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**Linda Simmons** to me [show details](#) Jan 24 (3 da

Karen, all I can offer on Mrs Webb would be from Social Security Death Record

**Toni Ince Webb**  
born 24 January 1921  
died 10 July 2008  
age 87  
death at 92011 (which is Carlsbad, CA)  
SS # 555-24-7887

I have tried searching for an obit for her in that area and other places, but nothing be there was no obit, but I shall keep trying. Suggest that someone just type up files.

*Live Love Laugh*  
Now and Always.....Linda

Draft autosaved at 12:30 PM (7 minutes a

**To:** Linda Simmons <lkhs45@yahoo.com>

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**From:** Karen Bunsness (kmbunsness@gmail.com)  
**To:** edsonallen@yahoo.com;  
**Date:** Sun, January 30, 2011 11:36:38 AM  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Fwd: Mrs Webb

On Mon, Jan 24, 2011 at 2:47 PM, Linda Simmons <lkhs45@yahoo.com> wrote:  
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*Live Love Laugh*  
Now and Always.....Linda

# Opinion

Opinions expressed are those of the authors or artists.

## Join in celebration honoring Del Webb's 111th birthday

**BILL PEARSON**

CHAIRMAN

SUN CITY 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Who would have thought celebrating someone's 111th birthday as a time for a massive, boisterous party? Imagine him being a straight-laced, upstanding business man, a captain of industry, a builder second to none. A man revered as the founder of Sun City, owner of the New York Yankees during the greatest run in baseball (1945-1965), and the man who built both Bugsy Segal's Flamingo and Madison Square Garden.

But enough with the history lesson. You can get all of that information and lots more when you come to Del Webb's 111th birthday party Sunday at the Oakmont Recreation Center at 107th Avenue and Oakmont Drive (just west of Fry's on Grand Avenue).

Doors open at 12:30 p.m., with cake and coffee on the patio (served until 3:45) while inside we will nurture your more cerebral side.

The incomparable Tanya Griffith will play Del Webb's personal secretary Maxine Newman. There will be two shows with the first at 1 and the second at 2:45.

With Tanya will be a host of Webb employees to talk about their boss and family members who bought and lived in the first model home in Sun City.

Jim Gatscher from the Sun City Players will present "The Life and Times of Del Webb."

Dress is casual and you don't have to bring a gift for Mr. Webb (in fact, all those in attendance will receive party favors to commemorate this event).

Unfortunately, Del left us back in 1974, though his memory will live on forever in the hearts and minds of those of us who love Sun City and what he gave us. His legacy is a community that is visited and studied by people across the world.

Immediately next door to the Oakmont Rec Center is the first model



**Delbert Eugene Webb**

home and it has been restored to look like it did opening day 1960.

Now known as the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, it has enjoyed record numbers since the first of the year. Clearly the 50th anniversary has spurred this interest. To give even more of you a chance to visit, the museum will be open from noon to 4:30 p.m.

If by day's end you still have the energy, there is a free concert at the Sun Bowl featuring the Arizona Trio.

Showtime is 7:30 p.m. and don't forget to bring your lawn chairs.

If your motor is still running on Monday night, the Sun City Players will perform "Laugh Out" at the Mountain View Rec Center (tickets available at the door).

The more than year-long celebration will conclude Jan. 12 with a raffle drawing. The grand prize will be a Smart Car (which we will have at Oakmont for your viewing).

Raffle tickets are \$10 each, so if you have been wanting to get in the prize drawing early, bring your wallet, otherwise, everything else is free.

Hope to see you all there.

# Del Webb Corporation

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IC

VF  
Del Webb

Contact: Sandy Painter  
(602) 222-4343

## ARIZONA'S DEL WEBB AND THE NEW YORK YANKEES

- Phoenix business mogul Del Webb bought the New York Yankees, with partners Dan Topping and Larry MacPhail, in 1945. Webb and Topping bought MacPhail's interest in 1947 and owned the team until 1965.
- Webb and his partners purchased the Yankees for \$2,850,500, a deal that not only included ownership of the team but Yankee Stadium and all the Yankees farm clubs as well.
- Under Webb's majority ownership, the Yankees won 15 American League Pennants and 10 World Series Championships (five of those set the record for consecutive title from 1949 to 1953).
- For the first and only time, the Yankees moved their 1951 spring training camp to Phoenix so Webb could show off his 1950 World Series-winning team to supportive Arizona fans.
- During his tenure, the first night game at Yankee Stadium was played and legends Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris and Yogi Berra made their debut.
- "Del Webb was an ideal owner," once remarked Yankee great Yogi Berra. "He left the business of baseball to the pros, knowing they would make mistakes, but that's the way it is and should be."
- Webb gave the general manager free reign to sign the players and the coaches to run the team on the field.
- Outside of major league baseball, Webb often credited his business success to his ability to apply the rules of baseball to business.
- Webb is best known for introducing the first Sun City near Phoenix in 1960 which forever altered the way society would view retirement. For this he was honored on the cover of *Time*.
- Webb's passion was baseball and in his early years as a carpenter's apprentice only worked for companies that had baseball teams.
- Webb died in 1974.
- In 1999, Webb was nominated to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Date: unk

# Del Webb book details Sun City's 42-year history

Every five years he worked for **Del Webb Corp.**, **John Morton** received a diamond in his service pin.

Those diamonds — seven in all — are now in a ring John's wife, **Ruth**, wears on her finger. "My husband worked for Webb for 35 years. He was an accountant," Ruth said.

The Mortons moved from Illinois to Arizona in 1946, after the war and before Sun City was built. "John had been at Luke (Air Force Base), and he liked it," Ruth said. "He said, 'Well, when we get married, would you consider coming to Phoenix if I can get a job there?'"

He got the job with Del Webb, he and Ruth got married, and John went on to work with the company — and the man — almost four decades.

"To me he's been John, but they called him Johnny," Ruth recalled. A sketch by Reg Manning featuring "Johnny Morton" appears in a 1950 edition of **The Webb Spinner**, the Del Webb Corp.'s company publication.

Ruth donated years worth of the Spinner in bound copies to the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, where she volunteers.

The society was founded in 1989 by, among other people, resident **Jane Freeman**.

"Jane had the vision 20 years ago and started accumulating," said **Connie McMillin**, society president.

A few years later, the society moved into the first Del Webb model home, at 10801 Oakmont Ave. Versions of that home sold for \$8,500 when Sun City opened on Jan. 1, 1960. Today, the home is a wealth of historical treasures and fun trivia.

McMillin, Morton and other volunteers delight in telling visitors the various stories about Webb and his development, which didn't have a name until two months before it opened.

"The billboards just had a question mark. There was a big contest to name Sun City,"



**Katy O'Grady**

**Your Turn**

McMillin said.

Officials with the company that was given the task of collecting and paring down the contest entries, and ultimately choosing the development's name, were stunned when Webb came in and saw some of the names, pointed to the Sun City entry and said, "Oh, I like Sun City," Morton said.

"They put up a big fight about that because they were being paid to name it," she said.

Details of the exchange can only be guessed now, but the fact is, Webb got his way, and opening day



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Connie McMillin, left and Ruth Morton have loads of "Del Webb: The Man. The Company" books to line the shelves of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

for Sun City was more successful than anyone could have predicted.

"There were so many that first day they ran out of sales slips," Morton said. McMillin said people took slips of regular paper with their deposit amount written on them as proof they'd purchased a Webb home.

Following Del Webb Corp.'s merger with Pulte Homes, the historical society was given about 150 copies of the revamped book by **Margaret Finnerly** titled "Del Webb: The

## Man. The Company."

The book was first published in 1991, but about 250 copies of the newer version were created less than two years ago. Many were given to company executives and other key people, and the rest went to the historical society, which is selling them for \$25 as a fund-raiser, McMillin said.

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society's summer hours, through Labor Day, are 10 a.m. to noon Friday and Saturday. After Sept. 2, regular hours resume:

1:30-3:30 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. The society also is open by appointment. Admission is free and donations are welcome.

To schedule an appointment or for more information about purchasing "Del Webb: The Man. The Company," call 974-2568.

To submit news for "Your Turn," e-mail Katy O'Grady at [kogrady@aztrib.com](mailto:kogrady@aztrib.com); fax at 876-3698; mail to Daily News-Sun, Attn.: Your Turn, 10102 Santa Fe Drive, Sun City, AZ 85351; or call 876-2514.

# Johnson recalls Webb, Yankees

## R.H. JOHNSON:

Namesake of many local landmarks reminisces about his tenure with Del E. Webb

JEANNE WINOGRAD  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

11/3/01

Del Webb and R.H. Johnson. They're not just streets and buildings.

R.H. Johnson — for whom R.H. Johnson Boulevard and the recreation center in Sun City West are named — was reminiscing recently about a Yankees game he once attended with Webb — the man for whom a street, hospital and construction company were named. Webb died in 1974.

Johnson, now a Diamondbacks fan, was attending a Sun Health Foundation luncheon Thursday with his fiancée, Marjorie Klinefelter, when he recalled his baseball days with Webb. Johnson is president of the Del E. Webb Foundation, which regularly gives grants to Sun Health.

Johnson worked for Del Webb Corp. for 48 years. For 20 years during that period, Webb owned the New York Yankees.

"Fortunately, we were able to get back for a couple of New York Yankees' games in those days," Johnson said. "At one game, I didn't have a ticket as I followed Del

into the game. He got through the turnstile first and kept going. The guy at the stile asked for my ticket, and I said, 'I'm with him,' pointing at Del. The guy said, 'Yeah, everybody is with him,' and wouldn't let me in."

**"At one game, I didn't have a ticket as I followed Del into the game. He got through the turnstile first and kept going."**

**R.H. Johnson**

"When he'd apply for a job, he'd ask if they had a baseball team. If the company didn't have a team, he'd go on to another company. He played baseball until he got injured and ill, and that was the end of his baseball playing. Later, someone



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

R.H. Johnson and Marjorie Klinefelter were on hand at the Sun Health Foundation Golden Recognition Luncheon at Union Hills Country Club Wednesday.

The game was a 1958 contest between the Yankees and the Los Angeles Dodgers. Johnson waited patiently at the entrance for eight innings.

"Finally Del sent a runner out. I got in to see the last inning," Johnson said with a chuckle.

Phyllis Street, a volunteer and former president of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society in Sun City, said Webb became part owner of the Yankees at a cost of \$2.8 million in 1945.

"Del Webb had been interested in baseball all his life," Street said.

suggested he move to Phoenix to recuperate from typhoid fever."

Johnson also has a work history with his fiancée.

"We worked together for 41, now going on 42 years," Johnson said of Klinefelter.

The couple became engaged earlier this year, although they haven't set a wedding date yet.

The engagement was followed by another noteworthy event in Johnson's life. On Aug. 3, he received an honorary Ph.D. in human letters from Arizona State University.

The historical society's Street said she researched the information on Webb's ownership of the Yankees using an updated version of the book "Del Webb: A Man, A Company," which the historical society is selling. The book will be available at the society's Nov. 14 luncheon at the West Valley Art Museum. For information about the book or the luncheon, call 974-2568.

Jeanne Winograd can be reached at [jwinograd@aztrib.com](mailto:jwinograd@aztrib.com) or by calling 876-2532.

# Del Webb owned Yankees

GARY NELSON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Arizona owns the New York Yankees so far in the 2001 World Series, but that's nothing new.



For 20 years, Arizona builder Del Webb possessed the premier franchise in professional sports. He owned the team. He owned Yankee Stadium. He owned its minor-league system.

Fans, Del Webb used to sign Joe DiMaggio's paycheck — if not literally, then at least figuratively as the Yankees' majority owner.

R.H. Johnson, a former president of the Del Webb Corp. who now lives in Wickenburg, remembers Webb as

a passionate and superstitious baseball man.

"When he was a youngster he would solicit work from construction companies. He would always ask them if they had a baseball team. If they didn't he would go until he could find a company with a baseball team," Johnson said.

Webb was putting together a pretty good career as a minor-league player in California until typhoid fever precipitated his move to Arizona in 1926. That illness, plus a bum arm, ended his playing days.

But even as his construction business boomed, his passion for the game remained strong. In early 1945, as World War II neared its climax, he bought the Yankees with two partners.

Total price for the deal:

\$2,850,500. Big-league teams pay that kind of money in one year now for banjo-hitting utility infielders.

Even so, baseball was already big business.

"Ball clubs used to be started by some old ballplayer getting other players together and keeping his books in his hip pocket," he told an Arizona Highways reporter in 1951. "It is far beyond that these days."

But it took more than money and talent to field a winning team, Webb believed. It also required hat-free beds.

"I remember being at the Waldorf-Astoria once," Johnson said. "I put my hat on the bed and he said, 'Get that hat off the bed.'" Johnson complied, but too late; the Yankees lost that day.

See Webb's teams, A7



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Arizona developer Del Webb swings a bat with Yankees great Joe DiMaggio looking on. Webb used to sign DiMaggio's check

## From A6

Webb was also famous for never carrying cash; Johnson had to make sure there was money on hand.

Webb brought the Yankees to Arizona for spring training one year, in 1951, swapping facilities with the New York Giants, who trained in Florida that year.

During his 20 years as Yankees owner, Webb employed such greats as DiMaggio, Yogi Berra, Mickey Mantle and Whitey Ford. He was on hand for one of the greatest World Series games ever, a perfect outing by an otherwise mediocre hurler named Don Larsen in 1956. Webb's teams won 15 American League pennants and 10 World Series titles, including five in a row from 1949 to 1953.

Webb is famous for master-planned retirement communities that helped

alter the face of the Sun Belt as well as the nature of retirement itself. He also built Madison Square Garden in New York, Anaheim Stadium in California and the first ballpark for the Kansas City Royals. And he oversaw renovations to Chicago's Wrigley Field, whose Cubs last appeared in the World Series the year Webb bought the Yankees.

Webb died on July 4, 1974, after which Johnson ran the company until his retirement in 1983.

Johnson, a native Phoenician, said he is rooting for the Diamondbacks. "I hope it's four and zero," he said.

He was in Bank One Ballpark Saturday night when Arizona clobbered the Yankees 9-1 for the first Series victory in franchise history.

"God, I've never heard such noise," Johnson said. "We tried to talk and by golly you were shouting in each other's ears."

# Webb built secure spot in legend of Yankees

By Catherine Reagor  
The Arizona Republic

If legendary Phoenix developer Del E. Webb were still alive, he would be inundated with requests for tickets to the World Series.

The creator of the Valley's world-renowned Sun City retirement communities also owned the New York Yankees during one of the most storied stretches of the team's history.

Under Webb, the Yankees featured Baseball Hall of Fame greats Mickey Mantle, Yogi Berra and Joe DiMaggio and won the World Series 10 times.

Webb also was responsible for bringing the Yankees to Phoenix for the first time. In 1951, he moved the team's spring training to the Valley from Florida. It since has moved back to the Sunshine State.

In 1945, Webb and two partners paid \$2.85 million for the Yankees, far less than what marquee big league players make in a year today.

"Del Webb was an ideal owner," Berra was once quoted as saying. "He left the business of baseball to the pros, knowing they would make mistakes, but that's the way it is and should be."

In 1960, Webb opened his first retirement mecca in the northwest Valley. Five years later, he sold the Yankees to CBS for \$14 million.



Photo courtesy of Del Webb Group

**Former Yankees owner Del Webb with star Joe DiMaggio.**

"I applied the rules of baseball to business," Webb was known for saying.

Longtime Webb executive R.H. Johnson said the developer dreamed of playing in the majors and even spent his early life as a carpenter's apprentice, working only for those companies that had a baseball team.

Webb, who built Las Vegas' Flamingo Hotel with gangster Bugsy Siegel, was generous with Yankees tickets. He put his secretary Amy Jo Hafford in charge of doling them out to clients and friends. It became a full-time job for her.

"We had requests from everyone," said Hafford in the book *Del Webb: A man. A company.* "He (Webb) had senators and doctors, and some people from Phoenix who sat in the same box every year."

Webb died in 1974. He was nominated to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1999.



Daily News-Sun • Wednesday, May 9, 2001

# Webb a visionary in community planning, building

STAFF REPORT

Without Del Webb Corp., there would be no Sun Cities. Even though Webb's board of directors agreed to a \$1.8 billion merger with Pulte Homes based out of Bloomfield, Mich., the legacy of the company's celebrated founder, Delbert Eugene Webb, lives on.

The 1960 development of Sun City may have its earliest roots in a decision Webb made in high school. Born in 1899 in Fresno, Calif., times were tough for his family, and he dropped out of school and became a carpenter's apprentice. But it wasn't until years later that Webb pursued a career in homebuilding. His lifelong dream was to become a professional baseball player. But that changed when Webb contracted typhoid fever in 1927.

Faced with the disease, Webb and his wife, Hazel, moved to Phoenix in hopes the warm weather would aid him in his recuperation. It was in Phoenix that he gave up his baseball dreams and turned his efforts toward carpentry.

One year later, Webb formed his own company.

By the 1930s, Webb's contracting business was one of the largest in Arizona. And because of the early success of the business, Webb was offered several defense contracts as the country prepared to enter into World War II.

As his development career progressed, Webb kept tabs on his first love of baseball. In 1945, he and a partner purchased the New York Yankees, and in the 20 years they owned them, the team won the World Series 10 times.

After the war when the demand for housing was high, Webb was hired to build Pueblo Gardens, a 600-house subdivision with a shopping complex to be built in the open desert. That led to his Sun City project in 1960, when Webb began to carve his niche in retirement



FILE PHOTO

Del Webb founded Sun City in 1960.

communities.

Sun City, built in circles, became Webb's crowning achievement, and by the 1970s he was almost exclusively involved in building retirement communities.

Webb later turned his efforts toward major hotels, and his notoriety grew with the construction of the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas for underworld figure Bugsy Siegel. In subsequent years, Webb himself became involved in gaming with the Sahara-Nevada Hotel.

Webb died on July 4, 1974, and his ashes were scattered in Sun City. But even today, his vision lives on.

Del Webb Corp. started its second Arizona Sun City community, called Sun City West, in 1978, propelling itself into a billion dollar business. It moved onto its third Sun City in Arizona, called Sun City Grand, in 1997. In addition to the Arizona communities, Webb's company has built Sun City communities in California, Nevada, Texas, Illinois and South Carolina.

As Pulte Homes prepares to take over the reins of Del Webb Corp., the vision that Del Webb began and his corporation continued will remain a part of his Arizona Sun Cities, where retirement truly became a way of life.

# Actress brings Del Webb's secretary to life

By Angela Rabago-Mussi  
Special for the Republic

Mention the words Sun City and the name Del E. Webb comes up almost automatically.

But what is the story behind the man who built the company that builds some of the most well-known communities across America?

To answer that question, it would help to ask someone who worked closely with him on a daily basis.

Someone like his longtime secretary, Maxine Newman, who was his secretary at the time of his death in 1974.

Although Newman herself is also deceased, Tanya Griffith, a Sun City actress known for her one-woman shows,

will be portraying Webb's secretary in a show Sunday titled *Getting to Know Del Webb*.

Griffith will try to imagine what it was like to work for a man who dropped out of high school to become a carpenter's apprentice and started a business which would eventually become one of the top home-building companies in the nation.

"He was such an important man in this country," Griffith said. "But he was able to take that all in stride and still appear in some ways as an average man."

She says that even today, people in Sun City often refer to Del Webb "as if he is still alive and walking on the streets."

Griffith's performance is part of the yearlong celebration of the 40th anniversary of the opening of Sun City. Other events have included a golf cart parade with nearly 300 entries and a program honoring volunteers. After Griffith's show, other events are planned in December, and the celebration will end with a party Dec. 17 at the Sundome.

Griffith has been doing one-woman shows for over 25 years. She has a portfolio of about 200 famous women whom she portrays in performances around the United States.

Griffith prepares extensively for her roles. Unknowingly, she has been preparing for this role since she moved

to Sun City from Cleveland with her husband 13 years ago.

A life-size statue of Webb at the Bell Recreation Center immediately sparked her interest in the man.

"It's a wonderful image of him," she said. "I was kind of taken with it and his quote that's inscribed there: 'The builder builds the house but people make the home.'"

Since then, Griffith has collected information about Webb. But she dug deeper when she realized she would be presenting a show on him. Griffith used various books written about the developer and interviewed people who knew him. One of her last

See **ROLE** Page 3

From Page 1

preparatory interviews was with Robert H. Johnson, who worked with Webb for 48 years and now heads the Del Webb Foundation.

Webb's relationship with Johnson showed the man's great respect for loyalty, Griffith said. Several of Webb's first employees when he started the company in 1928 worked with him for decades.

"Del Webb was able to build his company by winning numerous defense building contracts in the late 1930s. After the war, he benefited from the big housing boom that followed. Today, Del Webb Corp. is the nation's leading builder of communities for people 55 and older.

Although Maxine Newman's boss was a powerful man — his golfing buddies included Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Barry Goldwater — he never forgot where he started, Griffith learned. "During trips to construction sites, he always made a beeline for the construction foreman and the workers," she said. "He would go right past the VIPs."

Most of all, Griffith believes, as Newman took notes for him and scheduled his appointments, she would have seen her boss as an innovator, someone who built "lifestyle" housing communities long before it was popular.

"He saw possibilities everywhere," Griffith said.



Suzanne Starr/The Arizona Republic

Sun City actress Tanya Griffith portrays longtime Del Webb secretary, Maxine Newman, in *Getting to Know Del Webb*.

VF WEBB, DELBERT E. IC

—SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT— JANUARY 5-11, 2000

## Webb: Man of vision

Longtime confidante fondly recalls builder's genius

By **TOM BARRY**  
Independent Newspapers

When the barricades to the main entrance to Sun City were removed on New Year's Day 1960 at the corner of 107th and Grand avenues, there was a virtual traffic jam that extended for miles to the Peoria city limits.

It heralded the opening of what has become the hallmark of active adult retirement communities, an unprecedented concept that today is synonymous with the name Del E. Webb.

But, until that auspicious day 40 years ago, Mr. Webb himself was still uncertain about its eventual success. Any doubts were quickly erased when he arrived to witness



**R.H. Johnson**

an endless throng of people lined up at the tiny sales office eager to buy into the lifestyle offered by the

new community northwest of

See ■ **WEBB**, Page 10

OVER

## ■ WEBB

Phoenix.

Sun City was the first of its kind in the nation. Mr. Webb soon made the cover of *Time* as the magazine proclaimed Sun City "A new way of life for the old."

Among those who joined Del Webb to celebrate Sun City's opening were rancher Jim Boswell, a partner in the joint venture called Del E. Webb Development Co., and R.H. "Bob" Johnson, a name recognizable to Sun City West residents as that ascribed to the town's main boulevard, recreation center and library.

But to Del Webb, himself, R.H. Johnson was his most senior executive, trusted confidante and longtime friend. It was Bob Johnson who helped carry out Mr. Webb's unique vision of Sun City.

"It was really a departure for us," recalled Mr. Johnson. "We'd built a few master-planned communities. But until then, we hadn't been involved with a project as novel as Sun City."

But he said Mr. Webb was a determined, driven man who had already achieved fame as one of the nation's most prolific and successful builders. During the 1950s and '60s, the company had virtually changed the Phoenix skyline, having constructed its first high-rise

office buildings.

"Del was a doer, he loved to work. And he liked to surround himself with competent people who could deliver the goods."

Bob Johnson was no stranger to Del Webb. He first met the builder in 1935 while a student at a Phoenix business college. In order to pay his way through school, he took a part-time job as secretary for the Arizona General Contractors Association, of which Mr. Webb was president at the time.

"He was talking for quite a long stretch and I was copiously taking notes. Then, he suddenly stopped and asked me to read back the notes. I don't think he believed I'd managed to keep up," said Mr. Johnson. "I read back to him every word he'd said."

Impressed by his diligence, Mr. Webb hired the youthful Bob Johnson on the spot as an assistant to the executive secretary at the company's Phoenix headquarters. The starting pay was \$75 a month. He quickly proved himself a capable employee and within a month his salary was boosted to \$135 a month.

Recognizing his potential value to the company, however, Mr. Webb interceded again. "He told me there's no future in being a secretary

to a secretary, so he made me a timekeeper," said Mr. Johnson.

"But, as a field employee, my pay went back to \$75 a month. At first, I wasn't sure if it was a promotion or a demotion."

But Mr. Johnson said Del Webb was a very loyal and generous employer. "He was truly people-oriented and took good care of all of his employees.

"Although he was extremely intelligent, Del also was very superstitious," he said. "It was bad luck to put a hat on the bed, and you never put the phone on the edge of the bed. It could squirrel a deal."

As a timekeeper, Mr. Johnson's primary responsibility was to make certain all Webb projects ran efficiently and on time. During World War II, the company grew rapidly in scope and size, from building dormitories at Northern Arizona University to expanding Luke Air Force Base near Litchfield Park.

By 1942, Mr. Johnson was promoted to manager of Webb's California operations, which was busily engaged with defense-relat-

ed building contracts.

The post-war era proved even more lucrative. In 1946, he helped oversee construction of the first lavish resort on the Las Vegas Strip, the Flamingo Hotel which was headed by legendary underworld figure Benny "Bugsy" Siegel.

During the 1960s and '70s, the Webb Company built New York's famed Madison Square Garden; Chris-Town Mall in Phoenix, the West's first enclosed shopping mall; the 44,000-seat Anaheim Stadium; numerous hospitals, including five Veterans Administration hospitals and Maricopa County General Hospital; the Pasadena Museum of Art; and lavish resorts, including the Kuilima Hotel in Hawaii.

In 1967, Bob Johnson was elected president of what had become Del E. Webb Corp., which also diversified into the hotel and gaming industries. It built and owned such luxury hotels as the Beverly Hilton, Scottsdale's Mountain Shadows Resort and the Wahweap Resort on Lake Powell.

Its gaming division also made a

significant impact in Nevada with such hotel-casinos as the Sahara in Las Vegas and Lake Tahoe, the 17-story Mint (which was then the tallest building in the state), Thunderbird Hotel in Las Vegas, Reno's Primadonna, and the Nevada Club in Laughlin (now the Golden Nugget).

But, by 1973, his health began to deteriorate and Mr. Webb was no longer able to continue his frenetic pace. He stepped down as chief executive officer and was succeeded by his longtime friend and trusted employee, Bob Johnson.

Del Webb died of prostate cancer on July 4, 1974, at the age of 75. Mr. Johnson succeeded him as chairman of the board. Mr. Johnson retired from Del E. Webb Corp. in 1980, but remained as president of Wickenburg-based Del E. Webb Foundation, which was established in 1961 to administer Mr. Webb's sizeable estate.

"He had no children of his own, so he took a keen interest in many charitable endeavors, especially youth-related organizations like the

Boys and Girls Club," said Mr. Johnson, who continues at the foundation's helm.

Over the years, the foundation has assisted with sizeable donations to Sun City area projects, including Boswell and Del E. Webb Memorial hospitals among others.

"He was a fantastic man — kind, caring, soft-spoken and dedicated. In the 42 years that I'd known him I'd never heard him ever speak ill of anyone," said Mr. Johnson, now 84.

"It's hard to imagine that he would be 100 years old today."

In spite of the diversity of his countless undertakings, Mr. Johnson said Del Webb never lost his enthusiasm for arguably his most successful enterprise — the building of adult retirement communities. Today, there are numerous Sun Cities from California to Florida that represent a lasting legacy to his unique vision.

"Of all of his projects, I dare say that Sun City was his proudest. It's also the one by which we all remember him."

**Sun City History****DEL WEBB: A MAN OF VISION**

Longtime confidante fondly recalls genius of Sun City's builder

By **TOM BARRY**  
Independent Newspapers

**W**hen the barricades to the main entrance to Sun City were removed on New Year's Day 1960 at the corner of 107th and Grand avenues, there was a virtual traffic jam that extended for miles to the Peoria city limits.

It heralded the opening of what has become the hallmark of active adult retirement communities, an unprecedented concept that today is synonymous with the name Del E. Webb.

But, until that auspicious day 40 years ago, Mr. Webb himself was still uncertain about its eventual success. Any doubts were quickly erased when he arrived to witness an endless throng of people lined up at the tiny sales office eager to buy into the lifestyle offered by the new community northwest of Phoenix.

Sun City was the first of its kind in the nation. Mr. Webb soon made the cover of *Time* as the magazine proclaimed Sun City "A new way of life for the old."

Among those who joined Del Webb to celebrate Sun City's opening were rancher Jim Boswell, a partner in the joint venture called Del E. Webb Development Co., and R.H. "Bob" Johnson, a name recognizable to Sun City West residents as that ascribed to the town's main boulevard, recreation center and library.

