

[From the Lexington Herald-Leader, June 16, 2017]

R.J. CORMAN WAS "LARGER THAN LIFE:" HE'S GONE, BUT HIS BUSINESS KEEPS GROWING
(By Tom Eblen)

One of the hardest things for a company to do is survive and grow after the death of a larger-than-life founder like Richard Jay Corman.

Carol Loomis, a legendary business journalist who interviewed America's most famous executives, wrote in a 2011 profile that Corman "just might be . . . the most unforgettable character I've ever met in my more than half-century at Fortune (magazine) . . . In the way he operates—and faces the world—Rick Gorman is truly larger than life."

Corman, 58, died in August 2013 after a dozen years of fighting multiple myeloma, a blood cancer. But R.J. Corman Railroad Group, the Nicholasville company he started in 1973 with a backhoe and a dump truck, doesn't seem to have missed a beat.

"Rick built a heck of a company and a nationally known and recognized organization," said Ed Quinn, who worked seven years for Corman and returned to the company last year as president and CEO after the retirement of Craig King, who led the company after Corman's death and remains on the board. "That's what we trade on every day and that's why we continue to grow."

The company, owned by a trust controlled by Corman's sister and three of his five children, has continued growing and acquiring businesses over the past four years. It also continues to be a major benefactor to Central Kentucky charities.

Probate documents filed in November 2013 valued R.J. Corman Railroad Group at \$226.7 million. Since then, employment has grown from 1,100 to more than 1,600. Although the company doesn't release financials, executives say annual revenues now exceed \$350 million.

This year, the group's R.J. Corman Railroad Co. is celebrating its 30th year. It began with the purchase of two Kentucky short line railroads in 1987 as federal deregulation allowed major railroads to sell off lines they no longer wanted.

Since Corman's death, the company has acquired short line railroads in Texas and South Carolina, bringing its operations to 11 railroad lines with 904 miles of track in nine states. The company owns more than 100 locomotives and 475 rail cars, and last year they hauled more than 65,000 car loads of cargo.

Those railroads include the 148-mile Central Kentucky Line that runs through Lexington, where Corman's signature red locomotives and white cross-rail fences have become a landmark at the corner of West Main Street and Oliver Lewis Way. The company's first short line, in Bardstown, includes My Old Kentucky Home Dinner Train.

Next year, R.J. Corman Railroad Group will mark the 45th anniversary of its railroad services business, which Corman began by repairing and refurbishing track for major railroads. Those operations are based at shops on the company's 1,600-acre main campus in Jessamine County and at field locations in 23 states.

The company's best-known operations are its derailment and disaster recovery units, which can dispatch teams around-the-clock to handle some of the industry's biggest breakdowns and cleanup jobs. R.J. Corman's most famous job was helping clean up Gulf Coast rail infrastructure after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Last year, the company logged 4,560 emergency responses, including major floods in the Midwest.

The railroad group also has other businesses that serve both its short line oper-

ations and all seven of the nation's "Class 1" railroads. Those include track construction and maintenance, equipment maintenance, materials management, signaling design and construction, and railroad employee training. The company also offers railcar loading services for such major manufacturers as Toyota.

Railroads were the kings of American commerce from the Civil War until World War II, but declined after the Interstate highway system was built, leading to the rise of the long-haul trucking industry. But railroads have seen a resurgence as part of the world's multi-modal transportation network. Rail is still the most economical way to move many goods at least part of the distances they need to travel.

"While trucks and trains are competitive, there's also interconnection," said Noel Rush, the company's senior vice president for commercial development. "This is still a business you will see in 50 years."

And by reopening short lines that major railroads close, the company can provide an economic boost to small towns and rural areas with factories and warehouses that shut down when the railroad lines did, said Brian Miller, that division's president. He said the company is always looking for more short lines to buy.

"It has blossomed into a very good business for us," said April Colyer, Corman's daughter and the company's public relations director. "We're always trying to watch and adapt to the needs of customers in our industry."

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF WATT GLOBAL MEDIA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to recognize WATT Global Media, a leading provider of business information and marketing solutions for the agribusiness industry worldwide, headquartered in Rockford, IL. More than 100 years ago, on July 6, 1917, WATT Global Media was born.

WATT Global Media's history began in 1917, when J.W. Watt and Adon Yoder purchased "Poultry Tribune," a magazine published monthly for just 50 cents for an annual subscription. Before Watt and Yoder bought the magazine, its circulation was about 5,000. In a few short years, these young entrepreneurs grew the magazine's circulation by 400 percent. Under Watt's leadership, "Poultry Tribune" quickly became "America's Leading Poultry Farm Magazine" for poultry raisers, peaking in 1940 with a circulation of more than half a million readers.

During the mid-1920s, economic changes in the poultry industry led to the creation of the commercial hatchery industry, which led the staff at "Poultry Tribune" to create "Hatchery Tribune." In 1934, Watt added "Turkey World" to its growing list of publications. WATT Global Media, originally called the Poultry Tribune Company, changed its name in 1944 to Watt Publishing Company. In that same year, the company acquired Better Farming Methods, "The business magazine for leaders who train and advise farmers." As the evolving poultry industry grew, so did Watt Publishing Company.

In 1949, Leslie Watt—the second generation of family leadership—was

named president of Watt Publishing Company and expanded the company into international markets, acquiring "Industria Avicola," a Spanish language magazine targeting the Latin American poultry industry. In 1962, "Poultry International" was created to cater to the poultry and egg industries throughout Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia. In the 1980s, Leslie Watt took Watt Publishing Company to China by establishing "Poultry International China Edition" and became one of the first publishers from North America to make Chinese language business-to-business magazines in the People's Republic of China.

In the 1990s, under James W. Watt—the third generation of family leadership—the company expanded its portfolio to include pet food. In 1993, the Petfood Forum was created and grew into the world's largest annual event of its kind. Overnight, Watt became the global pet food market leader for business information—what an accomplishment.

Greg Watt—the fourth generation President and CEO—modernized the company by taking it into the 21st century, expanding across multiple media channels, including online and digital platforms, live events, and magazine channels. In recognition of its global audience, the Watt Publishing Company changed its name to WATT Global Media in 2014. Today, WATT Global Media serves 180,000 professionals in the pet food, poultry, pig, and animal feed industries from over 140 countries.

I will close with this: In 1907, J.W. Watt came to this country from the Orkney Islands, just north of Scotland. He came in search of the American Dream, and boy, did he find it. Despite WATT Global Media's growth and many achievements, its proudest accomplishment is that it has been family-owned for 100 years, and this family business isn't going anywhere. I want to thank J.W. Watt, Leslie Watt, James W. Watt, and Greg Watt—four generations from the Watts family—for their service to Rockford, Illinois, America, and throughout the world. I know the good people at WATT Global Media will continue its simple guiding mission: "to improve the health and well-being of people and animals across the globe."

I hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating WATT Global Media on 100 years of accomplishments, and I wish them all the best for another century of success.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to