambling habits are legendary, may reveal something about Del Webb. It may, in fact, partially explain the success of the Fresno-born baseball bum who dropped out of high school but grew up to own the Yankees, of the 36-a-day carpenter who became a multimillionaire master builder.

It is that if Hughes is the Bashful Billionaire, perhaps Webb is the Bashful Baroum, the Silent Showman.

Webb would deny it. He attributes his success to the old Puritan virtues of "a creative, active mind and a lot of hard work."

And certainly his outward appearance, behind the "No Smoking" sign on his desk, gives no clue of showmanship. He looks like a gentleman farmer and talks like a blend of field hand and potbellied stove philosopher. He's taciturn, soft-spoken, slow-turnd. One can imagine him on the mound in his baseball days, spitting, starting in slaking off the sign, pumping and delivering a sizzling fastball that takes the batter by surprise.

But other factors about him are showmanlike. His company is conspicuously the Del E. Webb Corp., engaged in the construction, resort hotel and retirement center businesses, headquartered in Phoenix and listed on the New York and Pacific Coast stock exchanges. All his hotels, like Wilbur Clark's or Conrad Hilton's, are Del Webb's. Match books proclaim "Del Webb's Towne House" or "Del Webb's Mountain Shadows" or "Del Webb's Sahara."

Webb shies away from estimating how much he's worth. But he won't dispute \$100 million. That includes some \$60 million worth of stock in his construction-hotel company. Webb also owns a multimillion-dollar stock and bond portfolio.

In addition, he owns Webb Resources Co., engaged in oil exploration, and a company named Master Products, "a box factory in Los Angeles worth maybe \$2 or \$3 million." And Webb says he has money invested in "electronic things" as well as motion pictures. "I'm probably in a half-dozen pictures now," he says. "Bing Crosby and I have a production company. We financed *The Great John L.* in 1949 and money's still coming in."

Most of the Webb showmanship is under the surface. But some of it, when brought out, may be downright brag-

gadic. For example, he says, "I've known every president since FDR."

Also, when in the mood, Webb turns from hesitant-tongued to long-windedness, reminiscently spinning a lengthy tale or two with or without an eventual point.

For example: "Harry Truman gave me hell once for voting for Ike, but I figured around Ike's first term we had a lot of military problems so a military man was best. I'm a lifelong Democrat—you can say a slightly conservative Democrat—but I can't vote for a bad Democrat over a good Republican."

Del Webb isn't as much in the public spotlight today as he was in his Yankee ownership days (1945-65). But there's nothing sullen about him. Not long ago, he was leading Ben Hogan by three strokes after 18 holes in a pro-am event.

A trim six-foot-four, 200 pounds, he's still a seven handicap. "He'll hit the ball a long, long ways," says Johnson, "but it slices more now than it once did."

In Las Vegas, the Webb company owns the Sahara, Thunderbird and Mint hotels-casinos. Its fourth gambling hotel is the Sahara-Tahoe. Del E. Webb Corp. puts up about \$100 million worth of construction a year, ranging from airports to office buildings to baseball parks. And it operates three retirement centers.

There is nothing conglomerate or go-go about the house that Webb built. Webb, in fact, is slightly worried about go-go speculation in stocks in general, both by individuals and institutions.

"In 1924, a bunch of us baseball players went to Bank of Italy (now Bank of America) and bought some stock with our baseball money," Webb recalls. "I bought \$50 worth. That was something—ballplayers owning stock. In those days, only the Goulds and the Mellons and the Rockefellers owned stock. Now everybody buys stock. And the big majority of buyers don't pay too much attention to what they buy. Understand, I'm not predicting a big drop in the stock

market. But I'm a little worried."

With Las Vegas hotel-casinos and retirement centers, Webb figures he has captured both ends of the population. "I think tourism and entertainment are the right kinds of businesses today," he says. "By the end of 1970, a truck driver will be earning \$12,000 a year, plus fringe benefits, such as dentistry and a month's vacation."

"When I worked in a trade, the only vacation I got was when I was out of work, and I spent that looking for a job. Now a young truck driver knows he's going to be taken care of, so he's going to spend his money."

And what of the older folks? "They have more money than in the past, too. Fact is, over 75% of the buyers in our retirement centers pay cash."

In the full spotlight or not, the Silent Showman influences a lot of things.

Consider Las Vegas. Webb actually pre-dated Hughes' descent on the city; Hughes, who owns six hotel-casinos, wanted to come in by purchasing Webb's Sahara. And, although Hughes gets much of the credit for the cleaner, family town image that's developing (very slowly) in Vegas, Webb has a history in the town that dates back to the hoodlum days of the 1940s.

"I consulted with Hoover (J. Edgar) for a long time before we went into Vegas, because we were worried about the gangster element," he says. "Hoover encouraged us to go in."

