

Robert Emmett Hickman

Died: March 30, 2014

Location: West Grove, Pennsylvania



Chandler Funeral Homes & Crematory

2506 Concord Pike

Wilmington, DE 19803

Tel. (302) 478-7100

Tribute & Message From The Family



Robert Emmett Hickman died at his home in West Grove, PA, on Sunday, March 30, at the age of 91.

Bob was born in 1922, in Wilmington, Delaware, to Emmett Stewart Hickman and Ethel Seal Hickman. A 1939 graduate of Tower Hill School, he attended Cornell University where he was an award-winning member of the swim team. He received his B.S. in civil engineering from Cornell in 1943 and served as a Lieutenant JG in the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1943 to 1946.

Known by many colleagues and business associates as the 'dean of real estate,' his remarkable business career spanned 53 years from 1946 to 1999. Working initially

with his father as a real estate salesman, developer, and property manager, he focused for most of his career on providing the expert real estate counseling and appraisal services for which he was so well respected. In 1969 he was selected as Delaware Realtor of the Year. His professional designations included CRE, MAI, CPM, SIOR, and CCIM; in 1992 he served as Vice President of the American Society of Real Estate Counselors.

As his expertise grew his business evolved, from the Emmett S. Hickman Co. founded by his father to Hickman & Co. and Robert E. Hickman, Real Estate Counselor. He was also affiliated with prominent real estate organizations such as Delaware Appraisal Group and Jackson-Cross Appraisal Co., of which he served as Senior Vice President from 1979 to 1985. Bob's leadership qualities were widely valued by regional businesses and organizations. He served as director of New Castle Mutual Insurance Company from 1955 to 1998, and for a time directed the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Wilmington Real Estate Board.

An inclusive and thoughtful man, Bob embodied the values of the Rotary Club, of which he was an active member for many decades. At the time of his death he was the Wilmington Rotary Club's oldest living member and oldest living past president. He joined Rotary in 1949, served as their president in 1966-67, and in 2007 received their prestigious John F. Newman Rotary Service Award for 'service above self.' Among notable examples of his service, he was a founding member of the region's Committee of 100 and of the Greater Wilmington Development Council. In the 1960s he served at the request of Mayor Haskell on the city's Housing Commission to promote fair housing practices; and in the 1980s at the request of Gov. Castle he served on the Council of Real Estate Appraisers, helping to write the state's appraiser licensing regulations. A phrase from his father's obituary of 1950 applies equally to him: "In his passing the city and state have lost a worthy citizen."

Bob enjoyed a great diversity of interests in his lifetime. He was a competent sailor, connoisseur of opera and other classical music, amateur violinist, avid golfer, adventurous world traveler, voracious and eclectic reader, and wily Scrabble opponent. Above all with his brother-in-law Charlie Gant he enjoyed 85 years of bird watching, a hobby which he shared generously with characteristic enthusiasm and expertise among family and friends.

He is survived by his sister, Jane Hickman Gant, and brother-in-law and lifelong friend, Charles H. Gant, and their family; by his children Martha Hickman Hild

(David), Patricia Hickman O'Toole (Timothy), and E. Stewart Hickman II (Busy Graham), whose mother Janet MacMahon Hickman died in 2006; by his grandchildren Florence Grant, Andrew Hickman, Charles O'Toole, Elizabeth O'Toole, Hannah Hickman, Margaret Hild, and Molly Hickman; by his close friend Delma Burgess; and by step-children and step-grandchildren through his deceased wives Consetta Hickman (d. 1989) and Anne Hickman (d. 2005).

The funeral arrangements are pending. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions in Bob's name to the Rotary Club of Wilmington Educational Foundation, the Delaware Nature Society, or Wilmington's Grand Opera House.