Grocery King and Philanthropist Eddie Basha Dies

Written by Written by Kathy Shayna Shocket

Kathy Shayna Shocket reports the sad news.

The Bashas' grocery stores grew to become Arizona's 7th largest employer.

It is with a heavy heart that I'm reporting that grocery king and one of Arizona's major philanthropists **Eddie Basha** died today at his home in Chandler, Arizona. The beloved entrepreneur and community leader who was 75 years young was rushed to the hospital last week for congestive heart failure. He was released from the hospital, and died at home this afternoon (March 26).

The Bashas' grocery stores were the only family-owned line of grocery stores in the state and Bashas' Inc. is **Arizona's seventh largest employer.** The chairman and CEO of Bashas', Inc ran for governor in 1994 on the Democratic nominee. He lost to incumbent **Gov. Fife Symington**.

Eddie was an avid advocate for education, (serving on the Arizona Board of Education and Arizona Board of Regents) and a familiar face on the philanthropic scene. His was a supporter of the arts, which included his passion for Western American and Native American art. His $16 million art collection is housed at his gallery on Basha Rd. in Chandler, is open to the public and visiting school groups.

The very first picture in this column is a picture of Eddie and wife **Nadine Basha** from one of my stories which I wrote about the PANDA event at which they were honored by the Phoenix Woman's Board of the Steele Children's Research Center. For many years the Bashas have donated money towards the **Louise Thomas** Endowed Chair in Pediatric Cancer held by **Dr. Emmanuel Katsanis.**

Eddie's uncle founded Bashas' in the 1900's. In 1968, at 31 years old, Eddie took over the family business. Under his direction it expanded to over 150 locations which included the brands of AJ's Fine Foods, Food City, Sportsman's Fine Wines and Bashas' grocery stores. The company filed for a planned Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization in July 2009 but in August 2010 a federal judge accepted a deal for the company to get out of bankruptcy protection.

Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton is one of many who are saddened by the news. "Eddie Basha was a giant in our state's history. Not only as a business leader but as a passionate advocate for education. He served selflessly on the Chandler Unified School District Board, Arizona Board of Education and the Arizona Board of Regents. It is because of Eddie and Nadine we have First Things First, giving thousand of Arizona children a chance for early childhood education."

Eddie, a well known family man is survived by his wife **Nadine Basha** and six sons. Nadine Basha's and Eddie Basha's advocacy for children and the community was well known. So was Eddie's great sense of humor. Eddie --- you will be missed!

A memorial service will be held April 6 at 10 a.m. at ASU Gammage in Tempe. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions in memory of Basha be sent to St. Vincent de Paul, The Salvation Army, First Things First, the Adelante Foundation - or to a charity of your choice.

(Kathy Shayna Shocket is a freelance **Reporter**, **Photographer** and **TV-Field Producer** based in Phoenix. She is a former TV reporter who has written and reported for prestigious publications such as **TIME** magazine, **PEOPLE** magazine, **MONEY** magazine, the **Hollywood Reporter** and the **New York Times**. You can reach her at redkarpetgirl@aol.com)