



Henry Jerry Sawicki, Jr.

May 17, 1930 - December 21, 2011

Henry J. (Jerry)Sawicki, Jr., 81 of Naples, Florida, passed away peacefully December 21, 2011, at Avow Hospice of Naples as a result of complications from a stroke.

He was born May 17, 1930 to the late Henry J. Sr. and Velma E. (Sandusky) Sawicki. Jerry was a 1949 graduate of Valley Forge Military Academy becoming the second cadet in the history of the school to attain the rank of Captain within two years. He attended on a music scholarship and led the band at President Truman's Inaugural Parade.

He later attended the University of Toledo. In 1950 he married the love of his life, Lois Ann Kolbe. Jerry and Lois would have celebrated their 62nd anniversary in January.

In 1953 he founded the Sawicki Realty Company and along with many wonderful partners, formed 25 additional companies resulting in the construction of over 4,000 housing units throughout Northwest Ohio. He remained active in the business until recently and still loved "making deals". In 1963 Jerry was listed as one of Toledo's 10 Outstanding Young Men. He served as President of the Toledo Board of Realtors in 1969 and later became President of the Ohio Association of Realtors. He served his community as a member of a variety of boards including the Toledo Model Cities Mayor's

Advisory Committee and St. John's Jesuit High School. He was also a long time city director of the Huntington National Bank

Along with his wife, Jerry lived an adventurous life that included flying, sailing, and spear fishing in the remote islands of the Bahamas. He was an accomplished pilot for more than 25 years. Jerry's love of music began at the age of 8. He played his saxophone in many jazz clubs in Toledo and Naples and recorded several albums. He last performed in September of this year before laying down his horn

He is survived by his wife, Lois Ann Sawicki, children, Jana Sawicki(Laurie), Jill Sawicki (Jennifer), Lisa (Dennis) Holman and H. Jerry (Angie) Sawicki, III, sisters, Dixie Fritts, and Cheri Tronrud, nine grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother, Peter P. Sawicki.

Friends may visit at the Coyle Funeral Home, 1770 S Reynolds Rd on Tuesday from 2-8 p.m. Funeral services will be Wednesday at 10:30 am at Trinity Lutheran Church 4560 Glendale Ave., Toledo where the family will greet friends beginning at 10:00 am. Entombment Toledo Memorial Park, Sylvania.

Considering Jerry's' deep love for music, memorials may take the form of a contribution to the Music Program at Maumee Valley Country Day School, 1715 So. Reynolds Road, Toledo, OH 43614 or St. John's Jesuit High School Music Program, 5901 Airport Hwy. Toledo, Ohio 43615

(NEWS ARTICLE) Henry J. "Jerry" Sawicki, Jr., a longtime leader in Toledo-area real estate and an accomplished jazz saxophonist, died Wednesday in Naples, Fla. He was 81.

He died in hospice care because of complications from a stroke, relatives said.

The native Toledoan was born May 17, 1930. He was a Renaissance man and lived a life with enough adventure for several. He made a fortune in his business, recorded several jazz albums, forged many household metal items, served in real estate and in elected posts in development, and was an avid spear fisherman.

He crash-landed a plane, shipwrecked on a sandbar in the Bahamas, and led a band that played at President Harry Truman's inaugural parade.

And yet he loved simple things, son Jerry Sawicki III said, such as gardening or cooking for his family on Saturdays.

"When you blew all the smoke off him, he was a pretty simple person," he said. Mr. Sawicki's motto, the son said, was that success is when opportunity meets preparedness.

A man of modest beginnings who never graduated from college, he worked various jobs and played jazz for years until a chance meeting, in a nightclub, with real-estate developer John Whelan, who in 1953 hired him as a salesman.

He quickly showed the drive characteristic of his life, eventually starting his own business, Sawicki Realty, which he built into a major area development

company.

The company built and sold thousands of homes and controlled thousands of apartments.

Mr. Sawicki forged numerous business partnerships and came to control, either personally or through partnerships, most elements of real estate deals, from lumber to finance to developing floor plans and excavation.

Many major real-estate developers in the area learned the trade from him; the training ground was once termed Sawicki real estate school.

Mr. Sawicki left active involvement in the company he built but found much to occupy himself.

He rekindled his love affair with jazz, which, as the second love of his life, had led him to his first: his wife, Lois, whom he married in 1950.

