

## Paul D. O'Regan dies at 67

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### *Car dealer noted for philanthropy*



*Stephen O'Regan, left, and Paul O'Regan stand in one of their car dealerships in Halifax on Thursday, March 29, 2007. Paul O'Regan died on Saturday. (PETER PARSONS / Staff)*

One of Nova Scotia's leading car dealers and businessmen has died.

Paul D. O'Regan, 67, co-owner of several car dealerships in the province under the O'Regan's banner, died unexpectedly in a Venice, Fla., hospital on Saturday with his family by his side.

The Dartmouth resident and his family never forgot their hometown, Parrsboro, said family friend and Kerwin Davison of Parrsboro.

"I've known Paul since he was a teenager," Davison said. "Paul was a prince of a man . . . highly respected in this community. He and his family's generosity was far, far reaching."

That generosity extended to several organizations in his hometown, including the Ship's Company Theatre, which Davison persuaded him to become involved with more than two decades ago.

"He and his family never missed a production and they were a major contributor when we built the new theatre," Davison said.

Bruce McCulloch, a past chairman and current member of the theatre company's board of directors, said O'Regan "was with us from the very beginning and his company was a sponsor of our mainstage productions."

"And if you needed something extra, you could count on Paul and his family . . . to be there."

An example was when he volunteered to be the chairman of the fundraising campaign for the new theatre that was built in 2004, McCulloch said.

"He just had a fierce integrity and a strong community mindedness," he said. "And he loved theatre; he not only supported us, but the Eastern Front Theatre too

His support wasn't just for the theatre. O'Regan also supported the local heritage society, the Parrsboro Band Hall, minor hockey, the local golf course and many other organizations in his hometown.

Parrsboro Mayor Lois Smith said the community was shocked to hear of his passing.

"He was a very nice man," said Smith, who was O'Regan's classmate at local schools and St. Francis Xavier University.

"He loved watching the football games. He was a loyal supporter of the team," she said, recalling those university days.

O'Regan was also a big supporter of his alma mater, the United Way and the Mental Health Foundation. He once performed in Rock 'n' Roll Heaven to help raise \$115,000 for the foundation.

O'Regan's father, Stephen, founded the firm in 1915, in Parrsboro, and O'Regan worked at that dealership as a young man in the 1940s and '50s. He studied to become a teacher but returned to selling cars when he opened a garage in at corner of Thistle and Maple streets in Dartmouth.

The business, which soon included his brother, Stephen, grew into one of the most successful enterprises in the province.

O'Regan's has won several awards over the years, including recognition as one of Canada's 50 best-managed companies.

In 2009 it was honoured as business of the year by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce; in 2006 the firm received the Ethics Award from the Better Business Bureau (Maritimes); and in 2004 it received the Corporate Philanthropist of the Year Award (Atlantic).

Paul O'Regan is survived by his wife, Mary (Furey), sons Sean and Patrick, daughter Kathleen, sister Mary, brother Stephen and nine grandchildren.

His funeral is being handled by Smith's Funeral Home in Parrsboro. Services are planned for both Dartmouth and Parrsboro, but details were incomplete at press time.

Source: Herald News <http://thechronicleherald.ca/novascotia/72338-paul-d-o-regan-dies-67>