



Obituary: David H. Block



David H. Block

David H. Block of West Orange, N.J. formerly of Montclair, died on Jan. 29, 2020. Before recently moving to West Orange in September 2018, he and his wife resided in Upper Montclair for 43 years.

Together with his wife Virginia, Mr. Block purchased the historic Ira Crane House (built in 1840 at 33 South Fullerton Ave.) restoring and converting it to commercial use for David H. Block Advertising. The couple received the 1984 Preservation Award from the Montclair Historical Society (Now Montclair History Center) for their outstanding historic preservation efforts. The property is now listed in the National Historic Registry and

is now home to the Mental Health Association of Essex and Morris Inc.

Mr. Block was born in Newark, N.J. where he attended Weequahic High School followed by studies at Newark School of Fine Arts where he graduated as an interior designer.

In 1951, he joined the US Air Force (Air Guard Division) and was stationed in Newfoundland for three years. Returning from service, he was employed as a designer in NYC followed by employment at Lasky Advertising in Newark.

In 1969, Mr. Block took over this Newark-based agency, founding David H. Block Advertising, which grew tenfold in size under his name and leadership while moving to Bloomfield, Montclair and finally Verona. In its final decade of service, the agency merged with another and became known as Block & DeCorso.

In an era when many advertising and marketing firms were known for specialization, Mr. Block had the ability to see the bigger picture and provide clients with full-service branding.

The agency's account and creative teams introduced Atlantic Health System; Travelers Insurance's charitable remainder trusts; Pitney Bowes mailing systems; Crown Roll Leaf holographic films for passport security; education programs at Thomas Edison State University, Ramapo College and Smith & Solomon Commercial Driver Training; food products; paving stones; corporate buildings, residential properties, and assisted living facilities; Suburban Propane, Hunter Douglas Window Fashions as well as New Jersey's first ATMs and Individual Retirement Accounts.

Mr. Block's mentoring of employees also spawned a half-dozen other agencies.

Throughout the years, the agency won numerous advertising industry awards from the NJ Ad Club and the Financial Advertising & Marketing Association of New York.

Mr. Block was an active member of the Board Member Institute.

He was a founding member of the New Jersey Bank Marketing Association (NJBMA) where he served on their board for 26 years. Mr. Block was extremely active not only on the Board but also at every seminar that was held throughout the years until he stepped down at the end of 2015.

He was a director of the Mental Health Association of Essex County where he served as an officer, chaired and co-chaired 13 annual fundraiser galas between 1980 and 1995. He was a co-Honoree in 2002 with Joan Stern.

In 1995, Mr. Block joined the North Jersey Chamber of Commerce board of directors where he chaired the Marketing/Advertising Committee for many years and was responsible for developing special events to build membership and enhance recognition of the chamber throughout the region. He was the creative energy behind much of the Chamber's accomplishments until he resigned in 2010.

Mr. Block was a generous supporter of Studio Montclair Inc. lending his corporate conference room for board their monthly board meetings and donating office furniture, equipment and supplies for their first office.

Mr. Block was a highly competitive tennis player into his 70s. His hobbies included stamp collecting, reading and visiting museums with a strong love of art and culture.

He is survived by his wife of 45 years Virginia Schaffer Block; a brother Daniel of Edison; his children (from a previous marriage) Jonathan of Cedar Knolls and Melissa Berger of Needham, Mass.; and four grandchildren twins Jordyn and Jacob 24, Brooke 16 and Griffin 19.

In lieu of flowers, consider donations to Mental Health Association of Essex & Morris Inc., 33 South Fullerton Ave, Montclair, NJ 07042 www.mhaessexmorris.org

A memorial service celebrating David's life will be held on Sunday, March 1 at 2 p.m. at the J. L. Apter Memorial Chapels, 486 Pompton Ave., Cedar Grove.