

Construction magnate dies

United Press International
HOUSTON — George Brown, a shop owner's son turned construction magnate, who boosted Lyndon B. Johnson along the road to the presidency — died Saturday at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital. He was 84.

Brown and his brother, Herman, left the hardware business their father operated in Belton as soon as they were old enough and built Brown & Root Inc., one of the world's construction giants.

Brown's personal fortune when he died is said to have exceeded \$100 million.

Along the way, the Browns became involved with a political

upstart named Lyndon Johnson and, for decades, were closely associated with his political rise.

In return, Johnson, as congressman and senator from Texas and as president of the United States, helped Brown & Root get many federal contracts.

"We always believed in good government and keeping good people in office," Brown once told an interviewer. "Those things go hand in hand. There's a place for both."

In 1926, George — who joined the Marines in 1918 and attended Rice Institute and the University of Texas before obtaining a Colorado School of Mines degree — opened the

Houston office of Brown & Root.

New Deal contracts fed the company well during the Depression. World War II made it a giant.

Although road and bridge building was a key to Brown & Root's growth, the company built the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station, the Marshall Ford Dam on the Colorado River near Austin, Johnson Space Center and began the South Texas Nuclear Project.

After Nuclear Regulatory Commission criticism and bad publicity, Brown & Root was replaced by Bechtel Power Corp on the project.

The company also became a

pioneer in offshore construction, building the first offshore drilling platform that was out of sight from land.

In 1962, the brothers decided Brown & Root needed a new owner and put 80 percent of their interest in the company into the Brown Foundation.

In 1962, Herman died at age 70. A month later, the company was sold to Halliburton Inc. for \$37 million and George became chairman.

George Brown retired in 1975, but remained active in Texas Eastern Corp., which he founded with his brother. The company was involved in natural gas production and distribu-

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Kidneys needed for kids

Inmate donors rejected

United Press International
GALVESTON — A proposal to allow prison inmates to voluntarily donate kidneys to children needing transplants has been rejected by a hospital administrator who said the plan posed legal, moral and ethical problems, officials said.

Dr. Luther Travis, head of the pediatric kidney transplant unit at John Sealy Hospital, said his department would not participate in any program with prison inmates.

"If you have a group of prisoners, and put them in a room (asking for volunteers), that is coercion," he said. "And the risk of removal (of a kidney from a

living person) makes it a highly moral and ethical question."

The idea of approaching prisoners through the Texas Department of Corrections and asking for voluntary kidney donations began when the three-year-old son of Alvin lawyer Ben Wagner, 30, was suffering from kidney failure and needed a transplant.

In September, the child's body rejected his mother's kidney. Neither Wagner nor any other relative has the necessary matching blood type to the boy.

TDC officials agreed with the proposal, but TDC Director W.J. Estelle Jr. said those in-

mates who donated kidneys would receive no special promises or benefits.

Wagner said Red Cross officials discussed kidney transplant with about 26 inmates at the Darrington Unit of TDC in Brazoria County. Fifteen immediately volunteered to have their blood tested to determine if they could be matched with a child in need of a kidney.

"The ones who signed up weren't asking for favors. They just wanted to help someone," Wagner said.

Despite Travis' refusal to participate in such a program, Wagner said he would continue to pursue the idea.

"You can't imagine what it's like seeing your child slowly deteriorate before your eyes," he said. "There's no reason why volunteers can't be used to save a child from that kind of life."

Meanwhile, Wagner's child received a healthy kidney from a child who died in Miami last week. He remained in stable condition following transplant surgery.

Clinic abductor pleads guilty

United Press International
ALTON, Ill. — One of three men accused of abducting an abortion clinic owner and his wife and threatening to kill them if he did not stop performing abortions has pleaded guilty, authorities said Saturday.

Wayne A. Moore, 18, of New Caney, pleaded guilty Friday to a U.S. District Court. District Judge William L. Beatty set sentencing for Feb. 18. Moore could face 20 years in prison.

Moore pleaded guilty to one count of conspiring to obstruct interstate commerce by threats of violence in a plea-bargaining

arrangement.

Don B. Anderson, 42, of Pearland, is another suspect in the abduction of Dr. Hector Zavallos and his wife, Jean. Anderson is scheduled to go on trial Monday before Beatty.

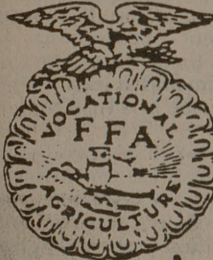

The third suspect, Moore's brother Matthew, 20, is awaiting trial. No trial date has been set.

Authorities said the three suspects were charged with attempts to force Zavallos to close his Hope Clinic for Women in Granite City, Ill. Federal kidnapping charges could not be filed because no state line was crossed.

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