Builder Del E. Webb founded a construction empire that built homes, buildings and resorts throughout the nation.

His work brought him fame and fortune and at one time he even owned the New York Yankees baseball team. But one of his proudest accomplishments was the founding of a city — and a retirement lifestyle — called Sun City.



But to Del Webb, himself, R.H. Johnson was his most senior executive, trusted confidante and longtime friend. It was Bob Johnson who helped carry out Mr. Webb's unique vision of Sun City.

"It was really a departure for us," recalled Mr. Johnson. "We'd built a few master-planned communities. But until then, we hadn't been involved with a project as novel as Sun City."

But he said Mr. Webb was a determined, driven man who had already achieved notoriety as one of the nation's most prolific and successful builders. During the 1950s and '60s, the company had virtually changed the Phoenix skyline, having constructed its first high-rise office buildings.

"Del was a doer, he loved to work. And he liked to surround himself with competent people who could deliver the goods."

Bob Johnson was no stranger to Del Webb. He first met the builder in 1935

while a student at a Phoenix business college. In order to pay his way through school, he took a part-time job as secretary for the Arizona General Contractors Association, of which Mr. Webb was president at the time.

"He was talking for quite a long stretch and I was copiously taking notes. Then, he suddenly stopped and asked me to read back the notes. I don't think he believed I'd managed to keep up," said Mr. Johnson. "I read back to him every word he'd said."

Impressed by his diligence, Mr. Webb hired the youthful Bob Johnson on the spot as an assistant to the executive secretary at the company's Phoenix headquarters. The starting pay was \$75 a month. He quickly proved himself a capable employee and within a month his salary was boosted to \$135 a month.

Recognizing his potential value to the company, however, Mr. Webb interceded again. "He told me there's no future in being a secre-

tary to a secretary, so he made me a timekeeper," said Mr. Johnson.

"But, as a field employee, my pay went back to \$75 a month. At first, I wasn't sure if it was a promotion or a demotion."

But Mr. Johnson said Del Webb was a very loyal and generous employer. "He was truly people-oriented and took good care of all of his employees."

"Although he was extremely intelligent, Del also was very superstitious," he said. "It was bad luck to put a hat on the bed, and you never put the phone on the edge of the bed. It could squirrel a deal."

As a timekeeper, Mr. Johnson's primary responsibility was to make certain all Webb projects ran efficiently and on time. During World War II, the company grew rapidly in scope and size, from building dormitories at Northern Arizona University to expanding Luke Air Force Base near Litchfield Park.

By 1942, Mr. Johnson was promoted to manager of Webb's California operations, which was busily engaged with defense-related building contracts.

The post-war era proved even more lucrative. In 1946, he helped oversee construction of the first lavish resort on the Las Vegas Strip, the Flamingo Hotel which was headed by legendary underworld figure Bugsy Siegel.

During the 1960s and '70s, the Webb Company built Madison Square Garden; Chris-Town in Phoenix, the West's first enclosed shopping mall; the

over

44,000-seat Anaheim Stadium; numerous hospitals, including five Veterans Administration hospitals and Maricopa County General Hospital; the Pasadena Museum of Art; and lavish resorts, including the Kuilima Hotel in Hawaii.

In 1967, Bob Johnson was elected president of what had become Del E. Webb Corp., which also diversified into the hotel and gaming industries. It built and owned such luxury hotels as the Beverly Hilton, Scottsdale's Mountain Shadows Resort and the Wahweap Resort on Lake Powell.

Its gaming division also made a significant impact in Nevada with such hotel-casinos as the Sahara in Las Vegas and Lake Tahoe, the 17-story Mint (which was

then the tallest building in the state), Thunderbird Hotel in Vegas, Reno's Primadonna, and the Nevada Club in Laughlin (now the Golden Nugget).

But, by 1973, his health began to deteriorate and Mr. Webb was no longer able to continue his frenetic pace. He stepped down as chief executive officer and was succeeded by his longtime friend and trusted employee, Bob Johnson.

Del Webb died of prostate cancer on July 4, 1974, at the age of 75. Mr. Johnson succeeded him as chairman of the board. Mr. Johnson retired from Del E. Webb Corp. in 1980, but remained as president of Wickenburg-based Del E. Webb Foundation, which was established in 1961 to administer Mr. Webb's sizeable estate.

"He had no children of his own, so he took a keen interest in many charitable endeavors, especially youth-related organizations like the Boys and Girls Club," said Mr. Johnson, who continues at the foundation's helm.

Over the years, the foundation has assisted with sizeable donations to Sun City area projects, including Boswell and Del E. Webb Memorial hospitals among others.

"He was a fantastic man — kind, caring, soft-spoken and dedicated. In the 42 years that I'd known him I'd never heard him ever speak ill of anyone," said Mr. Johnson, now 84.

"It's hard to imagine that he would be 100 years old today."

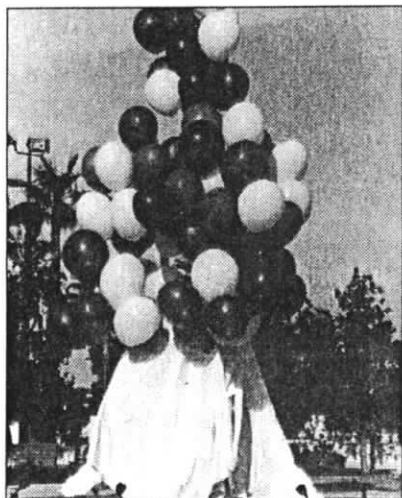
In spite of the diversity of

his countless undertakings, Mr. Johnson said Del Webb never lost his enthusiasm for arguably his most successful enterprise — the building of adult retirement communities. Today, there are numerous Sun Cities from California to Florida that represent a lasting legacy to his unique vision.

"Of all of his projects, I dare say that Sun City was his proudest. It's also the one by which we all remember him."

The statue of Del E. Webb that now rests in Memorial Garden was designed and created by Scottsdale artist James Farley. At right is an early working model and at far right the artist begins work on the final sculpture in the backyard of his home. Below, the 1981 dedication ceremony. Below left, the statue is about to be unveiled. Below right, John Meeker, president of the Del E. Webb Development Co., dedicates the statue in memory of the founder of Sun City.

## A memorial to Mr. Webb



# Charities benefit as Del Webb Corp. moves

## 8 agencies get \$35,000 in used office furniture

By Lori Baker  
The Arizona Republic

Valley charities have made a haul in free office furniture because of a move by Del Webb Corp. to new offices in Surprise.

The home builder's Sun Cities Division moved Sept. 10 from longtime offices in Sun City West to a new 35,165-square-foot administration building in Sun City Grand, making Webb the largest employer in Surprise.

After the move, representatives of various charities got their pick this

week of \$35,000 worth of used furniture, including conference tables, desks, chairs, filing cabinets and other office fixtures.

The groups are A Place Called Home, Dysart Community Center, Valley Big Brothers/Big Sisters, El Mirage Community Center, Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce, Surprise Community Youth and Teen Center, Clinica Adelante and Volunteer Placement Service.

About 200 Webb workers moved into the new offices, joining with about 400 staff members already working in Sun City Grand, said John Waldron, a Webb spokesman.

Webb's new complex is behind the Grand Marketplace, on the western side of Grand Avenue north of Bell Road. Employees working in customer service, construction, plans development, zoning and pub-

lic relations are there.

Property taxes for the new building are paid to Surprise and the Dysart Unified School District. The Sun City West headquarters had been exempt from Dysart taxes because it is in an unincorporated area of the county that had been de-annexed from the school district.

For 17 years, the Del Webb-Sun Cities headquarters was at 13950 Meeker Blvd. in Sun City West.

Sun Health Corp. bought Webb's 44,000-square-foot building for a reported \$2.9 million in 1998. By February, Sun Health will move in employees for its strategic development and managed care, financial services, human resources and patient account services, Sun Health spokeswoman Linda Tyler said.

"With the success of Sun City

Grand and the sale of the last home in Sun City West in 1998, it made sense to relocate our offices here to better serve our customers," said Chuck Roach, senior vice president and general manager, Del Webb Communities — Phoenix.

The 4,000-acre Sun City Grand is master-planned for 9,500 homes with a projected population of 17,000. Since opening in October 1996, the community has sold more than 3,000 homes, and more than 8,000 visitors have toured it.

Sun City Grand has health and exercise programs, computer clubs, in-line skating, kayaking, hiking and two 18-hole golf courses. Plans eventually call for four championship golf courses that will span nearly 90 acres of land and 28 acres of lakes spread throughout the community.

VF WEBB CORPORATION



Republic file photo

Residents of Sun City lined up in their lounge chairs for this 1963 promotional photo that appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

## *Their contributions helped turn West Valley into what it is today*

Throughout the past century, key individuals have made contributions that have shaped western Maricopa County. Every Friday in December, Community will highlight those who have made the West Valley what it is today.

### **John F. Long**

Mention west Phoenix growth, and one name tops the list, that of builder John F. Long.

Through his philanthropy and dedication to the West Valley, Long is creating a legacy for generations.

Long was the first in the Valley to build a master-planned community. His vision in the 1950s was to create a community where

people could live, work and play without having to drive far. He named that community Maryvale, after his wife, Mary, who died early last year.

"When we first started in Maryvale, we were completing eight homes a day," Long, now 79, said. "People were moving in just as fast. I don't know how many women wanted to get in before they delivered (babies). We were always racing the stork."

Long's company now focuses on managing commercial and retail properties. He spends time working with children in the Cartwright School District and was instrumental in bringing Maryvale Baseball Park to west



**John F. Long**



**Del Webb**



**Sue Branch**

— Please see **KEY**, Page 10

*Over*



— KEY, from Page 1

Phoenix.

His latest venture is to help create the West Valley Recreation Corridor, a series of parks and trails that would link Avondale to north Phoenix. He also is spearheading efforts to create a high-tech corridor along Loop 101.

"I certainly don't see myself as anything out of the ordinary," Long said. "Well, perhaps nothing other than the willingness to put forth the necessary effort to get a job done."

### **Billy Moore**

Around 1879, a man by the name of William Graham Moore settled and made his home along the banks of the Agua Fria River in what is now Avondale. Better known to early settlers as Uncle Billy Moore, the first White settler to the area put his stamp on the community as a homesteader, postmaster and stage stop/bar/store owner for the next 54 years.

Although he died in 1934 at age 92, the legend of Moore and what he did for this part of the southwest Valley is remembered each year during Billy Moore

Days.

### **Del Webb**

Del Webb is probably best known in this area for developing the Sun City retirement communities. He made the cover of *Time* magazine for creating Sun City as a haven of retirement living in 1960.

He moved to Arizona in 1927 at age 28 to recuperate from typhoid fever. A year later, he gave up his dreams of playing professional baseball and began Del Webb Co., a building contractor.

His company built some of the most prominent buildings in Phoenix and across the country. For example, Webb built the pyramid where Arizona's first governor, George Hunt, is buried in Papago Park; St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center; Luke Air Force Base; and Chris-Town Mall. Webb's company built Las Vegas hotels, and the Webb corporation was involved in the gaming industry for 44 years until September 1990.

Webb, who co-owned the New York Yankees, was described as a "rags-to-riches business legend" in a *Phoenix Gazette* story about his death in 1974 at age 74. An

*Arizona Republic* editorial said Del Webb was a man who had walked with kings but never lost the common touch.

### **Sue Branch**

Today's bustling Catlin Court Historic District in downtown Glendale likely wouldn't exist if it weren't for the tireless efforts of Sue Branch.

Sparked by news that her shop might be razed for a parking lot, Branch and her mother, Mel Foehner, gathered 5,000 signatures urging city officials to preserve what remained of the city's historic structures in the late 1980s. City planners had initially talked about flattening relics of the past in favor of modern office towers.

With Branch's help, the Catlin Court Historic Shops District, a four-square-block district bounded by 57th and 59th avenues and Myrtle and Palmyra avenues, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Branch and Foehner formerly owned Aunt Pittypat's Pantry in Catlin Court. About 50 renovated historic houses in Catlin Court now are shops specializing in everything from antique dolls, quilts and dried flowers to es-

presso, homemade bread and lunches.

### **William Bartlett**

Just a few hundred yards north of the milling campus of Glendale Community College is an oasis of serenity, Sahuaro Ranch Park. Preserved by Glendale as a turn-of-the-century working farm, the park, at 59th Avenue and Mountain View Road, stands in testament to William Henry Bartlett, an Illinois grain broker who built the sprawling homestead in the late 1800s.

Bartlett, who owned the ranch until 1913, expanded it to include several buildings, including a main house, a fruit-packing shed and a blacksmith shop.

The farm produced many crops, including plums, figs, peaches, pears, olives, pecans, dates and almonds.

Glendale bought the ranch in 1977 and restored it. The 17-acre eastern edge of the ranch is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Today, members of the Sahuaro Ranch Foundation help preserve the park and offer educational programs on farming during the year.

AUGUST 25-31, 1999 — SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT —

# KAET series to focus on Del Webb

## Developer's role in building Valley, Sun City will be explored

By **TOM BARRY**  
Independent Newspapers

In the 1950s, the Valley of the Sun was transformed by young veterans, entrepreneurs and families in search of a new and vibrant lifestyle. Among those with the pioneering spirit was Del Webb, a contractor who almost single-handedly changed the skyline of Phoenix.

In the documentary, "Arizona Memories from the '50s," which aired recently on KAET, Channel 8 in Phoenix, Mr. Webb is mentioned only in passing. And the brief reference relates to the former New York Yankees owner's ill-fated attempt to purchase land for development in

Scottsdale, which boasted a mere 2,000 residents in the early part of the decade.

Instead, considerable attention is paid to yet another Valley developer, John F. Long, who was credited with building the greater Phoenix metro area's first master-planned community, Maryvale.

"Trust me, it wasn't an oversight," explained Patti Jay, publicist for KAET. "We weren't slighting Del Webb's contribution to the overall development of the Valley."

Therefore, Mr. Webb's role in the Valley's growth and ultimately Sun City will be a focal point of a similar documentary planned by "Arizona Memories" director Don

Hopfer. Owing to the success of the first two installments, which spanned the 1940s and '50s, Channel 8 said the next will be an overview of the 1960s.

"You can't talk about Arizona in the '60s without talking about Del Webb," said Ms. Jay.

It was during that decade that Mr. Webb made indelible imprints on the Valley of the Sun. Among them were Phoenix's first residential high-rise building; several hospitals, including Boswell Memorial Hospital in Sun City and St. Joseph's Hospital; and Chris-Town Mall, the first enclosed, air-conditioned mall west of the Rockies.

But it was on New Year's Day

1960 that Del Webb celebrated the opening of his signature achievement, Sun City, which was widely hailed as the first successful model for other "active adult retirement" communities to come.

No date has been set for airing of the proposed documentary, but it is likely to be completed in time for the station's spring pledge drive next year and will coincide with Sun City's 40th anniversary.

The "Arizona Memories" series, underwritten by the Kemper and Ethel Marley Foundation and KAET Program Partners, has drawn large viewership to the public broadcasting station, and has been used primarily as a fund-raising premium.

# Webb surrounded himself with visionaries

If Del Webb were alive today he would be 100 years old. Webb was born in Fresno, Calif., on May 17, 1899. On July 4, 1974 he died of lung cancer.

Soon after his death more than 5,000 of his friends gathered to eulogize him. Men who served with him in building his business empire were there, as were representatives of the press and distinguished guests.

## MEMORY LANE

Then-Sen. Barry Goldwater traced his 40-year friendship with Webb. But the majority of the throng had never shaken his hand, never talked with him. They were the people of Sun City who came to honor the man who had given them something special in their lives — new homes, dignity in retirement, worthwhile activities that would extend their lives and the promise of golden years.

The late Doug Morris, then president of the Sun City Taxpayers Association, said this of Webb: "I hope his spirit never rests — that it continues on the winding streets of Sun City, that it motivates those with the task of translating the genius of his vision into reality for those who reach 65 or older who may feel the challenge is over."

While the name Del Webb and Sun City go together in the minds of those who think "active retirement," Webb didn't personally create the world's most famous retirement community. He did establish an organizational framework with men of vision and allowed them to grow under his direction. His natural concern for and love of people was manifested in the development of Sun City, which he came to see as his greatest accomplishment. His spirit, his business acumen and his energetic talent were all responsible for this success.

Before Sun City was envisioned, Del Webb had already established his

construction company in Phoenix and had built a national reputation as builder of hotels, office buildings and military bases. Luke Air Force Base is one of his products.

Like many successful men, Webb's life had a modest beginning. His father was a small contractor and amateur baseball player who passed onto his son the tools of both trades — a carpenter's saw and a fastball. His mother was the daughter of a German farmer who built one of the first irrigation systems in California.

By the time he was 10 years old, Webb knew his way around a construction site and a baseball diamond with equal aplomb. When he was 14, his father went broke in the construction business. Del had completed his first year in high school and left school immediately to work as a carpenter to help support the family consisting of his parents, himself and two younger brothers. Two years later he hit the road as a semi-pro baseball player on weekends and as a journeyman carpenter during the week. Though never a big leaguer, he did manage a precarious living up and down the West Coast from Mexico to Canada.

When America entered the war in 1917, Webb got a job in the Oakland Shipyards, thus making his contribution to the war effort. With a steady job, he could now marry his childhood sweetheart, Hazel Church, a marriage that lasted until 1952.

Baseball was still in his blood, but his playing days came to an abrupt halt in 1926 when a collision at home plate left him with torn ligaments and cracked ribs. After recovering from these injuries he was laid low with a particularly virulent case of typhoid fever. Twice he almost died, and his weight dropped from 204 pounds to 99. He was in bed for 11 weeks, and it was a year before he was able to work.

Whether it was his doctor's advice or a tip from a friend, the Webbs decided to move to Phoenix. "The climate will put you back on your feet," they told him.

The year was 1927. U.S. Marines

had landed in China in March to protect the U.S. and British consulates during the Chinese civil war. In May of that year, Charles Lindbergh flew a light, single-engine plane across the Atlantic.

The Westward Ho Hotel was under construction and Webb got a job hanging doors. When that job ended he was hired by a small contractor to erect shelves and cabinets for J.B. Bayless, a pioneer Phoenix merchant. When the contractor disappeared, leaving behind bouncing checks, Bayless asked young Webb to finish the job. This marked the beginning of the Del. E. Webb Construction Company. Bayless backed him financially and Webb took over the defunct contractor — 10 wheelbarrows, 20 shovels and 10 picks.

Webb's first expansion outside Phoenix was a contract to build a filling station for the Union Oil Company in Las Vegas, Nev. This job led to other ventures in the construction business. The company grew rapidly when the United States became involved in World War II, and the Webb company reputation got many wartime contracts.

Del Webb's interest in retirement living grew gradually from personal experience and memories of his grandparents. His grandfather, Jimmy Webb, had grouched about being old with nothing to do. His father had said, "My old man used to say that the railroad companies were the only ones doing anything for the guys they retired."

He surrounded himself with men who were aware of the changes taking place in American society and who had the courage to venture into untried fields. Some of these men, who were in on the beginning of the Del E. Webb Development Company that built Sun City, were L. C. Jacobson, John Meeker, Thomas Breen, Owen Childress, Tom Austin, John Ashton and James Boswell, among others.

*(From the files of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society).*

May 17, 1999 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.

IC

# Webb: Man of a century

## Community celebrates founder's 100th birthday

By JEFF OWENS  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Owen Childress began working for Del Webb in 1951 as a mail boy.

After 32 years, he worked up to chief financial officer in a company where, he said, people weren't treated as employees, but family members.

"That's the kind of guy he was," Childress said of Del Webb, who would have been 100 years old today.

While cleaning his pool one day, Childress was shocked when his wife came outside to tell him "Mr. Webb" was on the phone for him.

Childress thought it was a joke.

Mrs. Childress insisted it was no joke — Del E. Webb was on the phone.

After some small talk about business and finances, Webb asked about Childress' father, who had just been diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Webb had called to offer Childress the use of his private plane in order to fly Childress' ailing father to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota.

"That's really something I'll never forget," Childress said.

On the 100th anniversary of Del Webb's birth, some of his closest friends and business associates recalled some of their favorite memories of the man who built Sun City, and a whole lot more.

Robert Johnson, president, CEO, and chairman of Webb's company from 1935 to 1981, has a favorite story about a visit to New York to watch his boss' team, the New York Yankees.

"I remember the time too ... my very first visit to New York

and to Yankee Stadium," Johnson said. "And (Webb) has a long stride, and he was heading for the turnstile.

"I probably was so awed by the audience and the stadium and so forth, I was two steps behind. The turnstile closed, and Mr. Webb went on through.

"And there I was — first visit to New York ... 'What the hell do I do?' So I stood out there for about 30 minutes, and finally somebody came out and paged me and took me in, and it was quite a sight to see the inside of the stadium.

"But he hadn't forgotten me. He just expected me to be right on his footsteps."

Webb, whose own pro baseball career ended at age 26 by a bout with typhoid fever, owned the Yankees for 20 years during which they won the championship pennant 10 times.

John Meeker, vice president from 1946 to 1981, remembers when Webb "got 'em during the golden years" in 1946.

"He bought the Yankees, and I was in the service, and

he sent me a telegram," Meeker said. "I was a Yankee fan, and he wasn't ... and he sent me a telegram when I was in the service that said, 'I just bought your Yankees.'"

Meeker and Webb met on a golf course at the Phoenix Country Club.

"He was really a heck of a guy," Meeker said. "I liked him a lot. He really grew fond of Sun City as the years went by; he loved it. He loved the people and loved what it stood for."

Childress remembers being called into Webb's office one day, thinking he was in trouble. A baseball player himself, Childress had briefly played pro ball in North Carolina. Webb looked at him and spoke.

"What kind of batting average did you have?"

"Not very good," Childress answered.

Webb then produced a book of major and minor league baseball stats, saying "You'll find your name on page 433."

Childress was amazed. He had thought he was in trouble.

"That's all," Webb said. "I thought you might like to see it."

Childress still has and cherishes that book of stats.

Webb's executive secretary from 1962 to 1982, Maxine Newman, remembers vividly what the man looked like.

"His eyes stand out," she said, so much so that she'd remark on it to people after they met Webb.

"I'd say, 'Hasn't he got the kindest eyes you ever saw?'"

"I can't explain except with the word 'kind'," Newman added. "I wouldn't trade the years I worked for him for anything. I loved him."

OVER



Betty Schreiner of Scottsdale, soon to be a resident of Sun City Grand in Surprise, replaces a photo of developer Del Webb that had blown down in the wind, at Webb's 100th birthday celebration Saturday.

Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

Monday, May 17, 1999 Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz.



Del Webb, former owner of the New York Yankees, takes a practice swing with Joe DiMaggio looking on during spring training. Submitted photos

OVER

# Yankee great honors former boss

IC

By MONICA ALONZO-DUNSMOOR  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Peggy Williams dug up an old game program her father got at a 1962 World Series baseball game when the New York Yankees played the San Francisco Giants.

She thumbed through it until she found the picture of Whitey Ford, a former pitcher for the Yankees and baseball Hall of Fame player.

That's the picture she planned on getting Ford to sign for her father Saturday during Ford's appearance at Sun City Grand.

"My dad is pretty much disabled, and it's hard for him to make these trips," the Glendale resident said. "So here we are."

Ford was a special guest during a commemorative celebration on the weekend of Del E. Webb's birthday. Webb would have been 100 years old today. He passed away July 4, 1974. About 1,000 people, both young and old, came from all over to get a glance at Ford and get him to autograph a ball or two.

William Yetz had the same idea. He came from Scottsdale to get Ford's autograph for his father.

His father, an avid Yankees fan, still lives on the East Coast and sent his son a copy of a 1961 team picture of the Yankees he had picked up at a game.

And even though Yetz is a Red Sox fan, he said he'd still get Ford to sign the team photograph and mail it to his dad.

Fans and collectors formed long lines, patiently waiting for their turn to stand before a baseball legend. Each fan had a story to tell about a game they

saw or a play they'd never forget.

Ford, a bit under the weather, nodded at times, but seemed eager to get through the autograph session.

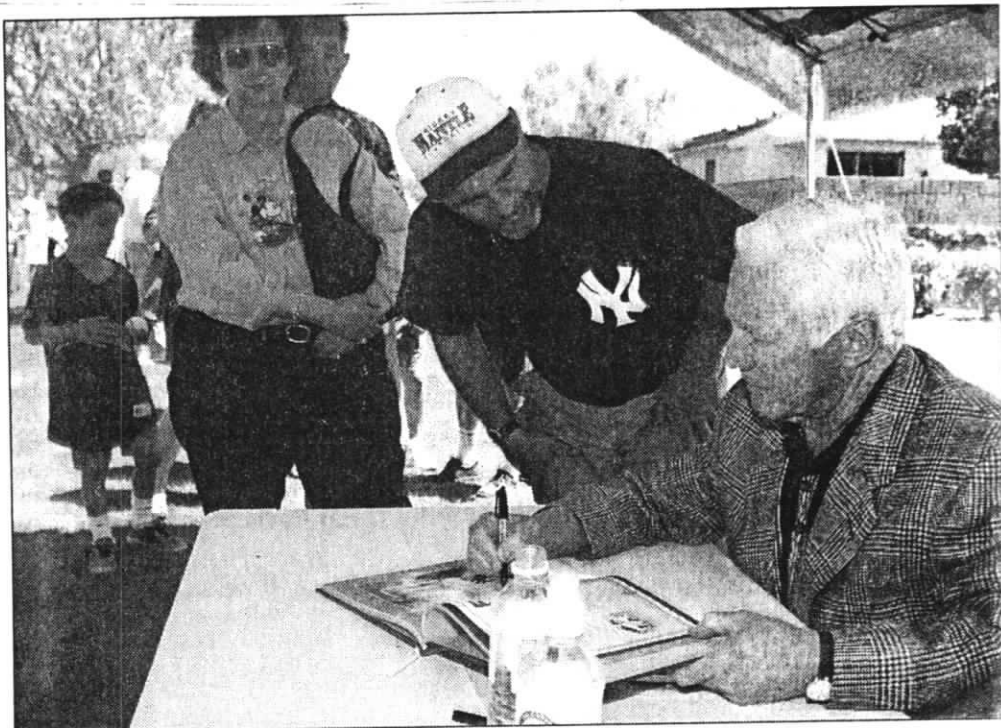
Ford, now 70, said he didn't have many memories of Webb, who was co-owner of the Yankees, except a trip to Japan with Webb and the team.

He said Webb usually only visited the team during World Series games.

"He was a nice and quiet man," said Ford.

Alan Morrow of Sun City showed up mainly to see Ford, but said he's heard about Webb.

"I know he's responsible for Sun City, and I heard he was a real classy gentleman," he said. "And no one seems to dispute that."



Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

Former New York Yankees pitcher Whitey Ford attracts a crowd during an interview at the grand opening of the Sun City Grand softball stadium Friday. Above, he autographs photos for Yankees' fans. Ford attended Sun City Grand's 100th birthday salute to developer Del Webb, who died in 1974.

IC

# Sun City pastime

## Community opens new retro ballpark

By **Connie Cone Sexton**

The Arizona Republic

**S**URPRISE — A rush of wind came into the ballpark and swirled the soft red dirt around home plate. A blackbird that had been resting nearby stirred and sailed into the outfield.

It was Saturday around noon. The stands for visitors and the home team were empty. The only sound was the constant snapping of four flags rising above the park's entrance.

After awhile, the blackbird returned and took another sweep across the grass, a blanket of lime green in the sunshine.

This tranquil scene is as much a part of the ballpark as the action for which it was designed.

Byron Sampson didn't have to hear the crack of a bat echoing around the park to know it had the right stuff. As the architect of this steel and concrete structure on the northeastern edge of Sun City Grand, he wanted to offer more than just a place to play ball. He wanted it to evoke memories of games past.

Dark chain-link fencing contains the 5-acre park. There is a neon-free scoreboard with white crisp lettering behind center field. The stands are roomy with wide aisles and individual seats. Because there are just 64 seats, it feels like you've stepped into a private box.

Curves of the steel evoke the simpleness

### 100th-Birthday Tribute to Del E. Webb

**WHEN:** 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. today.

**WHERE:** The Village Center at Sun City Grand, three miles north of Bell Road off Grand Avenue in Surprise. The Village Center is on Remington Drive, off Sunrise Boulevard, the main road through the community.

**ACTIVITIES:** Cutting of seven-tier birthday cake; autograph signing session with Whitey Ford, former New York Yankees pitcher.

