

Ivor Brown 1939 – 2005

*Scholar
Businessman
and a true gentleman*



Ivor Michael Brown was born in Kimberley in May 1939, the third child, and only son, of Fanny and Benny Brown, prominent citizens who lived in Lodge Road and latterly in the iconic Mount Curtis Flats.

Schooldays

Ivor was at Kimberley Boys' High School (KHS) from 1945 to 1956. It was noted in the School Magazine that from his earliest days at KHS in 1945, Ivor displayed talents and traits that would not only take him through life with great distinction, but he inspired his fellow classmates to match his dedication, discipline and hard work. He applied the same characteristics to things he was great at and found easy (like academics) to things he had to work a little harder at (like rugby, cricket and tennis).

Whilst he was always one of the better students in all subjects, he really had a much better understanding than anyone else in History class: he had a 'feel' for how events fitted together, of the structure of history, and could deduce dates that the others just had to remember. He had a low-key style, led by example and always gave everything he had to anything he undertook. It was no surprise and a popular choice when he was made Head Boy in 1956.

Ivor lived up to the school motto: *Per Labores Ad Honores*. He laboured and brought great honour to the school, his family and himself. Ivor and five of his classmates matriculated with first class passes, (one must have been Trevor Toubé). They competed in a friendly manner and inspired each other. Throughout his life he showed great loyalty to KHS and his old school friends, staying in touch with both groups.

University

Ivor went to the University of Cape Town in 1957. He spent 4 years there, obtaining BA and BCom degrees. While there he organised various cultural events, including concerts and a national student drama festival. After leaving UCT, he went to London, where he gained his MSc in Economics at the London School of Economics.

Sports

At school he played cricket and rugby with great determination. He also played tennis regularly, as well as squash. He continued to play sports after he returned to Kimberley, becoming a regular member of the yacht club, hockey club and tennis club. He was also an enthusiastic bowler in his later years, both in Kimberley and Cape Town and became a regular member of the daily Sea Point beachfront walking scene.

He married **Laurian Michalson** (née Alleson) in 1982. Ivor brought up two stepsons, Lance and Garth Michalson, who now live in Sydney and Melbourne respectively. In the 1980's, they followed, in Ivor's footsteps by matriculating from Kimberley Boys' High School.

Business life at Awerbuck Brown and Co



Ivor returned to South Africa when his father Benny Brown became ill. He came back to Kimberley where in 1961 at the age of 22, he joined his uncle Ikky as Director of the distinguished family wholesale business, Awerbuck Brown & Co Pty Ltd, founded by his grandfather Harry Brown with Raphael Awerbuck in the 1920s. Under Ivor's management, the business grew into possibly the largest wholesaler in the Northern Cape until he closed it down in 2001 when he retired to Cape Town. (Read about the original partnership at the end of this article.)

He built a very successful business career and was a respected and well-liked member of the Jewish and Business community in Kimberley. He was the chairperson of the local Industrial Council for the Distributors' Trade for a number of years.

He had numerous property and other business interests in Kimberley including interests in car dealerships, a hotel and clothing store.

Retirement

In 2001 Ivor retired to Cape Town with Laurian, his wife of more than 20 years, to be closer to their family.

Ivor the person

Ivor was tolerant, respectful, generous, particular, proper and a true gentleman. He set fine examples of honesty, integrity and the value of being accurate – which he was able to do with ease as he had the greatest capacity to remember everything and everyone. He had a keen memory of exactly who he was related to and knew exactly how he was related to them.

He loved travelling, fine wine, wonderful restaurants, Turkish coffee, Persian carpets and the share market. He was also a great and meticulous cook and produced fine curries.



Garth Michalson recalls Ivor's exceptional knowledge and love of classical music. In typical Ivor fashion, not only did he know the composer, but he also knew the opus number, and on listening to a recording he would know who the soloist was, if there was one, who was conducting, and which orchestra was playing, and invariably he also knew the location of where the recording took place and when. His memory was phenomenal which you have already mentioned.

I believe when he was studying in London as a young man, he lived only a few doors away from my mother Laurian who too was living in London at the time. Despite their close proximity, their paths never crossed. It was only until a couple decades later when fate intervened, and the rest as they say is history.

