



Sam Proler

February 1, 1917 - February 23, 2018

Sam Proler, 101 years old, passed away peacefully at the ranch, his home in Montgomery, TX on Thursday February 22, 2018. Sam was born on February 1, 1917 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania to Rose and Ben Proler and was one of nine children. Though not born in Texas, Sam, at the age of three, got here as fast as he could when his parents decided to move to Houston to be closer to his mother's family. When Sam entered first grade, he spent much of his school day learning English since Yiddish was the only language spoken at home. Growing up on Houston's south side, he spent time after school and on the weekends with his father, Ben, on a horse-drawn junk wagon, learning the business. At age nine, Sam and his family moved to a two-story home in Houston's fifth ward. He and his eight siblings lived upstairs while the downstairs housed the family business, The City Junk Company.

By the eighth grade, Sam quit school to work in the family business. When the truant officer showed up at Sam's home, his father told him, "My son's stomach is hungrier than his head is. I need Sammy to work." Within four years, Sam was running the business and changed the name from City Junk Company to Proler Steel. Over the next forty years, through hard work, innovation and persistence, Sam built Proler Steel into a publicly held, global company with recycling plants all over the world. Though Sam worked hard, he thought even harder and in 1956 on an Eastern Airlines flight from Salt Lake City to Omaha, he sketched out a plan on a napkin that resulted in the

US Patent office awarding Sam Proler with Patent No. 2,943,930 for The Prolerizer - his process to shred and recycle whole automobiles. By taking previously useless junk and creating a process to efficiently recycle it into high quality steel, Sam Proler revolutionized the steel industry and helped protect our environment. Sam always enjoyed his reputation as a trusted businessman and made many deals with a mere handshake.

Though Sam retired from Proler Steel Corp in 1969 at the young age of 52, he never retired from thinking. (One of Sam's favorite expressions was "Think, think, think and think. If all you do is work, you will just get tired.") He continued to contribute to the industry with new ideas and inventions throughout his retirement.

As accomplished as he was in the steel industry, Sam's biggest source of pride was his family. He always viewed them as his true legacy. In 1939, Sam married Jeanette Rubin. Together they had two daughters, Nina Proler Brown and Joyce Proler Schechter. Absolutely adoring his girls, Sam showered them with his attention and affection from the day they were born until his last breath. Though the hours at Proler Steel may have been long, Sam was never too busy for his daughters, often taking them to the movies, the Shamrock hotel and on trips around the world. As his family continued to grow, he welcomed his sons-in-law, Joe Brown (of blessed memory) and Arthur Schechter into his family as if they were his own. When his grandchildren came into his life, he purchased a place at April Sound and some ranch property nearby so the family would have a fun place to gather on weekends. Some of the family's best memories were at the ranch. All of Sam's grandchildren (and later, his great-grandchildren) cherished their special time with Sam whether they were boating, fishing, playing tennis, riding the golf cart into places they shouldn't, having campfires, and perhaps most memorable of all, waking up early at the ranch for Sam's famous scrambled eggs and salami.

In 1978, Sam met the love of his life, Marie J Heurtaux. They made a home together in Florida, were married on February 27, 1987 and Sam's family continued to grow. He treated Marie's children and his grandchildren's spouses with the same adoration and love that he always had for his own family. Finally in 1999, to the delight of his family, Sam and Marie returned to Texas to permanently make their home at the ranch, the very place he and his family treasured together. The fun times continued with his nine great grandchildren at the ranch. Sam and Marie would also make frequent trips to Houston, never missing the great grandkids' celebrations, whether it was a birthday, graduation or sporting event.

Sam had his own way of making both the stranger and those he loved feel good. His positive attitude, wit and approach to life were infectious. His family is truly grateful that Sam kept his health and mental capacity to the very last day of his life. He was always comfortable talking to all types of people, young and old. He insisted his grandchildren and great-grandchildren call him, "Sam" instead of Grandpa to make them feel like pals growing up together. His life lessons will live on in our hearts forever. Here are just a few pearls of wisdom that he left behind.... "Your family is the most precious thing you have. Treasure them;" "Laughter is a great medicine. It is free so use more of it;" "Be happy, even if it makes you feel good." Finally, Sam attributed his long life to his love of his family and to red wine (often referring to his blood type as Merlot). He used to say just like red wine, he too got better with age.

Sam is survived by his loving wife, Marie Proler; his children, Nina Brown and Joe Brown (of blessed memory), Joyce Schechter and Arthur Schechter; his grandchildren, Gregg and Toby Brown, Leslie and Hedley Karpas, Stacy and Scott Doctor, Jennifer and Alan Rosen; his great grandchildren Ryan and Ariel

Brown, Brian and Alyssa Karpas, Ashley and Emily Doctor, Kacy, Lilly and Sam Rosen; as well as Marie's children and grandchildren, Monique Mathieson and Jill Bernardi, Jordan Mathieson, Andrew Mathieson and Wendy Shapiro, Alden Mathieson and Kristina Rodriguez, Chris Mathieson and Faouzi Benmelouk.

A memorial service honoring Sam's life will be held on March 2 at 4:30 pm at Congregation Beth Yeshurun.

Donations may be made in his memory to any of his three favorite charities, Jewish Family Service, Seven Acres or Houston Area Parkinson Society.

Tribute Wall



“ *A one of a kind gentleman who truly made a difference in the world and in the lives of all who knew him. You'll be deeply missed Sam, but you've made a lasting impression on our hearts.* ”

Tommy and Diane Middleton - February 27, 2018 at 09:34 AM