

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: Michael Vukelich Sr.

Chris Beytes

Michael Vukelich Sr. passed away in May at the age of 87. His son, Michael Jr., founder of Color Spot with Jerry Halamuda, passed away in 2011 from cancer at the age of 61.

Michael Sr. got into the nursery business in 1950 when he founded M.V. Nursery, which eventually grew into a West Coast powerhouse. Michael was a pioneer in chain store sales, recognizing early on that supermarkets drew a high volume of shoppers. He was also a pioneer in plant displays and rolling racks, building his own display racks that he set up for free for customers. He even offered to keep them stocked—a forerunner to today's service programs. Unfortunately, he was forced to file for bankruptcy in the early '80s. That was when his son came into the picture, leasing the business from the bank and renaming it Color Spot.

Said Jerry of his close friend and former business partner, "His 65-plus year career in the nursery industry positively and significantly impacted every part of the operational, distribution and marketing segment of the business. The industry has lost a great icon and industry leader." **GT**