He also loved dogs, especially Alsatisans. He was very proud of his Jewish heritage and was a stalwart of the Jewish Community in Kimberley. Ivor died in Cape Town on 8 July 2005 and was buried in there on 11 July 2005.

Memorial service planned for Ivor Brown

Staff Reporter

WELL known Kimberley businessman and prominent member of the Jewish community, Ivor Brown, passed away after a prolonged illness on Friday evening in Cape Town.

Ivor was born and raised in Kimberley and he attended Kimberley Boys' High School where he was head prefect.

He matriculated in the mid-fifties and moved to Cape Town to study commerce at the University of Cape Town.

He graduated with

whereafter he attended the London School of Economics.

When he returned to South Africa in 1961, he took over the family business, Awerbuck and Brown, in Kimberley.

Ivor was Managing Director of the business, which was founded by his grandfather in the 1920s.

Ivor was very involved in various societies and sports while he lived in Kimberley, including the now-defunct film society. He was a keen yachtsman and hockey player and in the later years of his life found a new passion in bowls at the De

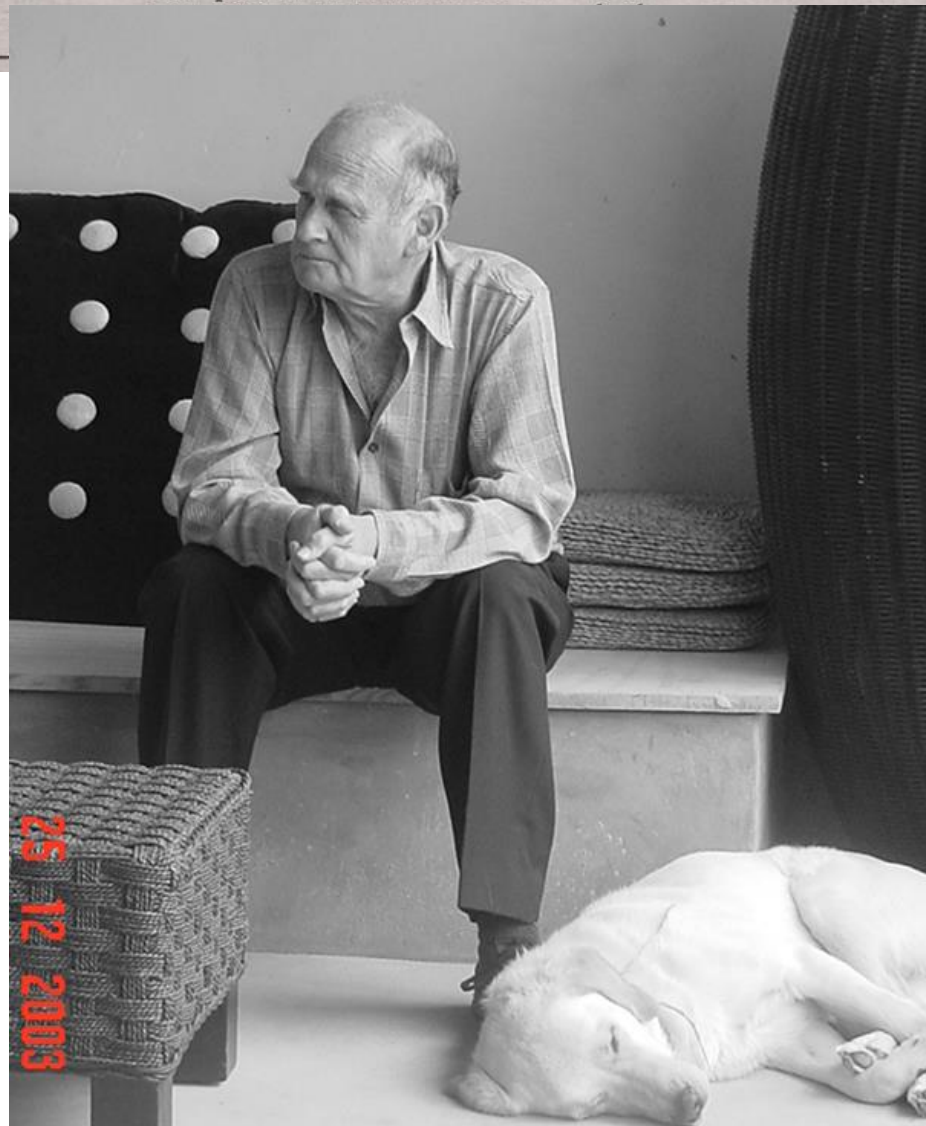
He was also the chairperson of the local Industrial Council for the Distributors' Trade for a number of years.

