

JIM MYERSON

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REMEMBERED

California Businessman and Entrepreneur Jim Myerson, 82, brought sweet creativity to Wine Warehouse and 21st Century Spirits, his beverage industry endeavors.

Jim Myerson, described by his peers as a “modern businessman with old-fashioned ethics,” not only leaves behind the legacies of his successful family businesses and Blue Ice Vodka, one of America’s vanguard vodka brands, but also a lasting impact on California’s wine and spirits industry.

Over the years, Wine Warehouse (which he co-founded) and 21st Century Spirits emerged as bonafide institutions for both connoisseur consumers and beverage industry movers and shakers. However, these landmark achievements were built with Myerson’s characteristic warmth, savvy and good humor. His commitment to the success of his businesses and staff lasted up to the date of his passing, November 10, 2008. Myerson, however, was modest about his achievements, and described his liquor business as, “an old-school family business with a team of valued employees, extending the Myerson family values of honor and hard work throughout their companies.” However, his peers also respected him for being a modern businessman who always staying up to date with new products and practices. Through it all, he was known for “hand-shake contracts”—his word was his bond and he believed in giving people

the opportunity to do their very best work.

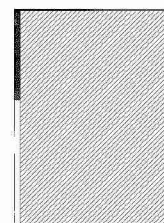
Los Angeles native Myerson was born in 1926, where he attended Los Angeles schools. After honing his life and business skills at Stanford University (graduating in 1949), he went on to serve as a radio technician in the U.S. Navy during World War II. After the war, he dedicated nearly 60 years to the Ben Myerson Candy Company working with his brother Bob Myerson, one of California’s oldest family owned candy companies founded by their father Ben Myerson in 1937. Myerson spent nine years on the board of directors of the National Confectioners Association and was inducted into the Candy Hall of Fame in 2004 for his work at Ben Myerson Candy Company.

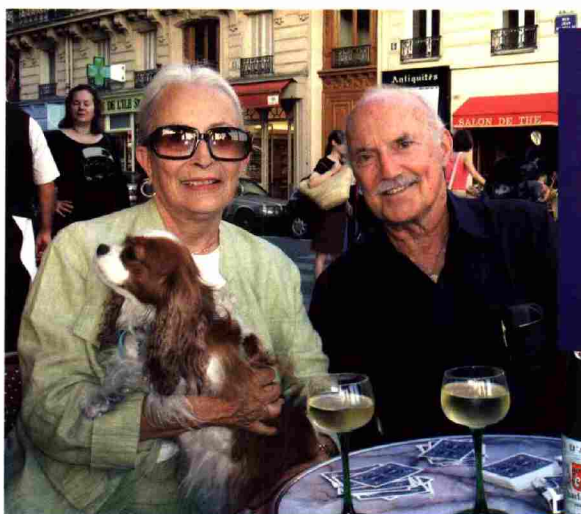
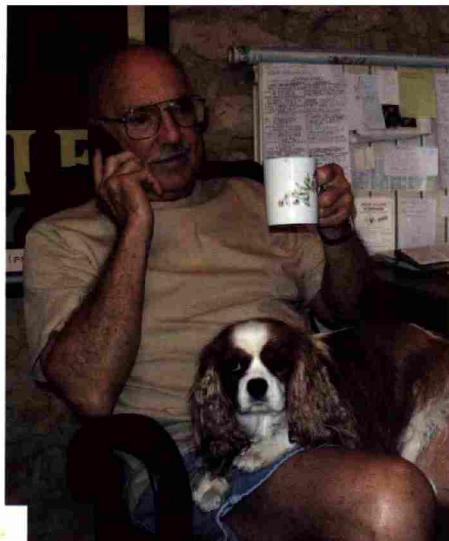
Although their work in the candy industry earned them a sweet reputation in the local business community, in 1973 the Myerson brothers went on to establish

Wine Warehouse. Today, it is recognized as an industry standard bearer that sells and distributes more than 10,000 wines, beers, spirits, non-alcoholic beverages and glassware, as one of the state’s largest distributors with branches in both Northern and Southern California. Starting with a single container of French Burgundy, Myerson and his brother built the business upon delivering quality and value to consumers, carefully selecting international products to represent the best offerings.

Late in his life, Myerson’s creative and entrepreneurial spirit inspired the launch of Blue Ice Vodka in 2001 for his family’s 21st Century Spirits company. Blue Ice, a premium American potato vodka made in Idaho, was for Myerson was “a fun challenge” that he dedicated his retirement years to. “Creating something new is a passion for me,” remarked Myerson last year, who loved the challenge of building his premium vodka into a national brand.

James P. Myerson, current president of Wine Warehouse, eulogized his uncle by noting, “Above everything else, Uncle Jim was a dreamer. His outgoing personality, ingenuity and ultimate focus on customer service and being two steps ahead of the crowd, made the products and companies he helped to build stand out. Uncle Jim





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made friends easily in each industry he was a part of, and never skipped a beat." Myerson was also widely known for his zest for life, inside and out of the beverage world. He enjoyed sharing his interests in sailing, skiing, traveling and golf with family and friends. A dedicated Francophile, he mastered the language, and was fortunate to make many friends on his many trips to France that enriched his life personally and professionally.

"There was never a time that Jim felt illness would curtail his ambition or stop him from planning for the future of Blue Ice Vodka," says Diane, his wife of 50 years. "He was looking forward to the launch of the Blue Ice Organic Winter Wheat Vodka. Up until the end, Jim was the ultimate educator for Blue Ice Vodka, even when we went out to dinner at some of our favorite restaurants on our own time. He would always order the Blue Ice martini, shaken, not stirred. If the waiter told him there was no Blue Ice martini, he would take whoever was assigned to our table to the bar, show him or her the bottle, explain the perfect martini and then offer them chapter and verse on what made Blue Ice Vodka special, no doubt inspiring those who listened to him."

Diane also delights in describing how Blue Ice Organic martinis were served at his memorial, as a vivid and flavorful reminder of his legacy. "He was very passionate about the vodka he spent the last five years of his life creating," she explains. "What he left unfinished was the Blue Ice Organic Vodka, slated to come out this January. While we still look forward to the launch, the excitement of this new product launch would have been something he would have loved to witness first hand."

At the aforementioned memorial, the cocktail itself was a perfect coda for the man behind the vodka: a martini shaken, not stirred. It had to specifically be shaken 25 times, and accented with an onion and olive on the side.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by daughter Dana Myerson Agamalian, her husband John and grandchildren Alexa and Grant, as well as daughter Carol Myerson Sever, her husband Jim and grandchildren Ellery, Olivia and Rory. Also surviving him is his brother Bob and sister-in-law Barbara Myerson, along with nephews James P. Myerson and Allen Myerson and niece Linda Myerson Dean. ■