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We are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Ken Melrose. Ken was the GCBAA 2018 Don A. Rossi Award recipient, and was a great leader and supporter of the golf industry. Our sincere condolences to the Melrose family.

Article by Carter Jones – Digital Producer, Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal

Kendrick "Ken" B. Melrose, former chairman and CEO of The Toro Co., died Sunday at the age of 79, according to an announcement by Toro.

Melrose started his 35-year career at Bloomington-based Toro in 1970, rising to president in 1981. After being named CEO in December 1983, he led the company to record results through a challenging financial period.

Melrose oversaw a number of acquisitions over his 21-year tenure as CEO including Wheel Horse, Exmark, Lawn-Boy and Hayter. By the time he retired in 2005, Toro's sales had grown from \$247 million to \$1.7 billion.

“Ken was a great man, and the epitome of an exceptional leader,” said Toro CEO Rick Olson. “The culture he instilled continues as a positive influence and will guide The Toro Company long into the future. Ken was passionate about supporting the industries we serve and helping our customers succeed.”

Melrose was a generous philanthropist his entire career. In 1998, he helped form the company's partnership with The First Tee, a youth charity that builds values through golf. Later he established The Kendrick B. Melrose Family Foundation Scholarship Program in 2002 for dependents of company employees, which has supported 189 students with scholarships. He also helped establish the Melrose/Hoffman Employee Critical Need Fund in 2005 to assist employees experiencing economic hardship.

After retiring, he helped establish the Melrose Center, which treats patients with eating disorders in St. Louis Park. Last year, Melrose donated \$18.7 million to the center to support an endowment fund. Melrose also founded Leading by Serving, LLC, whose mission is to advance the principles of servant leadership in organizations. And he was a board chair at the University of St. Thomas Opus College of Business.

“We owe much to Ken’s principled leadership, and his legacy cannot be overstated,” Olson said. “He was a rare transformational leader who saw the best in people and knew how to inspire them to work together and exceed their own expectations in order to achieve great things.”

<https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2020/05/05/ken-melrose-former-chairman-and-ceo-of-toro-dies.html>
