



Selwyn Lemchen

May 31, 1918 - January 28, 2011

Selwyn Lemchen, Pioneer of Discounting Industry passes away at 92

Selwyn Lemchen of Boston, MA and Longboat Key, FL passed away on Friday, January 28 at 92 years old. Lemchen was an innovator in the mass merchandising retail industry.

Raised in Brookline MA, Lemchen began his retailing career as an assistant shoe buyer at Enterprise stores, working for his father, Benjamin Lemchen. After service in World II as a medic in the Army, Lemchen returned to Boston and quickly became a rising star in the industry. He quickly worked his way up to top buyer of the women's and shoe departments.

In 1955, Lemchen made a risky decision to leave Enterprise and open his first large discount store in an old textile mill. He invested his entire savings into the Kerr Mill Bargain Center in Fall River, Massachusetts. Over the next several years he grew his business into a chain of 11 stores across Northeast. An early believer in the concept of discount stores, he spearheaded the evolution of the conventional department store chain into what was one of the country's fastest-growing discount chains.

Lemchen, at 49 years of age, sold to Interstate Department Store where he was a Vice President and a director which operated a chain of general

merchandise outlets. He was the founder of the company's Topps division which eventually became a 42 store discount chain.

After Lemchen retired, he spent much of his time on Longboat Key, Fl playing golf, fishing and taking his family out on his boat, the Lem-Chen.

Lemchen was born in Boston on May 31, 1918.

Lemchen is survived by his wife of 67 years, Pearl Lemchen of Longboat Key, Fla., and Boston, MA; two daughters, Louise Millman, of New York City and Madelene Posternak of Boston, MA and Boca Raton, FL; and his grandchildren USAF Major Alexander Millman of St. Petersburg, FL and Chloe Comins of Brookline, MA; and his sister Lenore Prague of Newton, MA.

For reference, he was mentioned in The New York Times, Thursday, September 15, 1966 and was featured in a publication of Discount Store News, May 31, 1965.

Tribute Wall



“ Selwyn Lemchen

October 09, 2023 at 02:01 AM



“ Selwyn Lemchen

January 28, 2023 at 12:09 PM



“ *It would take too long (and would interest no one other than myself, at this point) to tell you why I am thinking of your father and mother today...on a trip to England. But I knew them both some 40 years ago when they were very, very kind to me as the (too) young second wife of their old friend Warren Kastner. We lost Warren in December of 2012.*

Shortly before his death, Warren and I reminisced about our few years in Boston on Beacon Hill (when Pearl and Selwyn were still in Newton) and on Long Wharf (when your parent's had a condo on Lewis Wharf, I think). Anyway, I Googled Selwyn's name today and found this memorial site. I am sorry for your loss; always too soon.

I wanted to tell you that your family is not the only one to hold dear their memories of these two generous and humorous people.

*Barbara Wright
Irvington, NY*

Barbara Wright - September 20, 2015 at 12:40 PM