



Donald R. Barker

1921-1980

“Don was a driver...a tough man...a man who wasn't afraid of a challenge, but had a big soft heart and was one of the Northwest's most generous men. He worked hard, played hard, gambled, won and shared his winnings. His handshake was his bond.”

These words most fittingly describe the enterprising and big-hearted character of Donald R. Barker – lumberman, businessman and philanthropist. Hard work, keen judgment and daring – those were key elements that made him a prominent leader in the Oregon timber industry.

Don Barker was born July 30, 1921, to George R. and Louise M. Barker in Portland, Oregon. At the age of 16, he moved, with his parents, to Eugene where he resided the rest of his life.

Don's father founded the Westside Lumber Company, thus beginning Don's lifelong career in the timber and lumber industry.

Don Barker later attended the University of Oregon where he was a member of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity. After the University of Oregon, Don returned to work at his father's company. Except for two years in the U.S. Navy during World War II, Don remained a part of that business until 1947 when his father passed away and the company was liquidated.

A year later, in 1948, Don founded his own business, Barker Timber Company, with a tractor and a mortgaged truck. From this truly humble beginning, Don Barker's ingenuity, competitiveness and fierce determination earned him fabulous success in his professional and business career.

With great foresight, Barker began to acquire existing sawmills in Southern Oregon. He bought the Barker-Willamette Lumber Company in 1950 and the Cabax Mills in Grants Pass in 1951. Don soon began to diversify his business interests. He formed Barker Motors in 1956. In

1964 he converted Snellstrom Mills in Eugene into Cabax Plywood Mills. Moon Brothers Trucking Company was purchased in 1973. By 1977, Don had added B-W Export Company, Barker Leasing Company and Barker Investment Company to his chain of successes.

Don Barker was extremely generous of his time, talents and fortune to political, professional, charitable, fraternal, service, civic and community organizations.

Barker was a powerful force in the timber industry through his involvement in various State Boards and Commissions. Don served on the Oregon State Board of Forestry for three consecutive four-year terms, longer than any other appointee until that time, and served as Chairman for four years. He served on numerous advisory boards including Chairman of the Bureau of Land Management, Medford District Advisory Board and represented the United States Government in trade negotiations with Japan.

Barker was a past President of Western Forest Industries Association and served in 1967 as the first President of Northwest Timber Association. He also served as a member of the board of West Coast Lumber Inspection Bureau.

In 1977, Don established the multi-million dollar "Donald R. Barker Foundation" for the express purpose of helping those in need. During his lifetime Don donated generous sums of money to countless educational, religious and charity-supported community organizations. Through the "Donald R. Barker Foundation," an irrevocable charitable

trust, Don's compassion for those deserving, will continue into perpetuity.

Barker was a member and active supporter of the Masonic Lodge, the Hillah Shrine Temple and the B.P.O. Elks.

Barker was largely responsible for building a better sports program for the City of Eugene. He was instrumental in bringing Class AAA baseball to Eugene, and served from 1969 to 1973 as Chairman of the Eugene Boxing and Wrestling Commission. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the University of Oregon's athletic department, earning the title of "Big Daddy Duck." The "Stadium Club" at the University was largely funded by the Donald R. Barker Foundation. Don was also a member and active supporter of the Town Club of Eugene, the Eugene Country Club, the Aero Club of Portland and the Willamette Valley Hoo Hoo Club.

Several honors and awards were bestowed upon Barker during his lifetime. He was appointed a member of the Washington Generals, an honorary service organization, by Washington Lieutenant-Governor John Cherberg. In 1972, Don was recognized in Who's Who for Oregon.

Donald R. Barker died on January 5, 1980, survived by his wife, Coeta and his son, George.

In 1981, Don Barker was honored posthumously as a "Distinguished Oregonian" by the University of Oregon with its "Oregon Pioneer" award. "An individual who led his community in the fields of philanthropy, politics, industry and the arts."