

In Memoriam: Dr Gerald Anthony Wolman

Entrepreneur extraordinaire, Gerald Wolman, has died in Cape Town, at the age of 94. He played a remarkable and increasingly prominent role in the South African private sector from the day he joined his father's fledgling vehicle garage and service station business after graduating, to his retirement from business as the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Bailey Overseas Group of Companies.

During his long career, he held senior positions in a remarkable list of important and influential business organisations. These included 15 within the Cape Chamber of Commerce alone, which he joined in 1993, served as President in 2007-8, was made a life member and remained a Council member to the end. His many friends and admirers in the Chamber will sorely miss his wit and wisdom.

Gerald was born in Napier in the Cape where his father owned and ran the local hotel.

Precocious from an early age, he demanded to go to school when too young but so impressed the headmaster that he was allowed to stay and observe for a day. He sailed through school, going on to graduate from the University of Cape Town with a B.Com degree. Later in life, he gained a doctorate in Business Administration.

To describe Gerald as multi-talented would be an understatement. At school, he excelled at sport, developed a love of music, learned to play the accordion, and was a passionate admirer of Boer music and light classical.

Bilingual in English and Afrikaans, speaking English to his father and Afrikaans to his mother, in adulthood he added fluency in German and Italian, and a working knowledge of French, all resulting from his growing international business career.

This began when he grew the family garage business from its small beginning in Cape Town to a national group with operations in Port Elisabeth and East London and then as the South African agent for famous motorcar brands, including BMW and Alpha Romeo—the latter leading to a passion for motor racing.

The list of his positions on business organisations, sporting bodies, and service clubs is too long to list here (a video of Gerald's remarkable life is available on YouTube). Suffice to say that Gerald took his societal responsibilities seriously.

Accepting the post as honorary consul in South Africa for the State of Georgia he rapidly became an ardent promoter of talented Georgians, its musicians and of course its rugby players. This naturally meant he was soon one of the organisers of the Rugby World Cup in 1995 in South Africa.

Gerald is probably right now offering to help St Peter handle the crowd at the gate.

He certainly will have no trouble getting in.

Message from Past President, Michael Bagraim

"I am writing to you to salute the man and everything that he did for the Chamber movement over the last many years.

My interaction with Gerald over the last thirty years has always been positive, forward thinking and constructive. The Chamber movement has been all the richer for his

involvement and his interaction with all the members. Gerald remains a shining star of the business community and may I dare say that we should all look up to some of the brilliant suggestions he had over these past few years”.