



## Morton Irvin Sosland

May 7, 1925 - April 25, 2019

Morton Irvin Sosland, who led Sosland Publishing Co. for several decades and was a revered figure in the Kansas City and grain-based foods business communities, has died at the age of 93. Mr. Sosland was returning to Kansas City April 25 from a Continental Grain Co. board of directors meeting in New York and was stricken while riding home. He died soon afterward at Truman Medical Center.

Mr. Sosland attended Bryant elementary school and Southwest High, began his freshman year at Harvard University in 1942 and in 1943 enlisted in the Army. He began military service in the horse cavalry at Fort Riley, Kas., and was assigned to the 13th Armored Division, Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, which went to Europe soon after the invasion of France and ended the war near Salzburg, Austria. He immediately returned to Harvard and in June 1946 married Estelle Jane Glatt, his fiancée and friend of many years.

Completing his education in a shortened post-war curriculum, Mr. Sosland joined Sosland Publishing Company in 1947, where he worked initially under the direction of his uncle, Samuel Sosland, one of the three brothers who founded the company and its The Southwestern Miller weekly magazine in 1922 (a publication later renamed Milling & Baking News). Active as a publisher and editor for most of his 72 years with the company, he also created and wrote much of the editorial page for several of the company magazines.

He worked initially under the direction of his Uncle Sam, who was the principal editor of the weekly magazine and who from his early youth in Kansas City had been a journalist. Mr. Sosland wrote copy that was carefully and vigorously edited, learning “the trade” from a teacher who did not hesitate to tear up and toss in the waste basket an article that did not suit.

In 1972, Mr. Sosland was at the center of national news when The Southwestern Miller broke the story of the Soviet Union’s huge purchases of grain from the United States. The Russian Wheat Deal, together with the Arab oil embargo a year later, proved a watershed

moment for the U.S. and the global economy. With detailed and precise secret information provided over several months by a mysterious source, Mr. Sosland's tantalizing role in breaking the news attracted great attention from the national media.

For many years, Mr. Sosland was a frequent speaker before industry groups, primarily analyzing developments within various grain-based sectors — grain, flour milling and baking — and often looking thoughtfully toward future prospects.

Beyond his involvement with the family's publishing business, he divided his time among a number of different endeavors. He served on the board of directors of both leading public and private companies. His service on the boards of companies with a considerable Kansas City presence included H&R Block, Inc., Commerce Bancshares, Inc., ERC Corporation, Hallmark Cards, Inc., Kansas City Southern Industries, Stilwell Financial, Inc., and Trans World Airlines. He also was a member of the board of Brown Shoe Co., Inc., Ingredient Technology Corp., TW Services, Inc., and Continental Grain Co. At one time, he was a director of six companies with listings on the New York Stock Exchange.

Community involvement was no less a priority to Mr. Sosland and his family. The Sosland Foundation was started in 1950. And while the foundation has been an important instrument for family giving, Mr. Sosland also learned early that personal giving is equally important. He often led individual family members in supplementing foundation support of selected charitable activities, particularly in support of the Jewish causes that the family has devoted great attention to over a long period of years.

Recognizing his obligations to the Jewish community, Mr. Sosland served as president and/or chairman of Jewish Family and Children's Service, Jewish Federation and Council and the Jewish Community Foundation.

His activities in the general community covered a wide range. He served as chairman of Midwest Research Institute, as co-chairman of the Kansas City Area Economic Development Council, and on the boards of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Menorah Medical Center, St. Luke's Hospital, Truman Medical Center Foundation, and the Jacob L. and Ella C. Loose Foundation.

He was the long-time president of the Sosland Foundation and served for many years on the boards of the Hall Family Foundation, the H&R Block Foundation and the Marion and Henry Bloch Foundation.

Hardly any community activity attracted his attention as strongly as did the Nelson-Atkins

Museum of Art. He was co-chair of the Generations capital campaign that provided funding for a major current expansion of the museum, and he continued to lead fundraising for the museum's endowment needs afterward. He undertook that effort, as he did in serving as president of the museum's Friends of Art, in tandem with his wife's long service as a trustee. The family under Morton's leadership, donated to the Nelson in the early 1990s the Shuttlecocks sculptures by the artists Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. Highly controversial and loudly criticized when the four 17-foot tall sculptures of badminton birdies were first proposed, the initiative left Mr. Sosland in the unfamiliar and uncomfortable position of subject of raging news coverage. By the year 2000, the sculptures had become icons in the city, won over critics, one of whom called the Shuttlecocks a "rare example of vision winning out in Kansas City."

Mr. Sosland in 1975 received what was then known as the "Mr. Kansas City Award" from the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce. He received the Chancellor's Medal from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1978, has been a member of the Academy of Missouri Squires since 1987, and in 2002 received the Leader in Agriculture Award from Agricultural Future of America.

Mr. Sosland is survived by his wife of 72 years; three children, Amy Brown of West Sussex, England; Elizabeth J. Sosland, of New York; and Charles S. Sosland (wife Jeanne) of Kansas City; grandchildren Andrew Brown (Kate), Meyer Sosland (Mindy), Sarah Sosland (Benton Smith) and Sophie Sosland (Ryan Reich); six great grandchildren; a brother Neil Sosland (Blanche) and a sister Susan Kraner (Richard).

Funeral services will be held May 1 at 10:30 a.m. at Helzberg Hall at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, 1601 Broadway Boulevard, Kansas City, with private burial to follow at Mount Carmel Cemetery.

Memorials are preferred to Harvesters, 3801 Topping Ave., Kansas City, MO. 64129.

