

Billings' title at Alvamar Inc. was president and chairman of the board, but in a July 1999 interview he described himself as "just general flunkie."

"We have a lot of development partnerships," he said. "It's a total of about 3,000 acres—2,000 already developed, with another 800 to 1,000 acres to go. There's a lot going on out here."

Despite the massive project, Billings always downplayed his role in Lawrence's westward expansion.

"Lawrence is just good. We're just fortunate to be a very small part of what's going on," he said.

The name of his development honored his parents, Alva and Margaretta.

#### POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Billings was remembered Thursday by friends for his positive attitude and many contributions to Lawrence and the university.

"If Bob, as bad as he might feel, could look out the window today, he'd remark about what a great day it was and put some kind of positive spin on it," said Jerry Waugh, who coached Billings on the KU basketball team and later worked for his corporation. "I never saw him down in the many years I knew him and he remained that way to the end, always up, always inspiring others and never seeing any dark side."

Monte Johnson, a former KU athletic director who had known Billings since both men were freshmen at KU, called his former teammate a "generous, caring considerate, unselfish, positive, forward-thinking human being."

"My sense of loss is tremendous, but far greater is the loss to his family, KU, Lawrence, the state and humanity in general," Johnson said. "There is no way to replace him, yet it is so important to remember his legacy and, for the rest of us and those who follow, to try to measure up to the incredible standards of outstanding citizenship and friendship he set."

Friendship was the focus of many memories expressed Thursday. Billings' friends Nelson and Judy Krueger remembered a telephone call from Billings and his wife, Beverly, after the Kruegers' grandson was killed in a traffic accident. "It was the most meaningful call," Nelson Krueger said. "They left a voice mail, and they couldn't talk; they could only cry. Bob planted a tree at Alvamar in honor of Jack within a week after Jack died."

Krueger also shared a number of photos reproduced in today's *Journal-World*, including one of a children's fishing contest Billings sponsored every Memorial Day at a lake on the Alvamar Golf Course. Billings didn't want any child to go away without a prize, so he gave prizes for the biggest fish, the ugliest fish, the wettest fish, anything he could think of, Krueger said. "He wanted everyone to be a winner."

Another friend, attorney Jerry Cooley, also remembered his unselfish attitude. "He has been a great benefactor to the city of Lawrence and Douglas County," Cooley said. "His developments have been prize winners for the community, and he did that without great personal gain. He plowed back into the community what others may have taken as profit."

Don Johnston, a banker and former executive of Maupintour Inc., said Billings created more than brick and mortar.

"He was a builder not just of structures but of character and goodness," Johnston said. "I'm not sure he ever had a negative thought in his life. He could dream, inspire, make things happen and make people feel good while they were striving for something positive."

Waugh, Billings' former coach, recalled, "Bob was a student of history and always remembered what Abraham Lincoln's mother told him: 'Be somebody.' Bob's mother, Margaretta, was as supportive as a mother could be and, in effect, had relayed that concept to her son. He didn't fail her. Bob, absolutely, was somebody."

[From the *Lawrence Journal-World*, Feb. 22, 2003]

#### FRIENDS CELEBRATE MEMORIES OF BILLINGS (By Leita Walker)

Bob Billings couldn't say no. "A friend of mine once said that if Bob had been female, he would have been pregnant all the time," said Monte Johnson, who spoke Friday at a memorial service for Billings, who died Feb. 13.

Billings couldn't turn down charities. He always wanted to help out with even the craziest of business ventures.

And students in need were his weak spot. "He exemplified all that's good in a person and practiced it every day," Johnson told the more than 1,000 people who attended the service at the Lied Center.

The occasion was a solemn one, but, as shown by Johnson's remarks, it was not without humor. Giant red and purple flower arrangements complete with sunflowers and wheat stalks festooned the stage, and Jayhawk-adorned basketballs helped decorate tables in the lobby.

Guests included Kansas University administrators, coaches and athletes; city officials; and scores of friends and business associates.

Catered refreshments greeted everyone as they left the auditorium, and soon the Lied Center lobby was filled with conversation—and laughter.

Billings wanted the service to be a celebration, his friends and family said.

By the time he died of cancer at age 65, Billings had accomplished more than most people dream.

The Russell native played on the 1957 KU basketball team that made it to the NCAA championship game, and he served as student body president.

He developed thousands of acres in west Lawrence, and he was president of Alvamar Inc., which includes 3,000 acres of residential and commercial property, a nationally recognized public golf course and the Alvamar Country Club complex.

"He was Mr. Everything," Johnson said. But Friday, his humanity was the focus, and his accomplishments came second.

When Billings met someone, he always had a handshake ready, said his nephew Jim Billings.

"Great to see you," he would say. "How are you doing? Super."

He knew everyone's name, Jim Billings said, and yet the man who did so much for Lawrence was also human.

"His humanness should give us hope that any one of us could become more like Bob," he said.

He was a developer not just of property but of people and of communities, said the Rev. Butch Henderson.

And longtime friend John McGrew said, "Some people are generous with their time, some with their money. Bob was generous with both."

#### IN RECOGNITION OF MRS. JOSEPHINE HAMMARY

#### HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2003

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call the attention of my colleagues to a friend

of the Sixth District of New Jersey. Mrs. Josephine Hammery, is an outstanding individual, who is being honored for her many accomplishments by the National Council of Negro Women.

Mrs. Hammery is being recognized for the many years of service she has devoted to her community. Throughout her life, Mrs. Hammery has volunteered much of her time to working with various religious and social organizations designed to enrich the lives of her fellow citizens.

Mrs. Hammery is an active and devoted member of the Martin Luther King Presbyterian Church where she has served on the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons, the Stewardship Committee, and the Sunday School Ministry. Mrs. Hammery was also elected to preside over the Presbyterian Women's Organization as its President, where she proved herself as an effective leader. Currently, Josephine Hammery serves on the Christian Outreach Missions and the Christian Education Committee, as well as Recording Secretary of the National Council of Negro Women's North Shore.

Through her work with these numerous organizations, Mrs. Hammery has fostered a sense of community in her area and strived to help those less fortunate than herself. On this day I would like to honor the distinguished Mrs. Josephine Hammery for her extraordinary service to her community. I ask my colleagues to join with me in commending her in this dedication.

#### HONORING DETECTIVE MICHAEL CALVIN

#### HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2003

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to an exemplary member of the Long Island community.

The Suffolk County Police Department consistently shows us the best and most heroic that Long Island has to offer. For the past thirty-five years Detective Michael Calvin served as an admirable member of that department, first as an exceptional undercover officer with the Rackets Bureau, and then as a detective with the Homicide Squad. Over the years, Detective Calvin worked as the lead detective on numerous murder investigations, including the murder of Claudia Broder of Moriches, by her son-in-law, Ralph Farino. He has made a lasting impact on the safety of Long Island residents.

On January 6, 2003, Detective Michael Calvin retired from the Suffolk County Police Department. He will be sorely missed by his colleagues and by the community that has depended on his hard work to keep them safe for so many years. I come to this floor to out of respect and offer my congratulations and best wishes.

Mr. Speaker, Suffolk County owes a debt of gratitude to Detective Michael Calvin.