

Potter, Albert F. “Ab”

Of Albuquerque, NM and formerly of Kankakee, IL, where he was co-owner of Gordon Electric Supply, passed away November 12, 2011 of cancer at age 81. A Memorial Service will be held Saturday, November 26<sup>th</sup> 2:00 pm at First Unitarian in Albuquerque. Details are available at [www.uuabq.org](http://www.uuabq.org) under “Light a Candle.”

Ab was passionate in his devotion to his family and community. He nurtured and supported those he loved or admired. As a mentor he was a master at building a person’s self-esteem and helping them to identify priorities in their lives. As a humanitarian, business and community leader, Ab was focused on making his world a better place. He was never satisfied with the status quo. He was outspoken in his efforts to improve the organizations and communities with which he was involved, and was known for “asking the tough questions.”

Actively involved in the electrical distribution industry, Ab received the first-ever Lifetime Achievement Award for his leadership in merging and chairing IMARK, the largest national Buying/Marketing Group for electrical distributors. He was instrumental in the developing a viable nationwide insurance cooperative for distributors, Elite Distributor Insurance Corp (EDIC), where he was a founding owner and strategic Marketing Committee Chair. An annual marketing award has been established by EDIC in his name. He also served the electrical distribution industry as Central Regional Vice President and member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Electrical Distributors (NAED).

Prior to moving with his family to Kankakee, Ab was Vice President of Times Fiber Communications in Wallingford CT, President of several subsidiaries of General Instrument Corp. of New York, and manager of various operations of Bell Telephone Laboratories in Murray Hill, NJ.

Ab served in leadership positions, mentored business owners, and provided philanthropic support throughout his life. Most recently, in Albuquerque he was most proud to have been actively involved with WESST, where he and his wife, Cara, were the lead donor for the WESST Enterprise Center, an incubator facility for small business, and were the largest individual contributor in WESST’s history. He also contributed funding and expertise to the Bosque School and ACCION, a micro-lending organization serving the southwest. Also in Albuquerque, Ab was President of the Huning Castle Neighborhood Association, participated as a business consultant with SCORE, served on committees for United Way and First Unitarian, and delivered Meals on Wheels.

In Kankakee, Ab served the United Way of Kankakee County in the 1990’s as Division Head and Chair where he raised the contribution level 45% to just under \$1 million. He was Treasurer and a founding board member of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation, and was instrumental in coalescing the entire community in the celebration of Martin Luther King Day. Ab was Governor’s appointee and Vice Chair of the Kankakee-Will Regional Development Authority and was a Director of First American Bank, Kankakee. Ab and Cara were awarded Business Person of the Year by the Bradley-Bourbonnais Chamber of Commerce. He served in key leadership positions in

various other community organizations including various business and economic development organizations, Kiwanis, and SCORE.

In the 1970's, Ab lived in Hamilton, NY where he founded the Mid-York Family Health Center when the area lost its primary care physicians. During that time he also teamed with an associate to successfully preserve the historic Colgate Inn in Hamilton after Colgate University announced plans to raze it.

Ab was born and reared in Poultney, VT, the son of Albert and Kay Bertolino Potter. He graduated from Colgate University with a bachelors and a master's degree. He is survived by his wife, Cara Gordon Potter and his children Keith and JoAnne Potter of Tucson, AZ, Scott Potter of Kankakee, IL, Lauren and Dean D'Onofrio of Summit, NJ, Sabrina and Joshua Corson of Naperville, IL, and Michael Potter of Tucson, AZ. He also has four grandchildren, David Potter, Kristen Shipman, Kayce and Diana D'Onofrio and two great grandchildren, Veronica and Matthew Potter..

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that contributions be made in Ab's honor to United Way of Kankakee County, 311 N Kinzie Ave, Bradley, IL 60915 or United Way of Central New Mexico, 2340 Alamo Avenue SE # 200, Albuquerque, NM 87106.