

# **Resort Trades**

*Every Resort; Every Month*



- In Memory of Edwin Hull “Ed” McMullen, Sr. RRP
- Resort Trades Sponsors Virtual Town Hall
- Rapid Response Key to Safety During Challenges
- Contemplating The New Normal

- A Conversation With Jason Gamel
- Managing Your Business During Times of Disruption
- Better Times(haring) Coming
- Environmental Stewardship the Capital Vacations Way

- 5 Tips On Increasing Social Media Conversions
- Exploria Resorts' CEP Finalist
- An Everyday Chore Becomes Crucial

# In Memory of Edwin Hull “Ed” McMullen, Sr. RRP Timeshare Pioneer 1937-2020

By Marge Lennon

Long respected and beloved as one of the timeshare industry's most prolific visionaries and energetic entrepreneurs, Edwin (Ed) Hull McMullen, Sr. passed away peacefully in his Sarasota, Florida home at the age of 83 on April 10, after a brief, unexpected illness not related to the coronavirus.

If there is a Timeshare Hall of Fame, he would surely be one of the first inductees. Industry icon and legends are inadequate words to describe this true Southern gentleman. A mentor and genuine friend to many of today's timeshare leaders, Ed's contributions and entrepreneurial spirit paved the way for today's global timeshare industry. He was among a handful of early trailblazers who courageously traversed virgin territory, clearing new pathways and leading the way for others to follow. Many of his early ideas and concepts are deeply woven into the tapestry of today's vacation ownership programs.

If you never knew Ed McMullen, it is important to understand that he is widely recognized as one of the timeshare industry's most inspirational leaders. Most of today's timeshare professionals probably indirectly owe their jobs and career to his early accomplishments within their industry.

“Timesharing was in its infancy,” recalled Ed for a previous article in *Resort Trades*. “We were traveling into unknown territory and taking major financial risks along the way. In the early days, everyone knew each other as we shared information to help each developer – not as competitors but as colleagues.” Ed admitted his fellow pioneers were unencumbered by what they didn't know. Partially because of that, they continued to forge ahead, honestly believing there was no reason they could not accomplish their goals.

His timeshare pioneer contemporaries at the time were Jon and Christel DeHaan founders of RCI; Mario Rodriguez, Tom Davis and Craig Nash, founders of Interval International; Bob Burns with Vacation International and George Donovan of Fairfield (later Bluegreen Resorts). All of them sealed their

place in timeshare history, leaving their own unique imprint on the industry they helped build.

Following a career in insurance, banking and other industries, Ed and Robert (Bob) A. Miller, founded American Resorts in 1976, developing four timeshare resorts on Hilton Head Island, S.C. At the time, timesharing was a mere blip on the real estate horizon. Ed and Bob were intrigued by the timesharing concept and had spent a year researching the product.

American Resorts then developed four successful resorts at Sea Pines, including the nationally awarded Monarch Resort, which garnered attention from the Marriott Corporation. In 1984, Marriott purchased the assets of American Resorts, bringing the first international hospitality company into the timesharing industry with the formation of Marriott Ownership Resorts (now Marriott Vacations Worldwide), spurring the growth of the entire industry. “Without Marriott having taken the first step into timesharing” said Ed's former partner Bob Miller, “the timeshare industry would be very different today.” [potential pull-out quote]

As Executive VP, Ed was responsible for strategic planning, product development, and marketing and sales from 1984 to 1990, when he completed his contract with Marriott.

With a relentless drive to build something new, Ed's next venture was launched in November 1991 with the formation of Hilton

