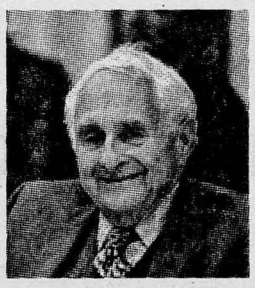
Kaplan, Herbert M.
January 2, 2017



KAPLAN, HERBERT M.

81. Business leader and philanthropist Herbert M. Kaplan died in his sleep Jan. 2 at his Providence home. The former chairman, CEO and president of Warren Equities, Inc. and president of The Warren Alpert Foundation was 81.

His daughter Bevin Kaplan Reifer remembered him as a man with tireless dedication to both his work and his loved ones.

"He wouldn't miss work for a vacation, but he would miss work to help me study for every history exam," she said. "He valued loyalty and compassion above all else. There was never a sick person he didn't visit in a hospital. There was never a Shiva call or wake he didn't make."

In business, Kaplan worked alongside his uncle Warren Alpert, who founded Warren Equities, a petroleum and convenience store business. Together, they grew the business, including its signature brand, Xtra mart – which had achieved annual sales of more than $1 billion by the time of Warren Alpert's death in 2007.

Kaplan served as president and CEO from 1993 to 2006. From 2007 to 2012, he served as chairman and CEO and from 2012 until the company's sale in 2015 to Global Partners LP, he remained chairman.

Reifer spoke with pride about Kaplan's relationship with employees: "He was noted for his unusual kindness to employees and engendering loyalty from them. He was brilliant in business, but always humble. People on the outside often remarked that they had never seen the same degree of loyalty from one's employees, that it was almost unheard of. Once people came, they stayed, it was family."

As Kaplan worked on building the business and its mix of commercial and retail brands, he also contributed countless hours to advancing the family's philanthropic passion: medical research. The Warren Alpert Foundation annually awards a $500,000 prize for outstanding research that has honored some of the field's most influential and important figures.

In 2007, the foundation made the naming gift of the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and in 2016 pledged an additional $27 million to the school. The Foundation has also made major gifts to Harvard Medical School, which awards the foundation's annual prize.

Kaplan served on the Medical School Committee of the Corporation of Brown University and was a member of the Board of Fellows of the Harvard Medical School. He was a founding member of the Noble Deeds Society of the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City and served as an honorary trustee of the Brookings Institute.

The foundation's naming gift to Brown's medical school was instrumental in the school opening its new building in 2011. At a dedication ceremony in October of that year, Providence Mayor Angel Taveras declared Oct. 21 "Herbert Kaplan Day" and gave him a key to the city. Brown also awarded Kaplan an honorary doctoral degree in 2011, for his dedicated work to improve health care and academic medicine.

Born March 24, 1935, and raised in Newton, Mass., by his parents Benjamin and Mary (Alpert) Kaplan, Kaplan was a longtime resident of Manhattan before making his final home in Providence.

Kaplan graduated from Vermont Academy. He then earned his bachelor's degree at Hobart College, and earned his M.B.A. from Babson College.

He is survived by his wife, Alida (McFadden) Kaplan, daughter Bevin Kaplan Reifer, son-in-law Daniel Reifer and a grandson, William.

Funeral services will be held Sunday, January 8th at 2 p.m. in the Chapel in Sharon Memorial Park, 40 Dedham St, Sharon, MA. In lieu of flowers, contributions in his memory may be made to: The Harvard Medical School (HMS) Diabetes Research Fund. Gifts may be sent to HMS Office of Resource Development, 401 Park Drive, Suite 22 West, Boston, MA 02215. Attention: Susan Carr.

Shiva will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. David Hirsch, Sunday 4-7 p.m., in Providence. For information and condolences, www.SugarmanSinai.com.