



B.J. "Red" McCombs

October 19, 1927 - February 19, 2023

Red McCombs, Texas Business Icon and Entrepreneur, Passes Away at 95

Red McCombs – beloved father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend – peacefully passed away surrounded by loved ones on Sunday, February 19, 2023. McCombs was a multi-industry business magnate known for his local car dealerships, pro sports team ownership, generous philanthropy, and bigger-than-Texas personality. With a booming voice, classic drawl, and mop of red hair, McCombs left a legacy in line with his lifelong desire to support San Antonio and all of Texas.

He is preceded by his wife, Charline, in December 2019. Red and Charline were truly life partners, enjoying 69 years of marriage. From sports team ownership to their charitable giving, every major decision and action was made in tandem. Red’s loving affection for Charline was well known and he was often quoted saying that “of all the business deals I’ve made, the only lifetime contract I’ve ever signed was with Charline.”

McCombs was born on October 19, 1927, in Spur, Texas. While his birth certificate reads Billy Joe McCombs, only his parents and siblings used that name – to everyone else he was simply, Red.

Growing up in the Great Depression, a strong family value was cemented at a

young age. Despite the whole family, including three other siblings, living on his father's \$24.75-a-week Ford mechanic's salary, Red saw his parents tithe each Sunday at church. Moreover, as drifters came through town looking for work, he watched as his mother would provide bedding and food for anyone who came begging. Red saw and felt the joy of giving to others and made it an integral part of his life.

After serving in the Army after World War II, Red used the GI Bill to study at the business and law schools at The University of Texas at Austin. While waiting for a corporate job to begin, Red joined a friend to sell cars at a Ford dealership in Corpus Christi. After selling ten in one weekend, he was hooked and never made it to that corporate job. McCombs immediately began selling 30 or more cars a month, and within half a year set out on his own. McCombs Enterprises traces its roots to 1953, when Red began McCombs Used Cars on Water Street in Corpus Christi.

When Red's first and only boss, Austin Hemphill, was having financial troubles at his San Antonio dealership, he called his former star salesman to come to the rescue. Red sat down with the sales team of 15, laying out the framework of how they would begin operating. Quickly, 10 of those salesmen walked out the door. Red then turned to the remaining five and promised them that if they stuck it out with him, he'd see to it that they each became car dealers eventually. Within a few months, Red sold his way back into a stable financial position, earning ownership of what is today now Red McCombs Ford. And yes, he kept his promise in getting those five salesmen their own dealerships.

While growing his car dealership empire, which would later reach more than 60 stores, Red and his family fell in love with San Antonio. It became home for them and would be for the remainder of his life. When presented the opportunity to help with HemisFair, Red jumped at it. Red's connections with Ford secured the Ford Pavilion and subsequently attracted other corporate

exhibitors. What he then realized, much to his chagrin, was how the majority of corporate America overlooked what they viewed as a “dusty old cow town.”

Red realized that San Antonio needed to be “put on the map,” and that the quickest way of doing so was via professional sports. With this in mind, he and a brazen team of speculators made a deal to acquire Dallas’s failed ABA team. While the first years were tough, the city of San Antonio eventually latched on to the Spurs and the common identity it offered for San Antonio. The team truly does belong to the people of San Antonio.

Red owned the Spurs two separate times, the latter of which ended with him handing the reigns over to the McDermott group and a collection of San Antonio businesses and families to ensure the team would forever remain in San Antonio. But it also allowed Red to pursue another dream of his: the NFL. After working to get a team in San Antonio to no avail, Red took a chance and managed to buy the Minnesota Vikings. McCombs understood the importance of the Vikings to the state of Minnesota, and never planned on moving the team. He did realize, however, that their stadium situation would lead to the team departing Minnesota if left unresolved. After struggling to get stadium support for seven years, Red decided he wouldn’t be able to make that breakthrough and sold the team.

