

# Nevada entrepreneur Donald Bently dead at age 87

To the community,

It is with considerable sadness that we announce the passing away Oct. 1 of one of the institute's greatest friends and benefactors, our longtime trustee Donald E. Bently. He was 87.

Don began his relationship with IWP when he visited our first headquarters a block down from our current location. At the time, he had become disillusioned with Washington politics. Our mutual friend and eventual trustee, Terry Balderson, however, encouraged Don to visit us, as he believed that Don would be inspired by our mission and what Terry ended up calling our "purity of motive."

When Don saw that we had not equipped our headquarters with new furniture, but were making do with bare bones accoutrements, he decided not only to donate to us, but to triple the size of his originally contemplated donation.



Donald  
Bently

Two years later, when we lost our lease and were having difficulty finding appropriate new campus facilities, Don took the extraordinary initiative to buy the Marlatt Mansion and the two adjacent townhouses for the institute's use. He donated the use of the mansion to us for 15 years at \$1 per year, and spent several million dollars gutting and rebuilding

the adjacent townhouses, which were beyond repair. I did not ask him for any of this. Thanks to Don, we have enjoyed an extraordinary physical presence just eight blocks north of the White House in one of the best locations in the city.

Subsequently, Don endowed the Donald E. Bently Chair of Political Economy at the institute, which has enabled our longtime professor, Amb. Alberto Piedra to teach moral philosophy and applied ethics to our students.

Don was one of the world's greatest experts on rotor dynamics. He not only blazed new paths in the engineering theories surrounding rotating machinery, but he also was an inventor and entrepreneur, whose innovations have made the world a much safer place. One of Don's inventions is a "probe" – a small device that detects vibrations in rotating axles, and therefore the possibility of impending failure in machinery. Such failure can produce meltdowns in nuclear power plants and catastrophes in oil refineries, among other things.

Don's first company, Bently Nevada, which became the largest manufacturing company in the state of Nevada, also played a pioneering role in the diagnosis and servicing of major machinery. Don eventually sold the Minden company to General Electric.

And then when he was already in his 70s, Don established a new company, Bently Pressurized Bearing Corporation, which manufactures a bearing that can hold in place a rotating axle without actually touching the axle and thus avoiding friction. This extraordinary technology is based on injecting highly pressurized air between the bearing and the axle. In addition to his world class expertise as an engineer, Don was also involved in agriculture, ranching, the development of biofuels, and other sustainable energy concepts.

Don was a long term investor. His companies were completely privately held, and because he was able to structure the way

he built his companies for the long term without having to worry about quarterly reports to stockholders, he was always able to keep on the cutting edge of his field technologically. He fended off subsidized competition from Japan; he fended off competition from U.S. government-funded entities, always offering a better product. He did business in over 50 countries around the world, and never agreed to pay a bribe. If people wouldn't buy his product on that account, he simply refused to do business with them.

Don was a believer in a sound currency. He strongly advocated that the U.S. government guarantee the value of the currency, thereby guaranteeing bondholders that they would be paid back the full amount that they had lent the government.

Don was an American patriot who served our country as a Seabee in the Pacific theater during World War II. He was a believer in limited government, the free enterprise system, and a strong national security posture.

He looked upon his support for IWP as an investment in America that would also benefit his companies, his community, and his family for the long term.

On behalf of the entire IWP community, I would like to extend our sincerest condolences to Don's son, Christopher, and daughter-in-law Amber Marie, as well as to his longtime assistant Carol Money, and the many other dedicated members of his staff.

Thank you for everything, Don. You have been a great blessing to our cause, and you have touched so many lives.

R.I.P.

Sincerely,

**John Lenczowski, Institute of World Politics founder and president**

—

**Note:** More on Donald Bently may be found online.