



SUMNER FELDBERG

JUN 19, 1924 - JUL 1, 2022



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Sumner L. Feldberg, founder of Zayre and former CEO of TJX, dies at 98

In Memoriam -- of Sumner Feldberg

Sumner was born on June 19, 1924. He passed away peacefully on July 1, 2022. He was married to Esther Lichter Feldberg and was father to Michael Feldberg and wife Ruth Lazarus, Ellen Feldberg Gordon and husband Michael, and Beth Lichter Mann. He was predeceased by his daughter, Mollye Lichter Block and son James Lichter.

Sumner, known to all as “Sonny”, grew up in Newton, Massachusetts and graduated with high honors from Newton High School. He studied at Harvard and during his freshman year he enlisted in the US Air Force. He was trained as a meteorologist. He became a Lieutenant and was sent to Natal, Brazil to furnish the incoming US pilots with weather reports on their missions to India, China and Africa. When a US General needed a lieutenant in his Ashville, North Carolina office, Sonny was transferred there because the Major in Natal thought that since Feldberg went to Harvard, he should know how to write a letter.

Once back from his service in the military, Sonny reentered Harvard and finished his studies, graduating in 1947, Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa. He then enrolled in the first class of Harvard Business School when it reopened after WW II. Sonny spent the next two years with hundreds of young men studying and wanting to learn the real truth and advantages about business. This graduating class, nicknamed the “millionaire business school class of 1949” did achieve their goals.

After graduation, Sonny joined his father, and uncle and cousin at the Bell Shops. Early on, he was interested in the concept of discount retailing. After observing the model of another discount merchandizing operation, Sonny created his own, more dynamic and impressive model. But the question was what to call the new discount department store. Sonny and his family wanted a short



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name, because neon signs were expensive, and the family could not afford a longer name. They wanted the name to start with a Z, so that it would be distinctive. After a full day of meetings, he overheard his uncle speaking on the phone with a friend, and heard his uncle use the Yiddish expression, Zehr Gut, meaning very good. The family played with the name, Here, Zayre, Everywhere Zayre, and the new company, Zayre, was named. The first store opened in Hyannis, Massachusetts. Zayre went public in 1962.

Mr. Sumner, as he was affectionately called at the office, began adding more discount stores to the organization. He created a fashion catalogue called Chadwicks of Boston and started a women's discount chain called Hit or Miss. He then founded BJ'S Wholesale Club and founded TJ MAXX. Eventually these stores fell under the parent company, TJX, which now also includes Home Goods, Home Sense, Marshalls, Sierra, Winners, Smart Sense and TK MAXX in Europe and Australia. As of its most recent Annual Report, TJX has approximately 360,000 employees.

Sonny was active on many corporate and university boards including Brandeis University, Boston University Medical School, Harvard School of Public Health, Beth Israel Leahy Clinic, Mass Mutual Insurance Company and Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP). He was also on the National Retail Merchants Association (NRMA) board for 10 years and became its president for an additional 5 years. After

his service with NRMA, Sonny was awarded the golden medal-of-honor for being an outstanding CEO and as a major contributor in the field of discount, retail merchandizing worldwide.

Sonny and his wife Esther were long time members of both the exceptional Washington Institute and the International Leadership Reunion. (ILR). They travelled annually, in support of the peaceful agendas both organizations represented, supporting Israel and the many Jewish communities around the world.

Sonny loved tennis, golf, skiing and bridge, and watched over 10, 000 football games both in person and on TV. He loved relaxing at his Vermont get-a-way, on weekends. He was a member of Belmont Country Club, Queechee Country Club and The Palm Beach Country Club. He leaves 9 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren whom he absolutely adored.

The Feldberg family is planning a Celebration of Life via Zoom for August. Further information will be announced at a later date. Sumner would appreciate it, in lieu of donations, to make a gift in his memory to Facing History And Ourselves, 16 Hurd Road, Brookline, MA 02446.



Tribute Wall

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BV

Benjamin Villanueva lit a candle in honor of SUMNER.

Mr.felberg sonny or pal as he Always replied to me what a great man he was to us that worked for him you will be missed my friend we shared many good times rest easy ❤️ 👤 🏈

July 5 at 10:00 AM



JB

Jim Bertles posted:

So sad and sorry to hear of Sumner's passing. He was a real gentleman, and I loved seeing his smile. I told him often how much he reminded me of my grandfather whom I adored, and I enjoyed his stories about Zayre and TJX. He was very simply one of my favorites. My sympathies and best wishes go out to Esther and all of Sumner's family.

July 4 at 6:11 AM

CV

Cindy Valley lit a candle in honor of SUMNER.

July 4 at 5:13 AM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring SUMNER by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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