GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: August “Sonny” Hummert III

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August “Sonny” Hummert, the third generation owner of the famous horticultural distribution company Hummert International, passed away suddenly on May 2 while enjoying a walk with Kathy, his wife of 55 years. He was 78—but you’d never know he wasn’t 60, which is why his passing was such a shock.

Who among us has not poured over the pages of the massive Hummert catalog, the Sears Wish Book of the greenhouse? Sonny’s grandfather founded the business in St. Louis in 1932 as the A.H. Hummert Seed Company. Sonny’s father joined the business after WWII; Sonny came aboard in 1961. By then they were selling greenhouse supplies, as well as seed, and their catalog was already well known. He served as president of the family business from 1974 and led the business for the next 46 years.

Sonny often described the business as “selling everything needed to kill a plant or grow a plant and everything you would find in a greenhouse, including the greenhouse.” He took pride in seeking out the very best products he could find to supply to customers. And he included a personal note in every invoice sent out by the company for decades that read, “Thank you for this order! If you would care to comment or make suggestions about our products or services, we would appreciate hearing from you. Your note will come to my personal attention.”

Nobody was friendlier, more optimistic or younger at heart than Sonny. **GT**