

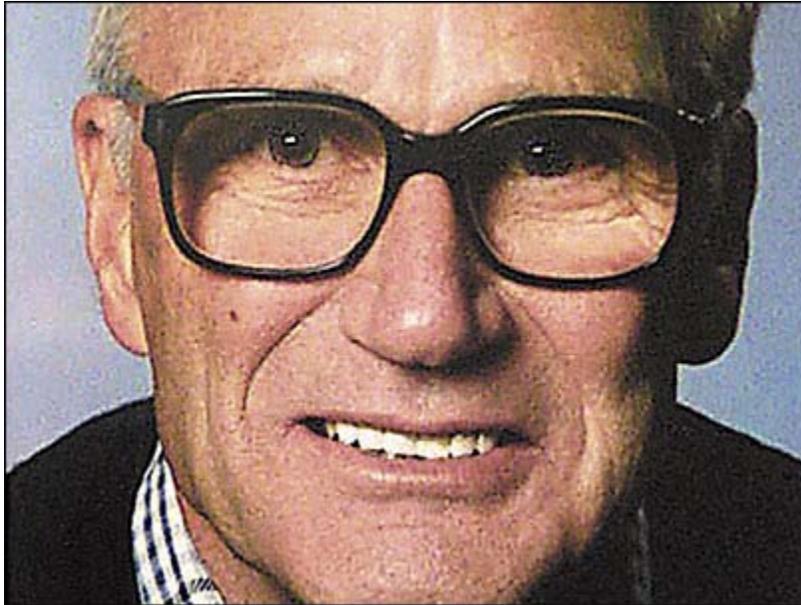
Jeld-Wen founder Dick Wendt dead at 79

By Associated Press

Summary

Richard "Dick" Wendt, a founder of the international door and window manufacturer Jeld-Wen Inc. and a contributor to conservative political causes in Oregon, has died. He was 79.

Story Published: Aug 16, 2010 at 10:11 AM PDT



Richard "Dick" Wendt

GRANTS PASS, Ore. (AP) — Richard "Dick" Wendt, a founder of the international door and window manufacturer Jeld-Wen Inc. and a contributor to conservative political causes in Oregon, has died. He was 79.

A company spokeswoman said Monday that Wendt died Saturday at Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland, where he had gone for observation following a stroke in Klamath Falls.

Born in Dubuque, Iowa, Wendt moved to Klamath Falls in 1957 to manage a window parts mill.

When the company shut down the mill, he joined a group that bought the equipment and founded Jeld-Wen in 1960.

The company grew from 15 employees to 20,000, with operations in 20 countries, to become one of the biggest privately held firms in Oregon.

As the company grew, Wendt continued to live in an unpretentious ranch house on a hillside overlooking Klamath Falls.

Forbes magazine estimated that Wendt had a personal fortune of more than \$700 million.

Wendt was known for pushing welfare recipients to work, supporting privatization of Social Security, and giving generously to support medicine, performing arts, and American Indian culture.

Politically, he was a major contributor to property tax reform and the 1998 gubernatorial campaign of Bill Sizemore as well as a foundation that supported Sizemore's political activities, and the 2002 gubernatorial campaign of conservative activist Kevin Mannix.

"I am deeply distressed at news of his death," said Mannix, a former chairman of the Oregon Republican Party. "As he achieved success in business, he expanded his vision so as to work for the greater good as he saw it."

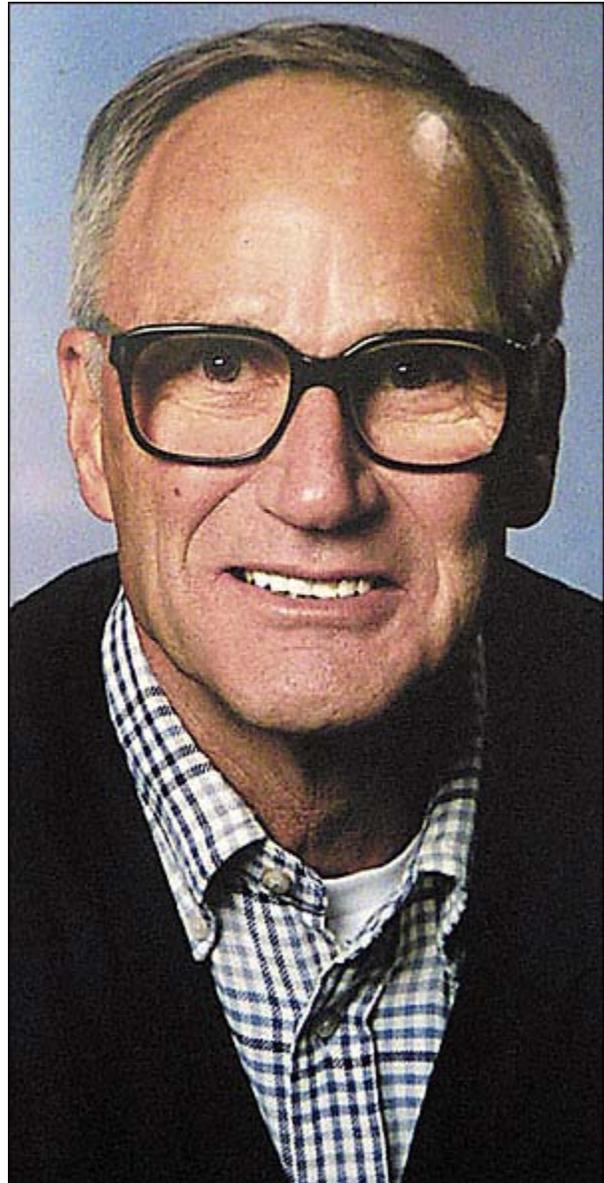
Mannix credited Wendt with helping shape welfare reform in Oregon.

In 2002, Wendt offered \$75 million to the Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls to go private, but the college decided it wasn't enough money to make up for state funding.

Wendt and his wife Nancy gave \$32 million to the University of Dubuque in Iowa in 2004 to develop a unique program focusing on the ethics and character of students, faculty and staff.

In addition to his wife, Wendt is survived by a son Rod, president and CEO of Jeld-Wen, and a son Mark, all of Klamath Falls.

Funeral arrangements were not immediately announced.



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First report

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