The joy of giving to others has always been important to Red, and with his business successes came the opportunity to make a bigger impact. Red’s passion for business and education found the perfect crossover at The University of Texas. In 1999, McCombs gave \$50 Million to the business school, which the Board of Regents renamed in Red’s honor. Texas McCombs has consistently ranked at the top for its undergraduate and MBA programs, and especially its accounting, finance, information systems, marketing, and entrepreneurship departments. This is a particularly incredible

accomplishment considering its peers are often ten times smaller in student count. Beyond the business school, Red has helped fund a brand-new softball stadium and the north end zone at DKR-Texas Memorial Stadium, both named in Red's honor.

In 2005, Red and Charline donated \$30 Million to M.D. Anderson to create the Institute for the Early Detection and Treatment of Cancer. This program was a one-of-its-kind initiative to bring cross-discipline researchers in-house to take down incurable cancers. Most notably, the institute's Dr. Jim Allison was awarded the Nobel Prize in medicine for his breakthrough with immunotherapy.

Beyond his notable major gifts, McCombs has given tens of millions to numerous San Antonio organizations. Much of his giving was focused on the immediate needs of people after reading or hearing about their dire situations. In 1994, after a fire burned two classrooms at Mary Hull Elementary, a Westside school already at threat of closing due to poor test performances, Red became the school's lead cheerleader. He hosted pep rallies for the students before tests and mentored and encouraged teachers. His spirit of giving all started by seeing the joy of giving to others during the Great Depression.

From the Corpus Christi Clippers to Clear Channel, Red has owned more businesses and told more stories than can be detailed here, but most of them are in his autobiography, *Big Red*. Red's legacy will continue as the current and future generations of the McCombs family carry the torch and execute his vision.

Red is preceded by the love of his life, Charline McCombs. He is survived by his daughters Lynda McCombs, Marsha Shields (John H.), and Connie McNab (Sandy); his grandchildren Carson Rubey IV (Cristina), Chloe Shands

(Matt), Anna Turner (Chris), Joe Shields (Andrea), Charles McNab, Sita McNab, Ian McNab (Alicia), and Easton McNab (Claire); his great-grandchildren Carson Rubey V, Townsend Shands, Christopher Turner, Zachary Turner, Charlotte Shields, Stella McNab, Wylie McNab, Ewan McNab, Billie McNab, Marianne McNab, and Isabella McNab; his sister, LaWanda McCombs; and numerous nephews and nieces.

The memorial service for Red will be held at 10:00 AM at the Tobin Center on Monday, February 27, 2023. Pallbearers will be Red's beloved grandsons. A short reception will be held afterwards in the McCombs Grand Lobby at the Tobin Center. The service will be livestreamed on MissionParks.com.

In lieu of flowers, Red's family requests donations in his memory to M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, PO Box 4486, Houston, TX 77210-4486, The UT Center for Students in Recovery, check payable to The University of Texas at Austin (with Center for Students in Recovery on memo line), PO Box 7458, Austin, TX 78713, or the charity of your choice.

Previous Events

A Celebration of a Life Well Lived

FEB 27. 10:00 AM (CT)

Tobin Center for the Performing Arts
100 Auditorium Circle
San Antonio, TX 78205

Tribute Wall



“ *Mission Park Funeral Chapels & Cemeteries created a Webcast in memory of B.J. "Red" McCombs*

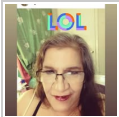


Mission Park Funeral Chapels & Cemetery - February 24, 2023 at 10:12 AM

LB

“ *What a wonderful Mentor, I am honored to have known and worked with Red to make San Antonio a better place; Red was a driving force for San Antonio. I will miss him dearly. Rest in Peace. Lynda Billa Burke*

Lynda Billa Burke - February 27, 2023 at 12:47 PM



REST IN PEACE MR. RED MC COMBS.....S.PAEZ

Sylvia Paez - March 21, 2023 at 06:57 PM

JF

“ *Joni Foster lit a candle in memory of B.J. "Red" McCombs*



Joni Foster - February 27, 2023 at 10:55 AM

RT

“ McCombs Family, please accept my condolences. I so respected the man who simply called me “coach” for coaching his grandson , Joseph . you were the “Coach” of determination, life, smiling, and making everyone feel important.

