

Founder of Scott's markets dies at 91

Prominent grocer began 54 years ago

HOLLY ABRAMS
The Journal Gazette

Don Scott opened his first grocery store in 1954. He would eventually own 18 stores bearing the family name throughout northeast Indiana.

The founder of Scott's Food Stores died Saturday in Jacksonville, Fla., of congestive heart failure. He was 91.

Upon his retirement in 1996, the business was among the largest food retailers in northeast Indiana. The first of those 18 stores sat at the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Taylor Street in Fort Wayne.

At a young age, Scott discovered a profession with holding power. He started working in the grocery business while attending Ball State Teachers College (now Ball State University).

"My dad always said, ... you're always going to have a job, people have to eat," said his daughter Cheryl Scott, of Fort Wayne.

In 1991, Scott's Food Stores was sold to SuperValu Inc. It later became known as Scott's Food & Pharmacy.

In 2007, Scott's was acquired by Cincinnati-based Kroger Co., but the stores kept the Scott's name.

Cheryl Scott said her father lived a full life and was healthy even in his later years.

"He was just very active, and I think that helped him keep his mind sharp," she said, adding that his first admittance into a hospital was at age 85 to have his appendix removed.

As a businessman, Scott was very "hands on." He would start each day going to every store and seeing in person how each location was operating.

"He just loved being with people," she said.

Originally from Galveston, Ind., Donald G. Scott grew up on a farm. He met and wed Marjorie Hutchens in 1939 while attending college. Scott also served in the U.S. Army Air Corps and worked for Muncie-based Marsh Supermarkets for 13 years before founding his business.

He also was chairman of the Indiana State Egg Board for 15 years.

Scott went on to receive an honorary doctor of humanities degree from the University of Saint Francis. Scott was an avid tennis player, and a golfer, up until age 90.

After his wife died of cancer in 1978, Scott started Cancer Day, an annual fundraiser for cancer



Scott

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awareness that continues at the stores.

In 1980, he wed Rose Botts. His stepdaughter of 28 years, Joan McVoy of Fort Wayne, remembered Scott as a caring family man.

"He was a gracious, loving man and a wonderful businessman, fair to everybody," she said. "He loved (us) as if we were his own."

Scott was an avid reader and followed football and basketball closely, she said.

Bill Reitz, a former vice president of Scott's Food Stores, worked alongside Scott for 45 years. He described the businessman as a mentor.

"He was a very innovative person in the food industry," he said. "He was the type of a person that you enjoyed being around because he was so knowledgeable about the business that he was in."

The two met in 1963 and remained friends. As business partners, the two merged their companies in 1979, Reitz said.

"He was just an outstanding citizen and person," he said.

As someone who made an outstanding contribution to business and community, Scott was inducted into the Greater Fort Wayne Business Hall of Fame in 1996.

He was also named a Sagamore of the Wabash in 1988, the highest honor given by the governor, by then-Gov. Robert Orr.

A funeral service will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at Trinity English Lutheran Church, 405 W. Wayne St., with calling one hour prior. Calling hours are also from 2 to 7 p.m. Friday at D.O. McComb & Sons Covington Knolls Funeral Home, 8325 Covington Road.

Memorials in lieu of flowers can be made to the Don G. Scott Scholarship Foundation at the University of Saint Francis or Trinity English Lutheran Church, both in Fort Wayne.

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