

Farewell Sir Bob Stewart

On **13 August 2007**, one of the pioneers of NZ manufacturing and founder of PDL - Sir Robertson Stewart, passed away aged 93. Schneider Electric wishes to convey its deepest condolences to the Stewart family.

The Cantabrian businessman's decision to back a little known substance called plastic that set him on the path to a place in New Zealand history.

Sir Bob Stewart, who founded leading Christchurch plastics manufacturer PDL, died after a career of highlights, including building a business employing 2000 people and eventually generating \$350 million in revenue.

Sir Robertson's lengthy business career effectively began when scarlet fever forced him to leave Christchurch Boys High at 13, after which he attended night school for five years to become an electrical engineer.

In 1935 a local company sent him to England to study the then-cutting edge field of plastics.

"He then came back, imported a moulding machine ... and started the plastics industry in New Zealand," Stewart said.

In 1947, he went to work for Plastic & Die Casting Ltd, originally a surplus war munitions factory.

He raised enough money to buy the company 10 years later, naming it PDL Industries.
"He was a pioneer of manufactured exporting in New Zealand," his son Mark Stewart said.

PDL, which made electrical fittings, switch gear and motor control equipment, was listed from 1973 until 2001, when the Stewarts sold their stake to French company Schneider Electric

Besides business, Sir Bob loved travelling and motor racing.
"His big claim to fame was the PDL Mustang - a legendary racing car, which put PDL on the map."

He leaves behind his second wife Lady Adrienne Stewart, five sons and 17 grandchildren.

LIFE OF A PIONEER

Sir Robertson Stewart

* Born 1913

* Attended Christchurch Boys High, but forced to leave because of scarlet fever at age 13.

* Studied electrical engineering at night school and later went to England to study plastics.

* Founded Christchurch plastics manufacturer PDL Industries, which later achieved revenue of \$350 million and employed about 200 staff.

* Favourite saying: "My job is to make ordinary people do extraordinary things."