**ADMISSION:** Open to Valley residents. Free.

— **NEW**, from Page 1

of the 1940s, and the dark green paint that washes the structure, including the deep overhangs, lends a cozy feel.

That vintage spirit is found at the Del E. Webb Memorial Field, which was dedicated Friday as part of a 100th-birthday tribute to the construction giant who died in 1974. The celebration continues today at the Village Center in Sun City Grand.

Webb, who launched the Sun City retirement community empire in the 1960s, was a man with a passion for baseball. From 1945 to 1965, Webb co-owned the New York Yankees.

So, as a fitting commemorative for what would have been his 100th birthday, company officials decided to build him a ballpark — albeit only a shadow of his former hangout, Yankee Stadium.

But what it lacks in size it makes up for in heart, said Sampson, the architect for BRW Inc., the firm hired to design the ballpark. Sampson served as project manager.

The Del Webb Corp. had been in the process of building homes in Sun City Grand, its third Sun City retirement community in the Valley, when company officials decided to carve out space for the ballpark. It will be the practice field for the four senior softball teams in the community and serve as a game field for their 12-team Northwest Valley Softball League.

Sampson said the idea was to design a park that would have the atmosphere of old parks like Yankee Stadium or Wrigley Field.

"Not a carbon copy, not a copycat from the past, but we wanted to

take the essence of those fields," he said.

John Waldron, director of public and community relations for Del Webb, said planning for the ballpark began more than a year ago.

He said there was a great deal of interest among residents in having such a park.

"Softball is like computers, a growing interest among seniors," he said.

There won't be any public event at the park today. However, you can drive over to it by taking Sunrise Boulevard, the main road through the community, and then turning east on Mountain View Road, about a half-mile south of Grand Avenue.

The Del Webb Sun City Grand Softball Club's four teams already have been up to bat several times at the field.

Some members of teams' members also make up the the Del Webb Sun City Grand Slammers, a team structured to pursue tournament-level games through the American Softball Association.

On Thursday during the summer, you can catch their softball games around 8 a.m. Starting this October, the games will be played at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Club President Jim Hansen, who plays second base for the Sun City Grand No. 1 team and also plays with the Slammers, is thrilled to have the park.

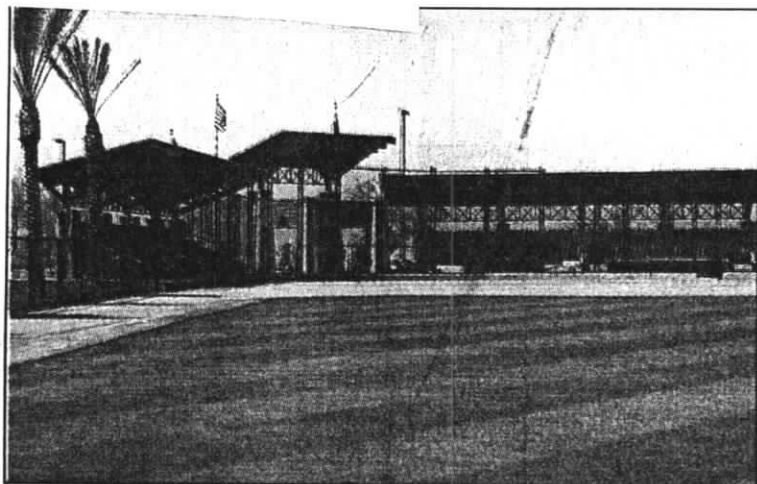
"It exceeded my expectations, tenfold. We were in awe to see it," he said.

Resident John Cofta, who plays

left field on the same teams, is thankful for such a "professional and beautifully designed" facility.

"The field brings out the kid in all of us," Cofta said. "We're anxious and excited to play and hit, just like kids going to the sandlot after school for a game."

Connie Cone Sexton can be reached at (602) 444-7118, or at [connie.sexton@pni.com](mailto:connie.sexton@pni.com) via e-mail.



Christine Keith/The Arizona Republic

Sun City Grand's new ballpark has a vintage look to it and was built for what would have been developer Del Webb's 100th birthday.



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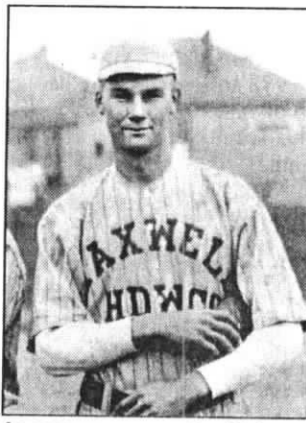
## Del Webb life highlights:

**1899:** Del E. Webb is born on May 17, 1899, in Fresno, Calif., the son of California pioneers.

**1917:** Works in the Oakland shipyards and supplements his salary with earnings as a semi-pro ball player on the shipyard team.

**1927:** Contracts typhoid fever and within a year moves to Phoenix. One year later, he begins the Del Webb Co.

**1936:** Opens an office in Southern California. By the mid-1930s, the Del E. Webb Construction Co. is operating in 12 states.



As a young carpenter, Del Webb dreamed of playing professional baseball.

**1937:** Builds an addition to the Arizona State Capitol, a turning point that helps build Webb's business.

**1945:** Becomes a co-

owner of the New York Yankees.

**1946:** Completes the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas.

**1950:** The expansion of the Hughes Aircraft Plant is completed, initiating a profitable relationship with Howard Hughes.

**1960:** Opens the Sun City retirement community on New Year's Day. More than 100,000 people turn out during the three-day opening with

sales that weekend of 237 houses and more than 400 during the first month.

**1963:** Del E. Webb Corp. is listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

**1966:** Completes a 44,000-seat baseball stadium in Anaheim, Calif.

**1972:** Completes the 13-story Madison Square Garden in New York.

**1974:** Del Webb dies on July 5, 1974, leaving behind a prospering company.

Source: Del Webb Corp.



Webb's development of the first Sun City in 1960 earned him a spot on the cover of *Time*.



Del Webb snags a high one in a impromptu baseball game at a construction site.

## Yankees thrived in Webb years

By **Connie Cone Sexton**  
The Arizona Republic

1999

He had dreamed of playing in the majors. As a young man, Del E. Webb spent his early life as a carpenter's apprentice only working for those companies that had a baseball team.

His drive took him as far as semipro ball before a devastating illness cut short his career. It was 1927, and Webb was 26 years old when he contracted typhoid fever.

But the man who would move on to be a legend in the construction industry could never leave baseball alone. As he dug in to build his company empire, Webb took the spirit of the game with him.

"I applied the rules of baseball to business," he once said.

He admired teamwork, performance under pressure and initiative.

— Please see **WEBB**, Page

OVER

It was that latter characteristic that would propel him to start his own contracting business in Phoenix, later seeing it branch out to California and 10 other states. His success helped him edge back into baseball. In 1945, he became a co-owner of the New York Yankees, holding on to the team until 1965.

Baseball legend Whitey Ford, who played on the Yankees from 1950 to 1967, remembers how Webb graced the team with his presence. Ford will appear today in Sun City Grand to sign autographs as part of a 100th birthday tribute to Webb. Webb, who died in 1974, would have been 100 on Monday.

"He was a friendly man. I came to know him quite well," Ford said.

Besides sharing a love of golf, Ford said he and Webb had something else in common: "He was a left-handed pitcher, like me, so we sort of hit it off."

Webb was a man who knew how to own a baseball team, Ford said, adding that he and others appreciated his hands-off approach. While other baseball owners would dig too deep into the everyday workings of a team, Webb would only show up during the exciting times.

"He sort of stayed out of things," Ford explained. "He left the general manager alone. About the only time we would see him and the others was during the World Series."

And there was plenty to cheer about. During the years Webb was connected with the Yankees, they won 10 World Series championships.

While his team flourished, so did Webb's business back home in Phoenix. R.H. Johnson, one of the first employees that Webb hired, said the employees back home also got caught up in baseball fever.

During the time Webb owned the team, Johnson was in Southern California helping run the construction office that Webb had established there. Life around the office during the Series wasn't typical.

"During the series, things stopped

or slowed down," Johnson said. "Each person had a radio or television on their desk to watch the game. There was quite a bit of excitement. We knew it was baseball season, no question about it."

Johnson, who went on to become president and chief executive officer of the Del Webb Corp., now lives in Wickenburg and oversees the Del Webb Foundation. He admits he wasn't a big baseball fan like Webb and others around him.

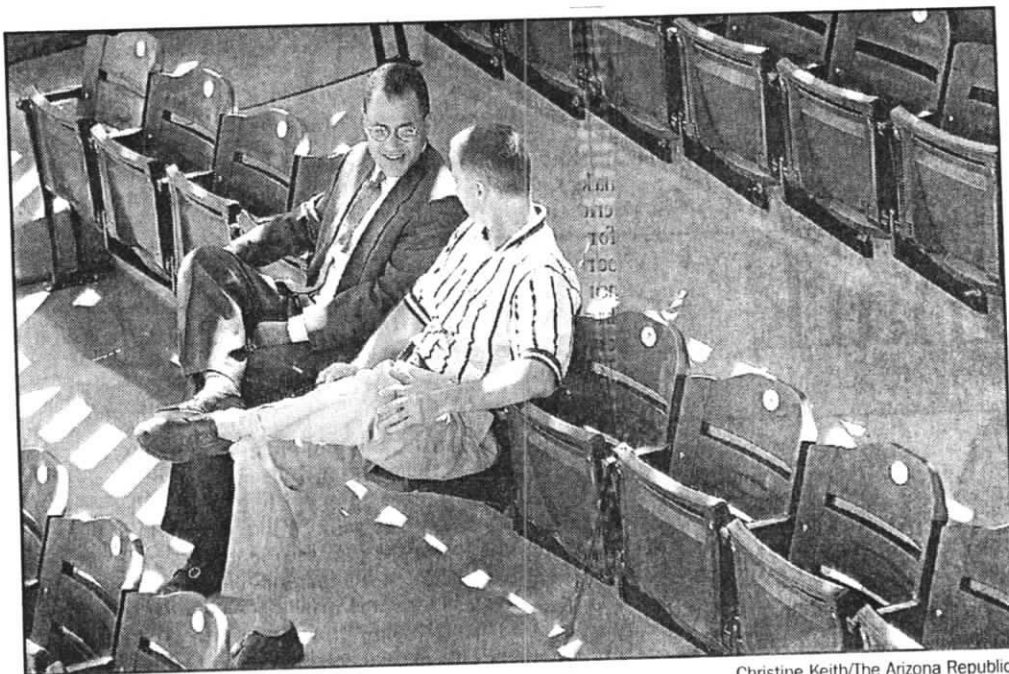
And forget playing the game or other sports, Johnson chuckled.

"I was the first guy at tug-of-war who always got dunked," he said.

Webb was a wonderful man to work for, Johnson said. He nurtured a family atmosphere around the office.

"We should have cloned him."

Connie Cone Sexton can be reached at (602) 444-7118, or at [connie.sexton@pni.com](mailto:connie.sexton@pni.com) via e-mail.



Byron Sampson (left) was the architect of the new Sun City Grand ballpark, and John Waldron is the Del Webb Corporation's director of public relations.

Christine Keith/The Arizona Republic

JULY 17, 1998 — SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

# FATHER OF SUN CITY

## Community founder fondly remembered 24 years after his death

BY JULIA DE SIMONE  
Independent Newspapers

**T**he day Delbert Eugene Webb died was one of the saddest days for R.H. Johnson.

He wasn't alone.

Mr. Johnson, president of the Del E. Webb Foundation — a separate entity of the Del E. Webb Corporation that supports medical research, facilities, labs and more — had been an employee and friend of the legendary developer since the late 1930s.

"He was a very, very, wonderful man," he said. "I wish we could have cloned him."

Mr. Webb was known as the father of Sun City because the active-adult retirement community now known as Sun City was his brainchild and it was his compa-

ny that created Sun City in 1960.

The idea spawned numerous other Sun City communities for the company and served to create the retirement community industry that still thrives nearly 40 years later.

Mr. Webb died July 4, 1974. He was 75.

According to "Jubilee: The 25th Anniversary of Sun City," a historical account of Sun City written in 1985, Mr. Webb was "a man of genius, who, together with men of competence, courage and foresight, explored and conquered untried frontiers that opened new vistas for thousands of retired Americans."

He was born on May 17, 1899 in Fresno, Calif., inheriting the love of construction and baseball from his father — an English evangelist, contractor and amateur baseball player.

According to the July 1974 *The Webb Spinner*, he was a weekend baseball pitcher on the West Coast until a bout of typhoid hit him.

It stated that Del Webb "dropped from 200 to 99 pounds. ... when he was 26 years old."

Although he was forced to give up on one of his first loves, his other passion — construction — grew.

In the late '20s, he and his first wife, Hazel Church, moved to Arizona, embarking on a career in construction.

His first expansion outside Phoenix was a contract to build a filling station for the Union Oil Company in Las Vegas, Nev., according to "Jubilee."

It also stated that when the contractor building the Flamingo Hotel — the first

See ■ FATHER, Page 9



Residents pay respect to Delbert Eugene Webb, Father of Sun City, at the unveiling of his statue on July 4, 1981. It sits in the Bell Center Memorial Garden, 16820 99th Ave., Sun City.

(over)

real gambling palace on the Las Vegas Strip — ran into trouble, Del Webb stepped in as a favor to friends at the bank.

He didn't realize, however, that the partially-built hotel was sold to Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel — the mobster.

Although it states in "Jubilee" that Del Webb tried to get out of deal, "actually there was no problem with Siegel."

In 1945, he regained a piece of his youth by becoming co-owner of the New York Yankees with Dan Topping and Larry MacPhail. He retained his ownership of the Yankees for the next 20 years.

However, the baseball diamond was not the only domain over which he ruled.

On Jan. 1, 1960, one of his dreams flourished. Sun City — the nation's first active-adult master-planned community — officially opened to overwhelming success.

In the first 72 hours after Webb's Sun City model homes were opened, 237 homes — \$2.5 million worth — were sold.

As Sun City continued to thrive — sprouting out to new communities and states — Mr. Webb's philosophy remained.

Marjorie Klinefelter, a director of the Del E. Webb Foundation, said as a business man he would argue to the last dime, but he was always giving to others. He served as a national director of The Boy's Club.

"He would give you the shirt off



When Sun City first opened its doors in 1960, few could envision the success and growth it would eventually attain. Del Webb's vision has certainly come of age. Today there are numerous Sun City communities throughout the nation, including four in Arizona.

his back," Mr. Johnson said. "He wanted people to like him."

A July 1974 article in *The Webb*, paying tribute to the construction mogul, concurred.

"Mr. Webb was fond of saying of those in his company: 'If I lost everything, I could make it all back with good people.'"

After his death, Mr. Webb's body was cremated and his ashes — as per his wish and will — were scattered over Arizona.

On July 4, 1981, Sam Higginbotham oversaw the dedication of the Del Webb statue that surveys the landscape at Bell Center Memorial Garden.

Although the Sun City resident admitted to meeting the father of Sun City only once, Mr. Higginbotham said his presence made a lasting impression on all.

"I think he stirred up the Phoenix Valley, don't you?" he asked.

# News-Sun grows in Webb's footsteps

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Delbert E. Webb's prominence in the retirement communities is legend. The News-Sun has documented his achievements every step of the way and can trace its own growth and success as the only daily in the nation serving retirees to Mr. Webb's achievements. Herein is part of his story.*

By **TINA SCHADE**  
Staff writer

A statue at Bell Recreation Center stands as a tribute to the man who had the ability to create something from nothing.

The sculpture depicts a man pointing and looking to a distant locale, representing not only the physicality of a man who is offering direction for a new construction site, but of a deeper ideal.

Delbert E. Webb dabbled in many industries, including movies, gaming and oil, but his true love and talent lay not in creating some of the most long standing buildings in the Valley and around the country, but in creating and fulfilling dreams.

"He was definitely revered," said Jane Freeman, a longtime resident of Sun City.

Webb created a world where you could bet on yourself and win. He performed this feat with his own life and then made it possible for others to do the same.

Webb, who dropped out of school at 13 to help support his family as a carpenter's assistant, went on to be one of the Arizona's largest contractor's, whose projects included the Maricopa County Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital.

He earned national recognition for his construction work and his projects. Webb's influence stretched from New York to Hawaii.

He grew up on a farm but would later construct buildings for Howard Hughes, rub elbows with President Lyndon B. Johnson and play golf with celebrities such as Bing Crosby and Bob Hope.

As a teen-ager, Webb played minor league baseball; as an adult, he purchased a major league team. In 1945, Webb bought the world champion New York Yankees for almost \$2.9 million. He sold the team 20 years later to CBS for \$14 million.

It was Webb who believed that seniors sought independence, as he ignored the advice of consultants when they proclaimed "you can't separate old people from their families" and senior incomes "were too small to support a town on their own."

Webb pushed forward and decided to build a retirement community that offered "activity, economy and individuality."

On Jan. 1, 1960, more than 100,000 seniors answered the call for independence by attending the grand opening of Sun City.

"He was a very bright builder and contractor," said Tom Wallace, a Sun City resident since 1988.

Sun City was such a successful venture for Webb that he went on to build other Sun Cities in California, Nevada and Florida. The Florida Sun City was one of only a few botched efforts by the Del Webb Corp.

Of course, Webb was also responsible for Sun City in Tucson and Sun City West. And his successors have build on his ideas with Sun Cities not only nearby in Surprise but in South Carolina and Texas.

At 65, Webb served as president, chief executive officer and chairman of Del E. Webb Corp., the company that developed Sun City as proof that people of "retirement age" had more to offer future generations than stories of the good ol' days.

In the early '60s, Webb was revered by seniors as a "wonder worker" and had made their lives more productive and happier than they could have ever anticipated.

"He's the one who inspired a good livelihood with good homes," said Ken Lamberly, 77, of Sun City.

Webb was also human. He drank heavily when he was younger but eventually gave it up completely. He suffered a debilitating bout of typhoid and his company had suffered some financial difficulties.

He also rarely visited the places he helped to create and has been accused of capitalizing on the elderly. Despite some misgivings, other residents still remember Webb and his legacy fondly.

"No matter his motives, he's done a great service for seniors," said Frank Hersh, a Sun City resident for 12 years.

Sept. 3-9, 1992

THE WESTER

## **Del Webb Wins Award For Sun City**

The Del Webb Corporation is the recipient of the Historic Planning Landmark Award from the Arizona Planning Association (APA) for its Sun City community. The award was presented recently at APA's 1992 State Conference in Tucson, Arizona. This is the first year the Historic Planning Landmark category has been awarded.

To be eligible for the Award, a nomination must be of a pioneering document, plan, subdivision, historic preservation project, individual structure, or developed project with historic, unique qualities and used as a precedent

for other work. The work must be designed or prepared by a planner or planning agency. The project or plan must be considered as making a significant contribution to the Arizona Community and be at least 25 years old.

Sun City opened on January 1, 1960. It was the nation's first active adult community, serving as the prototype for developments worldwide.

APA is made up of more than 800 Arizona professionals concerned with advancing the art and science of physical, economic and social planning to anticipate community needs.

# Success story

## Writer chronicles Del Webb, man and company

By Lori Baker  
Staff writer

Del Webb has been the subject of numerous magazine articles, but Margaret Finnerty is the first to chronicle his accomplishments in a hard-cover book.

Finnerty, a Phoenix resident, was hired by Heritage Publishers Inc. to write the book "Del Webb: A Man. A Company."

She began working on the book in the summer of 1990, and it became available for sale Dec. 7.

"The book has waited a long time to be written," Philip Dion, chairman of the board of Del Webb Corp., said in the book's introduction.

"Many of the important people in this company, who made it what it is, and the people who knew Del Webb, were disappearing," Dion wrote.

"The way they remember him was changing and probably becoming less accurate. It was time to capture those memories."

Dion said he also wanted to tell the story of the diversity and success of Webb's business enterprise at a time when "American business was subject to so much criticism."

Webb is probably best known in this area for developing the Sun City retirement communities. He made the cover of *Time* magazine for creating Sun City as a haven of retirement living.

But his company also constructed some of the most prominent buildings in Phoenix and across the country, Finnerty said.

For example, Webb built the pyramid where Arizona's first governor, George Hunt, is buried in Papago Park; St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center; Luke Air Force Base; Christ-Town Mall; and the Phoenix Newspapers Inc. building in downtown Phoenix

### PROFILE

#### Name:

Margaret Finnerty

#### Born:

Indianapolis in 1940

#### Residence:

Phoenix, since 1974

#### Family:

Husband, Tom; three grown daughters

#### Occupation:

Writer; teaches adult education in the Phoenix Union High School District, and history and philosophy of education at Ottawa University

#### Education:

Master's and bachelor's degrees in history from Arizona State University

#### Hobbies:

Reading and quilting

where *The Arizona Republic* and *The Phoenix Gazette* are produced.

"He really changed the city's style," Finnerty said.

Her book has photos of many of the buildings that Webb's company built, including hotels in Nevada. The Webb corporation was involved in the gaming industry for 44 years until September 1990.

Webb, who was a co-owner of the New York Yankees, was described as a "rags-to-riches business legend" in a *Phoenix Gazette* story about his death in 1974 at the age of 74.

While much of the book is devoted to Webb, it also highlights the key employees in the corporation, such as Robert Johnson, John Meeker, James Boswell and Fred Kuentz.

The book, which costs \$15, is being sold at Sun City's libraries at Bell Recreation Center, 16820 N. 99th Ave., and Fairway Recreation Center, 10600 Peoria Ave.; and at the Sun City West Library, 13801 Meeker Blvd.

Half of the proceeds go to the libraries.

#### Have you done a book like this before?

This is the first full-length book I've had published.

I've done an essay in a book called "Arizona's Governors."

#### How did you get started on the book?

There was a lot of help from the archivist at Del Webb. We interviewed 30 to 35 people who knew Del Webb or knew about the company.

Most of the photos came from Del Webb Co.

#### What was the purpose of the book?

They wanted to remember both Mr. Webb and the other people who built the company.

#### What did you find most challenging about doing the book?

Trying to put all the information in. It was a big story. We had agreed on the format, so I wanted to keep it to that.

#### Is this the first book on Del Webb?

As far as I know.

There have been many magazine articles.

#### Are you working on other books?

I'm working on a book on the history of soybean cooperatives in the Midwest.

#### How did you get involved in writing?

I've been writing forever. I've had newspaper articles published, but the Webb book is the first one with my name on it.

My father was a writer. He wrote advertising copy.

OVER



T.J. Sokol / Staff photographer

Margaret Finnerty autographs her book, "Del Webb: A Man. A Company," during a recent signing session.



# New biography details life of Sun Cities developer

Del Webb described as 'workaholic,' industrious and lover of baseball, golf

By LAURIE HURD-MOORE  
Sun Cities Independent

He was passionate about work, people and the game of baseball.

Delbert Eugene Webb, according to those who knew him well, was also fond of travel, plain ice cream with nuts, the colors red and black and the number 13. Conversely, his dislikes included white-colored autos, wasting time and smokers.

These personal tidbits of the visionary developer who created Sun City and Sun City West, as well as the voluminous story behind his business empire, have now been detailed in a new book by Phoenix author Margaret Finnerty.

The 246-page "Del Webb: A Man. A Company," features oral accounts of Webb by local figures such as James Boswell and Fred Kuentz, along with recollections from friends, employees and his second wife, Toni Webb.

Published by Heritage Publishers Inc. in Flagstaff, Ariz., the book went on sale Dec. 7 at libraries in the Sun Cities.

"It was a good idea," says Mrs. Finnerty, "to tell the story while we could still use the tool of oral history to get the feelings and color."

The Webb book starts appropriately at the beginning — Webb's birth on May 17, 1899 in Fresno, Calif.

Delbert Eugene Webb was the first son of Ernest and Henrietta Forthcamp Webb, descendants of pioneer California families. Webb's maternal grandparents arrived in the United States from Germany in 1846.

After the Webb family experienced financial problems in 1914,



Del E. Webb

Del left high school after one year. He got work as a carpenter and helped support a family that now included two younger brothers.

According to the book, it was at the age of 13 that Del became a serious baseball player. He was considered to be one of the best first basemen in Fresno in his day.

Del went on to seek carpentry work with companies that had baseball teams. While waiting to make the big leagues, he married childhood sweetheart Hazel Church. The couple would remain together until their divorce in 1952.

Then one fateful summer day in 1927, Webb contracted typhoid fever, thus ending his dreams of becoming a major league ball player. Acting on his doctor's advice, the Webbs moved to Phoenix, Arizona.

The book states Webb first appeared on the Arizona scene with little more than some tools and a borrowed \$100.

He took these meager assets and began installing fixtures for grocery

store owner A.J. Bayless. Webb was soon called upon to be the substitute superintendent for the job.

"I think he did a lot with good, old-fashioned hard work and personality. The story is he was working on one of the Bayless stores and the contractor he was working with decamped with the payroll.

"Mr. Bayless said, 'Why don't you do it.' So, he started his own company," explains Mrs. Finnerty.

Webb would set up his first company office at 218 N. 9th St. in Phoenix and in time hire a permanent staff.

From journeyman carpenter to builder of an empire, Webb would eventually accomplish such construction jobs as an addition to the Arizona State Capital, the Newberry's dime store on Washington and First avenues, hospitals, skyscrapers, Luke and

over

Williams Air Force Bases and several Nevada casinos.

In 1945, Webb would not only become part owner of the New York Yankees baseball team, he would go on to own several sports stadiums in New York, Newark and Kansas City.

Webb construction work in Phoenix, states the book, would peak in 1959, with more work being done that year than in all the years from 1914 to 1946. That year the company constructed a total of 5,060 dwellings — mostly single-family residences — 429 swimming pools, 115 office buildings, 94 stores, 167 industrial buildings and 15 educational facilities.

Also in 1959, construction began on a new concept — an active retirement community — later to be called Sun City.

On the New Year's Day, 1960 opening of Sun City, an estimated

100,000 visitors viewed the new model homes in a three-day period. By the end of the month, more than 400 homes would be sold.

Material used in the book was gathered last summer, says Mrs. Finnerty.

"I started with interviews and I started at the beginning with people who knew him the earliest. Then later on, we worked on the corporation itself," she explains.

In addition to information provided by the Webb Corp., the author also received cooperation from Mr. Webb's widow, Toni.

"His first wife I understand is quite ill, but I did talk with the second Mrs. Webb, a very gracious lady in California," she says.

The author also learned about Mr. Webb's likes and dislikes.

"He loved baseball and I think he was a real workaholic. He seemed to get a big kick out of playing with

the big boys."

Webb was also a dedicated golfer, who played with the likes of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby.

Of his dislikes the author says, "He didn't like to waste time personally, so he cut things real close. He was always missing planes and things like that because he cut things so close," she says.

Mr. Webb also had to be convinced by employees that white cars were cooler in the Valley. Other employees tell of big "No Smoking" signs in his office.

Despite this anti-smoking stance, Mr. Webb was hospitalized for the removal of a small primary tumor in his right lung. Doctors also found he had prostate cancer, which spread throughout his body.

During exploratory surgery in July, 1974, Mr. Webb died from complications following the operation.

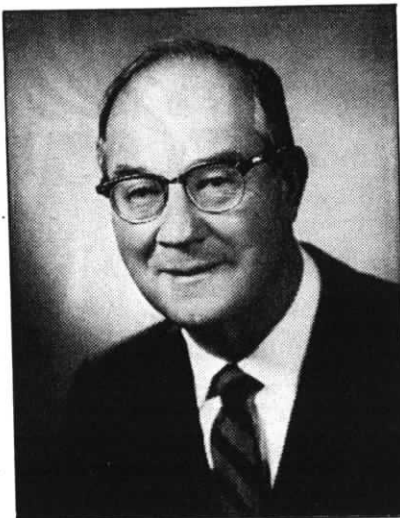
## Author of Webb biography to sign books in Sun Cities

Who was Delbert Eugene Webb? Inquiring minds can find out in the pages of new book entitled "Del Webb: A Man. A Company."

Copies of the book will be on sale at the Sun Cities Libraries from 10 a.m. to noon, Dec. 7, at a book sale and signing reception.

Author Margaret Finnerty will autograph copies of her book and Fred Kuentz, former Del Webb Development Co. president, will also be in attendance to answer questions and give personal insight into Del Webb, the developer of the Sun Cities.

Ms. Finnerty and Mr. Kuentz will be at the Sun City Library at Bell Recreation Center from 10 to 11 a.m. and at the R.H. Johnson Library in Sun City West from 11 a.m. to noon.



