

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: Flower Time's Bob Ench

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There are a few long-defunct businesses that made a big impact while they were here. One of those is Flower Time, the Long Island retail garden center founded by Bob Ench. Bob passed away on July 17 at the age of 83.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Bob graduated from Farmingdale State College on Long Island in 1960 and started Flower Time shortly after, eventually growing it to 38 stores. He even took Flower Time public! In the '80s, Flower Time merged with the rapidly expanding Frank's Nursery & Crafts (which had just been acquired by General Host Corporation). For a time, Bob served as the 250-store chain's chairman.

In 1988, Bob started Hopewell Nursery in Bridgeton, New Jersey, with the plan to build a first-class golf course with specialty trees and plants being highlighted on each hole. When the market shifted, so did Bob, and Hopewell Nursery was formed. In 2020, Central Garden & Pet acquired Hopewell to go along with their Bell Nursery acquisition in 2018.

Bob's contributions to horticulture have been widely recognized. In the 1980s, Bob worked with Lady Bird Johnson on beautification projects. He was on the Board of Directors for The National Wildflowers Research Center. At Farmingdale, Bob served as president of the Alumni Association, and was a member of the College Council and the Horticulture Committee. In 1983, he received the highest honor Farmingdale can bestow, the Ram's Horn Award and received an Honorary Doctorate in 2010. Farmingdale also honored him by dedicating their Ornamental Horticulture Teaching Gardens, the "Robert F. Ench Teaching Gardens," in his name. **GT**