

Huizenga started with trash, became billionaire

MIAMI (AP) — College dropout Wayne Huizenga started with a trash hauling company, struck gold during America's brief love affair with VHS tapes and eventually owned three professional sports teams.

Huizenga owned Blockbuster Entertainment, AutoNation and the world's largest trash hauler, and was founding owner of baseball's Florida Marlins and the NHL Florida Panthers. He bought the NFL Miami Dolphins for \$138 million in 1994.

The one thing he never got was a Super Bowl win.

Huizenga died late Thursday, according to Valerie Hinkell, his longtime assistant. He was 80.

The Marlins won the 1997 World Series, and the Panthers reached the Stanley Cup Final in 1996, but Huizenga's beloved Dolphins never reached a Super Bowl while he owned the team.

"If I have one disappointment, the disappointment would be that we did not bring a championship home," Huizenga said shortly after he sold the Dolphins to New York real estate billionaire Stephen Ross, who still owns the team. "It's something we failed to do."

Huizenga earned an almost cult-like following among business investors who watched him build Blockbuster Entertainment into the leading video rental chain by snapping up competitors. He cracked Forbes' list of the 100 richest Americans, becoming chairman of Republic Services, one of the nation's top waste management companies, and AutoNation, the nation's largest automotive retailer.

"You just have to be in the right place at the right time," he said. "It can only happen in America."

For a time, Huizenga was also a favorite with South Florida sports fans, drawing cheers and autograph seekers. The crowd roared when he danced the hokey pokey on the field during an early Marlins game. He went on a spending spree to build a veteran team that won the World Series in only the franchise's fifth year.

He turned a nifty profit by selling the Dolphins and their stadium for \$1.1 billion, nearly seven times what he paid to become sole owner. But he knew the bottom line in the NFL is championships, and his Dolphins perennially came up short.



Trash collector turned billionaire businessman Wayne Huizenga died Thursday.

Harry Wayne Huizenga was born in the Chicago suburbs on Dec. 29, 1937, to a family of garbage haulers. He attended Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., but dropped out and began his own garbage hauling business in Pompano Beach, Fla., in 1962. He would drive a garbage truck from 2 a.m. to noon each day, then shower and go out and solicit new customers in the afternoon.

He eventually bought out several competitors, expanding throughout South Florida. In 1968, he merged with the Chicago sanitation company his uncles owned, creating Waste Management Inc., which eventually became the world's largest trash company.

He resigned from the company in 1984, taking \$100 million in stock.

But retirement bored him and he soon began buying dozens of small businesses like hotels and pest control companies. In 1987, a business partner persuaded him to check out Blockbuster, a small chain of video stores. At the time, video stores were mostly locally owned mom-and-pop operations. Huizenga didn't even own a VCR.

"I had an image of them being dark and dingy and dirty types of adult bookstores," he told The Miami Herald. "But when I finally saw a Blockbuster store, it opened my mind."

The stores were clean and carried 10,000 titles, 10 times more than the typical corner video store. He loved the concept and thought it could become the McDonalds of video. He and two partners bought 43 percent of the business for \$19 million and he became chairman and president. By 1991, the chain had grown to over 1,800 stores, with one opening every 17 hours, on average.

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American Occupational Health	Management services	725 Bridgestone Dr.	William Wright
Aqua Clean Pressure Washing	Pressure washing houses, decks	205 Sunset Dr.	Christopher Bottoms
Celtic Blessed Transport	Trucking, motor carrier	193 Goolsby Rd.	James Quinlan
Clear Shine Window Cleaners	Window washing	122 Bonner St.	Justin Shrum
Dragon's Lair	Comics and collectibles	1030 Smithville Hwy.	Heather Loudermilk
Dustpans and Dropcloths	Maid service, cleaning	3878 Old Nashville Hwy.	Jordan Felton
Genoa Healthcare	Prescription pharmaceuticals	120 Omni Dr.	John Figueroa
Giddeons Roofing	Roofing	543 Cascade Ave.	Johnathan Giddeons
Global Logistics	Freight transportation	1100 Smithville Hwy.	Mark A. Holt
Hector G. Labrada	Painting	74 Cumberland Dr.	Hector Labrada
Hillside Woodworks	Cabinet components	8876 Green Hill Rd.	Arlin Schwartz
J&J Garage	Auto repair	1042 Bethany Rd.	Jackie Vaughn
Luis Torres Painting	Painting	86 Diemer Lane	Luis Torres
Mad Mike's Inc.	Salsa manufacturing	7876 Francis Ferry Rd.	Michael D'Andrea
Maid Rite	Residential, commercial cleaning	1044 Robert Wilson Rd.	Arizona Soto
McMinnville Tire & Brake	Tires, brakes, auto repair	820 Beersheba St.	Bobby Meeks
P&H Services	Hygiene bags	5201 Hills Creek Rd.	Jan Wilson
Phil's Pressure Washing	Pressure washing	104 Skyline Dr.	Philip L. Lance
Quick Shop No. 2	Beer and food	7824 Manchester Hwy.	Bhumik Patel
Right Mowing Lawncare	Lawncare, landscaping	632 Grizzel Rd.	Jose G. Martinez
Rock Island Trucking Co.	Trucking company	1920 Mason Grissom Rd.	Justin Barnes
Romo's Remodeling	Construction, plumbing, flooring	128 McGee St.	Steve Weeter
Simons Hotdogs	Hotdog vendor	235 Simons Blvd.	Simon James
Sparks Educational Services	Educational consulting	6212 Hills Creek Rd.	Nora Wilson Fry
Sparrow Construction	Contracting	213 Margaret Circle	Brooke L. Hale
Still Small Junk Remover	Removing junk	37 Short St.	David Ferrell
Tammy Jones	Teaching martial arts	112 N. Spring St.	Tammy Jones
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