

# 2009 TADA LEGENDS

*Ramsay H. Gillman and J.L. Huffines*

***In the 92-year history of the Texas Automobile Dealers Association, there are only nine dealers who have been designated as a TADA Legend. Going forward, only two dealers per year will receive recognition as a Legend. Essentially TADA's lifetime achievement award, it will never take long to call the roll of this revered group.***

***The two recipients of the award for 2009 have much in common. Both second generation dealers, sons of larger-than-life Texas car dealers, this year's Legends took their organizations to even greater heights of influence, prestige and service to Texas. Our honorees both have their family name on their dealerships and each has a new generation of the family in the dealership to care for their customers, their employees and their community.***

## Ramsay H. Gillman

Ramsay Gillman is the Owner/Chief Executive Officer of The Gillman Companies.

The son of a pioneer automobile dealer, he began his automotive career working in the parts department of this father's Pontiac dealership in downtown Houston. After attending the General Motors Dealer Management Institute and other specialized schools, he became an authorized dealer in 1967. He has since that time become one of the most successful private capital dealers in the country as well as one of the most respected.

## J.L. Huffines

J.L. Huffines, Jr. passed away in January, just a few months before he was to receive the Legend Award at the TADA Conference in Houston. Some time before his passing, he had been told that he was being honored as a Legend. As always, he was humbled and proud that he was being recognized by his fellow dealers.

A highly respected businessman, a gentleman in every sense of the word and the consummate family patriarch, J.L. Huffines leaves a legacy of service to his fellow man that is virtually unequalled.

J.L. Huffines, Jr. was born in 1923, and just one year later his father opened an Overland-Willys dealership in Denton, Texas, J.L. Huffines grew the family business to eight dealerships in four cities with a half a billion dollars in annual sales and 540 employees.

The origins of the family business were

Ramsay Gillman and his father, Frank, built their Pontiac-GMC franchise into one of the largest in the nation for those brands. Today, Ramsay and his daughter Stacey and sons Jason and Chris, operate fourteen dealerships with a variety of makes, both import and domestic in six Texas cities. The Gillman organization has grown considerably over the years, but Ramsay Gillman remains one of the most trusted and highly regarded dealers in the industry. Dealers across the country look to Ramsay for counsel and leadership.

He is one of those dealers that everyone wants to emulate. His leadership goes beyond his community and his state. In fact, he served as the Director of South Texas for the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) from 1989 through 1999 and was elected as President

modest to say the least. When the Huffines family moved their dealership operations to Lewisville in 1927, and started Huffines Chevrolet, which stands today in its fourth location in 82 years, there were less than 1,000 residents in the town. The Great Depression followed two years later and lasted throughout Mr. Huffines youth. He remembered that his father would take farm animals in trade for automobiles during those times. He had a farm where Lewisville Lake is today, where he kept the livestock, which were eventually sold at the Fort Worth Stockyard.

After graduating from Lewisville High School in 1940 and spending three years at Texas A&M University, he served his country in the European Theatre during World War II as a U.S. Army First Lieutenant Reconnaissance Officer with the 3rd Cavalry Regiment under General S. George Patton, Jr. He graduated from A&M upon his return from the war and began his long career in the family automobile business.

Among his many contributions to his state was being appointed to the boards of key Texas Agencies by four different governors. Of all of those appointments, he was probably most

of NADA in 1997. During his years as a Director, Gillman was a member of the NADA Industry Relations Committee, the NADA Regulatory Affairs Committee and was Chairman of the NADA Government Relations Committee in 1993 and in 1999. Currently, Gillman serves as a Trustee for the NADA Charitable Foundation and for the NADA Dealers Election Action Committee. Ramsay has helped raise over one million dollars through the years for the Dealers Election Action Committee, which gives our dealers a voice in Washington D.C.

He has also served as President of the Houston Automobile Dealers Association, Vice President of the Texas Automobile Dealers Association, and was appointed Vice Chairman

■ **ramsay h. gillman** — *continued on page 40*

proud of being named to the Board of Regents of his beloved Texas A&M University, by his close friend Texas Governor Rick Perry.

In addition to his connection with Texas A&M as a regent, Huffines was also a charter member and president of the Texas A&M 12th Man Foundation. He endowed teaching chairs, scholarships, and The Sydney and J.L. Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance. Texas A&M honored him by awarding him a place in The Letterman's Association Hall of Honor, The Corps of Cadets Hall of Honor and he was recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus.

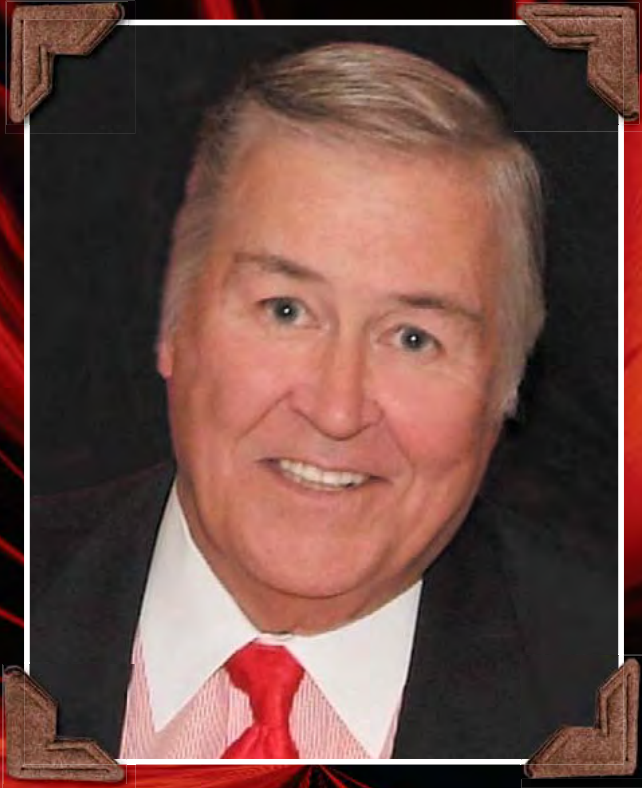
Throughout his life of service to Texas and his fellow dealers, he never forgot his hometown. He officed in the Chevrolet dealership in Lewisville and sold cars to the third and fourth generations of Huffines customers.

