

Christian Publishing Leader Ernest Owen Dies

Christian publishing industry leader Ernest (Ernie) E. Owen, 87, died Feb. 28 in Southern California. The recipient of a 1994 Jordon Lifetime Achievement Award from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association and a 2000 Life Impact Award from CBA, he served on publishing teams at Warner Press, Fleming H. Revell and Word Publishing, from which he retired in 1989.

Known as “the dean of Christian publishing,” he was influential in enhancing the writing careers of **Billy Graham, Charles Swindoll, James Dobson, Max Lucado** and many other best-selling authors. Swindoll recalled him as “a gentleman to the core, a man of genuine integrity and a true friend.” Lucado reflected: “Earth is less and heaven is more at the passing of Ernie Owen. In his fruitful life, he made no enemies, just friends. He did no harm, just good. He touched my life deeply and I will miss him.”

Having negotiated many a publishing contract with him, Sealy Yates of Yates & Yates said: “I never had a cross word with Ernie Owen in all the years that I worked with him professionally, through the many, many publishing contracts we negotiated together. He was a loyal and extremely competent employee.”

Born in Topeka, Kan., in 1924, Owen attended Anderson College (now Anderson University) in Anderson, Ind., before entering the publishing industry as a salesman for Gospel Trumpet Co., the forerunner to Warner Press. He joined Word Publishing in 1980 as associate director of publishing and retired from Thomas Nelson/Word Publishing after having served as senior vice president and publisher, continuing to serve as a senior acquisitions consultant with the company for several more

years.

Owen is survived by his wife, Pauline; four children; five grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. At his request, a family-only memorial service will be held. Cards may be sent in care of Debbie Nichols at Thomas Nelson.