

Obituary of Jonathan Ellis Martin

October 3, 1948 to September 20, 2019

Jonathan Ellis Martin, age 70, finished his work for Christ on Earth and was called home by his Savior on September 20, 2019. The night he passed away, he was at home in Alexandria, Louisiana, surrounded by all eleven of his immediate family. He is survived by his beloved wife of 48 years, Maggie Burnaman Martin, PhD, two daughters and sons-in-law, Natalie and Darryl Monroe of Alexandria, and Amanda and Benn Vincent of Baton Rouge, and his six grandchildren who brought him tremendous joy: Ryan, Raegan, Parker and Pierson Monroe, and Noah and William Vincent.

Jonathan was Chairman and past President of RoyOMartin, a Louisiana forest products manufacturing company, owner of a large amount of timberland in Louisiana. Both Natalie Monroe and Amanda Vincent work for RoyOMartin. Darryl Monroe is the Secretary-Treasurer, and Benn Vincent is a member of the Board of Directors demonstrating that the “apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.”

His faith in Christ shaped and directed his life. Stewardship of his God-given assets for the benefit of others was foremost on his mind. As in Matthew 25, stewardship drove Jonathan to improve all things immediately, and his desire for excellence and sense of urgency was unmatched. He sought honesty and integrity in his dealings with others. His values were passed down from his parents, the late Ellis and Virginia Martin, and were formed by his late grandparents, Roy O. and Mildred Martin, Sr, the founder of Roy O. Martin Lumber Company.

Jonathan graduated from Culver Military Academy in 1965, and earned a bachelor of science degree in Industrial Engineering from Louisiana State University in 1971. He married Maggie on June 4, 1971, and made their first home in the small town of Ringgold, Louisiana, where he began his career working for his father at the family’s sawmill business and became the plant manager. This was the start of his many business accomplishments. In 1981, he directed the design and construction of the first oriented strand board (OSB) plant in the Southern United States, and an adjacent hardwood sawmill in 1984. He also directed the design and construction of a plywood plant in 1995, the first plywood plant built in the United States since 1981. In 2006, he directed the expansion of this plywood plant while also building a new OSB plant capable of producing twice the quantity of the one built in 1981. As Chairman of Martin Sustainable Resources, he finished his career with the completion of an OSB plant in Corrigan, Texas, in 2018.

Under Jonathan’s leadership, the Martin family of companies received the Louisiana Lantern Award, which recognizes help in building the state’s economy, and was voted the Best Overall Business by the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce. Jonathan received the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of The Year award for the Gulf Coast region, and served as President of the Hardwood Manufacturer’s Association, and the Chairman of the American Panel Association. He received the Alexandria Rotary “Service Above Self Award” in 2019. Jonathan was an active member of Calvary Baptist Church where he had served as a deacon. He also served on various boards for LSU’s College of Engineering and College of Business, as well as the Louisiana Technical and Community College System.

All these awards were secondary to Jonathan as his real love was to sing in the church choir and to take advantage of each opportunity to do good to all people especially those that belong to the family of believers. Whether it was picking up trash during his daily walk around Compton Park or sharing his faith, Jonathan seemed always to take the opportunity to help others. Since 1993, under his leadership,

the Martin Foundation funded hundreds of scholarships and millions of dollars to help various charities. Over the past 15 years, he raised over \$2.5 million for Homeplace, a ministry of the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home that serves homeless mothers and children in northeast Louisiana, through an annual golf tournament which he started.

The extended family and his business associates celebrate his life and will miss him greatly knowing his legacy lives on in the thousands of lives he touched so deeply. His legacy will endure through the family business that is approaching its 100th anniversary.

Jonathan is also survived by his brother, David (Phyllis) Martin, and sisters, Bonnie Nelson, Susan (Charles) Potter, and Mary (Randall) Fowler, nieces and nephews, and more than a hundred relatives whom he loved.

May all who come behind him find him faithful.

Visitation will be at Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria, Louisiana, from 5:00 until 8:00 PM on Friday, September 27, and from 9:00 until 10:00 AM on Saturday, September 28. Immediately following, a memorial service will be held at 10:30 AM on Saturday at Calvary Baptist Church.

The family asks that, in lieu of flowers, memorials be made to the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home, Rapides Symphony Orchestra or the individual's charity of choice.