Hughes, a Johnny-come-lately as a hotel-casino owner in Vegas, no doubt recognized Webb's pioneering contribution. "We talk on the telephone a lot," Webb says, although he adds that he hasn't seen Hughes for about four years. He and Hughes, Webb says, have talked "in a general way" about a good many plans for the city. One possibility: A joint effort to build a rapid transit system—perhaps a high-speed train—from Los Angeles to Vegas.

Webb got into Vegas by accident. A bank had advanced money for the con-

# WEBB

He took over contracting and soon he built so many markets. They thought I was a grocery man.

struction of the Flamingo Hotel, one of the first real palaces in Vegas. When the contractor ran into problems, Webb stepped in as a favor to friends at the bank.

Pretty soon he discovered the party built Flamingo had been sold to a party named "Bugsy" Siegel. The name didn't mean anything to me at the time," Webb says. "But I sure found out in a hurry."

Bugsy wasn't exactly vanilla ice cream and Webb wanted out. But Webb's lawyers said Bugsy had a binding contract Bugsy said he, too, and he had a bulge under his breast pocket. Webb built.

Webb had no problem with Bugsy—in fact he paid up later than just about anybody Webb had built for. Of course one day Bugsy did shake up Webb a little by bragging that he'd personally killed 12 persons, adding of another mob figure in Vegas.

"I'm going to kill that son of a b—," it didn't sound like an idle threat to Webb. Bugsy noted his shocked expression and quickly added, "Del, don't worry, we (mobsters) are all each other."

Siegel was that in death in Beverly Hills a few weeks later the Flamingo opened. Webb recalls the little mobster always with feminine wiles. Siegel would do what he said," he says. "Bankers, lawyers and industrialists—I never knew anyone who's more honest."

Webb's company also built the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas and eventually Webb was offered an opportunity to build it.

"We took five years making up our minds. We consulted our Wall Street investment bankers (Lehman Bros). We were afraid we'd have a hell of a time with the amateur element, but we figured we could run hotels and casinos on a business-like basis and not have a goddamn thing to do with the gangsters."

Del Webb may not have suffered at the hands of The Mob. But his company did get into serious difficulty once. It ran a \$13 million deficit in 1965 despite revenues of \$130 million.

The problem led to one of the most unhappy moments in Webb's career—a parting

of the ways between himself and a man he considered like a son. Webb has been married twice but is childless.) His name is L. C. Jacobson, a hearty fellow whose hobby was rodeo roping and who started out, like Webb, as a carpenter. He'd been with Webb since 1935 and Webb named him president of the company in 1962.

Jacobson had an interest in the Sahara in Vegas when Webb merged it into his company. And, as president, Jacobson had a major program for acquiring motels and raw land for development. That was just before the real estate market fell apart.

Jacobson left the company in early 1966 and says he was happy to go. "I'd been taking Del for five years. I wanted to get out. I didn't have the same dedication he had. To me, the company was a means to an end. To Del, it's his whole life. If he has one thing left that he really has no other interests," Webb drives his staff hard but no one harder than himself, says Jacobson.

"You've got to be a hell of a man to keep up with him. As for myself, there are some other things I wanted to enjoy doing." He now owns the Newport Inn and Hotel in Newport Beach.

Webb disappointed himself president and went to work. Why get so active again? "I had to make one of three decisions," he says. "I could have let the company go on the way it was, I could have divorced myself from it—after all, I've personally got enough money—or I could have stepped in to help." He felt it was still his company.

Delbert Eugene Webb was born in Fresno, son of a building contractor and amateur baseball player. Baseball was much more attractive to him than carpentry (particularly since the latter paid 50 cents an hour) and young Del developed a good fastball and a yen to travel. He played semipro ball and worked part-time on construction jobs. The times were wild and Webb averaged 20 hours a day.

A crash at home plate wrecked his arm but he went on pitching. He pitched a game at San Quentin Prison

and contracted typhoid fever. That meant a year in bed and he shrunk to 99 pounds. He swore off whiskey, a promise he's kept, and baseball.

When he got well, he headed for Phoenix with the promise of a carpentry job from a newspaper editor. But the editor really wanted Webb to play ball on an industrial team he sponsored.

Fortunately, his playing days ended with a clutch two-out pinch hit homerun to win a game. It got him fired from the team. The opponents discovered he wasn't eligible to play. Webb went back to hanging doors, as he wanted to.

When an employer skipped town, he took over contracting himself. Pretty soon he was building so many markets in Phoenix "they thought I was a grocery man." Then he remodeled a store for Sears—in fact, he remodeled it twice. Webb says: "A guy came in and says, 'Hey, you know that Sears store is on fire?'"

"Hell, no," I said, "it's not on fire." But I went over and sure enough the goddamn thing was on fire. It burnt four days. That was during the depression. We built that store over again. It kept us out of the red."

Later, wartime construction contracts came Webb's way. He made a name for himself in Washington by moving 35,000 Japanese-American to a new camp in Arizona from California in 120 days. Webb emerged from the war as one of the largest contractors in the Southwest.