# Cemetery

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# Events

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**Mt. Carmel Cemetery**

5529 Ditzler Avenue

Raytown, MO,

**MAY**

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**Funeral**

10:30AM

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Helzberg Hall at the Kauffman Center for Performing Arts

1601 Broadway blvd, Kansas City, MO, US

# Comments

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“ Our hero is now receiving his much deserved reward. God Bless you Morton

**Dan and Dianne Hogerty** - May 11, 2019 at 03:16 PM

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“ Charlie and family, so sorry to just read of your loss. I have thought of your family often and I am honored to have worked for him and the Sosland Publishing family.

**Russ Clark** - May 02, 2019 at 10:43 PM

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“ Dear Estelle, my deepest condolences to you and your family. It was a pleasure knowing and working with Morton and his dear friend, Fred Merrill, Sr. with Cereal Food Processors. I miss them both, but I will forever be grateful for having known them. Fond regards, Lori (Rose) Hart



**Lori (Rose) Hart** - April 30, 2019 at 07:45 PM

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“ Dear Mrs. Sosland and Betsy,  
I don't know of another person that I admired and respected more than Morton Sosland. I was fortunate enough to meet Morton, and you Estelle, through Betsy many years ago. This is a great loss and please accept my condolences for you and the Sosland family.  
Mark C. Lee  
New York

**Mark C. Lee** - April 30, 2019 at 03:11 PM

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“ Dearest Estelle,  
Warmest condolences to you, Charlie and family. You and Morton have been the most wonderful friends for many years, a friendship which Judith and I have fondly cherished. A more personal note is in the mail. I asked Charlie to give you a warm hug from me, Estelle! John (and Judith) Thistle

Dr Johnson Thistle - April 30, 2019 at 01:50 PM

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“ Dearest Estelle and the entire Sosland family:

We at JCRB were greatly grieved to hear about the loss of Morton. The community - and the world - have been touched by his commitment to justice, his work to end hunger, and his efforts to make the Kansas City area an amazing place to live and work.

He was a wonderful friend, and a trusted and wise advisor to our agency, and we will truly miss him. May his memory be for a blessing.

Gavi, Jason, and Carol

Gavriela Geller  
Executive Director

Jason Krakow  
Board Chair

Carol B. Burton  
Assistant Director

Gavriela Geller - April 29, 2019 at 04:56 PM

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“ Dear Morton,  
Your leadership in producing outstanding publications that enhanced the knowledge of public, private, and not for profit leaders as well as students enabled them all to create a global food system that responded to society's needs in an environmentally sound way. You not only provided sound published works but used your own knowledge to guide so many institutions and people through your own professional personal involvement. No one has done as much as you have done to make the food system work for all.  
You will be missed. Thank you for your leadership.  
My sincere condolences to your wonderful family.  
Ray

Ray A. Goldberg - April 29, 2019 at 03:02 PM

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“ It was a privilege to meet Morton during my time as grant writer at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. My office was near the American Indian Galleries, so that I often walked through and enjoyed the wonderful collection he and Estelle gave to the museum.

My heart goes out to Estelle and their family.

Ann Friedman

Ann Friedman - April 29, 2019 at 02:00 PM

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“ Thank you, Morton, for speaking out and asking the hard questions. You inspired all of us to strengthen health and human services in the community. Your innovative ideas made Kansas City a vibrant home for the arts. Your vision, leadership and unwavering commitment will be missed. My thoughts and prayers to your family.  
Barbara Lebedun

Barbara Lebedun - April 28, 2019 at 09:09 AM

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“ John Muir observed that “the note which any creature forms in the song of existence, it is made first for itself.” To hear such a song of existence ~ whether our own, our mate's, or the entire symphony of being ~ is life's ultimate undertaking. Morton undertook all his ventures and pursuits with such gusto, as penning his own and Estelle's symphony. I have happy memories of helping him to make alive the weekend celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary in England. Exacting task masker though he was, the music that resonated from that simcha lifted up such beautiful notes for his family and friends to remember for a lifetime. Sending our sympathy to the entire family ~ may his memory always be called for blessings.

Leslie Mark - April 26, 2019 at 09:40 PM

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“ Sosland family generosity.  
Jewish persecution in Nazi Germany became intolerable. Werner and Eva fled to Shanghai, China in the spring of 1939. July 3, 1947 Werner, Eva and their 15 month old son, Ralph, landed in San Francisco. The Jewish Federation sent us to Kansas City where a family (Sosland) had agreed to sponsor a strange family that happened to have some grain business experience. A short time later, Hymie Sosland gave my father a job in his grain business. Hymie gave me \$100 (a fortune of money at the time) for my Bar Mitzvah. I have never known the Sosland family tree and it really does not matter because all I remember is the story my parents told me from the time I was very young-----the Sosland family was generous and I should never forget them. My condolences to the entire Sosland family. Thank you. Ralph Hartwich.

Ralph Hartwich - April 26, 2019 at 05:53 PM

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“ Oh Morton. How I will miss our conversations! You were such a consciences Federation and Jewish Community Foundation president. Most of all you and Estelle were so gracious and welcoming to my late wife Rosette and me. Our loss is a loss for Kansas City, our Jewish community and the State of Israel. It will be difficult to let you go.. Sol Koenigsberg. Executive Director Emeritus. Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City..

Sol Koenigsberg - April 26, 2019 at 02:43 PM

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“ Loss is difficult, always. We share your sorrow. Sending deepest sympathies to each and everyone in the family.

Mark Edelman and karin lichterman - April 26, 2019 at 01:40 PM