**Del Webb: Founder and builder of the Sun Cities.**

The book sells for \$15, with a portion of the proceeds benefitting the libraries.

### DEL WEBB BOOK SALE & SIGNING RECEPTION

*Saturday, December 7 • 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.*

- Meet the author, Margaret Finnerty, and have your book autographed!
- Talk with Fred Kuentz, former Del E. Webb Development Co., L.P., President.
- Receptions will be held at the Sun City Library at the Bell Recreation Center from 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. and at the Sun City West Library at the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- Refreshments will be served.
- Book sale proceeds benefit the libraries!
- *Del Webb: A Man. A Company.* Just \$15.00!

*Del Webb:*

A MAN.  
A COMPANY.

DAILY NEWS SUN Dec. 3, 1991 A-5

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# 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 al

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.

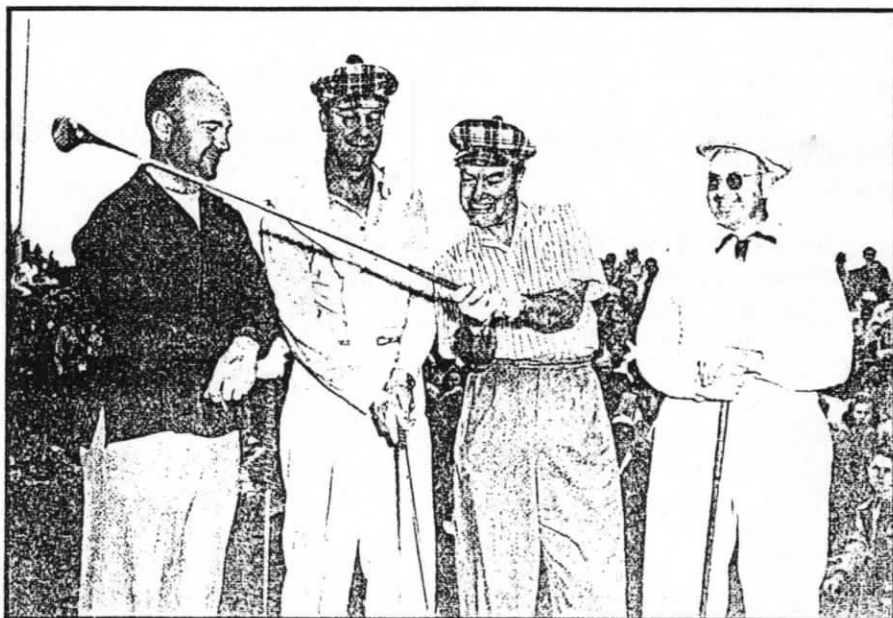
It was through his ownership of the Yankees that such titles as "Bashful Barnum" and "Webb of Mystery" were really applied, because for most of those twenty years as co-owner of the Yankees with Dan Topping, Webb was the silent partner while Topping was the front man. This is not to denigrate his role 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.'"

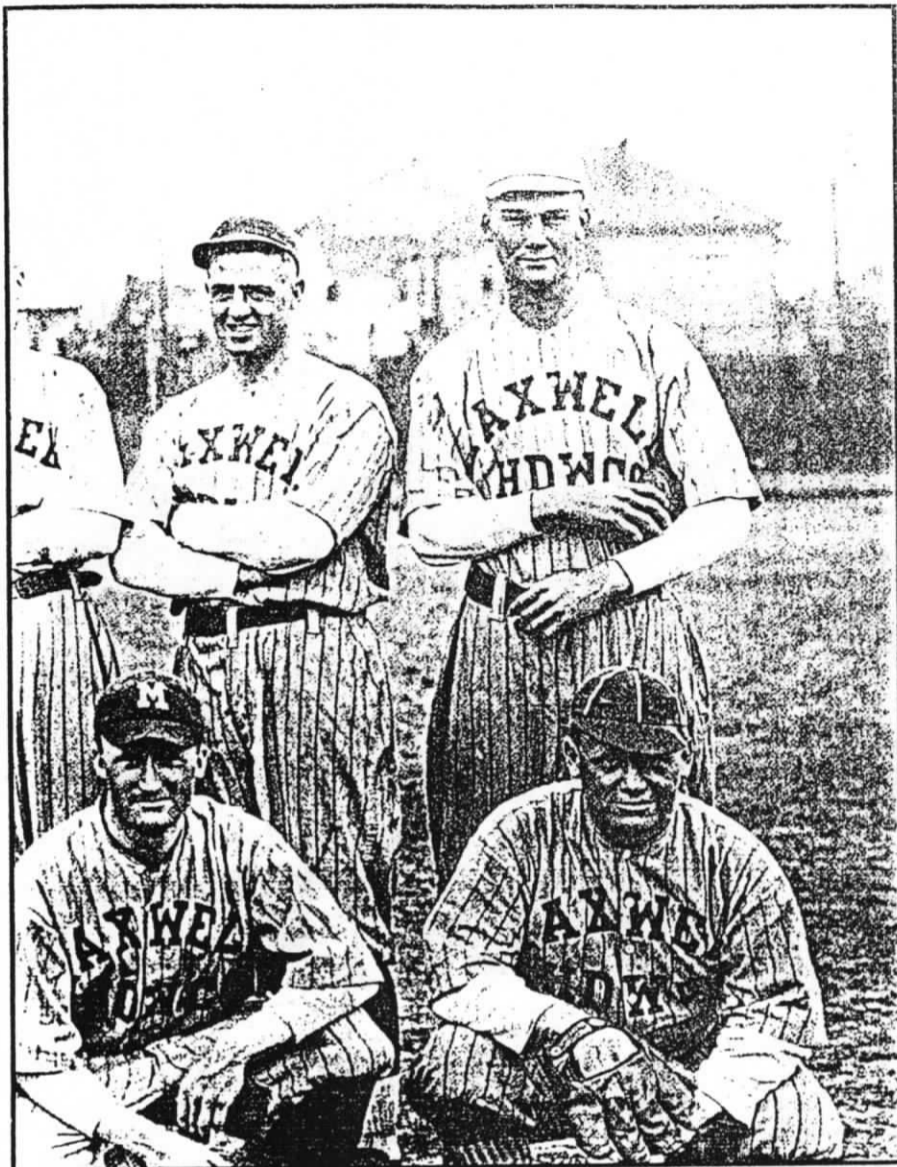
Harold Crum, the last president of the Del E. Webb Construction Division and a close associate of Webb, recalls a speech he gave four years ago in which he said, "I could never argue



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.



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."

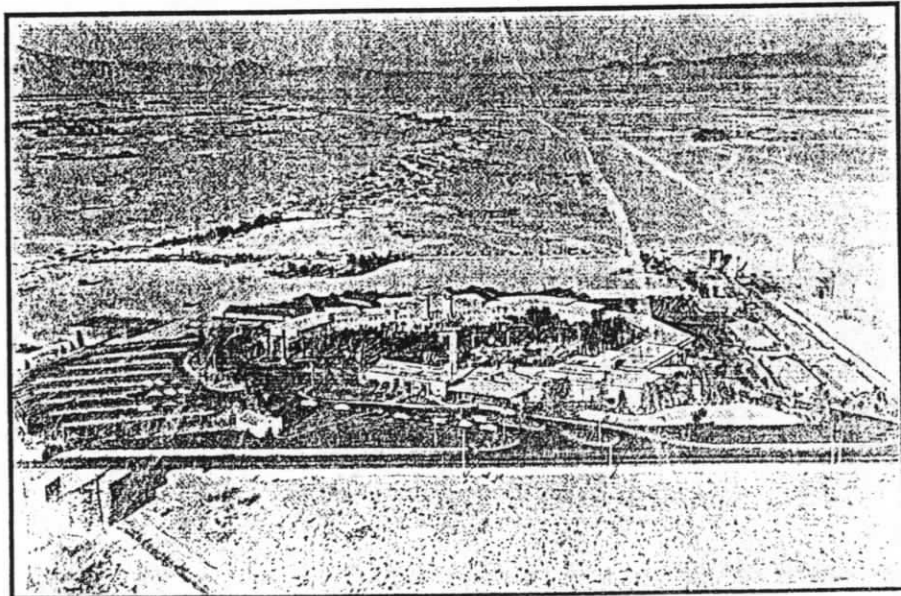
**P**eople would kill for a lot of things, most notably money. Although no one is really sure if mobster "Bugsy" Siegel was gunned down in a girlfriend's Beverly Hills apartment for money or for simply offending other mob captains. One persistent rumor that has never been proved is that Del Webb was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

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.

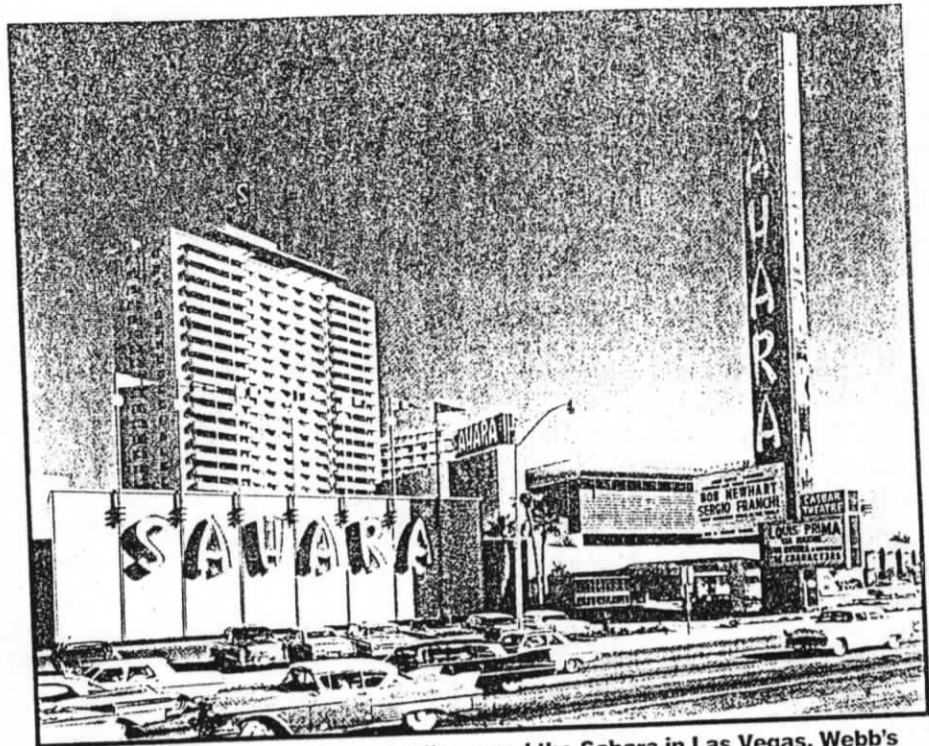
Webb was seventy-five when he passed away in July 1974. He was still a vibrant part of the company, holding the position of chairman of the board at his death.

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." EM



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.

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

DAILY NEWS-SUN

A4 Thursday, Jan. 3, 1991

# Opinion

## ■ OUR VIEW

### The dream goes on

When carpenter Del E. Webb became a developer, his first project was in Phoenix, 1940. His residential developments soon spread over the western states. Then in the late 1950s, he chose to enter a field that few builders had even thought about.

He envisioned a retirement community — an active retirement community with recreation facilities that would suit 50s-and-over. He built it next to the first retirement community in the nation, called appropriately, Youngtown. The new community was named Sun City.

The success of Webb's dream went far beyond his original concept. Sun City spread north of Grand Avenue, north of Bell Road, then spawned Sun City West. His recreational retirement idea was admired and copied, not only in the United States but abroad.

After Webb's death, planning and development went on, furthering his dream, creating retirement communities in other states as well as Arizona. But those who believed the Webb Corp. would remain limited to the area chosen by its founder must be surprised by the announcement of the firm's latest venture.

The pioneer in the retirement community field will expand into the construction of single-family homes with the acquisition of several unfinished developments owned by Coventry Financial Inc. They are Vistas at Arrowhead Ranch in Glendale; Newport at Mountainside, Chandler; Moon Valley Canyon, Phoenix; and Catalina, in Peoria.

Along with building the retirement communities that have given the firm worldwide fame, Webb will return to general homebuilding. It is an expression of Webb's confidence in Arizona's economy and its sure belief in its own future. It is a bold move in the face of gloomy forecasts; a daring statement that the time to expand is when the economy needs such visionary entrepreneurship.

We hope the news of Webb Corp.'s optimistic move will generate similar enthusiasm as it travels across the country — and that others will copy.

The firm's new venture truly reflects founder Del E. Webb's courage and wisdom.



THE SUN CITIES

# INDEPENDENT

Your  
Community  
Weekly

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• September 16-22, 1987 •

## Rec Centers dedicate Memorial Garden to city

By BRET MCKEAND

Sun Citians will gather at Bell Recreation Center Sept. 17 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution and to honor the founder of the Sun Cities.

A ceremony has been scheduled for 9 a.m. Thursday in the center's Memorial Garden to mark the completion of renovations recently made to the garden. The garden is the home of the Del E. Webb Memorial Statue and a replica of the Liberty Bell.

According to Doug Morris, one of the organizers of the project, "the garden will be finished and ready for dedication" by Constitution Day.

Renovations call for the addition of lush landscaping, park benches, picnic tables and several ramadas and gazebos. Later this year, a rose garden will be added.

"Constitution Garden (the rose garden) is not in evidence right now," says Morris, "because you don't plant roses until December."

Morris says organizers of the project are attempting to obtain

a rose from the White House Rose Garden and to have the garden designated as an "official" Constitution Garden.

The dedication ceremony will be held between the board meeting and quarterly membership meeting of the Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc.

The monthly board meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. at Bell Center. The dedication ceremony will take place at 9 a.m., followed by the quarterly membership meeting at 10:30 a.m.

All Sun City Rec Centers members are invited. Guest speakers for the dedication ceremony will be Col. Paul Morrill and Jane Freeman. Col. Morrill will present a talk on the U.S. Constitution and Freeman will present "Del E. Webb: A Man Worth Remembering."

According to Morris, the renovation of Memorial Garden will not only provide a more fitting tribute to Webb, but will also provide residents with a place to relax and meet with friends.

"It will be a colorful, sociable kind of a garden," says Morris.

See GARDEN, page two  
COVER



JANE FREEMAN, of Sun City, will present a talk on "Del Webb: A Man Worth Remembering" during the Constitution Day ceremony planned for 9 a.m. Sept. 17 at Bell Center.

(OVER)

VF - WEBB, DELBERT EUGENE, 1899-1974  
S.C. INDEPENDENT, Sept. 16-22, 1987

## • GARDEN

*From page one*

"A place where people will want to be. Not some place they just want to look at."

Most of the funds to renovate the garden were raised through donations from local residents. The Del E. Webb Foundation donated \$20,000 toward the project.

Morris says organizers are still \$5,000 short of their original goal. He says donations are still being accepted and may be sent to the Memorial Garden Committee, Valley National Bank, P.O. Box 690, Sun City, 85372.



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*DOUG MORRIS, one of the organizers of the Memorial Garden setting and dedication.*

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With a gigantic American flag draped in the background, retired Army Col. Paul Morrill addresses the crowd at the Del E. Webb Memori-

al Garden Thursday. His topic was "The U.S. Constitution ... The Common Sense of Uncommon Men." (News-Sun photos by Stephen Cherek)

## Residents pay tribute to Webb, Constitution

By JACQUE PAPPAS  
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Hundreds of area residents gathered at Bell Recreation Center Thursday to dedicate the Del E. Webb Memorial Garden.

The occasion also was used to mark the 200th birthday of the U.S. Constitution.

Flags representing every state in the nation waved above spectators' heads during the dedication ceremony that featured speeches on the Constitution, the memorial garden and the late Del Webb, who founded Sun City.

Doug Morris, chairman of the Del E. Webb Memorial Garden committee, served as master of ceremonies.

"We are celebrating the 200th birthday of the Constitution and also commemorating a man who brought us all together. It took our forefathers 159 days to invent a nation . . . That's something spectacular, but it took 55 people to do it," Morris said to a crowd of about 225.

"One person built Sun City. He had a dream and he has allowed us to live in his dream."

Spectators cheered when Morris

announced that the garden will be designated as an official Constitution Garden after rose bushes from the White House are planted on the grounds.

Morris said he was informed that the rose bushes will be sent to Sun City straight from the rose garden in Washington, D.C.

He said Sun Citian Dorothy Dent has assumed the responsibility of caring for the rose garden to be planted at the west end of the garden.

Paul Morrill, a retired U.S. Army colonel and a Sun City resi-

See Sun Citians, A5

OVER



# Sun Citians praise Webb, Constitution

—From A1

dent, enlightened listeners on some of the delegates of 200 years ago, whom he described as "the building blocks of the Constitution."

"For all their accumulated wisdom and all their accumulated experience, they were relatively young," Morrill said. "Most of them couldn't live in Sun City."

The average age of the delegates was 43 years. Benjamin Franklin, at 81, was one of the more senior members, Morrill said.

Morrill told stories of different states and said that two-thirds of the world's national constitutions are less than 20 years old and only 15 pre-date World War II.

"None pre-date our own," he said.

Garden committee member Jane Freeman reminisced a bit about Del Webb, whose speech was titled, "A Man Worth Remembering."

"On this Constitution Day, I can't help but think of those 55 delegates in Philadelphia as 55 Del Webbs of their day," Freeman said. "All leaders working with the courage of their convictions. All working to reconcile unity with diversity."

Freeman described Webb for those who had never laid eyes on him.

"He stood six-foot-four and looked as lean as a range rider at 200 pounds. He could exude the same sort of level-eyed laconic western charm, somehow suggestive of sagebrush and wide open space, often associated with Gary Cooper," Freeman said. "He was equally at home with presidents and kings as he was with carpenters and construction workers. He never lost the common touch."

Freeman also highlighted numerous distinctions Webb received and his involvement in community as well as corporate affairs.

At his death, Freeman said, the

bulk of Webb's estate went to the foundation bearing his name, which is dedicated to the causes of health and science.

During the 45-minute ceremony, Morris praised Sam Higginbothan, supervisor of the garden project, for the time he dedicated to developing the garden to surround a statue of Webb.

The statue was built in November 1981 and stands next to a ringing replica of the Liberty Bell in the garden.

Sun Citian Joe Marone, who died earlier this year, was also credited by many in the crowd as a instrumental person in getting a memorial garden built.

Marone had suggested that the statue of Del E. Webb be moved to a more visible area of Sun City or be surrounded by greenery and flowers as a fitting tribute to the monument.

Others who participated in the dedication were the Rev. Leslie Ross, who gave the invocation;

Eagle Scout Jim Lyon of Peoria Troop No. 462, who led the pledge of allegiance, and a vocal and piano accompaniment of the national anthem by I. Clayton "Bud" Wright and Rea Winters.

Although the garden committee received donations from organizations and residents in the community, as well as \$20,000 from the Del E. Webb Foundation, Morris said \$5,000 is still needed to pay for the \$40,000 project.

He said a fund will be established for the future maintenance of the garden.

The committee kicked off its fund-raiser July 4, which marked the 13th anniversary of Del E. Webb's death. Landscapers put their shovels into the dirt Aug. 10 after bids were accepted.

Major contributors will be permanently recognized with dedicatory plaques and donations may be sent to Memorial Garden Committee, c/o Valley National Bank, Box 690, Sun City 85372.

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DEDICATION

DEL WEBB MEMORIAL GARDEN

BELL RECREATION CENTER

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1987...9 to 10 a.m.

WELCOME..... Doug Morris  
 INVOCATION..... Rev. Leslie Ross  
 Pledge of Allegiance.....Eagle Scout Jim Lyon  
 Peoria Troop # 462  
 NATIONAL ANTHEM.....Vocal: I.Clayton "Bud" Wright  
 Piano: Rea Winters

"The U. S. Constitution  
 ...the Common Sense of Uncommon Men" Col. Paul Morrill

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

"Del E. Webb...A Man Worth Remembering" Jane Freeman  
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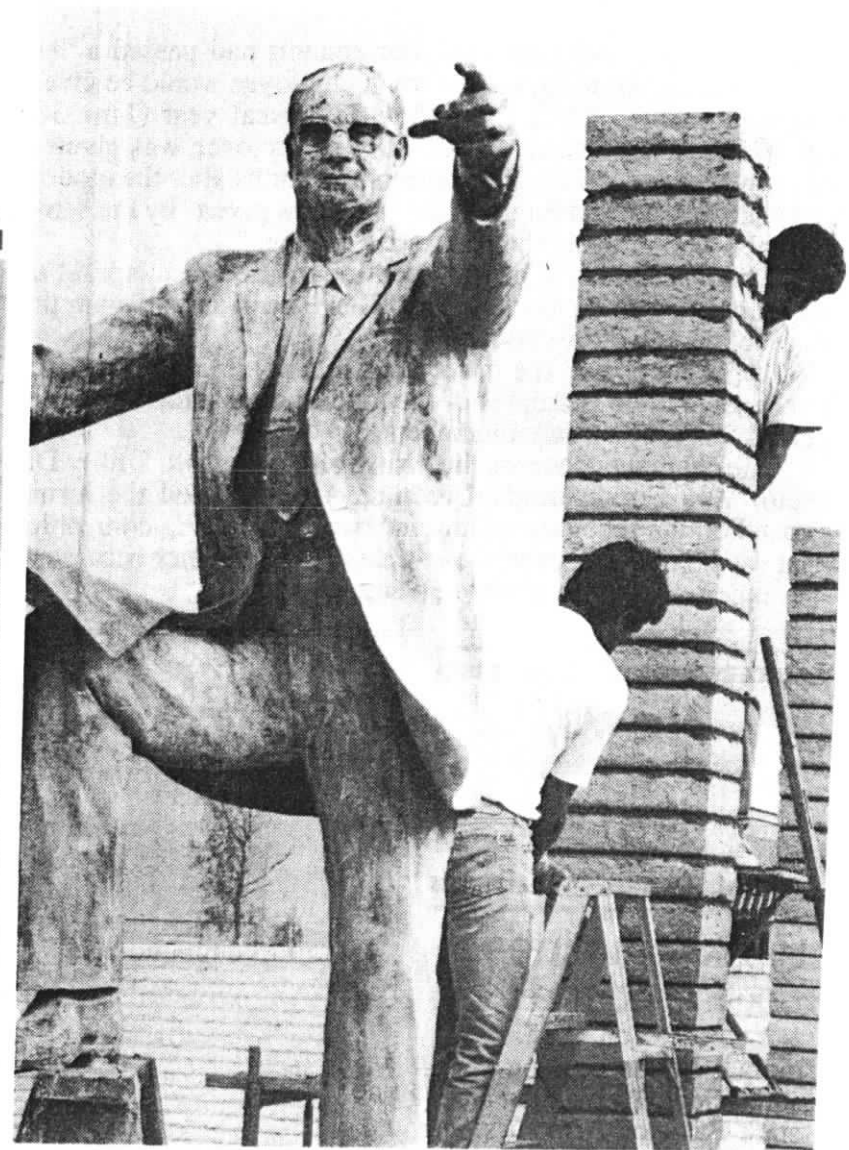
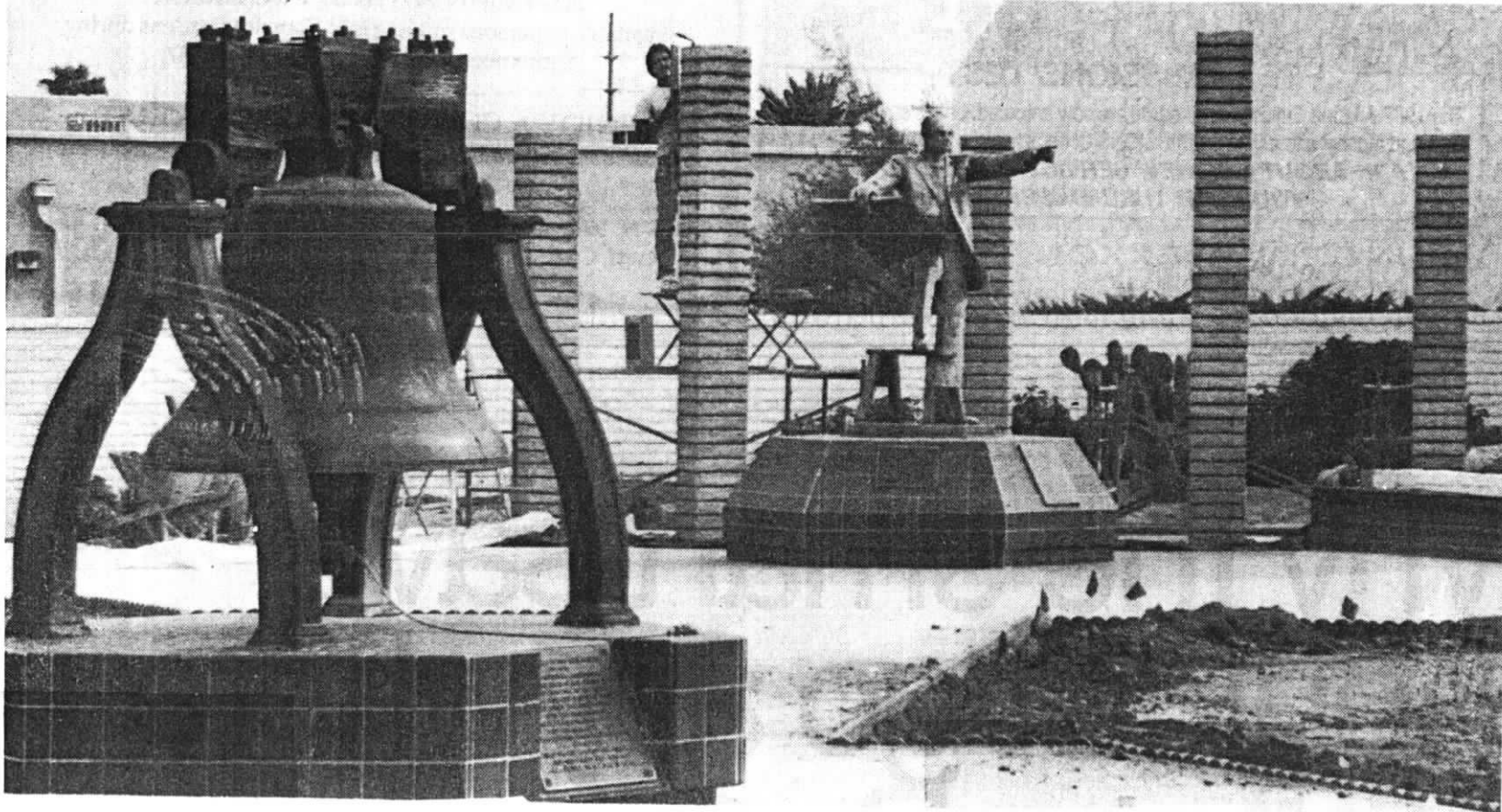
Contributions to complete and support the Memorial Garden may be sent to:

Memorial Garden Committee  
 c/o Valley National Bank  
 Box 690      Sun City 85372

## Weaving the Webb of history ...

**MEMORIAL GARDEN WORK PROGRESSES.** Del E. Webb, founder of the Sun Cities, seems to be supervising the renovation work at Memorial Garden at Bell Recreation Center. Since early August, workers have been constructing benches, ramadas and gazebos around the Del Webb statue and the replica of the Liberty Bell. The entire project, complete with lush new landscaping, is expected to be completed and dedicated Sept. 16, Constitution Day.

Photos by Morris Berman



Sunday, September 8, 1985

AA



Del E. Webb

His corporation boomed after landing World War II defense contracts.

## FBI probes uncovered a Webb of rich trust

By JIM WALSH  
Arizona Republic Staff

**B**efore the late Del E. Webb founded Sun City, one of his lucrative defense contracts included construction of a prison camp for Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Webb was accused of padding workers salaries to fatten his bill for building the Poston camp near Parker. He also was alleged to have bilked the government on some lumber when he built a Marine Corps air base in California.

And Webb finished building the Flamingo casino in Las Vegas, Nev., after his client, mobster Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegal, stuck him with two bad checks just before Siegal died in a blaze of carbine fire in a bloody 1947 Beverly Hills murder.

These colorful and largely unknown aspects of Webb's rise from a penniless carpenter to a corporate mogul are spotlighted by FBI documents recently obtained by *The Arizona Republic* from the Justice Department through a Freedom of Information Act request.

But the FBI's investigations into accusations against Webb produced no criminal charges. Ironically, Webb and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover ended up good friends.

Portions of Webb's 146-page FBI file are available because he is dead. Webb died of an embolism, an arterial blood clot, at age 75 in 1974.

