

Mulcahy, Bud d. 4-21-2002

Des Moines  
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# Car dealer Bud Mulcahy dies at 71

Bud Mulcahy, 71, of Des Moines, who built a car business on Des Moines' east side into the largest Jeep dealership in Iowa, died Sunday of pneumonia at Iowa Methodist Medical Center.

In 1977, Mr. Mulcahy gave up the security of being the sales manager at Bob Brown Chevrolet in Des Moines and bought a faltering American Motors Corp. dealership at 201 E. Locust St. — a

decision that puzzled some of his friends. One of the AMC brands was Jeep — at the time just a rugged descendant of the general purpose military vehicle of the same name.



Mulcahy

But Mr. Mulcahy's business gamble paid off in later years when AMC was acquired by Chrysler Corp. and when Chrysler added the Jeep Grand Cherokee to the product line, marking the start of the nation's love affair with the sport-utility vehicle. Bud Mulcahy Jeep Inc. now sells more Jeeps than any other dealer in Iowa.

"He started it on pretty much a wing and a prayer," said Jeff Court, the general manager of the business and Mr. Mulcahy's son-in-law.

"His whole approach was that he was one to remember people and their names and their families," Court said. "That's been his success. He's genuine. He was in it because he loved dealing with people."

On the south side of Des Moines, where he lived in the 3000 block of Druid Hill Drive, Mr. Mulcahy was known as a dedicated supporter of Lincoln High School, especially the school's girls' softball teams. At every home game, and at many road games, Mr. Mulcahy and his wife, Jan, were seated in their lawn chairs behind the backstop with friends.

Mr. Mulcahy was a native of Collins and had lived in Des Moines most of his life. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean War.

He was a member of Za-Ga-Zig Shrine, the Jesters, Des Moines Consistory, Auburn Masonic Lodge and the Des Moines and Iowa automobile dealers' associations.

Services will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday at Park Avenue Christian Church. Burial will be in Sunset Memorial Gardens Cemetery.

The family will greet friends from 5 to 8 p.m. today at Southtown Funeral Home.

Surviving are his wife; three daughters, Sherry Ward of Des Moines, Pam Court of West Des Moines, and Kelli Seid of Madison, Wis.; two sisters, Betty Lepeltak and Elaine Sorensen, both of Urbandale; and six grandchildren.

The family suggests that memorial contributions be made to the Animal Rescue League or the Shriners Crippled Children's Hospitals.