

Phoenix Loses a Barrett-Jackson Idol - Nellie Jackson

Written by Written by Kathy Shayna Shocket

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Nellie Jackson, co-founder and matriarch of the Barrett-Jackson collector car auction died peacefully on February 10, 2010 in her Scottsdale home. She was 90 years young.



Family and friends are mourning the loss of the woman who was a driving force behind the success of the Barrett-Jackson collector car auction empire. Even at 90 years old, she was front and centre at the annual Scottsdale auction just three weeks ago -signing the consignment checks.

Always a familiar presence on the auction block, **Nellie** was active behind the scenes of the family business. In fact, when her son **Craig Jackson**, chairman and CEO relocated the company's headquarters to a new building in Scottsdale, they built **Nellie** an office in the front of the building. "She loved to interact with our clients and never quit working," says her son **Craig** the company's CEO. "She loved working and was an example of those of her generation who lived through the depression, and grew up with a strong work ethic."

Even when Nellie was in her 80's she was typically the first one in the office at 7 a.m. sharp. In 2005, she fell at the auction and injured her leg, but insisted on working after she recovered. "She was ahead of her time," says close friend **Susie Alofs** - referring to **Nellie** owning her own clothing business when she was a young woman. "Forty years ago she was an example of the women we celebrate in business today."

The cherished memories of **Nellie** - a businesswoman, mother, grandmother and wife will live on among her circle of friends old and new. For example, among the headliners at the "Drive the Dream Gala" three weeks ago which kicked off the week of Barrett -Jackson- was former American Idol contestant **Michael Johns**. And **Nellie** was the Barrett -Jackson idol of sorts. She turned heads for example as actor **John O'Hurley** (J.Peterman of the Seinfeld hit TV show) gracefully whirled her around in her wheelchair on the dance floor.



The gala, presented by Barrett -Jackson and Childhelp, benefits the Childhelp non-profit organization. "Nellie was very young at heart," point out **Sara O'Meara** and **Yvonne Fedderson**, **Nellie's** friends who co-founded Childhelp.



"Philanthropy was important to my mother," stresses son **Craig Jackson** who is pictured above with **Nellie** and his two children **Shelby** and **Hunter**. In August **Nellie's** friends and family turned out at the company's Arizona showroom to celebrate her 90th birthday – and on Sunday following the beautiful and meaningful funeral service – they celebrated her life and spirit at the Phoenician resort- **Nellie Jackson** style. Hundreds turned out for the reception on the lawn decorated with white sofas and fancy food stations boasting gourmet culinary dishes.



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A tent filled with the rich aroma of hundreds of flowers was also decorated with hundreds of wonderful photos of **Nellie**. I snapped some photos as **Craig** and **Susie Alofs** recalled memories from some of those photos.



Above **Nellie** is pictured with late husband **Russ Jackson** who she co-founded the Barrett-Jackson company with, along with **Tom Barrett** in 1971. Among **Nellie**'s many accolades was in 2004, when Meguiar's presented her with a richly deserved award – selecting her as a Treasure of the Collector Car Hobby.

In lieu of flowers, the Jackson family requests that donations be made in Nellie's honor to the Russ & Brian Jackson Cancer Research Fund by mail to 400 E. Van Buren St., Phoenix 85004 or online at www.russandbriancancerfund.org



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