I pray for peace for all of your family members and all of those who lives you touched.....you will be missed.

Roy Terracina

Roy Terracina - February 27, 2023 at 10:01 AM

DS

“ He was a great guy, meeting him through his support of neurofibromatosis. He was always nice to my family and myself. He donated his time to the organization and well of many other places as well. All the work that he did not for recognition but for his enjoyment. Thank you for everything.

Darylin S. - February 27, 2023 at 07:26 AM

AR

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Ambrose Robinson - February 26, 2023 at 11:46 AM

MP

“ *Red was a special man with a heart the size of Texas. Always making me feel relevant and loved. May God give peace and comfort to the family in this time of loss.*

Michael Price - February 26, 2023 at 10:58 AM

AE

“ *Al and Elizabeth purchased the Joyful Memory for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



Al and Elizabeth - February 26, 2023 at 10:22 AM

JS

“ *One to all ways be remembered, for all he did for our NF group the trips to the Ranch, the Cattle sale. the fun our children had fishing at the ranch and enjoying to world of the out of doors, Red gave so much in support, but in letting our children be themselves, he excepting them as normal, and letting our family enjoy being together. Roger Smith family*

Jannette Smith - February 26, 2023 at 09:27 AM

JC

“ *Red was a phenomenal leader, friend. And visionary for San Antonio! He was Loved, admired, and respected for his generosity. Though a million people knew HIS NAME , I was always impressed when his greeting was inclusive of THEIR NAMES!!! That was Red!!!! He could make you feel special when he flashed his dashing smile and GREETED YOU BY YOUR NAME!
JUST ANOTHER OF HIS MANY TALENTS*

*We had him for 95 years, he now belongs to you, our dear Lord.
Hope you like Fords.*

Dr. Jo Ann Coates

Jo Ann Coates - February 25, 2023 at 06:28 PM

BS

“ *My deepest and sincerest condolences to the McCombs family . Red was a tremendously kind and inspiring person in my life during my time in San Antonio . To know him and learn from him was an absolute honor. He taught me many valuable lessons about life and philanthropy and the art of being good to people . My journey was blessed because Red McCombs was here .*

Bridget Smith - February 25, 2023 at 11:46 AM

EW

“ With prayers and sympathy sent to the McCombs family.

A Hot Day

The day was hot.

The steps on the streets.

The hours of sitting

The sips of water.

May you both enjoy the laughter in heaven.

With sincere thoughts and comfort sent your way.



ESMERALDA WILLIAMS - February 25, 2023 at 12:09 AM

BG

“ Blake George purchased the Lily and Rose Tribute Spray for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



Blake George - February 24, 2023 at 07:53 PM

TT

“ The Ford Houston Region Team purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



The Ford Houston Region Team - February 24, 2023 at 03:56 PM

YP

“ Your KCWX-TV Partners purchased the Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



Your KCWX-TV Partners - February 24, 2023 at 03:14 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



February 24, 2023 at 03:06 PM



“ Rose Tribute was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



February 24, 2023 at 02:48 PM



“ Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



February 24, 2023 at 12:23 PM



“ *Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



February 24, 2023 at 11:49 AM



“ *Frank Holmes, U.S. Global Investors Inc. purchased the Lily and Rose Tribute Spray for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



Frank Holmes, U.S. Global Investors Inc. - February 24, 2023 at 11:28 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



February 24, 2023 at 10:35 AM



“ *Praying for McCombs family.*

A Jones - February 24, 2023 at 10:23 AM

GS

“ Words cannot express the profound affect Mr. McCombs had in my life. I had the honor and pleasure of working for Mr. & Mrs. McCombs at their home my first two years of college in the early 80's. Raised from very humble beginnings and then thrust into a world of extremely successful people was a culture shock. The lessons that Mr. McCombs taught me are still taught to my own children and the thousands of children I interact with every year.

When I developed the Kids Leadership Development Curriculum i teach to my students everyday I called Mr. McCombs, and he reminded me of the lessons he shared with me when I was 18 and to focus on all of the Life Skills as adults we know we must develop to be successful and build it to enrich children's lives at a much earlier age.