He started playing music while young and was gifted enough to earn a scholarship while at DeVilbiss High School to Valley Forge Military Academy in Pennsylvania.

He led its band at Mr. Truman's 1948 inauguration.

Mr. Sawicki played jazz throughout the area before his realty career, and he picked it up again after he retired.

He played with the Murphys and the Jimmy Cook group and once shared the stage with Dizzy Gillespie.

Business success allowed the pursuit of many hobbies.

He spearfished in the Bahamas, cooked Southern-style food, sailed boats, flew planes, and wove baskets in his old age.

Mr. Sawicki had a fearlessness about him, his son said.

In 1973, he was flying a single-engine plane over West Virginia with his wife when the engine quit.

He clipped a grove of trees and crashed into a field, but the pair walked away mostly unharmed.

Within days, he chartered a new plane home.

The 1981 murder of his brother, Pete, in Ottawa Hills was the only challenge in life from which he did not quickly rebound, his son said.

He struggled with the murder's aftermath for years, until he fell back on faith for comfort.

For a man with so many interests and involvement in varied public positions, he never kept a large social circle.

Al Hotchkiss, who got his start in real estate with Mr. Sawicki, called the man more a brother than a friend or colleague but said there was always an impenetrable fence around him.

He said Mr. Sawicki was as focused and driven a man as he had ever met, one who commanded respect as soon as he entered a room.

And yet, he remained a mystery to most.

"I guess a lot of great men are that way," Mr. Hotchkiss said.

Mr. Sawicki is survived by his wife, Lois Ann, daughters, Jana Sawicki, Jill Sawicki, and Lisa Holman, son, Jerry Sawicki III, sisters, Dixie Fritts and Cheri Tronrud, nine grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be at the Coyle Funeral Home, 1770 S. Reynolds Rd., between 2 p.m. and 8 Tuesday. Funeral services are to be at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday at Trinity Lutheran Church, 4560 Glendale Ave.

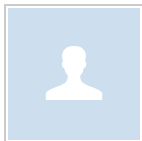
The family suggests tributes to the music programs at Maumee Valley Country Day School or St. John's Jesuit High School.

Contact Nolan Rosenkrans at: nrosenkrans@theblade.com or 419-724-6086.

Published in Toledo Blade on December 24, 2011

Print

Tribute Wall



“ Dear Lois,

Although I don't believe I have had the pleasure of meeting you personally I was an acquaintance of Jerry Jr. and know your son Jerry III.

The last time I spoke with your husband was after I sent him a copy of my book "Evil Brothers" concerning Peter's tragic death and the other atrocities the Cook brothers were responsible for.

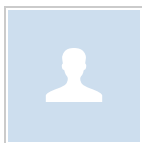
Your husband was such a distinguished gentleman and leaves a legacy of love and community service that is second to none.

I am sorry I was out of town and could not attend the services but my prayers and thoughts are with you and the family.

God Bless,

Frank Stiles##imported-begin##Frank P. Stiles topcop@buckeye-express.com##imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ *I am sorry for your loss. I enjoyed his talks with me.
(I was one of the carpenters to help build your home here in Toledo).*

May God give you peace and comfort during this.

Dan Roth##imported-begin##Dan Roth shadowmalone@bex.net##imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ *Its been an honor and a prievlege to have worked for you in the past, my deepest and heartfelt sympathy, god be with you.##imported-begin##Roxanne Rogers##imported-end##*

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ *Dear Jerry & Angie,*

So sorry to hear of your father/father-in-law's passing. May the support of friends and family and the love of God bring you comfort in the days ahead. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your entire family during this difficult time.##imported-begin##Paul & Diane Forquer forquer@accesstoledo.com##imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ *Lois, family and friends....*

First, I'll share verbatim in LTC Dick Leisters' comments above. I barely got to know Jerry thru our infrequent VF Band alumni happenings, but enough to always remember him as the absolute gentleman and achiever. Moreover, having played on a few concert and/or jazz occasions with him, we can also add the musician's top label "monster".

Our prayers for all, and thanks for your having shared Jerry with all of us.

