

Obituary for Henry M. Rowan

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Burlington County businessman, entrepreneur and philanthropist Henry (Hank) M. Rowan, the man who founded an international corporation, contributed generously to numerous causes and changed the face of higher education in South Jersey, passed away on Dec. 9, 2015. He was 92 years old.

Mr. Rowan, a native of Ridgewood, New Jersey, was founder and chairman of Rancocas-based Inductotherm Group, the world's leading manufacturer of melting, thermal processing and production systems for the metals and materials industry.

He started the firm with his late wife, Betty Long Rowan, in 1953, building their first furnace in their backyard in Ewing Township, New Jersey. Initially, his main goal was to enable foundries to reduce the cost of melting metal with induction, and Mr. Rowan and his staff became true innovators, changing the face of the entire industry. Today, the Inductotherm Group and its sister companies employ more than 3,500 people in more than 20 nations and serve customers around the globe.

While renowned as a businessman and entrepreneur, Mr. Rowan did not stop there, nor did his impact. Since 1992, Mr. Rowan's name has been synonymous with higher education. It was in that year that he and his late wife donated \$100 million to then-Glassboro State College with just one request: revitalize engineering education.

Although he was a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mr. Rowan was committed to investing his money in a school and a region where he believed it could have the most impact. The Rowan Gift was the largest to date given to a public college or university in the United States.

In 1992, the board of trustees of the college changed the name of GSC to Rowan College (and it became Rowan University in 1997, when it offered its first doctoral program). In 1996, Rowan University opened its doors to its first class of engineering students. Today, the award-winning engineering college offers bachelor's through doctoral programs in five disciplines and is adding a new building to enable it to double its enrollment to about 2,000 students. The donation by Mr. and Mrs. Rowan directly and indirectly led to remarkable growth at the university, which today is designated by the State of New Jersey as a research institution and is one of only two schools in the nation with both M.D.- and D.O.-degree granting medical schools.

In December 2014, the Henry M. Rowan Family Foundation committed \$15 million to Rowan University's College of Engineering, which was named the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering.

Mr. Rowan and his family have been generous to numerous organizations beyond the University. Among more recent donations, in 2008 he gave \$20 million to what is now known as the Williamson

College of the Trades in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. In 2014, Mr. Rowan funded the purchase of a building for the South Jersey chapter of Boy Scouts of America to expand its Westampton headquarters. Mr. and Mrs. Rowan had funded the construction of the Scouts' original facility there in the 1980s. In 2015, Mr. Rowan and his wife, Lee, personally committed \$17 million to the Doane Academy in Burlington City.

Many organizations honored Mr. Rowan for his commitment to business and community. Among his awards were the George Washington Medal Award from the Engineer's Club of Philadelphia (1992); Outstanding Engineer for the Year Award (1994) and a Lifetime Achievement Award (1995) from the Professional Engineering Society of Southern New Jersey, Inc.; the AFS William J. Grede Award (1995); a Distinguished Service Award from the Consulting Engineers Council of New Jersey (1997); the William Hunt Eisenman Award, Philadelphia Chapter, American Society of Metals (ASM) International (1997); induction into the prestigious National Academy of Engineering (1998); induction into the Hall of Honor, *Foundry Management & Technology* magazine's highest award (2003); and most recently the Distinguished Life Membership Award from ASM International (2014).

One of his most visible honors stands on Rowan University's Glassboro campus: a seven-foot bronze sculpture of Mr. Rowan unveiled in December 2012, two decades after the \$100-million gift.

In 1941, Mr. Rowan attended Williams College for a year and then transferred to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) upon his acceptance into its engineering program. The program was interrupted by World War II, and he enlisted in the Army Air Corps as an aviation cadet and trained to become a bomber pilot, flying B-17s and B-29s, though the war ended before he could fly in combat. He returned to MIT to earn his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering.

Among his many interests, Mr. Rowan was an avid pilot and sailor who was a member of the Aviation Hall of Fame and who competed in the 1992 Olympic Star Class sailboat racing trials in Miami. He published his autobiography, "The Fire Within" in 1995.

The son of the late Dr. Henry M. Rowan Sr. and Margaret Frances Boyd Rowan, Mr. Rowan also was predeceased by his first wife, Betty; his sons, James and David; and two of his siblings, Margaret and William.

Mr. Rowan is survived by his wife, Lee; his daughter, Virginia and son-in-law, Manning J. Smith III; his grandchildren, Rowan Smith Watson and Manning J. Smith IV; and his sister, Miriam Mallory.

Services will be held after the first of the year. Rowan University will hold a memorial service at a later date. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, any donations be made in Mr. Rowan's name to the American Foundry Society and the Lake George Land Conservancy.

