

IN MEMORIAM

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following notice and comments were provided to The Representative by ERA President Paul Nielsen, CPMR.

Good-bye to Jim Kimball

One of the many benefits of being the president of ERA is that I get to use my clout to get extra space in *The Representative*. In this case, I'm using that space to remember an industry giant and friend.

Jim Kimball passed away recently in Las Vegas. Jim left our industry for retirement in 1993, so many of you didn't know him. But, for us old timers, we remember one of the last cigar-chomping, martini-drinking (absolutely Absolut) old school sales leaders — a man who believed that if you work hard, you deserve to play hard. He also believed in moving business forward, not accolades.

More importantly, we remember the man described as “a mentor,” “a leader,” “a task master,” “a friend,” “an honest broker” “a joy to do business with” and “a very professional sales executive.” More than a few have told me that he gave them a “great start on a great career,” and “he was the best boss I ever had.” A few also mentioned he was a “terrible golfer!”

For purposes of this audience, it's also important to recall that Jim was a staunch supporter of reps and a great ally of distributors. He started at ITW, where he worked with Jack Roser, founder of Otto Engineering, and he was later hired by Joe Sola (yes, there was a Mr. Sola in the early 60s). Jim retired from Sola as vice president of sales and marketing in 1993.

During those years at Sola, he was a major force behind building an iconic brand name and thriving electronic and electrical sales channels. I know his amazing work ethic and attitude were integral to his success. He was in the office, cigar lit, at 6 a.m. every day, reviewing numbers, making phone calls and EXPECTING phone calls. If you weren't at least 15 minutes early for a Kimball appointment, you were late! If you knew Jim Kimball, you knew “Kimball Time.”

I believe, however, that his success also stemmed in great part from his respect for the role reps and distributors played in his company's sales success. He directed his people to work with the reps, to teach the reps, but also to learn from the reps. (And he had some great reps, including Merchant, Brown, Trinkle, Erickson, McCoy and even Kunz to name a few.) He was honestly and openly happy when he paid big commissions, commenting, “You make more, Sola makes more.” He knew what sales was all about.

He also knew the benefits of a strong distributor partnership. Jim aggressively pursued inventory, margin, field engagement and promotional programs that put Sola at the forefront in both the electronic and electrical channels. To Jim, it was pretty simple: “You sell more, I sell more ... there's plenty to go around.” There was no greed, no ego in Jim Kimball.

For my part, I fondly remember Jim as an honest, straightforward bear of a guy who didn't have a lot of time for B.S. He was a great principal who appreciated and respected what you did, and he let you know, in a straightforward discussion, when he didn't. He adored his wife, chuckled knowingly at his kids and enjoyed his friends. Jim's laugh was more like the growl of a bear, literally. When with Jim, you heard that laugh — a lot. I'll miss him.

Electronics Representatives Association



Executive Committee of ERA

Chairman of the Board:
Mark Conley
mconley@odonnell.com

Board President:
Paul Nielsen, CPMR
paul@bnmsales.com

Senior Vice President/Fiscal & Legal:
Dan Parks, CPMR
dan@westelec.com

Senior Vice President/Education:
Kathie Cahill, CPMR
kcahill@netsalesrep.com

Senior Vice President/Membership:
Robert Logan, CPMR
rlogan@kruvand.com

Senior Vice President/Industry:
David Norris
dnorris@norrisrep.com

Association President (Ex-Officio):
Robert G. Terwall
rterwall@era.org

*Executive Vice President &
Chief Executive Officer (Ex-Officio):*
Thomas J. Shanahan
tshanahan@era.org

ERA Staff

Association President:
Robert G. Terwall
rterwall@era.org

Executive Vice President & Chief Executive Officer:
Thomas J. Shanahan
tshanahan@era.org

Executive Assistant:
Karin Derkacz
kderkacz@era.org

*Communications, Conferences &
Chapter Services Coordinator:*
Tess Hill
thill@era.org

Database Manager and Webmaster:
Katherine Green
kgreen@era.org

Chapter Management & Social Media Coordinator
Stephanie Tierney
stierney@era.org

Communications & Marketing Manager
Katie Boysen
kboysen@era.org

Finance Director:
William R. Warfield
bwarfield@era.org

ERA Office:
309 W. Washington St., Suite 500
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Phone: 312-419-1432 • Fax: 312-419-1660
Email: info@era.org • URL: era.org



To boost your company's promotion efforts at EDS 2015 ...

be sure to advertise in *The Representative's* annual **EDS AD SUPPLEMENT**, coming in the Spring issue. Watch for the order forms in January. The deadline is **MARCH 6, 2015.**