

Salesman Curtis Berg dead at 75

By Robert Huschka
Herald Staff Writer

Curtis Berg, 75, longtime East Grand Forks businessman and community leader, died Friday, Aug. 13, 1993, at his home in Grand Forks.



Berg

Berg sold cars for 39 years in East Grand Forks, first as a salesman and then as the successful owner of the Red River Motor Co. Ford Dealership in East Grand Forks.

He was an energetic man who gave much of the credit for his dealership's success to his employees, who gave people reasons to come back and buy new vehicles.

But his success was also based on his belief in quality.

"You're in a consumer market. The customer is king," Berg said in an interview in 1985. He said that a car dealership can survive by

providing people with quality vehicles and service for their money.

Berg's efforts were honored in 1974, when he was named a Time Magazine Quality Dealer regional winner — one of only 12 in the country for that year.

"He was an excellent salesman. Even though he owned the dealership, he was involved in almost every department. He was the general manager and also a salesman," says John Cook, a 30-year friend.

Cook, the president of Valley Bank, described Berg as very motivated and committed.

It was this commitment that made Berg a natural community leader, according to longtime friend, attorney Henry Tweten.

He said Berg was "progressive and visionary" in his role as a community leader. Tweten said Berg was involved in most of the major East Grand Forks city projects in the last 40 years.

"He had a very strong commitment to the community. He was a natural leader, and a great public

servant," Tweten said.

Berg served on the housing authority and planning commission.

Berg loved to travel the world, both as an individual and as a representative of the Ford Motor Company. He sold his dealership and retired in 1985, so he could travel and spend more time with his wife, Eunice, who he had married Dec. 18, 1948, in Minneapolis. He devoted much time to his classic and antique cars.

Berg also put his energy into many organizations, including the Salvation Army and East Grand Forks Heritage Foundation.

He was very active in Our Savior's Lutheran Church and had served as president. He played a direct role in the building of a new church for the congregation about 30 years ago, according to Rev. Robert Bergland.

"He was a man of prayer; a man who was very interested in the study of Scripture," Bergland said.

He also served as a member of the Minnesota Auto Dealers Association, the Eagles Lodge, the

American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Berg was born April 25, 1918, in Sharon, N.D., the son of Oscar and Tilla Berg. He graduated from high school there. He attended the North Dakota Agricultural College. He received Naval officer training at Notre Dame and the University of North Carolina. He served as captain of a salvage tug during World War II.

He is survived by his wife; son, John and his wife Carol, Minneapolis; brother, Ordean, Fargo; and sister, Evangeline Hart, Minneapolis. He was preceded in death by his brothers, Norris, Garfield and Lloyd.

■ **Services:** 2 p.m. Monday in Our Savior's Lutheran Church, East Grand Forks.

■ **Visitation:** 3 to 6 p.m., with a 6 p.m. prayer service, today in Amundson Funeral Home, East Grand Forks. Memorials are suggested to Our Savior's Lutheran Church, East Grand Forks.

■ **Burial:** Memorial Park Cemetery, Grand Forks.