

## OWENS, George – 'Grocery King'

Humble but proud: George Owens, founder of the Savemore's chain of grocery stores.

# Grocery king fondly remembered

GEORGE Richard Owens, the founder of the Savemore's chain of grocery stores, died in Lingard Hospital on Wednesday after a short illness, aged 90.

The Owens name is synonymous with retail grocery in the Hunter Valley.

George's father Richard Owens started the family dynasty in 1909 with a store at Wollombi.

George's elder son Richard moved the family business into the modern self-serve age with the creation of the Shoey's outlets, which were later bought by the Coles group and renamed Bi-Lo.

In Newcastle yesterday, Richard Owens remembered his father as a humble but proud man, a good sportsman and singer who involved himself in community work wherever possible.

'One of his greatest attributes was that he was a wonderful coach,' Mr Owens said.

'He was a great teacher.'

## OBITUARY

George Owens worked from a young age in his father's Wollombi store, and a museum and coffee shop at the Centenary Antique Centre on Wharf Rd was his attempt to recreate the grocer's world in the first decade of the century.

'Dad collected most of the tins and signs for that display, and we did the facade much as it was' at Wollombi,' Mr Owens said.

George Owens and his wife Madge married in 1933, living at the one Parkway Ave, Hamilton, address until moving a few years ago to an apartment overlooking Newcastle Beach.

The Owens family achievements were outlined in a 1995 book, *Once There Was a Corner Store*.

The book recounted how George, the youngest of three sons, started work at 15½, managing his first store at 23 at the height of the Depression.

He opened the first Savemore's in 1956 and remained working long hours for another decade before winding down his commitments from 1965.

He continued to attend weekly meetings up until a few years ago.

Mr Owens also remained chairman of a family property company.

A large turnout is expected at today's funeral service at Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle, at 1pm.

The family has requested no flowers at the service.

It will be preceded by a private cremation.

George Owens is survived by his wife, Madge, and children Richard, Don and Margaret and 11 grandchildren.

## Christ Church Cathedral Newcastle



## Service of Thanksgiving for the Life and Work of George Richard Owens

Born 17.5.08 - Died 1.7.98



Friday, 3rd July, 1998 at 1:00pm

OWENS, George Richard

The Relatives and Friends of the late GEORGE RICHARD OWENS of Newcastle are invited to attend the Memorial Service of Thanksgiving for his life this FRIDAY afternoon at 1 o'clock in Christ Church Cathedral, Church Street, Newcastle.

This Service will be preceded by a private cremation

No flowers by request.

**James Murray**  
4961 1435  
PROUDLY AUSTRALIAN OWNED





George Owens in the Grocery Museum he created in Newcastle