

Vic Forsgren

Forsgren Incorporated was established in the early 1900's by Vic Forsgren's grandfather Olaf Victor Forsgren who was a Swedish immigrant. Olaf founded what was then the Phoenix Stone Sidewalk Company. He had three sons and a daughter: Gene, "Gib", "Sonny" and Lucile. Olaf died while Sonny was only 12 years old. The brothers founded Forsgren Brothers in 1936 and became the second generation of leadership for the family business. Dwight Victor "Vic" Forsgren was born December 18, 1946 to Jo and Sonny Forsgren in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Jo and Sonny had a second child, Lyn Caselman, and in 1955 the company became Forsgren, Incorporated.

Vic worked at Forsgren, Inc. through his years at Northside High School, Westark Community College and The University of Arkansas. In 1970, Vic joined the Navy where he served two years and was stationed in Morocco. While stationed in Morocco his oldest son Steve Forsgren was born. When Vic returned home in 1972 he married Jan Roller and had two boys, Justin and Dallas.

Vic worked up the company ladder eventually becoming president in 1988 following the death of his father "Sonny" Forsgren. Tragically Vic passed away suddenly from a massive heart attack in December of 1999 at the age of 53. Today, all three of his sons serve in leadership positions as the fourth generation at Forsgren, Incorporated.

Under Vic's leadership, Forsgren, Inc. flourished and grew to become one of the largest highway and utility contractors in Arkansas. The following are a few of the significant road improvement projects in Fort Smith and surrounding areas: Phoenix Avenue, Grand Avenue, Village Harbor, Massard Road, Eagle Crest, Fianna Hills, Brooken Woods and Highway 71 South. Vic also expanded the company with the purchases of JDS Supply Company and CF Stocks Excavating.

Vic was very involved in promoting the construction industry. He was a member of Associated General Contractors (AGC) chapters in both the Arkansas and Oklahoma. Vic's professional involvement included serving AGC as a member of the board of directors and on the highway committee. Vic was instrumental in establishing the AGC Bass Fishing Tournament, now named the Vic Forsgren Memorial Fishing Tournament in his honor. This event is held each spring at Lake Ouachita as a way for construction professionals to enjoy fun and fellowship while raising money for the Fort Smith Boys and Girls Club. The relationship between AGC and Forsgren is a long one, with Vic's Uncle Gilbert Forsgren serving as President in 1956.

Vic played a major role in many people's lives and inspired several to make a career in the construction industry. A few people who followed in his footsteps are his son's Steve, Justin and Dallas who all work for Forsgren, Inc., Clay Gordon with Nabholz Construction and Andy Brown with Mickle Wagner Coleman Engineers. All of these individuals credit Vic Forsgren as an instrumental figure in their lives and frequently think about Vic in their daily activities. In an article by the *Southwest Times Record* on February 27, 2000, Vic's middle son Justin was quoted saying "The daily business and personal decisions and individual actions are considered in the light of how those

ancestors conducted themselves. They're not here to say anything to me, they can't speak to me, but you know they're watching and you think about the way they did it and wonder, would they be proud of what you are about to do?"

During Vic's career he accomplished many great things; however his contributions to his community are the most important. Vic was not one to be out in the front of a crowd accepting recognition. Instead Vic worked behind the scenes for many community organizations. He served on the Fort Smith Boys & Girls Clubs (FSB&GC) Board of Directors for 11 years. He was an alumni member and sponsor of youth sports teams at the club. Vic also served as a volunteer coach in football, baseball and basketball for many years at the FSB&GC.

Vic was very instrumental in many facility improvement project for the FSB&GC including: Forsgren Field in 1990 in memory of Sonny Forsgren, construction of Goldtrap-Gardner Boys & Girls Club in 1993 and the rebuilding of Stephens Boys & Girls Club in 1997 after being severely damaged by a tornado. That same tornado severally damaged Forsgren, Incorporated offices just a few blocks down the road; however, his own personal loss did not interfere with his commitment to the needs of the FSB&GC. He was named the FSB&GC Volunteer of the Year in 2000 and earned the Sertoma Club Man of the Year Award in 1991. Vic was honored and inducted into the FSB&GC Hall of Fame in 2004.

His community involvement also included being a member of First Presbyterian Church of Fort Smith, board member for Fulfill-A-Dream, member of Fraternal Order of Eagles, founding member of BELCH Chili Pod, president of the Chaffin Junior High Booster Club and a sponsor of the Old Fort River Festival and Good Time on Garrison. He established the A.R. "Sonny" Forsgren memorial scholarship at University of Arkansas Fort Smith for engineering/construction students. Vic established the Forsgren Spring Scramble to raise money for the scholarship established in his father's name, the Special Olympics and many other local charities.

Vic was a good-hearted man who was committed to his family, friends, employees, community and business. Vic's spirit and love for life and the construction industry live on today in those that he touched.