I wrote him a simple thank you card to let him know how grateful I was for his mentorship and guidance throughout my life, even though I had not worked for him for 20 years.He picks up the phone and called me, tells me, "Gary, remember the size of the shadow you cast and your reputation of that shadow, nurture it and people around you."

Thank you, Mr. McCombs, you were always like a 2nd father to me and know the the shadow you cast will remain with me, my family and my students forever.

Thank you Marsha for always being so kind and generous. May God bless you, and Keep You, May his Face Shine Down Upon You, May the Lord Lift up His Face upon You, Linda, Connie and the rest of your family, and Give You Peace.

Gary Schill

Gary Schill - February 24, 2023 at 09:48 AM

JL

I loved and loved Red McCombs. What a man. What a servant to others. I wrote a memoir of him a decade or so ago, and I am happy to send it to anyone who requests it by sending such a request to me at. Stjimbow@gmail.com

Sincerely,

James Lutzweiler

James Lutzweiler - February 27, 2023 at 11:08 PM

TR

“ *Toyota Financial Services Central Region purchased the Enduring Grace for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



Toyota Financial Services Central Region - February 24, 2023 at 09:45 AM

MG

“ *I was a newcomer to my birthtown, going to college I remember hearing about Mr. McCombs and then meeting him at the many city gatherings he was invited to. And learned to be grateful for his philanthropy in San Antonio and throughout Texas. He was a role model I believe to many generations. Eventually you forget how fast the years go by. Now I'm a single-mother, an unretired singer-songwriter, artist and a future published author of poetry. I can't believe he's gone. Though not his example. I took a picture with him I will tell my 9 year old daughter...I got to meet him in my early 20's. ❤️👍❤️*



Maria Sicily Guido - February 24, 2023 at 02:16 AM

RB

“ Our deepest condolences to the McCombs Family from life long family friends, the Branham Family. May Red Rest In Peace with his wonderful wife, Charlene So many cherished memories with the family..Prayers, love and hugs .

Rhonda Branham - February 23, 2023 at 11:34 PM

RS

“ Red hired me in 1991 in 7 minutes, i borrowed Dan Kruse's Suit to interview him, Suzie Thomas graciously greeted me, I was with him with Rick and Todd Hovey for almost 8 years, we are eternally grateful for the opportunity he gave me and my family, he was more than an employer, he was a GREAT FRIEND and BROTHER, and Mentor. I had the priviledge to call him on his 95th Birthday and pray over him. May the Lord Bless all his family and give them your Strength, love, and joy.

Rich Hovey Sr - February 23, 2023 at 03:23 PM

RG

“ Rest in Peace with Charline. Love, Greg purchased the Rose Romanesque Bouquet for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



Rest in Peace with Charline. Love, Greg - February 23, 2023 at 01:09 PM



“ *Heavenly Grace Spray was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



February 23, 2023 at 11:09 AM



“ *With our deepest sympathy~UTSA Athletics purchased the Fiery Lily and Rose for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



With our deepest sympathy~UTSA Athletics - February 23, 2023 at 10:58 AM



“ *I'm 43 years old and grew up knowing that Red McCombs was the one and only founder of the San Antonio Spurs! He will be greatly missed and always known for his love for our forever San Antonio Spurs Praying for your family and you Red*

Christina - February 22, 2023 at 05:52 PM



“ *Alamo Auto Auction / ADESA San Antonio purchased the Lily and Rose Tribute Spray for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



Alamo Auto Auction / ADESA San Antonio - February 22, 2023 at 03:18 PM



“ *Celestial Love was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



February 22, 2023 at 02:42 PM



“ *Serenity Wreath was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



February 22, 2023 at 01:25 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



February 22, 2023 at 01:11 PM

DS

“ My heart is broken!💔I just learned my HERO has passed away (Red McCombs). I was released from the hospital this morning only to find out the GREATEST MAN along with my late father I have ever known has passed away. I loved him more than he ever realized. Red gave me my first real job at the dealership located at 1025 San Pedro in SAT. I admired him from the first day I met him at Lake Placid in Seguin, Texas. The family accepted a local river rat into their family...We swam, water skied, went to great places together and in general, always had a wonderful time. I love this family with ALL my heart! My sincere condolences go out to Linda, Connie, and my sweet Marsha whom I accepted as my adopted sister during the Lake Placid days. God Bless and keep you all forever!, Lake Placid Dave☐

