

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: Ray Blew

Chris Beytes

Amy Blew-Ordog shared the sad news of the passing of her grandfather, Raymond L. “Ray” Blew, patriarch of Centerton Nurseries of Bridgeton, New Jersey. He died March 14 at 90 years of age after a brief illness. Wrote Amy, “Ray made such a difference in our industry and is the reason why our farm has been so successful transitioning into the third generation. Here’s hoping we can keep making him proud and take this thing into generation four.”

Like many of his generation, Ray’s obituary is punctuated with experiences beyond those of the family nursery business (which he founded in 1974 with his son, Denny), such as playing semi-pro football for the Bridgeton Indians and receiving an honorary Doctorate of Management from Delaware Valley College.

He had loads of experience in the mushroom and vegetable business, and even consulted in food production and processing in Central and South America. He was also active in scores of associations and organizations, most in agriculture, but not all—for instance, he served as president of the Federal Reserve Bank (Eastern Division) of the U.S. Treasury. He joked that he was the leader of the Worst Handwriting Association of America.

Here’s something interesting: Ray apparently designed and built the world’s first mobile potting machine and the world’s first “electronic pruning apparatus.” He patented neither, preferring to make the ideas available for the advancement of the industry. **GT**