Albert A. List, 86, Industrialist Who Supported Many Causes

By ELIZABETH NEUFFER

Albert A. List, an industrialist and philanthropist who began his career working in his family's grocery store, died Friday of heart failure at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Manhattan. He was 86 years old and lived in Byram, Conn.

A tireless businessman known for working 18-hour days, Mr. List owned Strahl & Pitsch, a refiner of natural waxes in Babylon, L.I. He served as the company's chairman until he became ill with heart disease three months ago.

Among his many philanthropic contributions to medical research, the arts and education was a gift of $1 million in 1982 to Harvard University to establish the first endowed chair for Jewish studies at a non-Jewish divinity school in the United States.

Mr. List was also one of the original financial supporters of New York City's New School for Social Research, where two buildings now carry his name. A collector of modern art, he gave the funds for art centers at Kirkland College in Clinton, N.Y., Brown University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

'It Belongs to Humanity'

"What are you put on this earth for, anyway?" Mr. List said of his entrepreneurial and philanthropic enterprises in an interview in 1965. "To be productive — for yourself until you've got everything money can buy. After that, it belongs to humanity."

Born in Fall River, Mass., in 1901, Mr. List was the youngest of four children of Alter and Ethel Haimovich, who had come to the United States from Rumania.

He was forced to leave school at the age of 14 to work in his father's grocery business when his two older brothers left to serve in World War I.

Upon their return in 1918, Mr. List and his brothers expanded the store into a business that acted as a distributor for companies including the Frigidaire division of the General Motors Corporation. He later began his own company, the Crescent Corporation, which purchased and revitalized failing companies.

Retired at 36 Years Old

Mr. List never returned to school or attended college. His only other formal education was two years of night school.

But by the age of 36, Mr. List had made more than a million dollars and retired.

However, Mr. List — described as a gentle-mannered and dashingly mustachioed entrepreneur — re-entered business in 1942. After acquiring control of several companies, in 1957 he gained control of the Glen Alden and later the Hudson Coal Company, the principal hard coal producers in the United States.

Mr. List is survived by his wife, Vera, and four daughters, Joann Levenson and Olga Mack, both of Manhattan; Carol Schwartz of Denver, and Viki List of Villanova, Pa.; 12 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Services will be held at Riverside Chapel in Manhattan at 10 A.M. today.

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