David Wallace, Sr - February 22, 2023 at 12:58 PM

BH

“ Bert King & Bert's Barracuda HD purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



Bert King & Bert's Barracuda HD - February 22, 2023 at 12:37 PM

BH

“ Bert King & Bert's Black Widow HD purchased the Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



Bert King & Bert's Black Widow HD - February 22, 2023 at 12:32 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



February 22, 2023 at 11:13 AM



“ *Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



February 22, 2023 at 11:05 AM



“ *My Mom Estela Flores passed Jan 9th. She retired in 1990 as principal at Gus Garcia Jr High in EISD. One of the last things she did for her students was to bring Mr. McCombs to speak to her students. She was ahead of her time. Thank you Mr. McCombs. RIP.*

Viani Flores - February 22, 2023 at 10:13 AM

DH

“ *Condolences and continued prayers! I work for the San Antonio Spurs and when they say “Spurs Family” with out Red’s push to bring the franchise to San Antonio, I would not have had the opportunities I have with the organization! I am a huge Minnesota Vikings fan, growing up in Iowa, I became a Vikings fan at a very young age. When Red bought my beloved Vikings in 1998 and the 15-1 that year, what a year, I was at the Championship Game and seeing Red in his purple, was fantastic and of course the phrase he coined “Purple Pride!” I always think of him on game days! May god bless you in heaven!! -Dan Hagerty SKOL Vikings & Go Spurs Go!!*



Daniel Hagerty - February 22, 2023 at 10:10 AM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



February 22, 2023 at 09:54 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



February 22, 2023 at 09:01 AM



“ He believed in the West side when nobody thought it was worth opening a large business there. He opened a used car lot at the corner of West Commerce and General McMullen. Thank you Red for the opportunity you offered the West side of San Antonio when, it was considered the bad side of San Antonio.

Jose Hernandez - February 21, 2023 at 11:21 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



February 21, 2023 at 10:38 PM



“ Bluebonnet Motors purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



Bluebonnet Motors - February 21, 2023 at 05:54 PM



“ The Rise Recovery Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.



The Rise Recovery Family - February 21, 2023 at 01:39 PM

TH

“ *The Board and Staff Texas Sports HOF purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



The Board and Staff Texas Sports HOF - February 21, 2023 at 11:47 AM



“ *Heavenly Sentiments Spray was purchased for the family of B.J. "Red" McCombs.*



February 21, 2023 at 10:23 AM

ES

“ *As a Ford Zone Sales Manger of Zone C in the late 70's, I felt the energy and power of the man who all of us at Ford affectionally referred to as "The Red Man". I was honored to have met him, and fondly recall my first meeting him when he stood, and continued to stand as we departed company 5 minutes later. All respectful, all business, and powerful. My thoughts and prayers are with the entire McComb's family today. Your family, the city of San Antonio,the state of Texas, and our nation has lost an incredible man.*

Eric Scott - February 20, 2023 at 08:22 PM

JM

“ Saddened this afternoon to learn of the passing of B.J. "Red" McCombs who was the primary owner of the San Antonio Spurs and later the Denver Nuggets. With no doubt in my mind Red was one of the nicest, straight-forward and humblest team owners that I have met in my career. He put San Antonio on the world map and was enormously charitable with his fortune. Some of the billionaires that I've met in the sports world carry a bit of arrogance with them -- but not Red -- a 'down-to-earth-genuine guy. He'll be in my prayers this evening. J. Bruce Miller, Louisville, Ky. jbrucemiller65@gmail.com

J. Bruce Miller - February 20, 2023 at 06:20 PM