Ivor retired a few years ago when they closed the family business and moved to Cape Town with his wife, Laurian, soon after that.

His funeral was held yesterday afternoon in Cape Town.

A memorial service for Ivor, who was described by his friends as being a very sincere and honourable man, will be held on Wednesday evening at the Synagogue in Memorial Road in Kim-

See the DFA article above.



AWERBUCK AND BROWN & Co (Pty) Ltd

Transvaal Road, Kimberley.

General wholesalers, including groceries etc (formally established in 1932 after a partnership in fisheries from 1907)

Geraldine found a wonderful article about the originators of Awerbuck and Brown: Harry Brown and Raphael Awerbuck on the internet - reprinted from the Diamond Fields Advertiser (DFA) on 19 Apr 2013.

Both Harry Brown and Raphael Awerbuck were born in Lithuania and their families were old friends. Brown immigrated to South Africa and prior to the Boer War, worked in Johannesburg. At the outbreak of the Boer War, he left Johannesburg for Cape Town. He met his wife at Paarl and they were married shortly afterwards.

In 1907 he decided to go back to Johannesburg and on route stopped over in Kimberley.

Harry Brown met Raphael Awerbuck on the Market Square, where Awerbuck had established a small business in dried fish. Awerbuck suggested to him that they join forces and commence business with fresh fish. This was during July 1907 and Awerbuck had been in Kimberley for one month prior to Brown's arrival. Awerbuck's proposition made Brown change his mind about going to Johannesburg and a partnership was formed. This was the foundation of the present South African Fisheries. (Later sold to Sam Jawno)

After a few years in the fish business, **they branched out into groceries** and moved their premises to the site of Potgieters Motors. From this site they moved to **17 Transvaal Road**. As the business expanded, it was decided to dissolve the partnership and form a company and the company of **Awerbuck, Brown and Company (Pty) Ltd was incorporated on November 23, 1932.**



Above, we see Harry Brown and Jack Alter Maresky with Harry's second wife, Clara, and their granddaughters, Helen and Ikky Brown's three beautiful little girls: from left, Jennifer Cherille and Delia.

In the early days there was no till or cash slip system in the grocery department. Both Brown and Awerbuck wore carpenter's aprons with big pockets, which acted as tills and at the end of the day each one emptied his pockets, and the money was checked and banked. The property they rented at 14 Transvaal Road was put up for sale and they decided to buy it. They agreed to pay £400 for the property and Brown was to do the bidding. The property was finally knocked down to Mr Brown at a figure of £800.

But in spite of this terrific increase over the figure mutually agreed upon, Awerbuck's only comment on being told by Brown of the purchase was a shrug of the shoulders and a laconic 'All right'.

At no time did Awerbuck have any idea of what shares Brown had bought nor how much he bought in the Market, **but all profits and losses were shared equally between the two partners**. On the death of Awerbuck in 1951 the shares were held by the administrators of his estate, but Brown continued to dispose of the shares at his own discretion and all dividends were still equally shared. They also held jointly a 50 percent interest in Lee's Garage and this investment was a very profitable one.

Harry Brown's sons, **Benny and Harold** (usually known as Ikky), took over in the 40s to 60s with **Frankie Awerbuck**, and then later after Benny became ill, in 1961, **Benny's son Ivor** ran the business until he retired in 2001, closing the business and retiring to Cape Town.

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## Ivor Brown

Compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE.

From information and pictures of Ivor Brown from his stepson Lance Michalson

Picture of the firm from Delia Benn in Baltimore, (née Brown daughter of Benny Brown's Brother Harold, AKA Ikky, also a Director of the firm)

Read the family stories here

[Brown, Harry and family](#) (Awerbuck and Brown)

[Maresky, Jack, Shim & Helen](#) (nee Brown)