



Daniel Dror Sr.

May 25, 1940 - March 15, 2021

Daniel Dror Sr., a former child prodigy and first violin of the Houston Symphony, who came to Houston by way of New York City's Julliard School before becoming a real estate mogul and CEO of several publicly traded companies, passed away peacefully on Monday in Houston. He was 80.

"Danny," as he was usually called, was born on May 25, 1940 in Tel Aviv, Israel to Nathan and Rose Faiwuszewicz. He picked up a love of music as a small child, around eight years old, after attending a concert with his parents. They bought him a violin, and he took to it right away. "It was in his blood," says his wife Gabriela.

He had good company in his musical pursuits in those early years. A young Itzhak Perlman was a boyhood friend, and the two remained close throughout Danny's life.

Along with an emerging love of music, Danny's childhood was also marked by the onslaught of war. With his family, young Danny fled the bombs and unrest of the region and resettled in São Paulo, Brazil, where he had an uncle.

In his teen years in Brazil, Danny picked up a new passion -- soccer. One of his encounters he had with Pelé. According to Dror family lore, Danny gave Pelé his first soccer ball.

It was the violin, however, that would prove to be Danny's resounding passion. At age 16, he was accepted as a student at The Juilliard School in Manhattan's Lincoln Center. On his own, Danny moved from São Paulo to New York City, where he worked various jobs to pay his way through the prestigious school, whose hundreds of famous alumni include Yo-Yo Ma, Henry Mancini and Danny's boyhood friend Itzhak.

In 1961, at age 20, Danny moved to Houston, having been offered work by relative uncle Jack Oshman of Oshman's Sporting Goods. But a job in music soon opened up, somewhat by chance. After taking in a concert of the Houston Symphony, he was given an opportunity to play for famed conductor John Barbirolli, who was just beginning a six-year run as music director of the company. Barbirolli was impressed enough by the impromptu audition to hire Danny on the spot, naming him first violin.

After two seasons in the orchestra, Danny began looking for a way out of the genteel poverty of a young artist. He left the symphony and became a real estate broker, and then, making the most of his modest earnings, began investing in real estate. As a young man in his 20s and 30s, Danny became a successful businessman.

He never lost his love of classical music. Danny continued to support the Symphony as a patron, once even being asked to perform onstage at a benefit concert he had sponsored. Antique violins by the likes of Stradivarius were among his most prized possessions.

Throughout the '60s and '70s, Danny earned a reputation as a suave, wealthy and well-traveled playboy. In this he reveled. In his later years, his eyes twinkled when retelling tales of old times with starlets in one glamorous world capital or another. But Houston, and family, would of course ultimately win his

heart.

Professionally, Danny served as chairman and CEO of publicly traded companies across a variety of industries, including plastics, cosmetics and oil and gas services and he continued to buy land. In 1990's he purchased 120 acres in Kemah, out of which 30 acres he sold to Walmart, paying off the entire investment.

"He had an extensive understanding of business and a great vision for real estate," says his oldest son, Daniel II.

There was something else about that Kemah deal that made it feel right to Danny. He came to understand that the farmer selling the property was also a musician, who loved classical music. "It was meant to be," says Gabriela.

Danny is preceded in death by his parents Nathan and Rose Faiwuszewicz. He is survived by his devoted wife Gabriela, two sons Daniel II and David-Alexander, brother Elkana, nephews and many other loving friends and family.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that donations be made to Houston's Congregation Emanu El (1500 Sunset Blvd., 713-529-5771). For online giving opportunities visit <https://www.emanuelhouston.org/>

A Memorial Service will be held Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 1:00 PM at Congregation Emanu El, please click the link below to join: <https://venue.streamspot.com/event/MjU3NTk4NA==>

Tribute Wall



“ *Daniel Dror Sr.*

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