Today, Robert H. Johnson remembers that "it was not very nice" at the Poston camp, which once housed almost 20,000 Japanese-Americans about 20 miles south of Parker.

Johnson, who succeeded Webb as president of the Del E. Webb Corp., spent several nights sleeping at the camp while it was under construction. He recalls dust sweeping through the "temporary" buildings during the night and awakening to find it piled on his face.

— Webb, AA10

## Webb

Continued from AA1

"I don't think (Japanese-Americans) were well-treated," said Johnson, now retired and maintaining residences in Wickenburg and in southern California. "Certainly, there was hysteria about the war at that time."

But "it wasn't our job" to question the federal government's policy of herding Japanese-Americans from Western states into relocation camps, he said.

"It was a defense contract," Johnson said. "We had to get (the Poston camp) built. We didn't have time for anything else."

Bill Acton, a spokesman for the Del E. Webb Corp., said the company's "real growth" took off after landing numerous World War II defense contracts.

Webb was wealthy enough by 1945 that he became a part-owner of the New York Yankees. His interest was sold to the Columbia Broadcasting System in 1965.

Several of these contracts led Webb to his first brush with the FBI in 1942, when a bureau investigation failed to substantiate allegations that Webb was bilking the government by using "inferior equipment" for construction of Navy bases at Seeley, Sandy Beach and Niland, Calif.

Also in 1942, a federal employee told the bureau that the method for awarding defense contracts, mostly to Webb's company, "looked very suspicious," according to the documents. But no investigation was conducted.

The FBI also chose not to investigate an allegation that Webb's company paid workers "very high wages" at Poston so it could stick the government with a higher construction bill.

Nothing in the files indicate why these reports never were investigated. Johnson dismissed any notion that Webb padded the Poston contract.

"The guys that worked at Parker earned every dime they got," he said. "It was nothing but mesquite brush and rattlesnakes."

During the war, labor was in short supply, Johnson said. He attributed the company's success in landing defense contracts partly to maintaining "good labor relations" that enabled Webb to get enough workers to construct various government installations.

In addition to the padding suspicions, the FBI records show Webb again was accused of fleecing the government in 1944, when he allegedly obtained lumber from the U.S.

Engineers — now the Army Corps of Engineers — at half of the market price to build part of the El Toro Marine Air Station near Santa Ana, Calif.

After landing the contract, Webb arranged to tap into a stockpile of lumber near Los Angeles that had been purchased by the government from Foxworth-Galbraith Lumber Co. of Phoenix.

In writing about the transaction, James E. Harrington, special assistant to the U.S. attorney general, said Webb may have obtained lumber from the government for \$45 per 1,000 boards after the U.S. Engineers had paid \$90 to \$100 per 1,000.

Even if Webb made a profit by getting the lumber for half-price, it would only be an example of "sharp business practices" and "inefficiency" by the Army engineers, Harrington wrote.

The investigation subsequently was dropped when Harrington became satisfied that "nothing irregular occurred," according to the documents.

Johnson said the government regularly helped defense contractors obtain building supplies, such as lumber, that were in short supply.

Under the federal Renegotiation Act, the Internal Revenue Service reviewed the profits reported by World War II defense contractors to determine if they were reasonable, Johnson said.

"I remember that contract (for El Toro) was renegotiated, and we didn't have to give any money back," he said.

Henry Galbraith, vice president of Foxworth-Galbraith, said he knew nothing about the FBI investigations but considered Webb one of his best and most trustworthy customers.

As a businessman, Webb was "the right man at the right place at the right time," Galbraith said.

After Webb was cleared of any wrongdoing, FBI documents reveal he was investigated again in 1946 for associating with Siegal, a New York hit man turned California mobster who hired his company to build the Flamingo Hotel and Casino.

"There is no information, however, in our files that Webb had any further association with Siegal than that of a contractor," the records say.

In addition, the files say two checks to Webb's company bounced just before Siegal's bloody death.

Johnson said Webb finished building the Flamingo in an attempt to salvage his investment.

Acton, the Del E. Webb Corp. spokesman, said the Phoenix-based

company no longer owns any casinos, but still manages The Mint in Las Vegas, The High Sierra in Lake Tahoe, The Nevada Club in Laughlin and The Claridge in Atlantic City, N.J.

Webb not only emerged from the FBI probes without a scratch, but with Hoover as a new friend. The FBI documents began noting in 1958 that the builder was on the agency's "mailing list" and was known to Hoover as "Dear Del."

In fact, Hoover praised Webb and one of his close friends, the enigmatic Howard Hughes, for fighting organized crime in Nevada, according to a Feb. 1, 1968, FBI memorandum.

"Mr. Hoover pointed out that individuals like Mr. Webb and Mr. Howard Hughes were definitely instrumental in getting rid of the hoodlum element," says the memorandum, based on a meeting attended by Webb, Hoover and then-Nevada Gov. Paul Laxalt, now a U.S. senator.

"The director noted, however, that it is almost impossible to rid a state of all questionable characters," the memorandum adds.

Mike Rumbolz, a member of the Nevada Gaming Control Board, said the FBI wiretapped the Fremont Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas in the mid-1960s and may have wired the Stardust casino.

However, the bugs never resulted in any prosecutions and there is no evidence that any Webb casinos were wired, Rumbolz said.

Nevada officials recruited publicly held companies, such as those headed by Webb and Hughes, because it was thought that skimming and other irregularities were easier to pull off when a casino was owned by one person, Rumbolz said.

When the gambling houses are owned by a corporation, he said, "there are too many people looking over your shoulder, making sure they get their share of the profits."

Today, Webb probably is best remembered for establishing Sun City, where early residents treated him "as if he were a god" because he had founded the "active retirement" community to help them fight boredom, said Fred Kuentz, chairman of the Del E. Webb Development Co.

Johnson now carries on Webb's legacy as director of the Del E. Webb Foundation, where Webb's estate deposited most of his business profits. The foundation, which Johnson said has \$30 million to \$35 million in assets, donates about \$1.5 million to medical research each year because Webb, a vehement anti-smoker, was "very health-conscious."

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

News2

# BRET MCKEAND

SCI Editor

## Sun City: a tribute to Del Webb

Delbert Eugene Webb is truly a legend in every sense of the word.

His work has spanned the world over, but nowhere is his memory more alive than right here in Sun City.

Monuments and statues are usually reserved for heroes — people who are more highly regarded now than when they were alive.

Del Webb has a statue honoring his memory. It's located at the Bell Recreation Center. Seems such a small gesture for a man who has done so much.

For it was 25 years ago this month that Del Webb started Sun City. He may not have known it at the time, but it was an idea whose time had come. For Sun City has since gone on to set the standard for the "active retirement" communities which continue to spring up throughout the country and the world as well.

And although Sun City was merely a business venture for Webb, much the same as any other construction project, we like to think that it was a "special" project for him. In fact, for the rest of his life, Webb would always return to Sun City and prove that the community was indeed, "special" to him.

Webb's career has all the ingredients which make up the true American legend. Born to a poor family, Webb worked hard all his life to establish his empire. Nothing was given to him. He earned everything he had.

He was friend to Presidents, entertainers and athletes, but his best friends may have been right here, in Sun City.

Legends have monuments, Webb has a statue. But in reality, he has more than that.

His memorial, and a fitting one at that, is Sun City. For it was his community that completely changed the way senior Americans live in this country. For all his other accomplishment, he will always be remembered for establishing Sun City.

Sun City — its lifestyle, its attitude, and most of all, its peo-

ple — are a lasting tribute to Del E. Webb and his vision.



On behalf of the entire staff of the Sun Cities Independent Newspaper, I want to say congratulations to all Sun Citians on their community's 25th birthday.

We at the Sun Cities Independent are also celebrating 25 years of serving the people in the Sun City area. The Independent was formerly the Youngtown Record and the Sun City Citizen.

In 1960 Eugene and Eunice Ely started the The Youngtown Record, a one-page newsletter for the people of Youngtown and those first few residents of Sun City.

In 1971, the Record was sold to Bob Heiberg and Jack Pryor and within a few years the paper moved its main offices to the present location at 10327 W. Coggins Drive.

Under the editorship of Sun Citian Doug Morris, the paper flourished to a full-size tabloid weekly newspaper. The company soon introduced the Sun City Citizen and proceeded to publish both the Youngtown Record and the Citizen.

On Sep. 1, 1979, the Record and Citizen were published by the present owners, Independent Newspapers of Dover, Delaware. The two papers were then combined into one weekly — Sun City Citizen.

On Feb. 2, 1983, the Sun City Citizen changed its name to the Sun City Independent.

As a community newspaper we strive for the best coverage of events of importance to our readers in the Sun City area. Like the Record and the Citizen before us, the Independent cares about the community, the people in the community, and the news affecting those people.

We are proud to be a part of the history of Sun City. We have enjoyed the past 25 years and look forward to the next 25 years.

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT January 16-22, 1985

# Del E. Webb

*They treated him like a god,  
and old hands still call him 'mister'*

By **JIM WALSH** / Northwest Valley Bureau



**W**hen Del E. Webb came to Sun City, he was transformed from a multimillion-dollar builder and sportsman to a deity.

"They treated him like a god. It was dangerous to say anything bad about him," said Fred Kuentz, chairman and chief executive officer for the Del E. Webb Development Co.

"We used to say it was like he walked on water," said Maxine Newman, his longtime secretary.

Webb inevitably was surrounded by large crowds of senior citizens when he ventured into the 20,000 acres of cotton fields that his company molded into the nation's largest and best-known retirement community.

"It was almost like the people just wanted to touch him, shake his hand and so forth," said Owen Childress, who served as the development company's vice president and project manager.

As Webb walked onto a stage at one dedication, "the looks on their faces was like, this is Jesus Christ, this is the man," Childress said.

Never a wallflower, Webb "loved every minute of it," said Robert H. Johnson, Webb's protege and successor as presi-

Continued on SC8

■ Continued from SC6

dent and chairman of the Del E. Webb Corp.

The attention was one reason Webb's fondness for Sun City and its residents grew and probably contributed to his decision in 1965 to continue the retirement haven, rather than sell it, during a corporate financial crisis.

"He got a lot of notice over it. It goes back to getting him on the cover of *Time* magazine" in 1962, said Tom Breen, the former Webb executive who conceived the Sun City concept of restricting housing sales to senior citizens and surrounding the retirees with ample recreational facilities.

Webb merely approved Breen's idea at the urging of Joseph Ashton, the Del E. Webb Corp.'s vice president and Phoenix regional manager, for a \$2 million gamble in 1959.

But to many Sun City residents, it was "Mr. Webb" who built their houses, fixed any imperfections and made it pos-

sible for them to buy a stake in his "active retirement" way of life.

"He was like the colonel for Kentucky Fried Chicken. He was the ultimate marketing tool," said John Meeker, a former president of the development company who is credited with making Breen's idea work.

Kuentz, the company's senior employee with more than 35 years of service, said the profits from Sun City undoubtedly pleased Webb the businessman.

However, "of all the things he did in his life, he was proudest of Sun City," Kuentz said. "All the people were having a ball" and that satisfied Webb.

A chat with Webb, during his many visits, often would make the day of Sun City residents who enjoyed describing their opinions of the retirement haven to its founder.

Meeker recalled how D. K. Ludwig, then one of the world's richest men, toured Sun City

with Webb and paid the developer a compliment.

"He said, 'You're a lucky man. A lot of people work all their lives for something to remember them by, and you already have it,'" Meeker said.

Webb's larger-than-life image in Sun City also can be traced to his imposing appearance at 6 feet 4 inches and 190 pounds, his humble roots, an uncanny ability to get along with anyone from a common laborer to U.S. presidents and his graciousness with Sun City residents.

"He was always busy, but he was never too busy to come to Sun City," Breen said.

Success never made the straight-forward Webb pompous, a trait he hated, and he never forgot what it was like to arrive in Phoenix from his native Fresno, Calif., as a young

man with only a few dollars in his pockets and some carpentry tools.

"He had a big disdain for people who tried to hustle him," Breen said.

Even after he became successful, he often would talk to carpenters on construction sites and advise them how to do the job right.

"He was really country, but not in a bad light," said Meeker, who first met Webb as a 12-year-old caddy at Phoenix Country Club and began with the company as a warehouse clerk.

"He was a country gentleman," Meeker said. "He was soft-spoken."

During a round of golf with Meeker, Webb once revealed his lighter side by demonstrating how to throw a knuckle ball by

tossing oranges he plucked from a nearby tree.

Webb had been a pitcher in baseball's minor leagues before he was injured during a slide into home plate in 1925. Later, typhoid fever reduced his weight to 90 pounds from 204 before he recovered.

Johnson, who is immortalized by the R. H. Johnson Recreation Center and R. H. Johnson Boulevard in Sun City West, said everyone identified Webb personally with his business ventures because Webb insisted that all construction projects be named after him.

"It was Del Webb's Sun City, Del Webb's Sahara (casino), Del Webb's Townhouse (hotel)," said Johnson, president of the Del E. Webb Foundation, which funds medical research.

■ Continued on SC9

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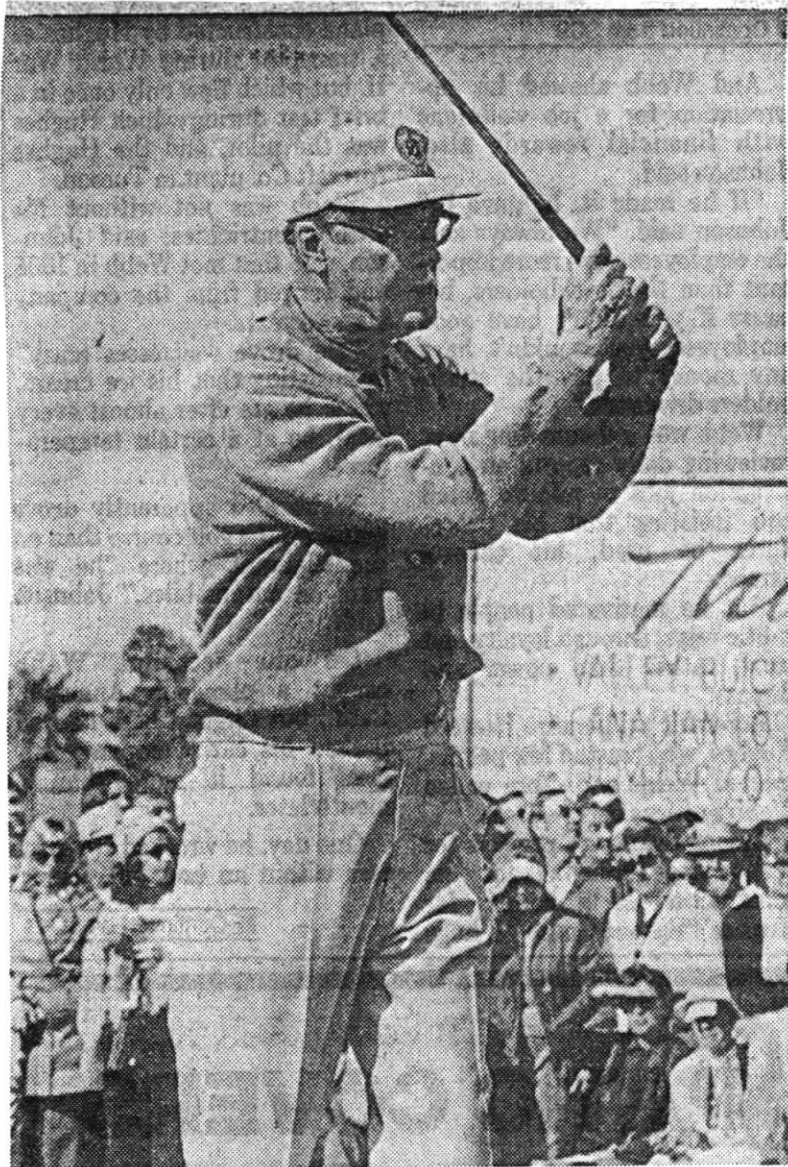
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Continued on SC9





Webb was an ardent golfer who boasted of a "500-yard drive" on a downhill hole with the wind at his back.

Continued from SC8

"He was known nationally because he was an owner of the New York Yankees" baseball team, Johnson said. "To know Del Webb was to know somebody."

Childress said Webb had a "dry sense of humor," and Breen said he was "earthy."

Meeker remembered Webb's fondness for sticking his executives with nicknames, some of them less than desirable, and "he would never call you by your given name."

But 10 years after Webb's death at age 75 from an embolism, Meeker, Childress, Kuentz and Johnson still refer to him as "Mr. Webb," a title borne of respect, Meeker said.

Webb earned such respect by hiring employees with little or no academic credentials and teaching them business techniques in the "Webb Academy of Business."

"He was more than my boss," Kuentz said. "He was my friend, boss and father rolled into one."

Childress recalled how Webb called him one Sunday afternoon to ask about the health of Childress' father, who was suffering from cancer.

"I didn't even know that he knew my father was sick," he said. "That was the kind of man he was."

Continued on SC10

Continued from SC10

them up at a downtown Phoenix dealership.

Although he never intended to drive poorly, Webb was repeatedly ticketed for speeding, Johnson said.

"He was just in a hurry. He was always late."

Webb liked teeing off for a round of golf late in the afternoon with a friend he called "The Cat."

They'd play into the night because the Cat purportedly could see in the dark. At times, they'd listen to the sound the ball made when it hit the ground to know where it landed.

Webb was a good golfer and once bragged to Johnson about hitting a drive 500 yards downhill, with a strong wind at his back.

Meeker said there was an occasion when Webb lent Arnold Palmer money to get the nation's most famous touring professional out of a financial hazard.

Newman said Webb would

sometimes call her on Sunday afternoons to send out 50 to 100 telegrams to congratulate golfers and other athletes on their accomplishments.

Webb used to tell Johnson stories of his hardy drinking as a barnstorming baseball player, hitting every bar on a particular street in Oakland, Calif., "but I never saw him take a drink," Johnson said.

In the 1962 interview with *Time*, Webb related how an Army doctor told him during World War II to cut back on his habit of drinking 10 to 20 bourbons a day.

"Not another drop of whiskey has passed my lips since that day," he said.

Webb also was insistent that no one smoke around him and had steel "No smoking" signs on all of his desks.

He also was glued to the telephone, calling his executives constantly on weekends "just to talk," Johnson said.

"Those who knew him are just as loyal today as they were then," Johnson said. ■

## Del Webb statue is unveiled at Recreation Center

SUN CITY — A bronze statue of Del E. Webb, founder of Sun City, was unveiled Saturday in the flower garden of the Bell Recreation Center, 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

The 7-foot statue was set in place last week near one of only two exact replicas of the Liberty Bell, said Doug Morris, editor of the *Sun City Citizen* and one of the principal backers of the statue project.

"This is the first of what we hope will be 100 years of founder's days celebrated on November 21 every year," Morris said.

Saturday's celebration included music, speeches and appearances by local dignitaries.

The unveiling of the statue was assisted by 100 30-inch, helium-filled balloons, said Morris, who made introductory remarks at the ceremony.

Three plaques — honoring Webb, giving his life's facts and honoring a 22-member statue committee headed by Sam Higginbotham, a prime force behind many Sun City charities — are mounted at the statue's base.

The statue depicts Webb with his right foot on a saw horse, his right hand holding a map of Sun City and his left hand "pointing skyward to the future," Morris said.

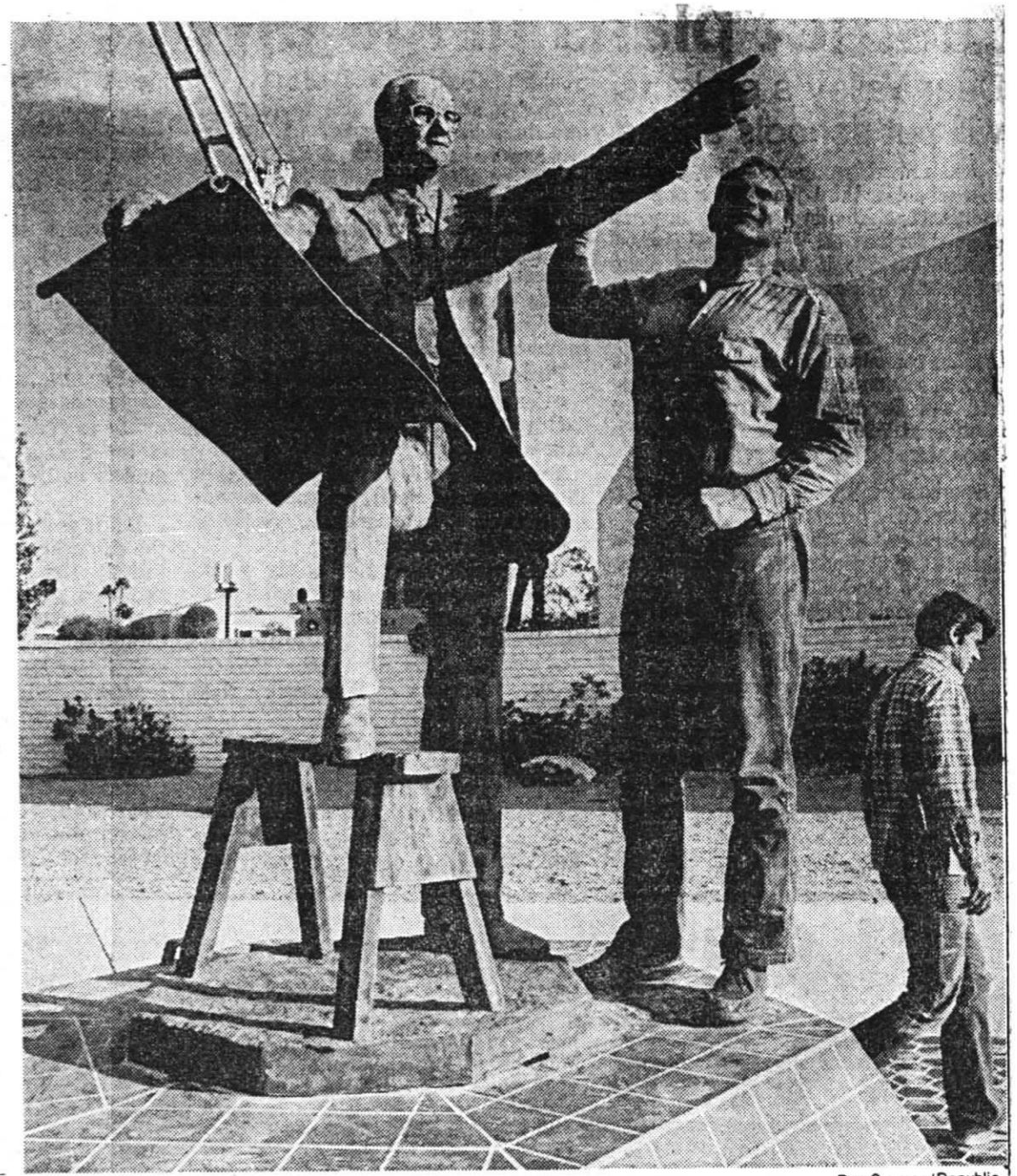
"This has been three years in the making," said Morris, who breathed sighs of relief when the statue was set in place after "whirling around like a dervish" as it was lifted over the

walls of the Bell Recreation Center.

The nearly \$30,000 statue — financed by local individual and corporate donations — is intended to "memorialize the man who built Sun City, the first community of its kind in the world," Morris said.

Organizers had hoped to unveil the statue at Fourth of July ceremonies this year. But James Farley, the statue's sculptor, suffered a heart ailment June 1, delaying the project until he recovered.

Webb, who started as a carpenter at age 13, eventually became the head of one of the largest construction companies in the nation. He died July 4, 1974, at age 75.



Roy Cosway/Republic

The statue of Del Webb is placed before Bell Center by (l-r) John Heisley, sculptor, James Farley, Rich Woods and Del Martensen. At right, the sculptor stands with the statue.

# Statue of Del Webb to Be Unveiled

## Nov. 21 Ceremony In Bell Garden

A statue of the founder and developer of this retirement community will be unveiled at 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 21, in the Bell Center Memorial Garden.

The seven-foot bronze statue by Scottsdale Sculptor James O. Farley will be unveiled by Douglas Morris and Burt Freireich, members of the Webb statue committee headed by Sam Higginbotham. They will free 100 helium-filled balloons to lift the shroud off the statue in the hexagon area east of the Liberty Bell at the Bell Center.

"This is a community project," according to Jack Spellman, president of the board of directors of the Rec Centers of Sun City. "All the information we have points to this area's being included in the architectural plans for Bell Center and designated for the purpose of accommodating a memorial statue of Del Webb."

Everyone here is invited to the program to see Sun Citians and their guests unveil the statue.

Among the preliminary events before the unveiling was a musical Oct. 24 in the Sundome.

This event, presenting Jo Ann Castle and the New Christy Minstrels, was booked to help provide funds to make the final payment on the \$28,000 statue of Del E. Webb.

Contributions may be sent in any amount to Tom Clewes, First National Bank, Box 1665, Sun City 85372.

Names of all contributors will be inscribed on scrolls to be placed in the base of the statue.



**DEL E. WEBB**

DEL E. WEBB statue to be unveiled Nov. 21 in Bell Center Memorial Garden near the Liberty Bell.

The Lions Clubs of the Sun Cities planned to cover initial costs until the proceeds of the fund drive have been realized.

The statue portrays Mr. Webb as a "planner, builder, a man of vision." He was

well-known here as a Texas carpenter who came to Arizona via California and developed Sun City as the country's largest retirement and recreation community.

The unveiling will be followed by comments concerning Del Webb by John Meeker, Joe Aubin, and Robert H. Johnson representing the Del E. Webb Development Co.

Jack Spellman will represent community members and the Rec Centers board.

The three bronze plaques will be explained by Higginbotham and Meeker.

The Webb statue committee consists of Jane Freeman, Tom Clewes, Bob Scott, Burt Freireich, Doug Morris, Joe Davisson, Gertrude Taylor, Nell Wilkinson, Bob Hird, Bill Kulakowski, Ben Birrell, Kenneth Lipp, Helen Vallee, Arlene Gray, Morris Beldon, and Milton Jacobsen.

The plaques carry this descriptive narrative:

DEL E. WEBB

MASTER BUILDER AND SPORTSMAN

His were humble beginnings. He was forced from school and into carpentry when the family business came upon hard times. He enjoyed his weekend work as a semi-pro baseball pitcher.

Moving to Phoenix, Arizona, in 1928, he proceeded to build one of the nation's largest construction and development companies.

He was more than a fine carpenter. An excellent estimator of jobs and keen judge of people, he consistently won major contracts and attracted dedicated and skilled craftsmen to aid in his firm's expansion.

Some major projects completed under his leadership include Luke and Williams Air Force Bases, the Army's Fort Huachuca, the

Cont'd on P. 6

## Statue

Cont'd from P. 2

Kansas City Stadium Complex, the Los Angeles County Art Museum, Anaheim Stadium and Convention Center, the International Airport at Kansas City, Phoenix Civic Plaza and world-famous Sun City, Arizona.

In 1945 he became a partner in ownership of the New York Yankees baseball franchise. He was one of the most successful team owners in the history of professional sports.

More important to him than his business success were people. He showed a genuine interest in and concern for his fellows. He reached out and positively touched the lives of youngsters and retirees, of amateur and professional athletes, and people in business, politics, and entertainment. Few men have started more humbly or achieved greater success and acclaim than did Del E. Webb, master builder and sportsman.

## On The Town Del Webb comes home to Sun City

By Doug Morris  
Editor

It started so long ago, it's hard to recall that first committee meeting, and painful to remember the zillion meetings between then and now.

A few were determined that there would be a statue to Del E. Webb, and that it would be at the spot in the Memorial Garden of Bell Center which he had approved, before his death. "Yes, that's where I'd like to be," he said.

The first problem of course, was money. The enthusiasts said there'd be no difficulty raising the necessary \$30,000, because enough people recognized their indebtedness to Del E. Webb that such a sum would be there for the asking.

Inexplicably, it didn't work out that way. "If the Del Webb Corporation wants a statue of Del Webb, let them pay for it." "Why a statue? Why not just a simple plaque on some convenient wall?" "If there's going to be a statue, it should be at Oakmont Center, where Sun City started."

"Better to take that money and put it into the library, or Sunshine Services, or the Community Fund."

Contributions came hard, but they came — and the statue became reality. Last Saturday, Nov. 21, a hundred helium-inflated balloons lifted the cover off the statue, and a thousand Sun Citians were proud. It was Founder's Day; and November 21st will be Founder's Day every year from now into the infinity of Sun City.

