

# Herbert Kurz,

## Businessman & Philanthropist

March 16, 1920 – November 24, 2014

Herb Kurz was born in Harlem on March 16, 1920 to Max and Molly Kurz. He and his wife Edythe moved to Rockland County, NY in the 1950s. He founded the *Presidential Insurance Company* in 1965 and was a lifelong activist for civil liberties.



As a teen, he helped organize a union of hotel and restaurant workers in the Catskill resorts. During World War II, he served in the Army Air Corps and was a decorated navigator aboard B-26 bombers for his rescue mission over Greenland. After the war, he founded *Veterans Against Discrimination*, which became an active element within the radical Civil Rights Congress.

The insurance company that Kurz founded and directed for forty years practiced affirmative-action hiring for both women and people of color and was honored by President Bill Clinton at the *White House Conference on Corporate Citizenship* in 1996. Kurz remained CEO of the company until 2008.

Presidential candidate and Senator George McGovern, a friend of Herb, has stated: “Herb is a humanistic, Roosevelt-type Democrat and a committed activist on the war and peace front...” “He’s a person of deep political convictions, but not in a narrow partisan sense.” He termed his relationship with Kurz “rewarding.” “He’s what a businessman ought to be,” McGovern said. “He makes money, no question about that, but he does it while preserving a warm relationship with his employees.”

Kurz went on to become the founder of the *Kurz Family Foundation* through which he endowed a chair in constitutional rights in the political science department of Brooklyn College, his alma matter and established the *Frederic Ewen Center* at NYU’s *Tamiment Library*. He also supports numerous organizations in Rockland County, NY, the community where *Presidential Life* is based. Some of these include: the *Rockland Nero Scholarship Fund*, the *Center for Safety and Change* (formerly the *Rockland Family Shelter*), *Rockland Community College* (SUNY – Rockland) student support fund, and the *Martin Luther King Multipurpose Center*.