In 1949, with Dan Topping and Larry MacPhail, whom Webb had met in Washington while on government wartime construction work, Webb bought the Yankees for \$2,850,000.

It was the best deal Webb ever made and he'll not only admit it, he'll brag about it. "Sure, I got a lot of publicity in that, get to know a lot of people," he says.

Webb is a pragmatist whose love of baseball didn't deter his assessment 20 years later that the Yankees had had it and it was high time to get out. He sold to CBS for \$14 million.

"I saw bad things coming for baseball," he says. Ballplayers were getting orga-

continued

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## WEBB

I attended two inaugurations and I'll never do that again.

nized against the owners and the baseball owners' meetings were being transformed from intimate little gatherings he could dominate, to gigantic affairs with lawyers all over the place. "The last meeting I went to there were 67 guys there."

Webb liked to have control. Some say he drove Bill Veeck, former Indians, St. Louis Browns and White Sox owner, out of baseball. "Yeah, I guess I did," he says. "I didn't think Veeck was good for baseball. He always kept everybody in a turmoil. I'd hire him but I wouldn't let him have anything to do with the purse strings."

For the \$285 million purchase (the price was low partly because of the threat that baseball would suspend operations for the duration of the war), Webb and his partners got more than the Yankees. They got stadiums in New York, Newark and Kansas City. And they promptly sold a patch of land that came with the Newark stadium for \$2 million, almost what they'd paid for the whole mess. (Webb hints that bit of land was a big reason he got interested in the Yankees.)

Now Webb is spoiled by the success of that deal. "I don't think I'll ever be back in sports. I offered \$6 million for the White Sox two years ago, but they wanted \$12 million. George Allen came around one day and said the Rams could be bought—for \$20 million—\$20 million, and you don't even get a stadium."

Webb surrounds himself with baseball souvenirs (all his offices have bats from Yankee World Series), but he seems pretty sour on the sport.

"The four divisions in the majors aren't going to work out," he says. He thinks the quality of play is slipping because so many new players have been added. "Al Kaline told me the other day that with these four leagues, I can play until I'm 50," Webb says.

Unlike his friend Hughes, Webb is a sharp dresser. He has perhaps 150 suits, many of them blue, 100 pairs of shoes and more hats than all his executives could ever wear out.

Webb has contributed to many political campaigns but he's hardly a political kingmaker. Often, he's contributed to both sides. For example, when Barry Goldwater ran against Lyndon Johnson in 1964, Webb was on the fence. He was longtime friend of Goldwater, both being from Phoenix, but he preferred Johnson whom Webb also knew.

"Seemed to me that Johnson seemed to have pretty good control of that Senate," Webb says. "Now Goldwater, he jumped around too much. He went to California to school, then went up to Illinois. He worked in the store for a few years, then he came and fly, then he lived with the Indians, then the store again, then he decided he'd be a politician."

Webb had given Goldwater plenty of monetary support earlier, but he voted for Johnson. "Barry Goldwater is a hell of a good senator but he's no President," Webb says. Then, as if to keep the subject on politics, he continues: "I attended two inaugurations of Presidents, Roosevelt and Ike, and I'll never do that again." Why? Webb "Mess, crowd around, nobody's knowing what they're doing."

One recent week Webb went from headquarters in Phoenix, where he owns a home, to his Beverly Hills residence to stay overnight, then flew off to Hawaii for a funeral, back to Los Angeles and then to Washington to confer with George Romney on to New York, and back to Phoenix. He had a private plane once but gave it up as too expensive and now sticks to commercial flights.

He takes a visitor around the beautifully landscaped Beverly Hills mansion, glances at the view of the city (though he hadn't noticed before, and remarks wistfully, "I don't see much of the place. If I'm here more than one night I get restless.")

And if he's not there, he sometimes gets burglarized. Once somebody got away with a bevy of autographed baseballs (the thief ignored the valuable silver cups). Another time, in broad daylight, someone drove off Webb's white Continental. "Found it curbside and winterlogged," Webb recalls.



Mr. Del E. Webb, founder and chairman of the board of Del E. Webb Corporation, passed away Thursday morning at Methodist Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota.

Mr. Webb underwent a lung operation in mid-March and recovered sufficiently to chair the company's annual meeting of stockholders on April 26.

Returning recently to Mayo Clinic for a routine checkup of the successful lung operation, further surgery was found necessary, disclosing new complications from which he passed away.

Mr. Webb is survived by his wife, Toni, and a brother, Halmer J. Webb, North Hollywood, Calif.

Included in his will, as one of his last wishes, was a request that there be no funeral, his body be cremated, and his ashes be scattered over Arizona, the state in which he achieved his business success.

He will be sorely missed by a legion of fellow employees and friends who long have admired his devotion to his company, which was his life; his business acumen and his concern for the welfare of all who worked with and for him.

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7/5/74

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