

## **Kenneth Roach, 90, founder of McCathay Timber, Passes Away**

Remembering Kenneth R. Roach of St. Clair Shores, Michigan

Kenneth R. Roach, 90, former co-owner of McCathay Timber in Chicago, IL and McCausey Lumber Company in Roseville, MI, passed away peacefully at home on Sunday, December 31, 2017, surrounded by family.

Born on May 26, 1927, in Detroit, Michigan, Ken's connection to the hardwood plywood business started after he married his loving wife Helen (Gillera) on Nov. 29, 1952. Helen's father, George Gillera, owner of McCausey Lumber Company, introduced Ken to the plywood sales business. Ken loved being a salesman, and after George died in 1972, Ken and his brother-in-law Jim Gillera bought the business. When the Detroit metropolitan area became saturated with builder supply yards in the early 1970s, Ken and Jim made the decision to diversify and began importing specialty wood products. McCausey became an importer of specialty items not commonly produced by U.S. manufacturers. When Ken retired in 2006, the next generation took over. McCausey is now co-owned by Ken's daughter, Heleen Heaton, and Jim's son, Michael Gillera, who are carrying on the family business as McCausey Specialty Products. Ken also shared his love of the plywood business with his sons, Ken and Dan, who are now co-owners of McCathay Timber Company in Chicago. McCathay has been a member of HPVA since 1987. About his business, Ken said, "You have to give 100 percent, even if 50 percent of your efforts don't pay off, because you never know which 50 percent."

Ken was an avid world traveler, and took advantage of his business travels to learn about the world around him. In the early 1980s, Ken and his wife took a trip to Finland to negotiate for scaffold plank and material for concrete forms. While in Finland, Ken saw 40-foot sheets of plywood—a manufacturing process not done anywhere else in the world at the time – so he brought it back, and began a life-long quest for unique woods and manufacturing processes. He initiated business relationships with companies in Finland, Germany, South America, Singapore and Hong Kong. In addition, McCausey began importing mahogany from the Philippines, South America and Africa for use by automotive companies in car modeling, and teak from Thailand for use in boat making. The 40-foot sheets of plywood from Finland were used for scaffolding. The best part of his career was being able to show his children the world. He visited 61 countries, often traveling with his children and grandchildren on business trips to teach them about wood products and how to travel.

Ken was also a proud World War II veteran. He dropped out of high school and enlisted in the Navy on February 5, 1945 at the age of 17. Later, with the benefit of the G.I. Bill, Helen's encouragement, and 10 years of night school, he graduated from University of Detroit in 1960. He is survived by his loving wife of 65 years, Helen, four daughters and two sons: Colleen Krausmann, Eileen Bogosian, Maureen Tobin, Heleen Heaton, Ken Roach and Dan Roach, as well as 16 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. Services were held January 6 at St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church, St. Clair Shores, MI, with burial on January 8, 2018 at Great Lakes National Cemetery, Holly, Michigan.

With sincere thanks to those he met in the HPVA community. Ken loved the hardwood plywood business, and always enjoyed attending meetings and conventions to share appreciation for hardwood plywood as a staple in our daily lives.

From: Dan Roach