And Del Webb will be there in the Garden, acquiring the patina that accrues to bronze statuary year after year, and watching affectionately over what we do with his dreams. Every July 4th will be "Ring That Bell," and every Nov. 21 will be "Founder's Day" in the Memorial Garden; and, as year piles on year, Sun City will build its heritage and develop its character.

There were 200 in the banquet room of Crestview. They were Lions. They were there to make sure John Meeker knew that his departure from the Del Webb organization didn't reflect his

continuance in the affection and appreciation of Sun Citians who know how important he was to all of us.

It was said: "This morning we dedicated a statue to Del E. Webb. Now, we acknowledge a monument to John Meeker. We call it Sun City."

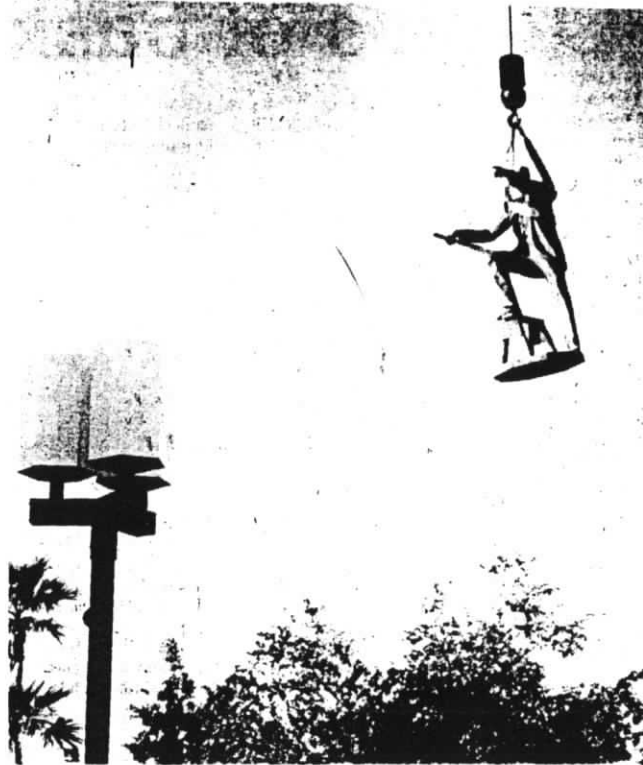
### Weather

| Date  | High | Low | 4:30 p.m. | Prec. |
|-------|------|-----|-----------|-------|
| 11-16 | 85   | 46  | 79        | 0     |
| 11-17 | 82   | 47  | 76        | 0     |
| 11-18 | 80   | 45  | 76        | 0     |
| 11-19 | 76   | 44  | 70        | 0     |
| 11-20 | 77   | 40  | 73        | 0     |
| 11-21 | 77   | 42  | 73        | 0     |
| 11-22 | 74   | 44  | 72        | 0     |

H. V. Coles, observer

# Del Webb comes home

6—November 25, 1981—SUN CITY CITIZEN



Statue being lowered onto pedestal last week before ceremonies

Photos by

Morris Berman

Earl Manthey

## FOUNDER'S DAY

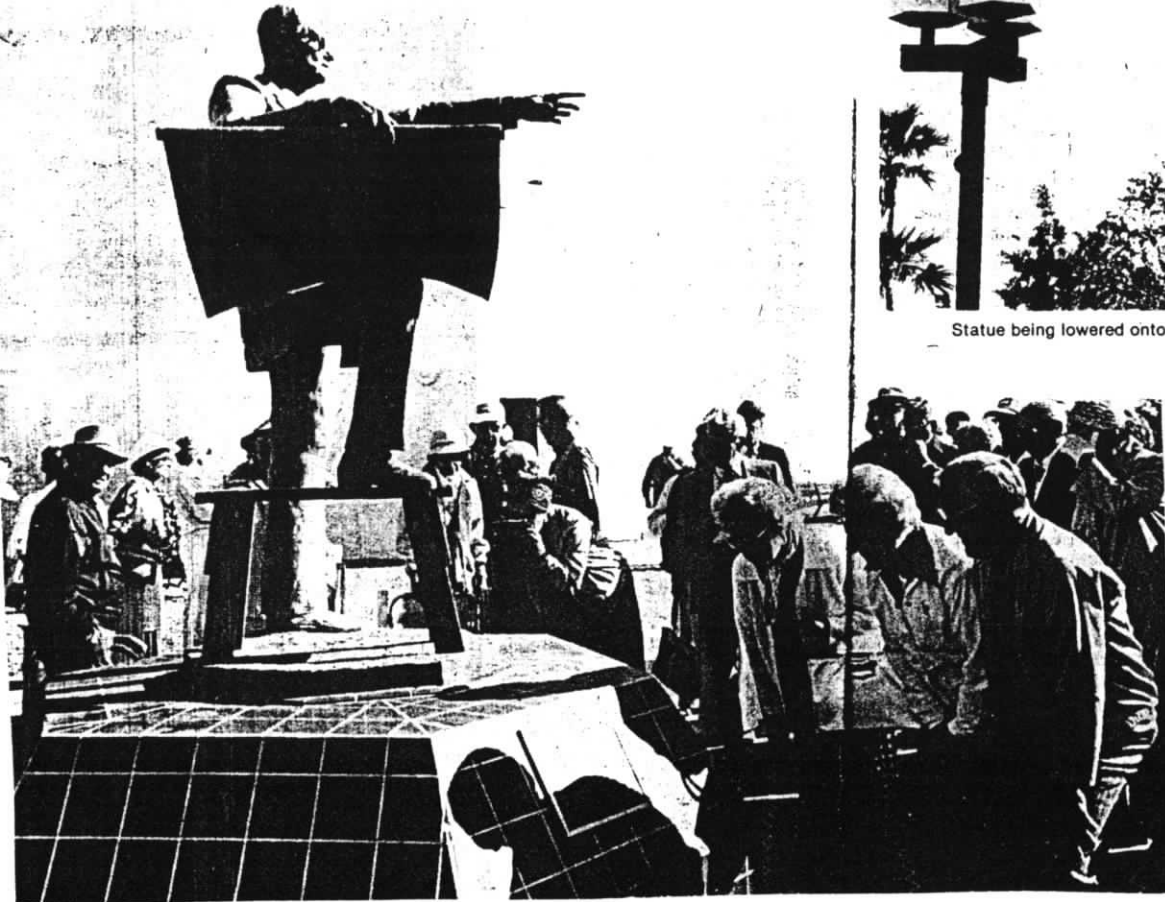
The Sun City sun shone benignly  
With very little persuasion  
To honor a very special man  
On a very special occasion.

A thousand grateful residents  
Among them many pioneers,  
Associates like John Meeker  
And many distinguished peers,

Gathered today to pay homage  
To a man held in high esteem  
For dedicating his career  
To achieve the retiree's dream.

In this recreation plaza  
Stands a splendid life-size statue  
Of Del E. Webb the planner  
Of the city built for me and you.

It is fitting and proper  
On every 21st of November  
To celebrate Founder's Day  
A day Sun Citians should  
remember!



Spectators await balloon lift off

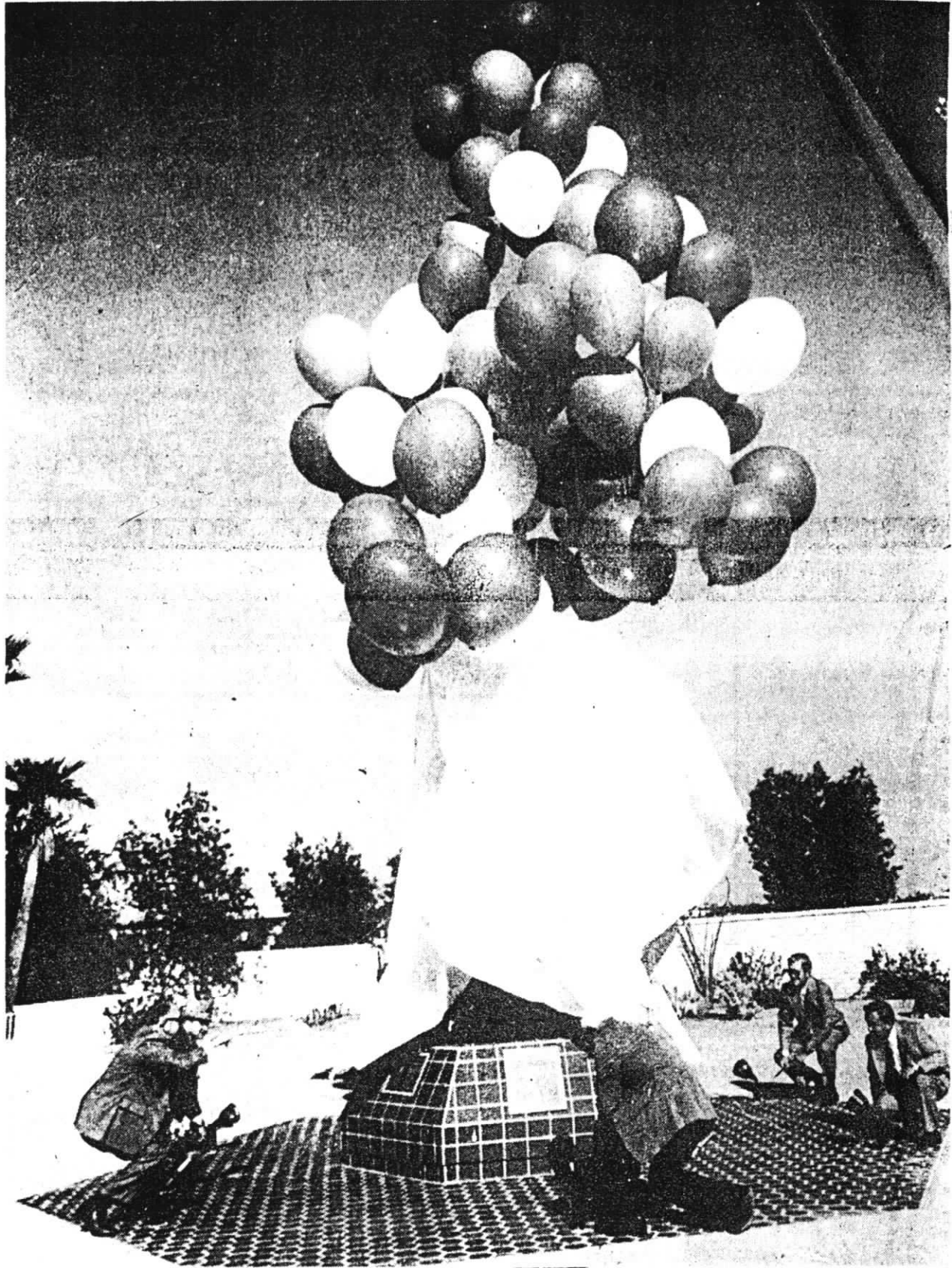


A hundred helium balloons unveil the statue

VF - WEBB, DEL

IC

IC

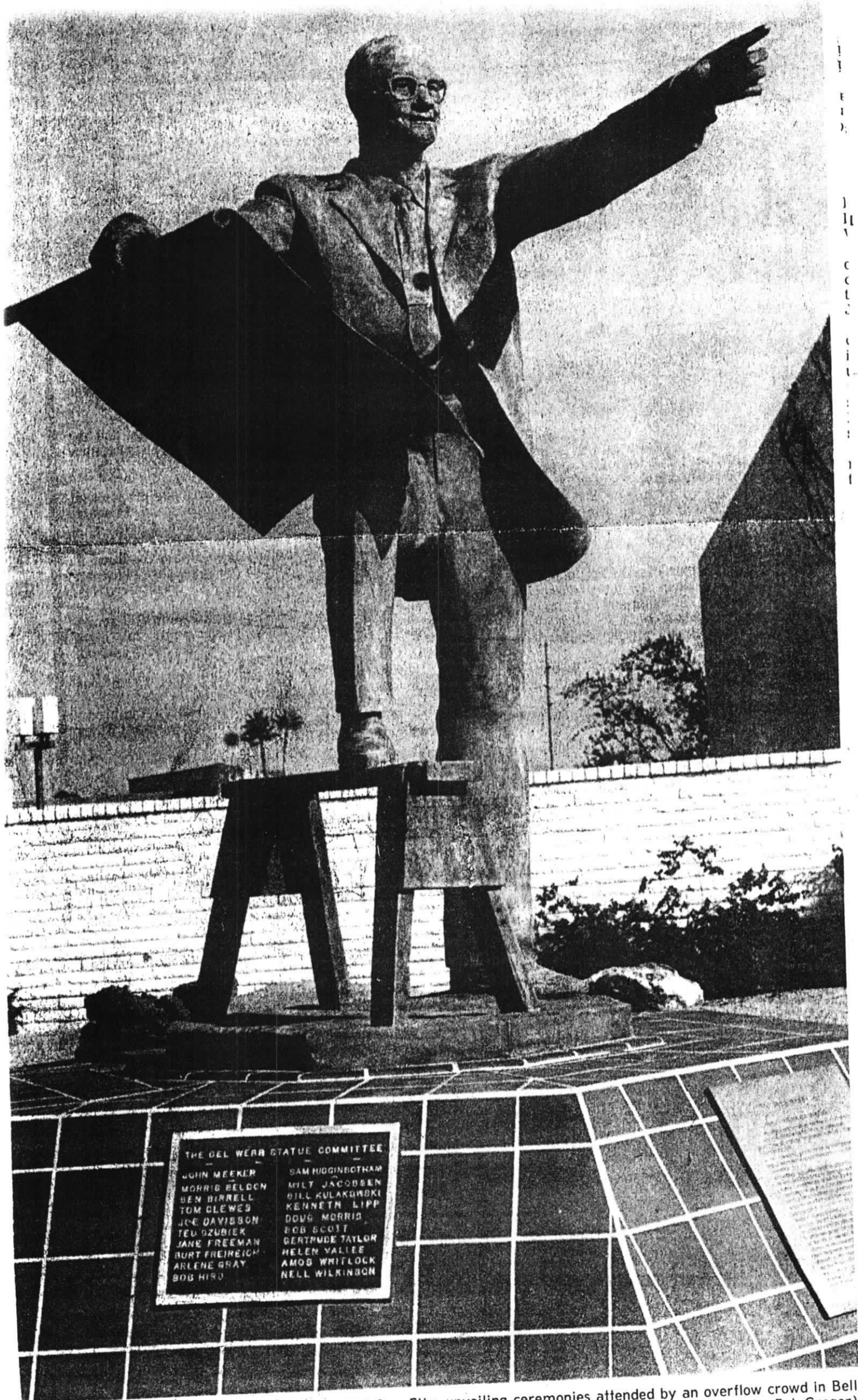


## Statue Unveiled

A hundred helium balloons lifted the drapery over the Del E. Webb statue at the official unveiling last Saturday. For more photos of the historic event, see page six.

Photo by Morris Berman

10



THE DEL WEBB STATUE COMMITTEE

|                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| JOHN MEEKER    | SAM HUGGINSBOTHAM |
| MORRIS BELDON  | MILT JACOBSEN     |
| BEN BIRRELL    | BILL KULAKOWSKI   |
| TOM CLEWES     | KENNETH LIPP      |
| JOE DAVIDSON   | DOUG MORRIS       |
| TED OZUBIEK    | BOB SCOTT         |
| JANE FREEMAN   | GERTYUDE TAYLOR   |
| BURT FREIREICH | HELEN VALLEE      |
| ARLENE GRAY    | AMOS WHITLOCK     |
| BOB HIRD       | NELL WILKINSON    |

This bronze statue of Del E. Webb, developer of Sun City and Sun City West, went on public display Saturday during unveiling ceremonies attended by an overflow crowd in Bell Memorial Garden. (News-Sun Photo by Bob Greger)



IC

Small folder given out at dedication ceremony

With the support of the Del E. Webb Development Company and the Sun City/Sun City West Lions Clubs, a community fund raising campaign was conducted to raise money for the Webb statue.

A committee of Sun Citians selected a Scottsdale sculptor, James O. Farley, to create a statue which would be cast in bronze. The final design concept was approved as it aptly reflected the character of a "planner, a builder, a man of vision".

The statue was dedicated November 21, 1981

## DEL E. WEBB



## MASTER BUILDER

1899 - 1974

BELL RECREATION CENTER

Sun City, Arizona

### DEL E. WEBB

..... a man of vision with the courage of his convictions of a new lifestyle for retirees, founded Sun City in 1960. It was indeed a most remarkable idea for a community.

Nine thousand acres of cotton ranchland owned by the J. G. Boswell Co., located in a place called Marinette, were turned into tree lined curved streets, golf courses, shopping centers, recreation centers and well kept houses. Sun City had come into being.

Webb's proposal for a retirement city for persons 50 or older, was strong on recreation and part-time employment. Basic to the proposal was the notion that all its facilities — golf, swimming, shopping centers, recreational centers, etc., should be installed BEFORE the first house was sold. And they were!

In January, 1960, 272 units were sold the first week! Prices ranged from \$8,700 to \$11,600. Twenty years later there were 48,000 people enjoying the many recreational and community facilities of the now internationally known Sun City, Arizona. Sun City West, a sister community, now established, is continuing Del Webb's dream.

At the July 16, 1974 memorial service for Mr. Webb at the Sunbowl, Doug Morris so beautifully paid tribute to this master builder when he said:

*"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 the 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 . . . and today we are neighbors and friends because he made our coming together irresistible.*

*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 he so passionately love . . . whose voice will say*

*"I built you a city but only you can fulfill its promise."*

# Memorial Funds Needed



On July 4th, 1981, the citizens of Sun City and Sun City West will dedicate a statue of Del E. Webb, the builder of Sun City, at the Bell Center Memorial Garden.

Del E. Webb had a dream and the result became a model for the world.

Now we need your contribution to show our gratitude for the man who made it possible for all of us to have a beautiful place in which to live.

All contributions are to be sent to:

Tom Clewes  
First National Bank  
Box 1665  
Sun City, Arizona 85351

January 14, 1981



Del Webb statue rendition

## Webb model statue shown

Scottsdale sculptor James O. Farley submitted his first clay rendering of the statue of Del E. Webb.

The Committee approved the concept as aptly reflecting the character of "a planner, a builder, a man of vision."

Plans are under way for a fund drive to raise \$25,000 for the statue, which will be unveiled in the Bell Center Memorial Garden, July 4, 1981, the seventh anniversary of Del Webb's death.

The eight Lions Clubs of Sun City and Sun City West will advance money to cover initial costs until the proceeds of the fund drive have been realized.

The names of all contributors will be inscribed on scrolls to be placed in the base of the statue. Sam Higginbotham, chairman of The Statue Committee, said, "If two-thirds of the people of Sun City and Sun City West were to contribute only \$1 each, we'd have all the money we need. It's important that this memorial to the man who conceived our communities be an expression of appreciation from all the people of our communities."

Contributions, in any amount, should be sent to Tom Clewes, First National Bank, P.O. Box No. 1665, Sun City 85372.

## 1/7/81 Sculptor selected for Webb statue

James O. Farley of Scottsdale, has been selected by the Del Webb Statue Committee to create the statue of Webb to be unveiled in the Bell Center Memorial Garden, on July 4, 1981.

Applications and credentials were received from many aspirants for the assignment.

According to Sam Higginbotham, chairman of the Statue Committee, "We had to choose between many who were obviously qualified to do the job. Jim Farley was selected

because he has had more experience--more specific accomplishments--in what we want to get done."

With the support of the Del Webb Development Co. and the Sun City Lions, a fund-raising campaign will start soon. Higginbotham said, "We hope that every Sun Citian and Sun City Wester will want to be a part of the memorial to the man who started it all, at least to the extent of contributing a dollar to the statue fund."

DEVELOPER OF SUN CITY

# Residents hail honor to Webb

By **FRAN SMITH**  
Staff Writer

Delbert E. Webb was neither a professional athlete nor a glamorous entertainer, neither a politician nor a general. That a life-size statue is going to be erected in his honor seven years after his death, then, may surprise those who know neither him nor Sun City.

But to scores of residents it's a monument now due.

Rev. E. Duane Thistlethwaite, who bought a desert lot in what is now Sun City one week after property went on the market Jan. 1, 1960, understands some of the aura around the man's memory. "He had a vision of what the community could be and he put everything here that retired adults could want. He did something no one else had done."

**CHARLOTTE BOWLING**, a Sun City resident for 14 years, thinks it's time the community commemorated the man whose brainchild it is. "He did so much to make older people happy and to give them a sense of security," she says. "He made a profit, but he also had compassion. I think people appreciate that."

John Meeker, golf caddy for Webb 35 years ago and president of the Webb Development Co., can add to Rev. Thistlethwaite's and Mrs. Bowling's explanation. "He became a symbol of all that is good about the community," Meeker said.

People investing their savings in Webb's vision and moving to Arizona from all parts of the country and all walks of life looked to Webb as the guarantee that their upheavals would work out for them, Meeker says. Since Sun City is populated now by some of the most contented people anywhere, they give him credit for it, he adds.

**IN CALIFORNIA, WHERE** he was born in 1899, Webb learned to wield both a hammer and a baseball. At the age of 13, he dropped out of school and began earning his keep. Soon he was

working as a carpenter during the week and playing semi-pro ball as a pitcher on weekends. The Time magazine article which featured him some 40 years later with a picture on the cover said that he "hit nails and nailed hitters all over the West" during those days.

Typhoid fever laid young Webb flat in the mid-1920s, reduced his 6-foot, 4-inch frame to 99 pounds and gave him almost a year of recuperation to decide whether he wanted to pursue business or sports as a career.

Choosing business, he landed a carpenter's job in Phoenix, but unfortunately it was with a contractor who soon handed him a worthless Friday paycheck and then disappeared.

Webb was 29.

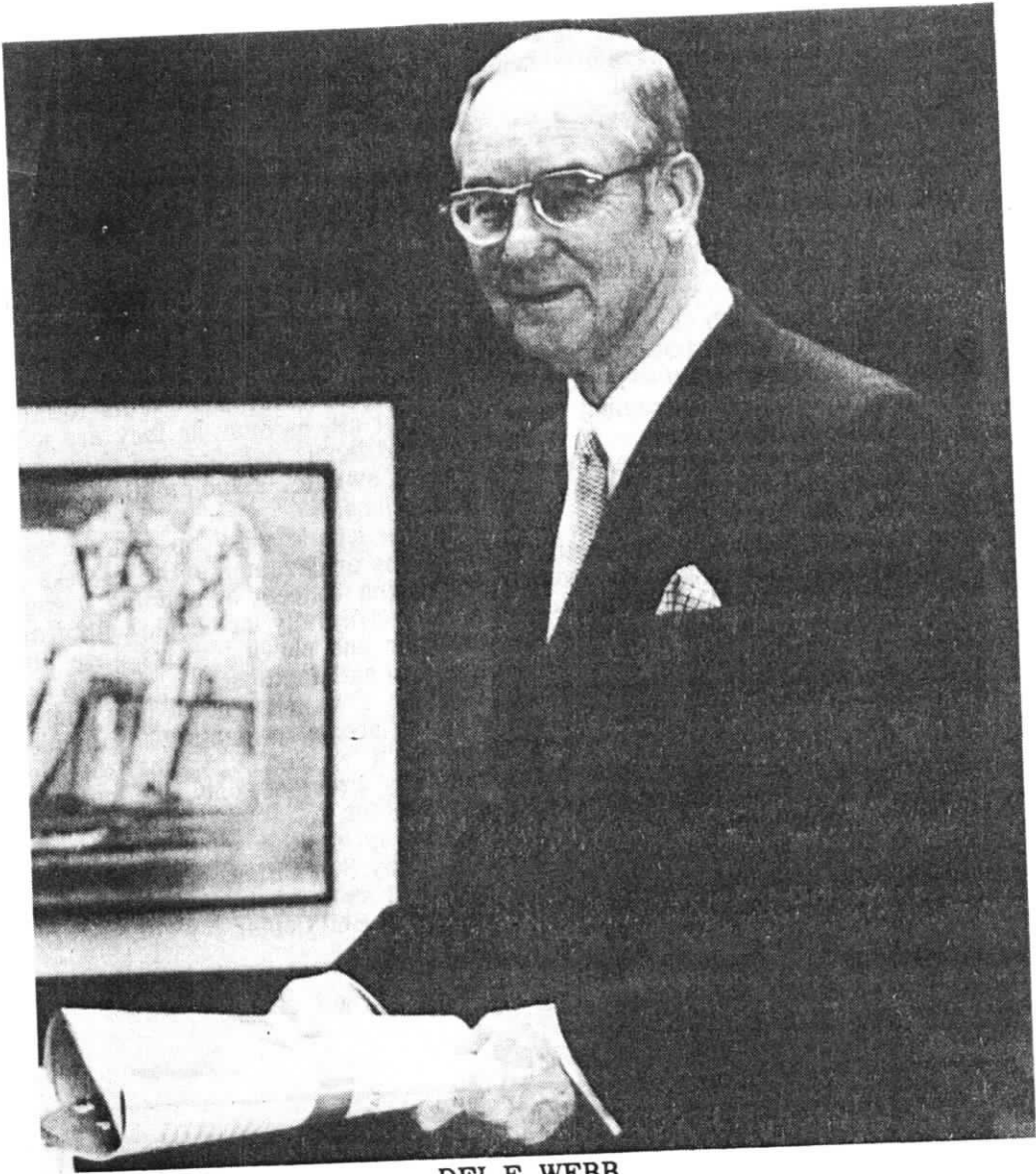
The year was 1928.

**WEBB PICKED UP** the pieces of the grocery store building job under contract by the vanished builder, finished the work and launched a modest company of his own. Its original assets were one cement mixer, 10 wheelbarrows, 20 shovels, 10 picks and an energetic, personable entrepreneur who was prepared to dream and work to make dreams come true.

By 1935, Webb had a \$3 million business with a reputation sufficient to get him into the big-time construction business during the World War II boom days. His company prospered as it handled some of the "plum" construction projects of the time, air stations, military installations and the 15,000-acre community south of Houston that housed the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's staff.

Eventually he was to build New York's Madison Square Garden, the Los Angeles County Art Museum, Anaheim Stadium, the International Airport in Kansas City, the U.S. Pavilion at the New York World's Fair, Phoenix Civic Plaza and Phoenix's trio of skyscrapers comprising the Rosenzweig Center.

**THE COMPANY BEGAN** to manage



**DEL E. WEBB**

properties it built and became well-known for hotel ownership and operation all over the West—Nevada's Sahara and Mint in Las Vegas, the Sahara-Reno in Reno, the Sahara-Tahoe at Lake Tahoe, the Del Webb Tower House in Phoenix and Mountain Shadows in Scottsdale.

By buying, with a partner, the New York Yankees for \$2,850,000 in 1946 and

holding them during their golden years of 1945 to 1965 (15 American League championships and 10 World Series crowns), Webb combined his love of sports with a penchant for business.

His associates, including Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Howard Hughes, knew that he also played golf as if money rode on every shot.

(Continued on 2A)



Del E. Webb, who co-owned the Yankees baseball team for 20 years, tries an Arizona style hat on a visiting New Yorker, Casey Stengel, the team's manager. Stengel and the Yankees were in Phoenix for spring training in 1951.

## Residents hail honor . . .

(Continued from 1A)

**THE TALE OF THE POOR** boy who made good is enough to gladden the hearts of free enterprise advocates everywhere. But Webb can list another accomplishment that has gladdened tens of thousands of hearts—the development of the largest retirement community in the country.

Impressed by the success of Youngtown, which had become a mecca for retirees in the mid-1950s, Webb pictured a bigger town slightly north of there, one designed to provide everything that a senior citizen could want. He began to sell lots Jan. 1, 1960. His town would be called Sun City, a name that surely would attract the residents of snowbound places like Des Moines, Iowa, and Detroit.

To the surprise of many planners and sociologists, who claimed that older persons prefer living in mixed communities, those with younger people and children and lots of activities, Webb's concept worked.

**SUN CITY AND** Sun City West, founded by his company after his death, have become the hometowns for 47,000 citizens who don't seem to miss seeing youths and toddlers—except for their grandchildren on occasional holidays. In fact, they don't seem to miss much at all, as busy as they are with golf and tennis, jogging and university classes, swimming and painting ceramic figurines.

Those who knew Webb best say that of all his achievements, the success of his daring concept of building a community especially for people with graying hair and slowing walks gave him the most satisfaction.

Webb always acknowledged that it was the area's residents who provided the spirit of Sun City and that his company provided only the concrete and steel for it.

