

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: Bert R. Hybels

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Bert R. Hybels, a well-known and beloved figure in the Kalamazoo, Michigan, community and a pioneer of the bedding plant industry, passed away on November 2. He was 84.

Born in 1940 in Kalamazoo, Bert studied political science at DePauw University in Indiana, then earned an MBA from Western Michigan University before founding his own company, Bert R. Hybels, Inc., in 1962 after the passing of his father.

At that time, the business was primarily focused on produce. A few years later, recognizing the potential of bedding plants, Bert gradually shifted his focus and resources toward expanding their role in the business. Over the next 50 years, he transformed Bert R. Hybels, Inc. into a powerhouse in the wholesale production and distribution of bedding plants. His vision, persistence and entrepreneurial spirit were instrumental in establishing Kalamazoo as the “Bedding Plant Capital of the World.”

Under his leadership, Bert R. Hybels, Inc. became a favorite supplier of independent garden centers in 26 states throughout the Midwest and the South, from Minnesota to Texas. His life-long mantra? “If you work hard, good things happen.” Today, two of his sons carry on the family business, which still bears his name. **GT**