In 1996, he purchased and donated 17 acres of land to the Lewisville Independent School District for the award winning J.L. Huffines Sr. Middle School. He was quoted

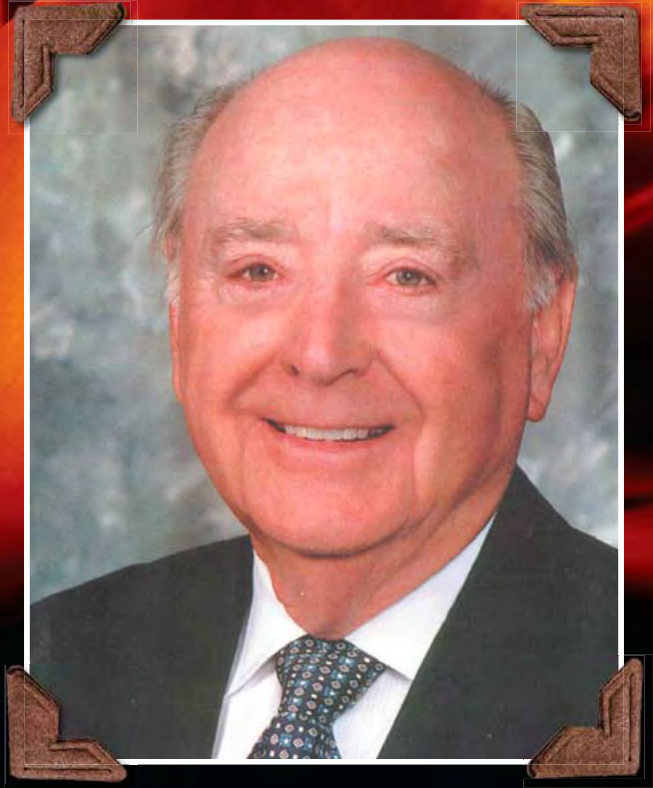
■ **j.l. huffines** — *continued on page 40*

2009

# TADA LEGENDS



*Ramsay H. Gillman*  
*Houston*



*J.L. Huffines*  
*Lewisville*

## 2008

*Don A. Buckalew, Conroe*  
*Red McCombs, San Antonio*

## 2007

*W.O. Bankston, Dallas*  
*Mary Rose Cardenas, Brownsville*

## 2006

*C.C. "Pop" Gunn, San Antonio*  
*Sam Pack, Carrollton*

## 2001

*Tom Vandergriff, Arlington*

of the Texas Motor Vehicle Commission from 1984 through 1987 by the Governor of Texas.

Ramsay received the 1996 Sports Illustrated All-Star Dealer Award, presented by the American International Automobile Dealers Association, for his lifelong contribution to the automotive business and commitment to numerous charitable organizations.

In 1997, the State of Texas House of Representatives passed House Resolution No. 350, officially commending Gillman for his "outstanding achievements" and years of dedication to the State of Texas, the automobile industry, his community, and charitable organizations.

For his many years of continued support, the Sickle Cell Association of the Texas Gulf Coast awarded Gillman their Humanitarian Award for the year 2000. Ramsay and his wife, Stevie, were co-chairpersons for the Sickle Cell Association of the Texas Gulf Coast 2001 Gala. Mr. & Mrs. Gillman are also active participants and sponsors of the Tracey Lawrence Annual Golf Tournament benefitting the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Other charitable organizations that receive support from the Gillman family include the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Youth Scholarship Program, which provides shelter for abused women and their children, the Earning by Learning Program, which rewards young children for reading books, the Ronald McDonald House, and the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Gillman Companies holds an annual charity golf tournament befitting the Fort Bend County Women's Center.

Ramsay Gillman may be one of the most influential automobile retailers in the country, but he is first a family man, a husband, father and grandfather, whose legacy will endure through a new generation of Gillman's to serve Texas.

A dealer who gives of himself in every aspect of his life and who has made a difference in the lives of countless others, Ramsay Gillman is a true TADA Legend. ■

**huffines** — *continued*

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as having said, "My father used to ranch on the land on which the school is now built, and in recognition of his many years on the school board, it seemed appropriate to name the school in his honor."

J.L. Huffines was a brilliant businessman, a state and national civic leader, an icon in the automobile business; but to Mr. Huffines, his proudest achievement was his family. He was proud to be "Daddy Huff" to his 17 grandchildren and proud of the accomplishments of the six children shared by he and his remarkable wife, Sydney.

"Family is very important," J.L. Huffines said. "That's what your blood is, who you provide for and teach your values to."

He often spoke about the fourth generation of the Huffines family becoming dealers, following in his footsteps and that of his son, Ray, now the patriarch of the family business.

As modest as he was accomplished, J.L. Huffines lived a life that will serve as a standard for all those who follow and he will live in our hearts forever as a true TADA Legend. ■