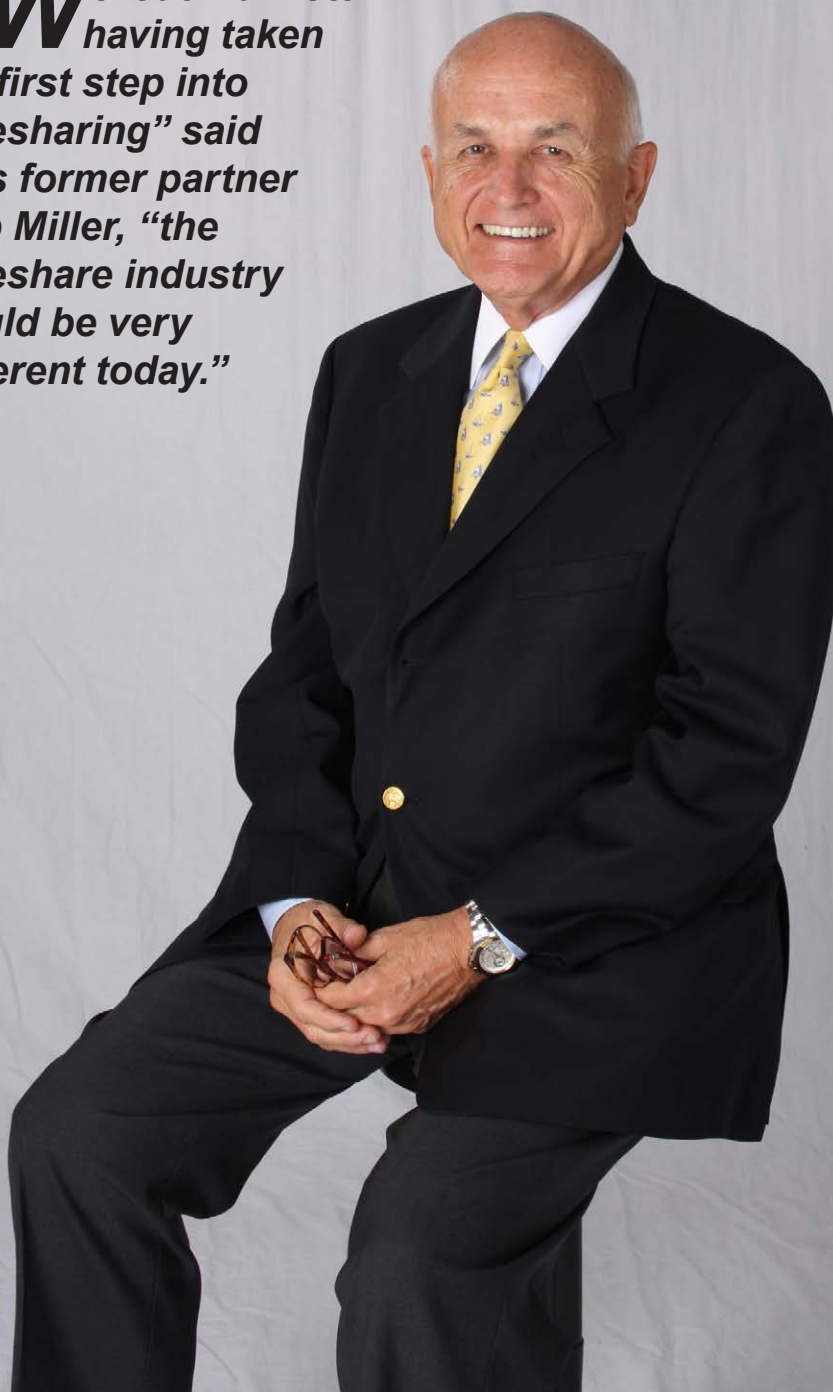
Grand Vacations Company, a relationship with Hilton Hotels Corporation, a joint venture between Ed and sons Ed, Jr. and Malcolm and the Mariner Group as Ed's SECOND hospitality-branded timeshare company – was born. In 1996, Hilton Hotels Corp. bought out the partners' interests in HGVC. By this time, vacation ownership was the rising star on the vacation horizon and Ed had played a significant role in making this happen.

During the ensuing years and operating as McMullen Development – a family partnership – Ed worked with sons Ed McMullen, Jr. and Malcolm

McMullen in numerous industry projects. They included Emerald Grand in Destin, Florida and the creation of Wisdom Ventures, a travel club concept aimed at the pre-retirement demographic and retirement community development, an idea that remained Ed's passion to the very end of his life.

Along his 44-year timeshare journey, Ed was named Timeshare Professional of the Year in 1984, served as ARDA Chairman from 1997-1999, and was a Founding Director and Vice President of the ARDA International Research Foundation. Among his numer-

**“Without Marriott having taken the first step into timesharing” said Ed's former partner Bob Miller, “the timeshare industry would be very different today.”**





**RCI 360°**

When the time is right,  
we'll be here.

