

Ed Malzahn, Ditch Witch Founder and Industry Icon, Dies at 94

16 December 2015 by Ditch Witch

The Ditch Witch family is deeply saddened to announce the passing of the company's founder and industry icon Ed Malzahn on Friday. He was 94.

Malzahn changed the way the world's utility infrastructure is installed and maintained when he launched the first service line trencher, the Ditch Witch model DWP in 1949 from a small machine shop in Oklahoma. That small shop grew to become Ditch Witch, a Charles Machine Works company, which today employs more than 1,500 workers, and has more than 175 dealerships and branches serving 195 countries. The company has produced and sold more than half of the world's trenching machines.

"Ed was the inspirational leader of the Ditch Witch and Charles Machine Works family for over 65 years," said Rick Johnson, chief executive officer for Charles Machine Works. "He possessed a sharp mind, strong rural work ethic and generous spirit - all of which he used to better those around him."

Recognition of Malzahn's accomplishments as an industry leader and innovator included his induction into the Oklahoma Inventors Hall of Fame, American Rental Association Hall of Fame, Construction Equipment Hall of Fame and North American Society for Trenchless Technology Hall of Fame. He also was named Inventor of the Year by the Oklahoma Bar Association: Patent, Trademark and Copyright Section.

The needs of the community and its residents were always a priority to Malzahn, who held deep Oklahoma roots. His efforts as a civic leader and philanthropist included volunteer service and financial contributions to numerous organizations and boards at the local, state and national level.

As a family man, Malzahn's family life extended to his work life. Charles Machine Works has remained a family business since its creation, even after global success. Malzahn's granddaughter Tiffany Sewell-Howard, who represents the fifth-generation of the Malzahn family, now serves as the executive chair of Charles Machine Works.

Malzahn is survived by his three children, nine grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

To send condolences or share memories, please visit EdMalzahn.com.

Memorial and funeral arrangements are scheduled as follows:

Memorial:

Friday, December 18, 2015:

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Ditch Witch Training Center

1947 West Fir Avenue

Perry, Okla. 73077

Funeral Services:

Saturday, December 19

2:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

1922 N. 15th Street

Perry, Okla. 73077

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Perry Memorial Hospital Foundation, c/o Brown-Dugger Funeral Home at 1010 North 7th Street in Perry, Oklahoma.

Source: Ditch Witch