

We are very sad to hear about Dr Haggai passing away. He was a dynamic leader and we appreciate all that he did for us. We will treasure the good memories we have had with him and pray for his family at this time.

—Surani | Cargills of Sri Lanka

This adds more sadness to a very sad time in our industry. His legacy will always be hope, love, and God! My prayers to his family.

—Jim Shook | Lake Region IGA

This information caught us by surprise and we received it with grief. We had the privilege of meeting Dr. Haggai several times, here in Poland, in Australia, and in the States. He left on us an impression of a remarkable person with a sense of duty, entrepreneurship, righteous and very candid. We were impressed on how Dr. Haggai continued to travel all around the World, just like a young boy! Always fresh, always ready to talk with people, visit stores and spread his conviction on independent trade and local communities. We will never forget that it was he who opened the IGA door for us. We know how close you were with him and how much this news must be sad for you—we extend to you our condolences. The extraordinary thing is that his legacy will continue—with you, with the IGA organization, and with all the retailers and alliance partners that will continue his dream. A life worth living and a real impact for the life of many people in several countries.

—Luis & Pedro | Eurocash

He was a dynamic figure and really was the picture of IGA to so many people.

—John Maclaren | IGA Australia

I had heard earlier this morning about Tom's passing and it is truly a devastating loss. We both lost a personal friend who was one of the most outstanding Christians I have ever known. He certainly made everyone around him a better person.

—Drayton McLane, Jr.

A very sad day. Tom was a true icon and legend of our international IGA team. He will never be forgotten. A man of passion and wonderful manners.

—Fred Harrison | Ritches IGA Australia

My deepest sympathies to all the family at IGA Inc. during this time of loss. My thoughts/prayers are with you and Dr. Tom's family during this difficult time! I always loved collecting him at the

front of The Star (Jupiters) every year for our Expo and seeing his warm smile and extended arms!

—Tania Allt | Metcash Supermarkets & Convenience

I cannot express my sadness and sorrow in connection with Dr. Tom's passing. To say that Dr. Tom was a very special leader is an understatement. We all loved him dearly and he in turn loved everything about The Coca-Cola Company. He will be missed dearly all the time.

—Muhtar Kent | The Coca-Cola Company

I just heard the news that Dr. Tom has passed away and I just wanted to send my condolences. My thoughts and prayers are with everyone and I hope he is at peace.

—Michael Dempsey | Metcash Food

The Industry has lost a great leader and statesman. Even though he has not been active for the last few years, his legacy and foundational principles are evident even today with all of the changes that are taking place.

—Tom Jackson, CAE | J. Frank Grimes honoree

Dr. Haggai, he knew me by name, even only having met him a handful of times. What an inspirational man. I will definitely get his book out and savor each page.

—Kristin Meadows | Kishman's IGA

Dr. Tom was one of a kind. A giant who loved the Lord, his friends, the food business. All of whom loved him in return.

—Scott Johnson

What a terrific man! He was so kind to me early in my career at the GFIA.

—Kathy Kuzava | Georgia Food Industry Association

What an incredible man he was! A giant of our industry! I feel privileged to have known him and called him friend and mentor. There will never be another like Dr. Tom. Well done, good and faithful servant.

—Gary Baker | Baker's IGA

Tom was a huge influence on my career—a great source when I was a journalist and my very first client when I started my agency. When he found out I was an Eagle Scout, he had the BSA send me a silver medallion. More endearing, when my daughter was born, he wrote her a letter. Just a class act. He will be missed.

—Ron Margulis | RAM Communications

With great remembrance and deepest sympathy to our friend, mentor, and leader. Our hearts are deeply saddened and yet know Dr. Haggai did earn his wings as he embraces true peace with our Lord and Savior.

—Phillip A. Vigil and team members | El Rancho Markets IGA

My sincerest condolences. I remember sitting in the lobby of the Chicago Hyatt talking through the then dream that would become the internationalization of IGA and working with him putting together the IGA history piece I wrote. He was an interesting man, with many unusual gifts—always remembering people no matter how long it had been since he had seen them, his obvious oratorical skills, and his seemingly relentless energy.