An unexpected journey can lead us to a beautiful destination. And when the time is right to travel again, RCI will be here to meet your customers' needs through a comprehensive portfolio of all-new travel services.

Visit [RCIAffiliates.com/360](https://RCIAffiliates.com/360) for more information.

RCI does not make any representations regarding the availability of or endorse any of the products or services provided by third parties. RCI and related marks are registered trademarks and/or service marks in the United States and internationally. All rights reserved. ©2020 RCI, LLC. Printed in the U.S.A. 9998 North Michigan Road, Carmel, IN 46032

0433-2020

ous national and international awards is ARDA's coveted Lifetime Achievement Award, the association's highest recognition, which he was presented in 2020 in honor of his distinguished career. He was also active in the American Hotel and Lodging Association, the Urban Land Institute and deeply involved as an Alumni Trustee at Florida Southern College.

With an incredible zest for life, genuine love of people and passion for the timeshare industry, people were mesmerized by his extraordinary energy, the twinkle in his eyes, infectious laugh and savvy business acumen. Constantly working on new projects, he understood more than most that change brings opportunities and remained a flowing fountain of ideas to improve the timeshare industry.

He could make a person feel like they were the most interesting and worthy person in the room. One friend shared, "Being with him was like waking up to a sunny morning, after days and days of rain. I truly love him and to this day live by his ethos."

With Ed, humor was around every corner and he had a bottomless treasure trove of sage "Edisums," (a phrase coined by his good friend Simon Crawford-Welch) for every business or personal situation. They included, "Don't worry about the mule going blind, just load the wagon." Or, "If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much room." He also advised in his own style, "If you fish only in a catfish pond, all you're gonna catch is catfish!" He also famously said, "We're here for a good time, not necessarily a long time."

His contemporaries assumed he would outlast them all. In reflection of his Energizer Bunny lifestyle, for his 80th birthday, the family had t-shirts and koozies printed with the message "Pappa Bear - 18 with 62 years' experience." He leaves behind wife Julie Kimmel McMullen, his four children Ed Jr. and Malcolm McMullen, Melanie McMullen Gardner and Michelle McMullen Counter plus Julie's son Scott Schaefer, nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren, plus other extended family members.

In 2018 he said, "I am extremely lucky to have had a career I love with a passionate business pursuit and partners and family who put up with me. If you truly love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life. It helps to wake up each day with a purpose. This motivates me to continue a full work schedule with a mission and over-riding purpose with absolutely no plans to retire." Mission accomplished, dear Ed.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting that donations in Ed's memory be directed to the Edwin H. McMullen, Sr. '58 Scholarship Fund, Florida Southern College, 111 Lake Hollingsworth Drive, Lakeland, FL 33801.

Author's bio.

Marge Lennon has been writing about the timeshare industry and its people since 1978, almost as long as Ed McMullen has been involved in this very special industry.