George Newell VFband'53c##imported-begin##George Newell BigbandGN@aol.com##imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ to lisa and her family so sorry to see the passing of your dad in the paper. my memories of him go back to the house in maumee with the lime green carpet, white furniture and the baby grand piano. not to mention the rides to the store in the lime green cadillac! because of the holidays i was unable to attend the funeral home having been out of state to visit my son in nebraska. God love you and your family. take care sue###imported-begin###susan freimark s.freimark @promedica.org###imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ It is with deep regret that I have received the E-mail concerning Jerry Sawicki's passing...I was a classmate of his and a fellow clarinet player...We shared many happy memories in the days of our youth and assent to manhood. Although we never maintained close contact through the years, we were close in memories...and I would hear about his great success from other alumni in our group...My feelings and prayers go out to his family at this time of sadness.
LTC Col. Richard Leister class of 49 and 51 C
Band Captain 51 PMS 69/73###imported-begin###LTC Col. Richard Leister###imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with the family at this sad and difficult time.###imported-begin###Rich and Carole Harris###imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ Please accept our sincere condolences.##imported-begin##The Westmark Family##imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ Jo and I were greatly saddened with the news of Jerry's passing and fondly remember all the times we met at various local jazz venues where I had the honor to sit in alongside Jerry on dozens of old favorite jazz tunes...I considered Jerry as my jazz mentor who was always complimentary of my playing and he will remain in my memory as a good friend and the most highly respected player I had ever met in my life of 79 years... Ted##imported-begin##Jo & Ted Jenson / Naples##imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Sweet Lois,

Jerry has left us all with wonderful memories of his kind, gentle, bigger than life spirit . We will never forget the Jazz sessions that Jerry added so much talent to...you and Jerry were an inspiration to all of us. We are so glad you came to Naples and shared with us. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Al and Joy##imported-begin##Al and Joy Lucchese##imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Lois,

I am sorry to hear of the passing of your Sweetheart. I have so many fond memories of the 4 of us. I often reminisce of the good times flying with Jerry to all of our meetings. I will see Jerry again soon, I'm sure. God Bless, Bill###imported-begin###*Bill Holden Lkohan@comcast.net*###imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ When I was a boy my father decided to have a garage sale. Our house sat considerably further off the road compared to the other houses on Bancroft. And since we didn't actually own a "Garage" at the time, everything that was to be sold had to be dragged well over a hundred yards to the end of our driveway. "Everything!!" Not only was this my job I was also charged with the task of minding the store. I guess my parents thought there was nothing better for a 13 year old boy to do in midsummer. This went on for weeks until one day a man pulled into the driveway with this very unique car, an Excalibur. I've seen it drive by before. Every day as a matter a fact. The man got out and introduced himself, bought this old sewing machine, and then invited me to come and meet his son and family. And there the journey began.

It's been close to 40 years now since I first met Mr. Sawicki at the end of my driveway. And since that day I can say I never really got to know him on a one-on-one level. I think maybe that was just his way. But, in the times that I did speak with him it turned out to be a lesson. Lessons that I did not come to appreciate until later in life. I would often see him working on his farm, covered with dirt, and loving every minute of it.

For me, this was his greatest gift. He taught me that a person doesn't have to have allot to be happy. And that anyone can achieve anything as long as you're will to work for it. His connection to the "Land" and the simple appreciation that with a little sweat and hard work, anyone can create their own dreams. These are lessons that inspire me to this day.

I will surly miss this man.

Rev 21.4.

Tim McCormick###imported-begin##McCormick family macak47ar15@gmail.com###imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ Words cannot express our sadness in hearing of Jerry's passing. Somehow we can't grasp it, knowing him so well, and being a part of his life. We send our love and prayers to Lois and family. Mal had a serious operation in Nov. and we nearly lost him with a complete heart block. Please stay in touch.

Sadly, Marianne and Mal

###imported-begin##Mal and Marian King
mking234@comcast.net###imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ All of us share with Lois and family, great sorrow the loss of a good friend and fellow musician, whose unique talents we all will miss. Jean and ken###imported-begin##Jean Packard mopspopsnaples@aol.com###imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Jerry & Angie,
I am so sorry to hear about your loss. Jerry, although I have not met your father you spoke very highly of him and its very obvious you are following in his footsteps.His accomplishments were many and I can tell he was loved by many people and will truly be missed.God bless all of your family and my prayers are with you at this very difficult time.

Mary,

Brondes Ford###imported-begin##Mary Lantagne-Brondes
Ford###imported-end##

December 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM