



## A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE HARVEY LORTON

Port Tampa Bay's maritime community recently mourned the passing of a true legend, George Harvey Lorton. George Lorton was a constant force and respected fixture in our maritime community for more than 60 years. Lorton brought a passion and distinct leadership style to International Ship Repair, Padgett-Swann Machinery Company, and many other businesses operating in the maritime community. Since 1990, he led International Ship Repair with tenacity as well as his generosity and kind and caring spirit.

George Lorton was a true Tampa native. He graduated in 1969 from the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida with a degree in geology. Lorton was a member of the USF Alumni and a Life Member donor. A maritime veteran and businessperson for over 55 years, George began his career as a shipyard apprentice in 1962 and worked a variety of positions in the industry while attending high school and college. From start to finish, Lorton spent his entire career in the ship repair and marine service industry.

In 1990, George purchased International Ship Repair & Marine Services, Inc., and eventually became the sole owner, President, Chairman and CEO. His additional companies include Padgett-Swann Machinery Company, Marine Metal Works and Lorton Holdings, Inc. – which were all located in the Tampa Bay area. As an entrepreneur, Lorton had a varied interest in several different businesses and land holdings over the years. One important change Lorton brought to International Ship Repair was the addition of dry docks. Prior to the change, was only able to perform topside work. Adding dry docks to their portfolio helped to expand International Ship Repair, allowing them to take on bids and work they could not have performed prior.

According to his colleagues, he had a Midas touch as almost any deal that Lorton entered into, turned to gold and was a success. He is remembered for his wisdom when it came to the maritime business and his ability to adapt and evolve in his career. Lorton is also fondly remembered as a man who cared for the people who worked for him. Despite his success, Lorton could relate to anyone and was a true friend to his entire International Ship Repair family.

George Lorton believed in giving back to and being an active member of his community. He served as a former board member of the Florida State Fair Authority; King of the Krewe of the Knights of Sant' Yago and on the Educational Foundation of the Krewe of the Knights of Sant' Yago. He was a long-time member of the Sertoma Club and the Propeller Club of Tampa. An avid outdoor recreational sportsman, George participated in hunting and fishing trips traveling the globe to exotic places such as the Caribbean, New Zealand, Africa, and Alaska.

George Lorton loved all things related to the marine business and could frequently be found volunteering in the community. In his appreciation of life and his desire to do for others, George was a supporter of organizations such as Heartbeat International, USF Marine Biology, Tampa Port Ministries and Angels Against Abuse. Lorton was honored posthumously as the recipient of the James McKay Award during the 2022 Anchor Ball. He was chosen for his lifelong dedication to our maritime community and his devotion and support of Tampa Port Ministries, the Tampa Bay Maritime Scholarship Foundation and many other worthy causes.

Most of all, George Lorton will be remembered as a formidable leader within the maritime industry and a true friend. He helped many people over the years; always believing that he could make a difference in someone's life. All of us at Port Tampa Bay will miss him greatly. ■