### McMullen Family:

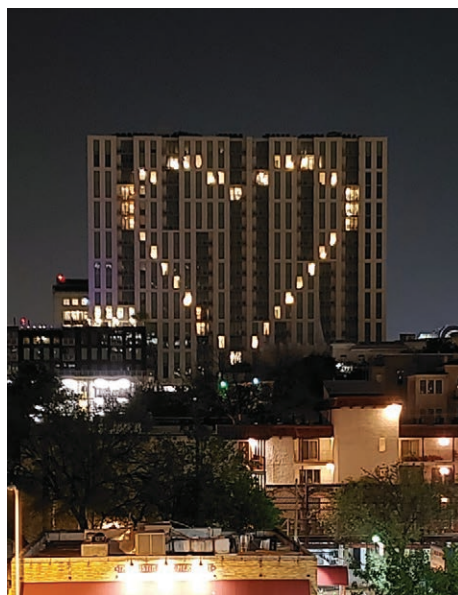
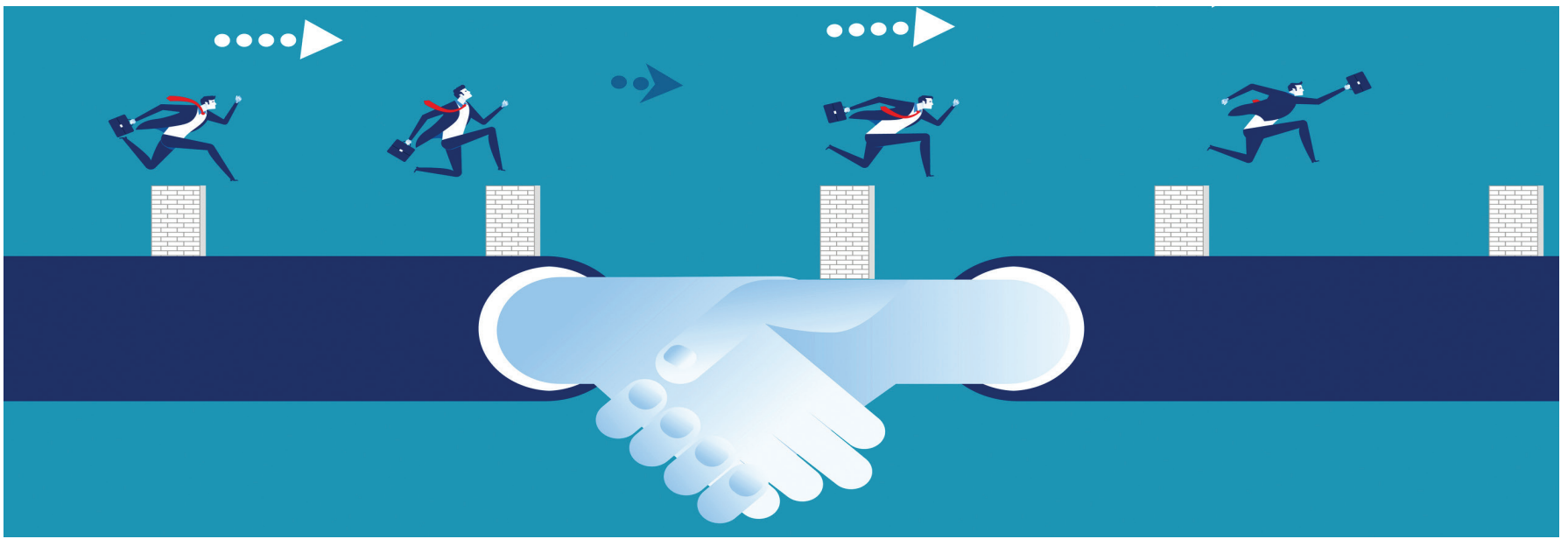
I am so sorry to hear the news about your Dad. Please accept my deepest condolences and feelings of loss.

When I met your father in the mid-70s, I much enjoyed the experience. He was full of life, brimming with ideas and ready to slay the timesharing dragon, even in the early stages of development. Over the years and through our work at ARDA, we served on committees, we directed the conversation to standards and ethics, and we found ways to uplift the early image of the industry. Your Dad always led the way.

Reflecting on these years and also the later years, I admired your Dad for seeking new ways to increase the appeal of the product. His place in the chronicle of timesharing as a pioneer par excellence is forever secured. I was proud to have known your Dad and to have worked with him sometimes side by side. This was a period in time that cannot be replicated. Truly unique--- just as unique as he was.

May your period of mourning concentrate on all that your Dad accomplished both professionally and personally.

Christel DeHaan  
Founder RCI & Christel House



# Contents | June 2020

## FEATURES

- 04 In Memory of Edwin Hull "Ed" McMullen, Sr. RRP
- 8 Resort Trades Sponsors Virtual Town Hall
- 9 Rapid Response Key To Employee And Owner Safety During Unprecedented Challenges
- 10 Contemplating The New Normal
- 12 A Conversation With Jason Gamel
- 14 Managing Your Business During Times of Disruption
- 16 Better Times(haring) Coming

- 18 Environmental Stewardship the Capital Vacations Way
- 20 5 Tips On Increasing Social Media Conversions
- 20 Exploria Resorts' Cep Finalist
- 22 An Everyday Chore becomes Crucial

## TRENDING

- 23 Classifieds
- 25 Advertiser List
- 26 Business Directory