—Ryan Matthews

In the midst of all the Supermarket Superheroes we're witnessing rise to the occasion during this crisis, one of the all time industry greatest was Dr. Tom. He was my Grocery Geek crush and I could never learn enough from him. He personified leadership and character and left an immeasurable legacy in the industry I love. The highlight of my career was him treating me and my mother to dinner at The Greenbriar in White Sulphur Springs, WV four years ago. Story after story and lesson after lesson, I hung on every word. He was gifted and gracious and will be dearly missed by many.

—Stephanie Reid | Shelby Publishing, Inc.

A very heavy heart when hearing about the news of Dr. Haggai. We will remember his wife and family with prayers and thoughts.

—Sophie | IGA China

I am shocked and deeply saddened to learn of Dr. Tom Haggai 's passing. Tom has been a special person for IGA China and myself. By bringing IGA to China, he helped change the mindset of many Chinese retailers. By recruiting me to IGA, he changed my life and helped me rediscover myself. He will be remembered as a great leader, visionary, coach, mentor, motivator, inspirer, and a dear friend.

—Xiao Guang | 301 Hainan Hospital

With grievance, we learnt about the passing of Dr. Thomas Haggai, IGA Chairman Emeritus. We hereby send our remembering and condolences to Dr. Haggai's family!

Dr. Haggai has worked tirelessly in promoting retailing. He brought IGA to China and lauded the values of Hometown Proud and service to the community. He made outstanding contributions to IGA's global success and forged a lifelong friendship among Chinese retailers.

We wish his spirit continues to live among the people of IGA, and IGA China continues to follow its commitment to serve Chinese retailers and consumers so as to bring honor and greater success to Dr. Haggai's visionary heritage.

—China Chain Store & Franchise Association

IGA China Retailers joined the global IGA retailer family in mourning the passing of IGA Chairman emeritus and industry icon Dr. Thomas S. Haggai, who died at 89 on March 26 from natural causes after a brief decline.

A person of vision, wisdom and inspiration, Dr. Thomas S. Haggai spent more than 40 years in various roles in IGA leadership, including nonexecutive chairman and later chairman and CEO. He spearheaded a series of successful initiatives in standardization, branding, and manufacturer alliance that vitalized and reshaped the IGA brand.

Dr. Haggai also worked tirelessly to promote IGA values and presence among independent retailers around the world, heralding a continuous growth which has now covered more than 30 countries around the world. In particular, Dr. Haggai worked tirelessly to bond and unite Chinese independent retailers around the “Hometown Proud” commitment. Throughout his days in IGA and after being named chairman emeritus in 2016, Dr. Haggai remained connected with the progress in China and IGA China retailers.

IGA China retailers were shocked and deeply saddened to learn of Dr. Haggai's passing from Mr. Mark Batenic, Chair of IGA. For Tom's Chinese families, he had always been a special person: he brought IGA to China and bestowed countless retailers with inspiration and counsel; he identified and rallied “birds of the same feathers” among Chinese retailers; he lauded the core values of “Integrity, Sharing, Inclusiveness, Brand” distilled by the retailers themselves; and he always reserved a special place in his heart for the retailer friends in China such as Big John and Helen.

Through the IGA China office and personal channels, Chinese retailers expressed their grievance and sent condolences and prayers to Dr. Haggai's wife Buren and the family. Many retailers joined Helen in her affectionate farewell bid to the deceased, “Tom loved China and he loves all of us like a father. His love is always felt and will forever live on here.” Zeng Zhe, IGA

Deputy Representative to China, Zhang Li, the General Manager of IGA China and the rest of the IGA China Office lamented this huge loss to friendship, family and the extended IGA family.

When it comes to Tom's days and years in China, few could remember them better than Mr. Fang Xiaoguang, IGA Chief Representative to China and Madame Sun Xiaoping, the former GM of IGA China. They said, "He will be remembered as a great leader, visionary, coach, mentor, motivator, inspirer, and a dear friend."

To Tom, the best among us and our life-long friend, R.I.P.

—Zhe Zeng, IGA Deputy Representative to China