This spring the spirit of gratitude that many Sun Citians feel toward the man will show up in the statue to be erected at Bell Center.

# Sculpture of Webb planned

Plans are under way to raise funds for a sculpture of Del E. Webb, founder of Sun City.

An ad hoc committee that met last weekend for the first time hopes to have the monument ready for dedication July 4, 1981, the fifth anniversary of Webb's death.

The group's primary goals are to seek donations totaling \$25,000 from various clubs, organizations and individuals and to search for a suitable artist for the statue.

**THE COMMITTEE** plans to have the statue erected in the garden of Bell Center near the replica of the Liberty Bell.

Specific fund-raising efforts will be announced later.

Webb is well-known in the area as a Texas carpenter who came to Arizona by way of California and developed Sun City as the country's largest retirement community.

**SAM HIGGINBOTHAM** is chairman of the Webb statue committee.

Other members are Tom Clewes, Bob Scott, Burt Freireich, Doug Morris, Joe Davisson, Gertrude Taylor, Nell Wilkinson, Bob Hird, Bill Kulakowski, Ben Birrell, Kenneth Lipp, Helen Vallee, Arlene Gray, Morris Beldon and Milton Jacobsen.



DEL E. WEBB

*12-17-80  
News Sun*

# Time magazine examined

## Sun City concept in 1962

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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 told, 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.

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.

Chief developer of the retirement cities is a man of restless energy named Delbert Eugene Webb.

Construction is Del Webb's business. Construction of anything and everything from a silo to a skyscraper. In 1955, casting about for ways and means to expand his burgeoning Del E. Webb Corp., he bethought himself of the retirement market.

"My grandfather, Jimmy Webb, used to grouch about being old with nothing to do," he said. "My old man used to say it was only the railroad companies that did anything for the guys that retired. It was pretty grim, being old with nothing to do."

Webb assigned one of his lieutenants to see what could be done. The man he picked for the job was Thomas E. Breen, a vice president of the Webb Corp. and, coincidentally, the son of famed Joseph Breen, long-time head of Hollywood's Hays Office. A former actor himself and one-time Marine, Breen began by reading up on geriatrics and visiting places like St. Petersburg, which depressed him with its drab rooming houses and its thousands of elderly people "just sitting around on benches." He decided that activities should be important in any program that Webb might undertake. He was also frequently assured by gerontologists that old folks hated to be cut off from the cross section of ages that make up regular communities.

But a little-publicized community that flew directly in the face of this orthodox doctrine began to interest him.

**ADULTS ONLY.** It was called Youngtown and was some 16 miles northwest of Webb's home office in downtown Phoenix. Since 1954, it had been growing slowly on the unusual principal that no one less than 60 was allowed to move in. Despite this geriatric heresy, and despite the lack of facilities for

shopping or recreation, the houses of Youngtown were steadily selling.

Breen decided that there might be something in the age-segregation idea, no matter what the experts said. By 1959, Webb had a clear-cut proposal to decide on. Should he commit \$2,000,000 to build a community that would be limited to residents 50 years old or more, with no school-age children, a community that would be strong in recreation and part-time employment?

Basic to the proposal was the notion that all its facilities—golf course, swimming pool, shopping center, etc.—should be installed before the first house was sold.

("There's no point in trying to sell futures to a guy whose 65 years old" argued Breen.)

Webb decided the risk was worth it and the first of Webb's Sun Cities, 30,000 acres northeast of Phoenix began to sell houses five

months later.

To Webb's astonishment, 272 were sold the first weekend. Built of concrete blocks in pleasant pastel colors, the houses were priced from \$8,750 to \$11,600 for three bedrooms, two baths. (A house on the golf course, which snakes through the community, cost \$1,450 more.) Both FHA and bank financing were offered with monthly payments varying from \$73 to \$114.

Sun City customers were not rich, but Webb found that more than half wanted to pay cash. The purchasers were usually men of solid substance—former engineers, successful salesmen, formen, dentists, small businessmen, schoolteachers with money in the bank, often as the result of selling the house back home. Del Webb and his staff found they had miscalculated on only one point: Instead of going to work at least part time, most Sun Citians have been happy to spend all day

at play.

**HEALTHY AND BUSY.** There is plenty to play with. Like a laird of the manor, Webb has supplied his tenants with almost anything and everything they want to keep them on the go.

If a sufficient number want to play bocce, Webb complies and supplies an alley. There are potters wheels for the potters, easels for the painters and a proliferation of more than 90 clubs and organizations. Sun City oldsters bicycle and grow vegetables, take pictures, dance and do exercises, sing, sew, act, bowl, swim and play almost every kind of game from canasta to chess. All this activity—organized spontaneously by Sun City residents without artificial cruise-director stimulation—seems to make oldsters healthier as well as happier.

They make fewer trips to the doctor and the death rate is actually lower than for compa-

rable age groups elsewhere. Hypochondriacs are at a minimum. When one of Sun City's three resident doctors gets a phone call, he knows he had better get there fast.

Helping the doctors is the Sunshine Committee. Two hundred volunteers, organized by the Rev. E. Duane Thistlethwaite, 70, a retired Methodist minister, who take the sick to doctors and hospitals, lend wheelchairs, crutches and even money to widows waiting for the social security or estate funds to start coming in.

With typical Sun City initiative, the community church, an amalgam of 35 Protestant denominations, is currently raising money for a small nursing home for long-term cases.

#### **PIONEER SPIRIT.**

"We love all the things you can do out here," says Dr. Chester L. Meade, 76, a tanned, lithe, white-haired man who gave up his dental

practice in Mason City, Iowa, and moved to Sun City last November.

His wife, Mabel, claimed, "People say, 'but don't you miss Mason City?' Those dear friends, yes, but not Mason City. We're not lonely at all, and the people are so friendly here."

"Back there," interrupted Dr. Meade, "you can play golf only a few months of the year. The rest of the time you go to the Elks Club and play two-bit rummy."

"We love children," said his wife, "but as you get older, you don't care about having a lot of them around. The fact that you can have your own yard and flowers without worrying about children tromping through is appealing. And then again, its wonderful, having everybody on the same level. Here, they're not interested in your financial status the way they are in most communities."

"I think there's the

spirit of the old original settlers out here," says Dean Babbitt, one-time president of the Sonotone Corp., who moved to Sun City from a large estate in New Hampshire to which he had already retired. "People here have pulled up stakes and started over. Whether you're living on social security or a bunch of money, it makes no difference."

Underlying it all is the oldster's feeling that Sun City is a town that is their own to shape and enjoy. They have no fear of being shouldered aside by younger men. They find they are competing with no one and the camaraderie of shared age with past achievement makes for relaxed companionship.

Webb makes no claim to be motivated entirely by Christian charity. "We knew that we were taking a calculated risk," he says, "but you have to do that in the contracting business. It was a gamble, but I was pretty damn

sure it would work."

He is surprised and pleased, though, that it worked so well. Retirement housing has become a major element in the Del E. Webb Corp. and it has already built similar developments at Kern City, California, just outside Bakersfield, and at Sun City, Florida, 17 miles southeast of Tampa. Sun City California, 20 miles south of Riverside, which opened officially four weeks ago has already sold 833 units.

#### **RICHER, POORER.**

Webb's Sun Cities are for only a small minority of the aged. Those who are richer can buy into a specialized old age community such as Casa del Manana in California, one of the 100-odd similar projects operated by the Methodist Church.

Those who cannot afford Sun City can always go to St. Petersburg where they can sit on pastel-colored benches in the sun and stare into space.

# Time magazine examined Sun City concept in 1962

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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 told, 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.

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.

Chief developer of the retirement cities is a man of restless energy named Delbert Eugene Webb.

Construction is Del Webb's business. Construction of anything and everything from a silo to a skyscraper. In 1955, casting about for ways and means to expand his burgeoning Del E. Webb Corp., he bethought himself of the retirement market.

"My grandfather, Jimmy Webb, used to grouch about being old with nothing to do," he said. "My old man used to say it was only the railroad companies that did anything for the guys that retired. It was pretty grim, being old with nothing to do."

Webb assigned one of his lieutenants to see what could be done. The man he picked for the job was Thomas E. Breen, a vice president of the Webb Corp. and, coincidentally, the son of famed Joseph Breen, long-time head of Hollywood's Hays Office. A former actor himself and one-time Marine, Breen began by reading up on geriatrics and visiting places like St. Petersburg, which depressed him with its drab rooming houses and its thousands of elderly people "just sitting around on benches." He decided that activities should be important in any program that Webb might undertake. He was also frequently assured by gerontologists that old folks hated to be cut off from the cross section of ages that make up regular communities.

But a little-publicized community that flew directly in the face of this orthodox doctrine began to interest him.

**ADULTS ONLY.** It was called Youngtown and was some 16 miles northwest of Webb's home office in downtown Phoenix. Since 1954, it had been growing slowly on the unusual principal that no one less than 60 was allowed to move in. Despite this geriatric heresy, and despite the lack of facilities for

shopping or recreation, the houses of Youngtown were steadily selling.

Breen decided that there might be something in the age-segregation idea, no matter what the experts said. By 1959, Webb had a clear-cut proposal to decide on. Should he commit \$2,000,000 to build a community that would be limited to residents 50 years old or more, with no school-age children, a community that would be strong in recreation and part-time employment?

Basic to the proposal was the notion that all its facilities—golf course, swimming pool, shopping center, etc.—should be installed before the first house was sold.

("There's no point in trying to sell futures to a guy whose 65 years old," argued Breen.)

Webb decided the risk was worth it and the first of Webb's Sun Cities, 30,000 acres northeast of Phoenix began to sell houses five

months later.

To Webb's astonishment, 272 were sold the first weekend. Built of concrete blocks in pleasant pastel colors, the houses were priced from \$8,750 to \$11,600 for three bedrooms, two baths. (A house on the golf course, which snakes through the community, cost \$1,450 more.) Both FHA and bank financing were offered with monthly payments varying from \$73 to \$114.

Sun City customers were not rich, but Webb found that more than half wanted to pay cash. The purchasers were usually men of solid substance—former engineers, successful salesmen, formen, dentists, small businessmen, schoolteachers with money in the bank, often as the result of selling the house back home. Del Webb and his staff found they had miscalculated on only one point: Instead of going to work at least part time, most Sun Citians have been happy to spend all day

at play.

**HEALTHY AND BUSY.** There is plenty to play with. Like a laird of the manor, Webb has supplied his tenants with almost anything and everything they want to keep them on the go.

If a sufficient number want to play bocce, Webb complies and supplies an alley. There are potters wheels for the potters, easels for the painters and a proliferation of more than 90 clubs and organizations. Sun City oldsters bicycle and grow vegetables, take pictures, dance and do exercises, sing, sew, act, bowl, swim and play almost every kind of game from canasta to chess. All this activity—organized spontaneously by Sun City residents without artificial cruise-director stimulation—seems to make oldsters healthier as well as happier.

They make fewer trips to the doctor and the death rate is actually lower than for compa-

rable age groups elsewhere. Hypochondriacs are at a minimum. When one of Sun City's three resident doctors gets a phone call, he knows he had better get there fast.

Helping the doctors is the Sunshine Committee. Two hundred volunteers, organized by the Rev. E. Duane Thistlethwaite, 70, a retired Methodist minister, who take the sick to doctors and hospitals, lend wheelchairs, crutches and even money to widows waiting for the social security or estate funds to start coming in.

With typical Sun City initiative, the community church, an amalgam of 35 Protestant denominations, is currently raising money for a small nursing home for long-term cases.

**PIONEER SPIRIT.** "We love all the things you can do out here," says Dr. Chester L. Meade, 76, a tanned, lithe, white-haired man who gave up his dental

practice in Mason City, Iowa, and moved to Sun City last November.

His wife, Mabel, claimed, "People say, 'but don't you miss Mason City?' Those dear friends, yes, but not Mason City. We're not lonely at all, and the people are so friendly here."

"Back there," interrupted Dr. Meade, "you can play golf only a few months of the year. The rest of the time you go to the Elks Club and play two-bit rummy."

"We love children," said his wife, "but as you get older, you don't care about having a lot of them around. The fact that you can have your own yard and flowers without worrying about children tromping through is appealing. And then again, its wonderful, having everybody on the same level. Here, they're not interested in your financial status the way they are in most communities."

"I think there's the

spirit of the old original settlers out here," says Dean Babbitt, one-time president of the Sonotone Corp., who moved to Sun City from a large estate in New Hampshire to which he had already retired.

"People here have pulled up stakes and started over. Whether you're living on social security or a bunch of money, it makes no difference."

Underlying it all is the oldster's feeling that Sun City is a town that is their own to shape and enjoy. They have no fear of being shouldered aside by younger men. They find they are competing with no one and the camaraderie of shared age with past achievement makes for relaxed companionship.

Webb makes no claim to be motivated entirely by Christian charity. "We knew that we were taking a calculated risk," he says, "but you have to do that in the contracting business. It was a gamble, but I was pretty damn

sure it would work."

He is surprised and pleased, though, that it worked so well. Retirement housing has become a major element in the Del E. Webb Corp. and it has already built similar developments at Kern City, California, just outside Bakersfield, and at Sun City, Florida, 17 miles southeast of Tampa. Sun City California, 20 miles south of Riverside, which opened officially four weeks ago has already sold 833 units.

**RICHER, POORER.** Webb's Sun Cities are for only a small minority of the aged. Those who are richer can buy into a specialized old age community such as Casa del Manana in California, one of the 100-odd similar projects operated by the Methodist Church.

Those who cannot afford Sun City can always go to St. Petersburg where they can sit on pastel-colored benches in the sun and stare into space.



# THE WEBB Spinner



JULY, 1974  
VOL. 28 NO. 7

## What Kind Of Man Was Firm's Founder?

What kind of man was Del Webb?

Those who knew of his wealth, his sports associations, his far-flung company operations and his friendships with the famous usually expected a bombastic personality.

What they met was "The Bashful Barnum," as he was dubbed by the *Los Angeles Times*.

**He was quietly colorful.**

He enjoyed the limelight, but he was warmly human.

Mr. Webb was a showman in ways not generally associated with showmanship.

He could put his name on large hotels and office buildings, and even communities.

He could hobnob with presidents, actors, business tycoons . . . the famous and near famous.

But he could establish instant rapport with a green clerk and field construction men of all ranks.

**He started as a carpenter and ended as an entrepreneur.**

His young manhood contains clues to his personality.

As a boy he won in competition a washtub full of marbles.

He became good enough to be in demand all over the West Coast as a weekend baseball pitcher.

He dropped from 200 to 99 pounds after a bout of typhoid when he was 26 years old. He came back then.

And he bounced back in mid-March, this year, to chair the April stockholders' meeting.

He was fighting a losing battle for his life when the end came July 4.

Tributes to the man born May 17, 1899, flowed quickly from the public and from media across the nation. Some of the headlines from the Phoenix daily newspapers are reproduced on pages six and seven.

## Del Webb—His Rules Didn't Stifle Creativity

Mr. Webb was fond of saying of those in his company: "If I lost everything, I could make it all back with good people."

We who work for the company which bears the man's name have lost a good friend and a good businessman.

What success the Webb Corporation has enjoyed is largely the result of his leadership and devotion to duties.

And to the free rein he gave the people he employed.

Del Webb was an orderly man.

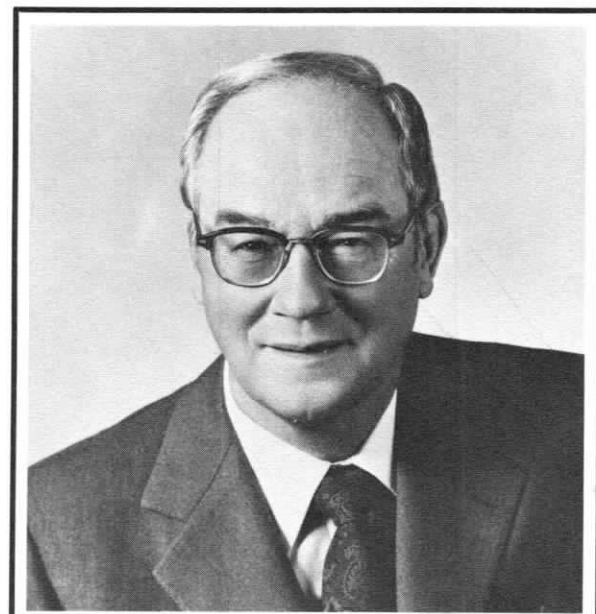
His colors were red and black.

His company insignia was not to be changed in any way.

Each department and group were guided by basic rules and regulations.

He never took more than several days vacation a year, and even those were punc-

*(Continued on Page 12)*



**DEL E. WEBB**

Del E. Webb, board chairman of Del E. Webb Corporation, died July 4 in Methodist Hospital at Rochester, Minn.

The 75-year-old, nationally-known building contractor and former co-owner of the New York Yankees, underwent a successful lung operation for cancer in mid-March. Back to Mayo Clinic for a routine checkup, further surgery revealed additional complications from which he passed away.

A last wish, included in his will, was that no funeral be held, his body cremated, and a desire that his ashes be scattered over Arizona.

Surviving are his widow, Toni, of Phoenix, and a brother, Halmer J. Webb of North Hollywood, Calif.

## Photos Help Tell Story Of Del E. Webb

A 100-page *Spinner* would not include all the story material filed on Del Webb.

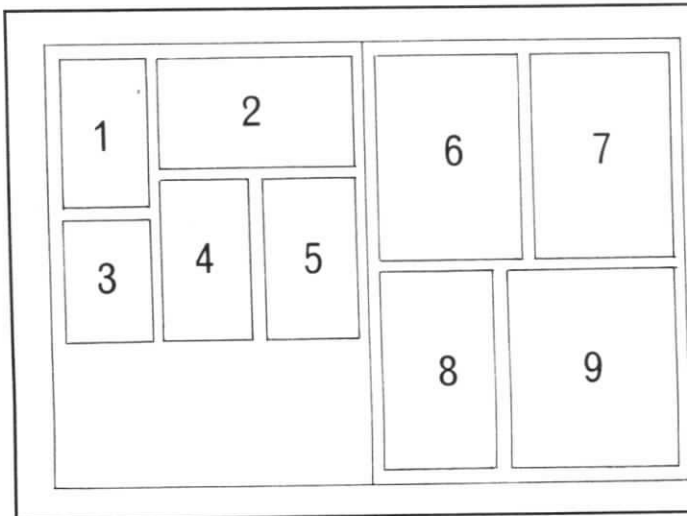
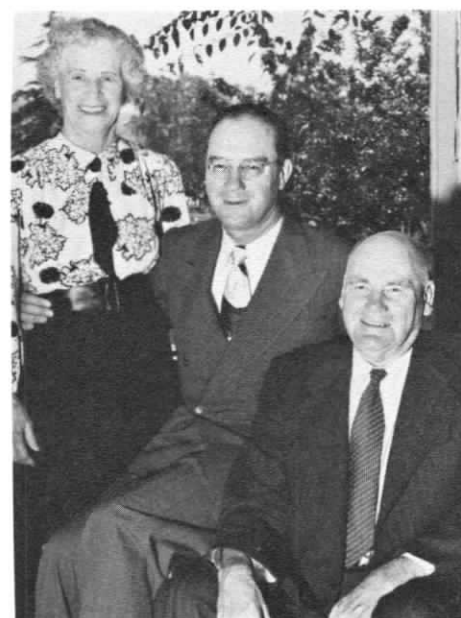
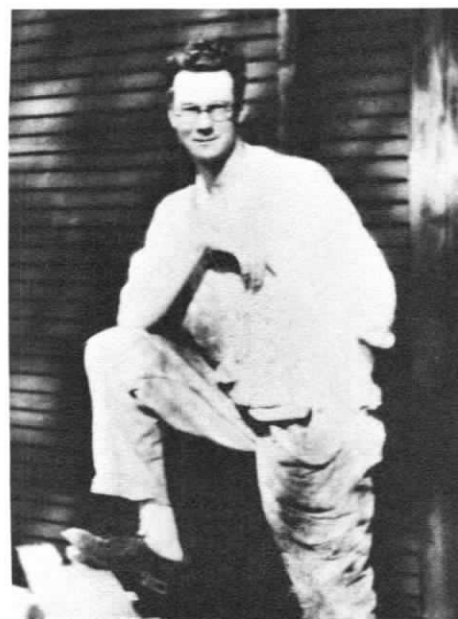
And 200 pages couldn't contain the photos.

But photos better convey Mr. Webb's immense energy and far-flung activities.

Hundreds portray his association with the famous from all walks of life.

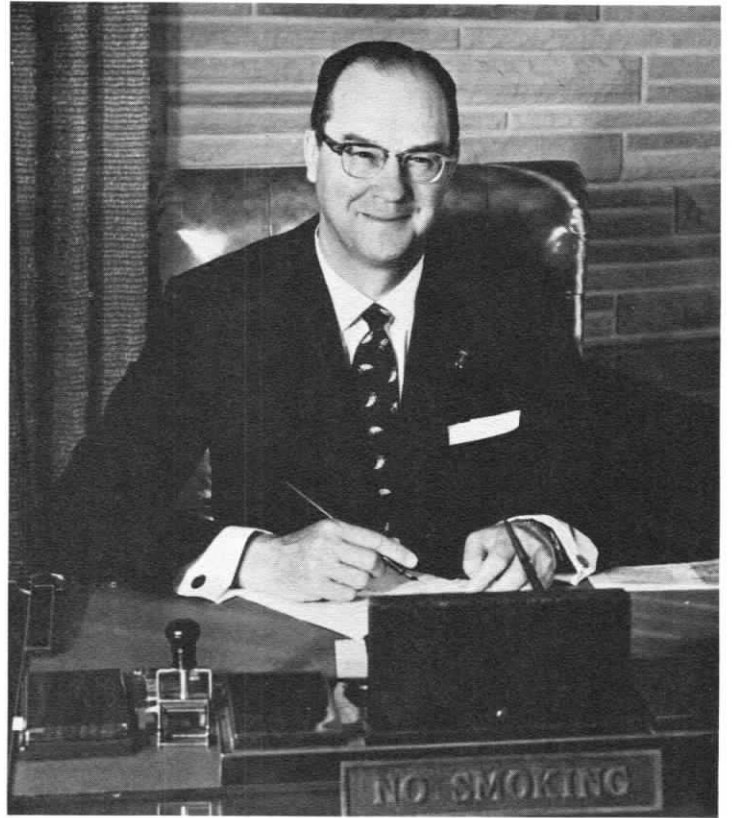
Hundreds more show him with clients and those in his company, breaking ground for a new project, presenting anniversary pins, in conferences.

Selecting representative photos to pay tribute to this special man was an awesome task. It is with humility we present this brief photo history.

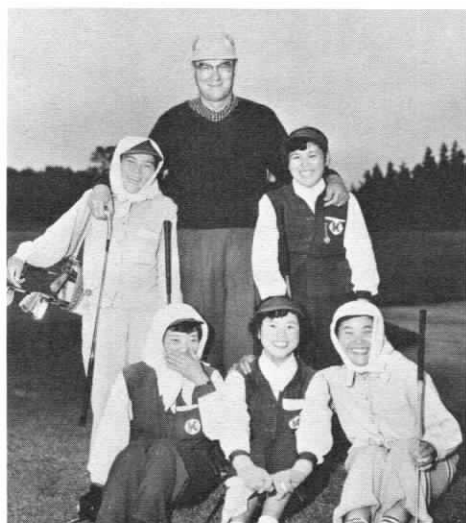
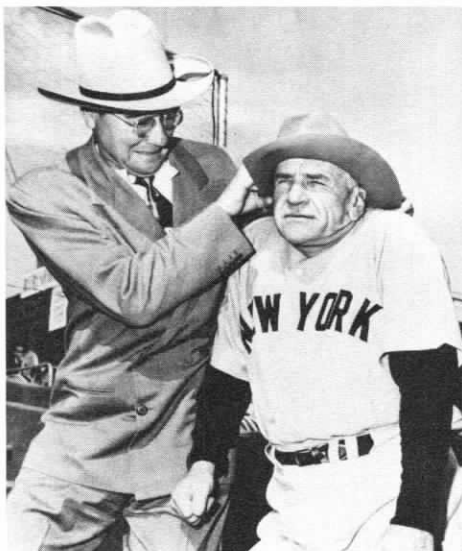


1) **WITH YOUNG BROTHER**, on farm near Fresno, Calif. 2) In driver's seat, as member of Durant Motors team, 1920, Fresno. (Durant became a founder of General Motors, a firm which Mr. Webb said he admired and used as an organizational model. He also remembered "No Smoking" sign on Durant's desk.) 3) Rev. J. W. Webb, grandfather; Ernest, father, and Del Webb. 4) As young California carpenter in early 1920s. 5) With mother and father, in 1940s. 6) As a young Phoenix contractor in 1940s. 7) Famous "No Smoking" sign appeared in desk portrait of 1950s. 8) At Home Office, early 1960s. 9) With wife Toni; they were married in 1961.





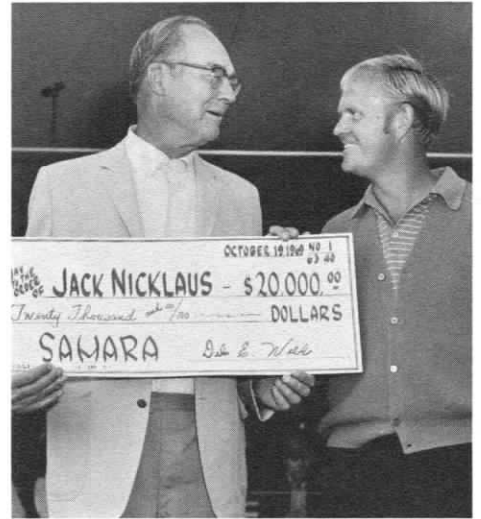
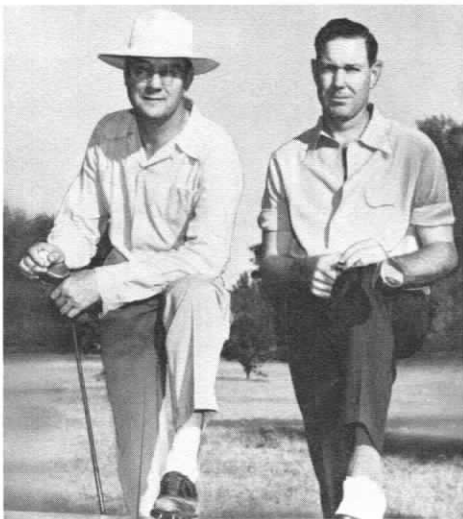
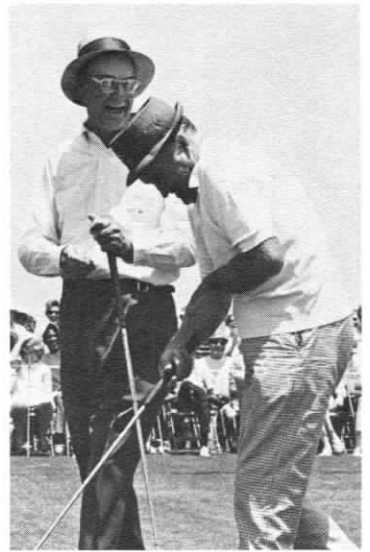
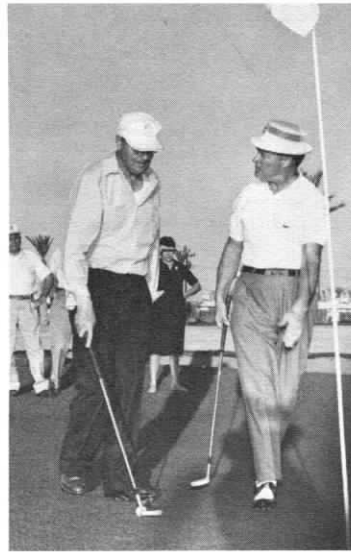





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|   |   |   |    |    |    | 14 |

1) **WITH YANKEE STAR** Joe DiMaggio, many times a golfing partner after his baseball retirement, and Bob Vinson, pilot of a Webb Company plane. 2) When the Yankees switched training sites with the New York Giants in 1951, Mr. Webb clowned for photographers in Phoenix with Yankee Manager Casey Stengel. 3) Del Webb in the Yankee dressing room following a

pennant or World Series win was a familiar sight from 1945-64. Here he congratulates Don Larsen after Larsen pitched a perfect Series game. 4) When the Yankees were invited to tour Japan in 1955, Mr. Webb indulged in his only avocation and posed with local caddies. "I couldn't understand them," he said. 5) Of another Yankee star, he once said: "Mickey Mantle had a chance of being better than Ty Cobb, until he hurt his knees." 6) At a Dodger game, with wife Toni, Mr. Webb tuned in a Yankee broadcast. 7) Of many celebrity golfing partners, Bob Hope was probably the one he most often joined on the tee, from coast to coast. Mr. Webb frequently was the good-natured foil of Bob's jokes, as in this 1947 photo. 8) In 1952 he appeared with Hope at a Tucson March of Dimes benefit. 9) In 1963, the two made a surprise visit to a Sun City, Ariz. course, but were soon mobbed. "I have to let Del win today," Hope told the crowd. "I hear he's down to his last city." 10) At a March AFB Celebrity match in 1970, Mr. Webb joined in a good laugh on Bob. 11) When the firm's offices were less dispersed, Mr.



