

KOCH

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Lawrence D. Starr, Retired Chairman/CEO of Kansas City-Based Koch Equipment LLC, Dies at 72

"Father of Vacuum Packaging" to be inducted into the Packaging Hall of Fame™

KANSAS CITY, MO – 24 October 2004 – Lawrence D. Starr, Kansas City native, philanthropist, and business leader, died at home. The cause was pancreatic cancer. The son of the late Hortense (Davidson) and Raymond H. Starr, Mr. Starr was surrounded by his family at the time of death.



Born 9 April 1932 in Kansas City, Mr. Starr graduated from Pembroke-Country Day School in 1949 and received a BS degree in biology from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in 1953. His advisors were Nobel Laureate winners Dr. Linus Pauling (Chemistry and Peace) and Dr. George Beadle (Physiology and Medicine, later president of The University of Chicago). In 1955, he earned his MS degree in Food Technology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He then entered the United States Army, serving as an undercover agent with the Army Intelligence Service in West Germany.

Upon returning to Kansas City, Mr. Starr began working at the family business, Koch Supplies Inc., in various management positions. He took over this business from his father in 1966 and created an industry-leading company providing equipment and supplies to the meat, food processing, and packaging industries. Mr. Starr learned about vacuum packaging during his military service in West Germany and became a pioneer in introducing the technology in the U.S. His global vision led him to focus on international trade opportunities. Koch has built meat-processing facilities in the former Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republics, China, Micronesia, Trinidad, and Mexico.

During his 34 years as president of Koch Supplies Inc. (now Koch Equipment LLC), Mr. Starr accomplished revolutionary results in the meat packaging and food processing industries that earned him the title "founding father of vacuum packaging in the U.S." In recognition of his influential work, he will be inducted into the Packaging Hall of Fame of the Packaging Machinery Manufacturers Institute (PMMI) during ceremonies at the PACK EXPO International convention in Chicago on 7 November.

Recently asked about his biggest accomplishment at Koch, Lawrence Starr replied "I helped a lot of coworkers live well, and raise and educate their kids. I partnered with customers to help them develop new, profitable products. And, I never stiffed a vendor on a bill." His love for people and technological curiosity were keys to his success in business and in life.

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Mr. Starr was active in the community and a generous philanthropist. He was a member of The New Reform Temple and served on the board of directors for the Menorah Medical Center and the University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth, KS. He also actively participated in fundraising efforts for Operation Breakthrough, an inner city daycare program, and the new downtown Kansas City Public Library. His ancestors were founding members of Temple B’Nai Jehudah and The New Reform Temple. He was a strong supporter of Israel for its democratic influence and he was also a member of AIPAC.

He had a wide variety of interests and hobbies and was best known for his love of hiking to the tops of tall mountains in remote parts of the world, tennis, the Great Books program, learning and teaching, food, and the Chicago Opera. He was particularly proud of his ascent of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Climbing with two younger, more experienced partners, Lawrence was the only one to reach the summit.

Lawrence Starr is survived by two children and their spouses, John and Debra Starr, Kansas City, MO, and Laura Starr and Zeke Berman, New York, NY; four grandchildren, Miranda Starr, Adam Starr, Lily Starr and Lily Berman; two brothers, Norton Starr, Amherst, MA, and Raymond Starr, Jr., Baltimore, MD, and his partner, Honore Ashcraft. Irma Starr, his former wife and mother of his children, lives in Kansas City.

As a member of the University of Saint Mary’s Board of Trustees, Lawrence focused his attention on the quality of students’ learning and their potential impact for good. His influence is memorialized in the *Lawrence D. Starr Global Studies Institute*, established to promote attitudes, policies, and practices that foster peace, and justice. The University has also established the *Lawrence D. Starr Endowed Scholarship in History, Political Science and Global Studies*.

Additionally, he has established the *Lawrence D. Starr Charitable Foundation*. This foundation supports individuals and organizations in Kansas City who strive for spiritual and intellectual leadership consistent with Jewish values such as defending human rights and freedom of thought and expression. Judaism played an important role in Lawrence’s thought process and in his quest for truth.

