

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: Gary Miller of Milgro Nursery

Chris Beytes

Gary Fred Miller, founder of Milgro Nursery, passed away peacefully in his sleep September 3 at home surrounded by his wife, Farrelyn, and his eight children. He was 74. Gary suffered from Alzheimer's and he quickly declined after a fall that broke his hip.

Gary was born in Salt Lake City in 1947, the fourth oldest of eight children. He played baseball and football for Bountiful High School, and attended college at Utah State, Brigham Young University and the University of Utah, where he majored in Business Management. In 1971, while having knee surgery from a football injury, he met a beautiful nurse with long black hair. Within six months he and Farrelyn were married.

In 1975, they moved to California, where Gary landed a job at Venco Nursery in Oxnard. Despite not knowing the difference between a fern and a chrysanthemum, he quickly learned the business and five years later became the owner, renaming it Milgro Nursery. He soon became one of the largest potted plant growers in the country, expanding the business to other locations, including Santa Barbara, Nipomo, Moorpark and Newcastle, Utah. He was well-known, loved and respected within the floral industry, and he passed down this legacy to his children. Today, his brother, Barry, and sons Scott and Brad, and daughters Melissa (Muncy) and Cherilyn (Smith), run the business (youngest son Michael just left Milgro to start his own business). Gary also leaves behind 31 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

In addition to the nursery industry, Gary was deeply committed to service in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He loved traveling, flying his own plane, playing golf and visiting Hawaii, which was like a second home.

"Gary was one of those guys that lived a full life many strive for," said Vaughan Horticulture's Brent Boardman. **GT**