Webb used to join his executives in regular golf contests, as in this 1950 photo with R. H. (Bob) Johnson. 12) After his firm acquired the Sahara Hotel in 1961, Mr. Webb happily joined annual Sahara Invitational tournaments. His annual awards to winners included Lee Trevino in 1971, and 13) Jack Nicklaus in 1969. 14) Mr. Webb and Bob Goldwater, second from right, were among founders of the Phoenix Open in the 1930s. This photo with Arnold Palmer and Hope was taken at Phoenix Open in 1971. In 1973, the sponsoring Thunderbirds named Webb one of their few honorary members in recognition of his support through the years.




# THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Friday, July 5, 1974

## Del E. Webb Lies; builder of Sun City

## Webb Left Ind

ossible to write a book on the development  
ey without devoting a chapter exclusively

Ben Foote, former Gaz  
dent (in fact, the first  
chairmen), testifies to th

be a pretty neat trick to cram all of his  
ne chapter.

Webb, who died yesterday at 75,  
made his fortune in construction. But  
his fame came from sports.

"There I was, a young  
now in the public relation  
co-owner of the New York

"And I never got th  
anything like that. I w  
I would have

## The Phoenix Gazette

PAGE 6 Section A

FRIDAY, JULY 5, 1974

## Del E. Webb, Building Giant

"I just apply baseball to business  
and it works."

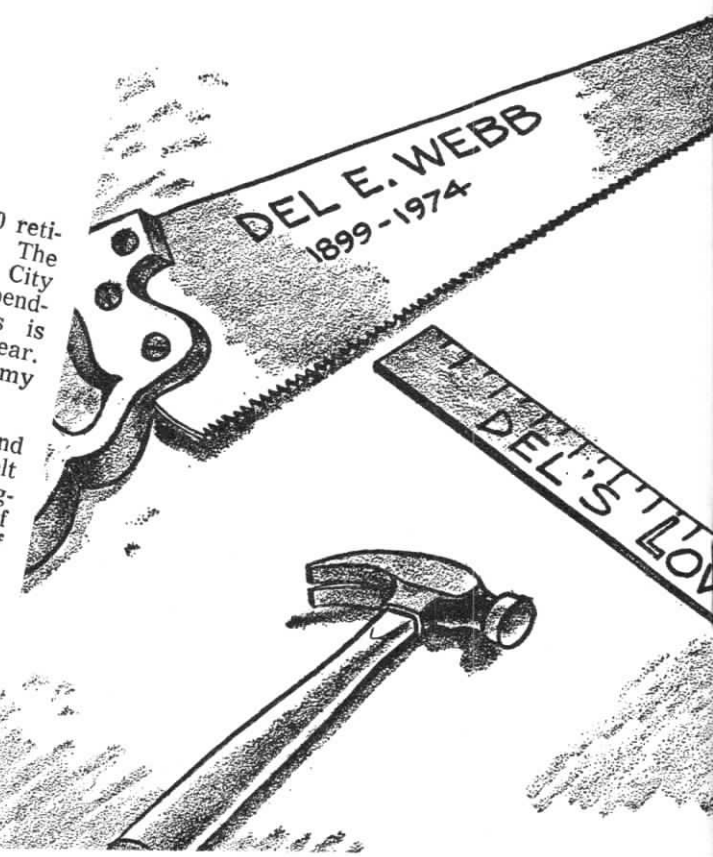
along with his farflung busin  
activities, made Webb a nation  
and even international busin  
figure.

That was the explanation once  
given by Del E. Webb for his  
remarkable success

# THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Phoenix, Saturday, July 6, 1974

Tools of an empire builder



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

but this dream was thwarted by  
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.

Webb was born in Fresno, Calif., Mr. Webb

Phoenix, Friday, July 5, 1974

The Arizona Republic

### Editorials

## 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" re-  
ports 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.

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

Webb also was proud of the fact  
that he played professional base-  
ball to augment his income from  
1926 through 1928. After a stay in  
hospital he combined the tech-  
nical skill of a carpenter with the  
competitive drive of a baseball  
player and went into business as a  
contractor. The rest is

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

uilt great resort hotels, plan-  
ed and constructed fine office  
buildings, was part owner of the  
New York Yankees baseball team,  
and employed housing at the  
pace center. His compa-  
ny, listed in the New York  
Exchange,

But his main interest was in peo-  
ple. 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  
operations and down-  
side

# Deliberate Mark On Valley Sports

...the staffer and the first PPBA president and first four directors.

...sports writer," recalls Foote, who was in business in California, "calling the Yankees."

...who shall I say is calling routine would say, 'Mr. Webb, please,' and was a curt 'Webb'."

## Sy Hobby

...that Webb contributed to PPBA.

...m for us," said Ben.

...event we had was an event Municipal Stadium" (the "and Webb pitched")

...ess in his elbow!  
...ess e golfer, a four-or-five

...LIC

"Our head table was so full that year," said Yogi Berra had to sit in the audience."

## A Better Valley

Chicago 5

# Phoenix Gazette

Vol. 94, No. 278

PHOENIX, ARIZONA, THURSDAY AFTERNOON, JULY

# Del Webb Die 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

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 turned to Mayo Clinic in Rochester for a routine check. Further surgery revealed additional complications.

Webb was born May 1899, in Fresno, Calif., Ernest and Henrietta Fox camp Webb.

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

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

## PHOENIX

## NEWSPAPERS PAY THEIR RESPECTS

Mr. Webb started "making headlines" on a regular basis prior to and during the early years of World War II, when his firm built military facilities in record times.

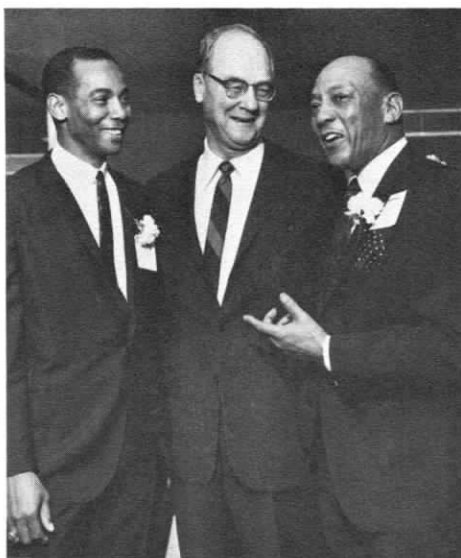
By the time the Yankees started winning pennants and World Series for he and Dan Topping, his name was a by-word, at least in Arizona and the baseball world, and became interchangeable with the firm he founded.

Making the right kind of headlines is different than just making headlines, and recognition of his accomplishments upon his death, by media across the nation, was gratifying.

But nowhere was it more warm and profuse than in Phoenix, his adopted hometown. On these pages we reproduce some of this coverage from the Phoenix Gazette and Arizona Republic.



REG MANNING  
Republic editorial cartoonist




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**GOLF AND BASEBALL** opened many social and business contacts for Del Webb and the firm he directed. 1) While presidents and other famous men often used his Yankee box seats, Mr. Webb in 1955 joined Harry Truman in the former president's box in Kansas City, a park his firm enlarged to major league dimensions. 2) Mr. Webb felt particularly at home with sports-

men. A favorite occasion was the Phoenix Press Box Association's Sports Award Banquet, where he chatted in 1967 with Ernie Banks, left, and Jesse Owens. 3) The following day, however, Mr. Webb likely would fly across the country for an appointment. In 1970, he joined Colorado Gov. John Love at Prudential Plaza groundbreaking. 4) As a celebrity himself, Mr. Webb was sought for such events. Three of the many hundreds he attended included Pueblo Gardens in 1949 in Tucson, the firm's first development investment (at opening); 5) In 1950, for the St. Louis V.A. Hospital, and 6) at Phoenix Civic Plaza, 1969. 7) At opening of Del Webb's Fresno Center in 1964, Mayor Wallace Henderson explained to the Webbs a personal gift from the city, then 8) unveiled a commemorative plaque. 9) After the Phoenix Boys Clubs had given him its highest local honor, they sponsored a testimonial dinner in 1973, where William Bricker, national executive director, made a special award. 10) Vice-Pres. Lyndon Johnson honored Mr. Webb and R. H. Johnson in 1963 for the firm's safety record in building the nation's first



Minuteman missile silo complex. 11) Doctor of Humane Letters honorary degree was bestowed in 1971 by University of Nevada. 12) In 1962, after his firm had opened four retirement towns, Dr. Ethel Andrus, founder of the American Association of Retired Persons, presented a special award. 13) At Sun City, Ariz., which Mr. Webb called his proudest achievement, he received extremely warm greetings each time he made a visit.




## Writer Interprets Some Of The 'Color'

# Part Of The Fascinating Life Of Del E. Webb

*Mr. Webb's official biography contained information on colorful aspects of his career. In a lengthy July 5 story on his death in the Los Angeles Times, which began on page one, Robert Kistler interpreted some of this material. We thought you would be interested in excerpts. — Editor*

"Mr. Webb, a Fresno native who dropped out of high school to work as a carpenter for 50 cents an hour and play semipro baseball throughout Central California, had aspirations of pitching in the major leagues.

"However, while playing an exhibition game at San Quentin Prison in 1926, he contracted typhoid from an inmate's drinking cup and was forced to stay in bed for a year.

"His pitching career over, and his normal weight of 200 down to a meager 99 pounds, he moved to Phoenix because of the climate.

\* \* \*

"Despite his success in general contracting and construction, Mr. Webb — once described by a writer as "looking like a gentleman farmer and talking like a blend of field hand and potbellied stove philosopher" — always maintained that his purchase of the Yankees was his best business deal.

\* \* \*

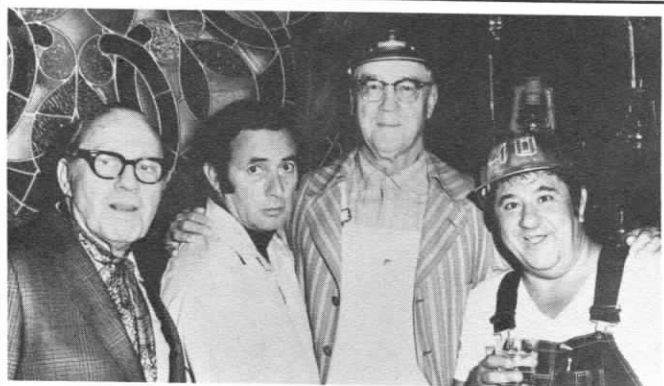
**"During Mr. Webb's 20-year reign as Yankee co-owner, the team never had a losing season financially and did almost as well on the field, winning 15 league championships and 10 World Series crowns.**

\* \* \*

"Ironically, what would prove to be the two most important changes in Mr. Webb's career — starting his then-tiny construction company in Phoenix and later moving into Las Vegas — came about by accident.

"Shortly after moving to Phoenix after his bout with typhoid, Mr. Webb was working for a small contractor as a door-hanger.

"He got his paycheck one Friday and cashed it, only to later find it had bounced. The next Monday he went to find the contractor. The man had left town, leaving debts and an unfinished grocery store.



**THREE** show business personalities he called friends joined Mr. Webb several years ago at a birthday party . . . Jack Benny, Joey Bishop and Buddy Hackett. Benny and Hackett are entertainers in Webb Corporation hotels.

"According to a close associate, Mr. Webb talked the owner of the grocery into putting up the financing and Mr. Webb took over the absentee contractor's firm.

**"The company consisted of one cement mixer, 10 wheelbarrows, 20 shovels and 10 picks.**

"Mr. Webb's entry into the Nevada gaming center was also unplanned. This is his own version:

"When a contractor building the Flamingo Hotel — the first real gambling palace on the Strip — ran into problems, Mr. Webb stepped in as a favor to friends at the bank backing the project.

"Mr. Webb soon discovered that the partly-built hotel had been sold to a party by the name of Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel.

**"The name didn't mean anything to me at the time," Mr. Webb once said in an interview with the Times, "But I sure found out in a hurry."**

"According to Mr. Webb, he asked his attorneys to get him out of the deal, but they told him Siegel had a binding contract. Siegel, who had what appeared to be a bulge under his breast pocket, said he thought so too.

"Mr. Webb built.

"Mr. Webb would later recall that he had no problem with Siegel, adding that Bugsy paid up faster than just about anyone Mr. Webb had built for.

**"However, one day Siegel did admittedly shake up Mr. Webb by bragging that he had personally killed 12 persons, and saying of another mob figure in Las Vegas, 'I'm going to kill that s.o.b., too.'**

"It didn't sound to Mr. Webb like an idle threat, the contractor would say later, and when Siegel noted the shocked expression on Mr. Webb's face, he quickly added:

"Del, don't worry. We (mobsters) only kill each other."

\* \* \*

"Despite his normally quiet, introspective personal manner, Mr. Webb also took delight in occasionally dazzling reporters by, say, picking up the telephone during an interview and placing — and getting through — a call to Howard Hughes' private compound, then located at the top of the Desert Inn Hotel in Las Vegas.

"Following one such call in 1969, Mr. Webb beamed and told his listeners:

"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."

\* \* \*

"Throughout his career, Mr. Webb remained something of an enigma. By 1969, his personal wealth was estimated at more than \$100 million, a figure Mr. Webb did not dispute.

**"A friend of presidents and acquainted with the very rich and flashily attired, Mr. Webb himself preferred conservative blue suits, of which he had perhaps 150.**

"His penchant for golf remained with him in his later years and, at age 70, he still maintained a seven handicap. He worked six, often seven days a week until his initial surgery last spring, associates said.

## Hotel Story—Builder, Then Owner

Mr. Kistler has presented only one aspect of the Webb Corporation's Nevada involvement.

Actually Mr. Webb's first construction project in Las Vegas was a Union Oil Station in 1935.

The firm's investments in Nevada date to 1952, when as a partnership it built the first of many buildings for the Hotel Sahara, taking an equity in lieu of construction fees.

**By the mid-1950s the Webb firm had launched in Arizona its own motel chain.**

Several years later it acquired Mountain Shadows in Scottsdale and built Del Webb's TowneHouse in San Francisco.

Just as Mr. Webb had decided 30 years earlier it was as easy and more profitable to bid a \$10 million job as it was a \$1 million project, his organization began to cast its lot with larger, more sophisticated hotel properties.

When the Sahara-Nevada Corporation was purchased in 1961, with the Sahara, Mint casino and other land in Las Vegas, the foundation had been prepared for the first publicly-held company to enter the Nevada gaming-resort business.

**The experience of Sahara and Mint staff members was needed to bridge the transition into this new aspect of the leisure industry.**

Thousands of employees did remain, and do so today.

In addition to preceding Hughes, Hilton and MGM into Nevada, the Webb Corporation helped introduce controls into the gaming industry which won praise from press and government officials.

A part of Mr. Webb's April 26 stockholder address was an advocacy of the industry and his firm's gaming investments.

\* \* \*

**Upon Mr. Webb's death, Nevada Gov. Mike O'Callaghan said:**

**"He was always a welcome visitor as he never discussed his own financial empire. He always relaxed. I valued his friendship."**



**THE ORIGINAL** Hotel Sahara facilities, built by the Webb firm in 1952.

## 'Quiet Giant Has Left His Mark'

What impressions do men like Del Webb leave with others?

*Los Angeles Times* writer Kersting surmised the two most important changes in Mr. Webb's life were the start of his Phoenix contracting business in 1928, and his entrance into Las Vegas.

Into our office the Monday after Mr. Webb's death came a poem from Doug Farley, executive sales director of the Hotel Sahara, who has been in the Nevada hotel business for six years.

He wrote it just after learning of Mr. Webb's death. It is interesting, both in Doug's impressions of what Mr. Webb has accomplished, and in his warm regard for "this man of destiny."

From the Valley called San Joaquin  
This man of destiny came  
This carpenter who as a youth  
Loved most, a baseball game.

He settled in a desert spot  
Down Arizona way  
And started building an empire  
Thru hard work every day.

He gathered round him other men  
Who felt the same as he  
They toiled and sweat and planned and built  
A corporate entity.

As he developed in his life  
He found it quite a joy  
To give to many charities  
Especially if it helped a boy.

His building projects multiplied  
His horizons ever grew  
His name became a household word  
When the Yankees deal went thru.

As time went by, all were amazed  
At his wondrous energy  
He was scratch at golf, and often played  
In famed golf company.

He developed the acme for retirement  
Known world wide as Sun City  
Yet all its attractive accoutrement  
Could not lure him into inactivity.

He was a man to look up to  
One we were always glad to see  
And we'll sorely miss this quiet man  
Who founded our Del Webb Family.

This quiet giant has left his mark  
In construction round the earth  
And none can erase the Del Webb spark  
That gave his life a lasting worth.

Douglas A. Farley



## Webb Point Of View (On Mr. Webb)

That Del Webb was a legend in his own time is no fabrication of the Webb public relations department. He was a man larger than life . . . At times, it seemed he received more recognition outside Arizona, yet in recent years honors came his way there increasingly . . . He was a man who built his business in Phoenix. Travel took him to all parts of the world, yet he always bragged about Arizona. He asked his ashes be scattered over the state . . . **He was a conservative Democrat by registration, yet often voted Republican.** He was once asked about running for Arizona governor, and declined. He was invited on a college board of regents, yet constant travel confined regular civic participation to Boys Clubs, of which he was a national director, and, through annual donation of Sahara Hotel facilities, one of the club's largest fund raisers. Many other donations were never made public . . . His traits were bywords. He was a fast driver, yet invariably was nearly late for a function or a plane. Favorite foods were steak and ice cream. He wanted the front seat of an airplane to stretch his 6-4 frame. **He would use a favorite anecdote in his speeches for years.** He was not a polished speaker, but was warm and sincere, and once charmed the leading columnist in Phoenix to note his country-boy grammar, but add: "We could have listened to him all night." . . . Arriving on a job-site, for a groundbreaking or whatever, his first respects were to the superintendent. His scrawls on memos were the bane of their receivers, little more legible than his signature. Many employees never knew his name was Delbert Eugene, and few knew he developed his signature in one day of signing thousands of contract copies . . . **He was usually the tallest in a crowd, and often the only one with a hat . . .** His forcefulness and insight in running the Yankees earned him the respect of other owners, who made him league president, and the enmity of a few whose running feuds made national headlines . . . He was on friendly terms with every U.S. president since F.D.R., who called him to Washington to talk about Phoenix WPA projects and learned each had forged his ambitions during the fire of illness — Roosevelt with polio and Webb with typhoid . . . In the early 1960s, a Phoenix magazine said Mr. Webb was the best known Arizonan of all time. **He was pictured on the cover of many magazines, including TIME . . .** In recent years he was regularly linked with the success of Sun City. Sun Citizens not only believed Mr. Webb added years to their lives in creating the Sun City way of life, but they identified with his age, energy and enthusiasm . . . It was Sun City which announced a memorial service for the man linked to their town. But he will be missed by us all.



FINAL public appearance was at company stockholder meeting, April 26, 1974.

## R. H. Johnson Salutes Mr. Webb

(Continued from Page 1)

tuated by telephone calls to company operations across town or across a continent.

**Sometimes people chaffed under his paperwork.**

Del Webb personally didn't build the first Phoenix shopping center, and the first Phoenix enclosed mall shopping center.

He didn't create personally the world's most famous retirement town.

He didn't develop, single handed, a mid-town Phoenix business complex.

He didn't alone operate leading resort and convention hotels.

And he didn't erect some of the nation's most complex construction projects.

But he established an organizational framework with freedom for others to do so under his direction.

And he was proud enough to put his name on them, and constantly to be a good salesman for the company he founded in 1928.

R. H. (Bob) Johnson, who joined Mr. Webb in 1936, said it for us all:

"Mr. Webb was a 'born leader,' and he will be sorely missed by a legion of employees and friends who admired him for his business acumen, his aggressiveness and his dedication to his company."



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in the interests of the personnel of its  
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**DEL E. WEBB - THE MAN**

When Del E. Webb arrived on a job site for a groundbreaking, or other similar function, his first respects were to the construction supervisor. In relating some of the Webb story to you today, I think it only appropriate that I continue the tradition in Mr. Webb's behalf - to Harold Crum, President and General Manager of Del E. Webb Construction Services Company, and Phil Williams, construction supervisor for this magnificent hospital, my deep appreciation for your efforts and those of your crews. To John Meeker, my respect and admiration for his efforts in making Sun City West the retirement paradise it is today.

Mr. Webb was a legend in his time... the legacy he leaves approaches the true definition of American folklore. As a simple carpenter, he began work in the late 1920s on the ageless Westward Ho Hotel in downtown Phoenix. In 1928, he joined a construction crew that had been hired to build one of the first A.J. Bayless stores at Central and Moreland. When the contractor defaulted on the project and left town, Mr. Webb asked if he could finish the job. He did finish the job and, in the process, established Del E. Webb Construction Co. The legend was well on his way!

The Los Angeles Times once referred to Mr. Webb as "The Bashful Barnum", sarcastically referring, of course, to the showman's showman, P.T. Barnum. I could never argue that Del Webb was not a showman - he walked with kings, consulted with every president from FDR forward, and founded

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friendships and business relationships among the greatest personalities of the 20th century. But... he<sup>also</sup> established the same friendly rapport and demonstrated the same human kindness for construction workers and hotel clerks.

His business acumen was known around the world - but his philosophy for success was quite simple: he felt that hard work and a creative mind were the two main ingredients in achieving success. He once said, "If you really believe in the people you hire, then you'll pay them well, allow them to make decisions, expect their loyalty... and get it. It is people... our employees and our customers... who will determine our success." And how right he was! Mr. Webb wanted to be able to call each of his employees by their first name...many of us felt he succeeded in that goal. There are countless stories of an employee receiving a personal call from Mr. Webb - either congratulating the individual on a personal triumph or expressing condolences for a family sadness. Those who worked closely with Del Webb felt there was never enough time in a given day to accomplish all that he wanted - but even in those crowded hours, clouded and confused by the stressful decisions of this corporate giant, he always found time to talk to the little person.

Mr. Webb had a fondness for bringing ordinary people - many without college educations - into the company and nurturing them into key<sup>executive</sup> positions. We used to refer to the newcomers as having been "Webberized." I once interviewed and subsequently hired two bright young men from prominent

Ivy League schools - I had to spend considerable additional time reassuring Mr. Webb that these non-Webberized challengers were worth the effort.

As you might expect, Mr. Webb had some very interesting business ventures over the years...and some equally interesting business associates to go with them. You may not realize that it was Del Webb who originally purchased the huge agricultural area known as Arrowhead Ranch... in partnership with the very influential Chicago business executive <sup>ed</sup> Henry Crown. In his spare time, Henry Crown was also referred to as the owner of the Empire State Building.

There were many stories about Del Webb and Howard Hughes - and the majority had substantial truth to them. After all, for more than three decades, the Webb Construction Company - almost exclusively - built Hughes office buildings, manufacturing facilities, and other structures throughout the Southwest. When Mr. Webb dealt with Howard Hughes, he had to prepare for meetings in the most unexpected and isolated locations... and always at night. If you did business with Howard Hughes, it was typically between 12 midnight and 4 a.m. While Hughes was admittedly an eccentric of unparalleled definition, Mr. Webb cherished his relationship and felt that Hughes was one of the shrewdest men he'd ever met.

And there was the unexpected relationship with the notorious New York mobster Benjamin "Bugsy" Seigel. I say "unexpected" because Webb Construction Company contracted

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*Las Vegas, Nev.*

for the building of the Flamingo, not realizing at the onset who was involved. It was after the binding contract was consummated that Mr. Webb found with whom... and what Bugsy Seigel was. The normally punctual Mr. Seigel always paid his bills in a timely manner... but, as history documents, the final payment to Webb Construction took 10 years to accomplish. *after Mr. Seigel's untimely death.*

As a result of the Seigel relationship, and the aura surrounding Las Vegas entrepreneurs at the time, numerous investigations were created... the more prominent of which emanated from J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI. But Mr. Webb was never linked to anything remotely suspicious...in fact, Del Webb and J. Edgar Hoover remained long-time friends following the Bureau's inquiries. FBI files subsequently referred to the subject as "Dear Del."

Del Webb's love and devotion to sports were instrumental in his work ethic - he always maintained that if he were not able to get away periodically and play a round of golf, that drudgery would most certainly have overtaken him. A former baseball player himself, he accomplished a long-standing dream when, in 1945, he joined in partnership with Dan Topping and invested in the largest *pur* single enterprise of his career - the purchase of the New York Yankees. In the ensuing 20 year ownership, the Yankees never once failed to generate a profit - not to mention an unprecedented 15 American League pennants and 10 World Series crowns. I once went to New York with Mr. Webb to see

the Yankees play. Mr. Webb, obviously well known at Yankee Stadium and always enthusiastic about seeing his Yankees, marched forward and blatantly walked through the turnstile - forgetting that I was right behind him. I was not so well known at Yankee Stadium; I didn't make it through the turnstile; and, as I recall, it was the 2nd inning before one of Mr. Webb's emissaries kindly bailed me out.

In spite of the large financial holdings attributed to Del Webb, he never carried much cash with him. Those who travelled with him for the first time usually found out the hard way! I can remember when Maxine Newman, his long-time secretary, took Mr. Webb to play golf with Bob Hope. As his golf bag was being taken from the car, Mr. Webb leaned over to Maxine and asked to borrow a \$1 to tip the porter. But the porters and Skycaps at the Phoenix International Airport knew Mr. Webb as well as the gate attendants at Yankee Stadium. One day, while hurrying to catch a flight to Las Vegas, Mr. Webb forgot his wallet. A few hours later, he telephoned Maxine, from Las Vegas, and confessed he'd also forgotten his plane ticket. She asked how he'd managed to get on the flight if he didn't have any money. The incredulous reply was that a Skycap named Charlie, recognized him... and took up a collection from all the other Skycaps to buy his ticket. Maxine was to immediately go to the airport and repay the money...Charlie would know who and how much to repay! By the way, Maxine Newman is with us today...I'd bet that she still carries an extra bit

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of change with her, just as she did for the twenty or so years she worked for Mr. Webb.

Mr. Webb was very interested in medicine and medical research. Many of his employees often referred to him as "Doc Webb." Now that I think of it, his penmanship had grown so illegible, he could have easily qualified for a real prescription-writing doctor. In the 1950s, as chief executive for the corporation, Mr. Webb insisted that all key executives have thorough physical exams - and he personally reviewed each one. He was, I'm sure, the first to put a "No Smoking" sign in corporate offices. As a philanthropist, he was the spirit behind many large contributions given to assist medical research. He had the forethought to create the Del E. Webb Foundation to ensure that his interests in civic and charitable causes were carried on. This Foundation, [currently with assets approaching \$40 million,] is proud to be a key contributor in the hospital that bears his name.

In eulogizing Mr. Webb in 1974, then Senator Barry Goldwater put it simply and succinctly when he said that Del E. Webb "started with nothing but American initiative, willingness to work, and devotion..."

Del E. Webb was a man larger than life - a man that had a part to play in the lives of every person here today. His name precedes every accomplishment he ever produced...he loved Sun City and Sun City West for the values it taught, the principals it sustained, and, most importantly, for the

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people it catered to. I feel very comfortable in saying that Mr. Webb would have considered the naming of this hospital as the zenith of recognition and honor to be bestowed upon him.

Mr. Webb decreed that at his death there would be no funeral, and that his ashes would be scattered over Arizona - the state he loved so much. I'm sure that one of those ashes fell to earth on this very spot - a noble place to resurrect a caring institution... and a deed of kindness and respect to call it Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital. *I know he would have been very pleased*  
Thank You.

Presented by:  
Robert H. Johnson, President  
Del E. Webb Foundation  
on the occasion of the  
Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital dedication  
Sunday, December 6, 1987

*Written by Jenny O'Connell  
Sun Health Public Affairs*