

Roger William Coleman

1929 - 2017



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March 30, 1929 - March 18, 2017 Roger W. Coleman passed away on Saturday, March 18, 2017, surrounded by family and close friends at his home in Carmel, California. He was less than two weeks from his 88th birthday. He was born on March 30, 1929, in Newark, New Jersey. His

parents were Bernard Simpson Coleman and Evelyn Bornstein Coleman. Roger was an excellent student, athlete and musician in his early life, and went on to a long career in business that spanned more than four decades. Roger considered one of his greatest achievements to be the rank of Eagle Scout that he attained at a young age. His dedication to the tenets of the Boy Scouts philosophy would shape his outlook for the rest of his life. He attended the University of Colorado, where he excelled as a member of the ski team. Faced with a choice of whether to become a professional skier or to continue his education, Roger chose the latter, studying theater arts at UCLA, where he graduated with a bachelor of science degree in 1950. That same year, Roger joined a division of S.E. Rykoff & Co., an institutional wholesale grocer in Los Angeles founded by Saul E. Rykoff in 1911. He steadily took on more responsibilities, moving up to the parent company in 1957 to work in the purchasing department and rising to general manager in 1963. Four years later, upon the death of Saul E. Rykoff, Roger became president. Under his leadership, the company grew steadily and went public, becoming the largest wholesale foodservice provider in the western United States. Roger had bigger business ambitions, and in 1983 he spearheaded the acquisition of John Sexton & Company in Chicago, doubling Rykoff's size overnight and expanding its geographic reach. A program of acquisitions, which started in the 1970s, continued and by the time he retired in 1992, after 25 years at the helm, annual revenue had expanded to more than \$1 billion. After a series of mergers, the company became part of what is known today as US Foods. In retirement Roger began spending more time in Carmel, where he pursued his passion for golf with the zest that he approached his career, and where he lived the rest of his life. In Carmel he became a well-known, active member of the local community and was involved in many philanthropic activities. Roger served on the boards of the Monterey Symphony and Monterey County Animal Services. At the time of his death, he was active on the boards of Beacon House, a nonprofit drug and alcohol treatment center in Pacific Grove, California, and the Panetta

Institute of Public Policy in Marina, California. During his career, he served as president of the United Institutional Distributors and the North American Foodservice Corporation, and he was a director of the National Institute for the Foodservice Industry. While in Los Angeles, he served on the board of the Los Angeles Convention Center and the Reiss-Davis Child Guidance Clinic, among many other civic organizations. Roger had four children with his first wife, Ruth Rykoff Coleman, whom he married in 1951. The marriage ended in divorce. He is survived by three of his children: William T. Coleman (Deborah Teltscher) of Los Angeles, Wendy C. Wood (David Petersen) of Greensboro, North Carolina, and Eric Roger Coleman (Yannick Lacroix Coleman) of London, England. He was preceded in death by his son Paul Rykoff Coleman of New York City. He is also survived by his five grandchildren: Rebecca Coleman, Joel Coleman, Courtney Wood, Marielle Coleman and Tristan Coleman. A second marriage, to Francesca Jones of the Netherlands, also ended in divorce. It is legend among those who knew him that Roger greeted every morning by saying "Oh Boy!" for yet another wonderful day. This sentiment has inspired those whom he helped to realize the power of the positive, something that Roger W. Coleman personified. It was Roger's request that memorials be directed to Beacon House and the Panetta Institute.

To Plant Memorial Trees in memory, please visit our [Sympathy Store](#).

Published in Los Angeles Times on Mar. 22, 2017.

Coleman Pages

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MEMORIAL EVENTS

No memorial events are currently scheduled. To offer your sympathy during this difficult time, you can now have memorial trees planted in a National Forest in memory of your loved one.

Funeral services provided by

Mission Mortuary

[450 Camino El Estero](#)

[Monterey, CA 93940](#)

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Guest Book sponsored by Mission Mortuary

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12 entries

March 26, 2019

I worked for Rykoff from 1969 to 1979. I was a low level functionary and Mr. Coleman and I mostly exchanged greetings on rare occasions. I did try to do a good job and when I finally left to relocate, I was surprised when called me into his office and made a very generous offer to try and keep me on board. I have never forgotten this and the gesture was greatly appreciated. Our brief interaction and his obituary are testaments to what a fine man he was. My sincere condolences to his family and close friends.
- Bob Massey

March 15, 2019

Thank you Roger for being such an understanding person. You cheered for the underdog as well as trying your best to give them the tools for great accomplishment. You rewarded success with personal messages. I will never forget the kindness and tools you gave me. Rest in Peace Roger you certainly earned it. Earl Soares

October 15, 2017

"OH BOY" ROGER, GOD BLESS U FOR BEING THERE FOR ALL OF US! I WILL MISS OUR TIME PLAYING GOLF AT CYPRESS WITH YOU SO MUCH!! ALL THE BEST TO YOUR FAMILY I KNOW HOW MUCH THEY MEANT TO YOU.

TERI MELANSON

March 28, 2017

Roger was a great man with a big heart. He made a difference in the lives of many. Rest in peace Roger.

Jim Iacobazzi

March 26, 2017

I will always remember Roger, as a good man and always as a professional. No matter how busy, he always found time to ask about the family. Rest in peace, boss.

Fred Botello

March 23, 2017

Joe Jansen

March 23, 2017

Roger, you gave me the tools to grow with the company in my own way, but led me to challenge myself professionally. We also spent many late evenings chatting about life and family quietly in your office. They were non-working conversations that made me appreciate our friendship even more. Rest easy Roger, knowing you will long be remembered.

Ed Candioly

March 22, 2017

My thoughts and prayers are with you in your time of grief. May your memories bring you comfort.

Julie Beachnau

March 22, 2017

Roger, you were a longtime friend in business and personal life from our S.E. Rykoff years, and you were the man that made it all come together!! This will make you chuckle - I still have the 'door knob'. You will truly be missed!!

My condolences to the Coleman Family.

Bill Ford

Bill Ford

March 22, 2017

Joe McGuigan

March 22, 2017

Roger;
You are and always will be remembered as a friend and as one of the strongest pillars of hope and inspiration in the Monterey, Carmel communities..

I will forever cherish the good times we spent together..
Along with all the AWESOME rides in "THE MAZZ."

My heartfelt condolences to the Coleman family.

David G.

David Gulley

March 22, 2017

Offering our deepest condolences during this difficult time.

Mission Mortuary, Inc.

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