

METRO

Wealthy Sweet'N Low magnate Donald Tober leaps to his death from NYC apartment

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A wealthy, 89-year-old artificial sweetener magnate who made Sweet'N Low a household name has committed suicide by jumping from his Park Avenue apartment building, law enforcement sources told The Post.

Donald Tober, CEO and co-owner of the New York-based 1,400-employee Sugar Foods, leapt to his death just after 5 a.m. Friday, and was found in the courtyard of the luxury Upper East Side building between 65th and 66th streets, the sources said.

He was struggling with Parkinson's disease, the sources said.

At the helm of Sugar Foods, Tober turned the company's flagship product, Sweet'N Low, and its ubiquitous little pink packets, into a mainstay on kitchen counters and restaurant tables across the country, along with Sugar in the Raw and N'Joy nondairy creamer.

"Basically, we're concerned with everything that surrounds the coffee cup," Tober told Restaurant News in 1995. "We're tightly focused."



Medical Examiner's office personnel remove Tober's body from 620 Park Ave. in Manhattan on Jan. 15, 2021.
Robert Mecea

By the mid-'90s, some 80 percent of foodservice establishments used Sweet'N Low; the sweetener also commanded more than 80 percent of the sugar substitute market, Restaurant News reported.

"Donald IS Sweet'N Low," the president of Sugar Foods, Steve Odell told the magazine.



Donald Tober seen with his wife Barbara Tober on Feb. 27, 2018.
Patrick McMullan via Getty Image

"Don's had as much to do with building Sweet'N Low into a household name as anyone ever has with a product. Every packet of Sweet'N Low sold today can be traced back to a single sales call that he probably made or at least had a part in."

Odell told The Post he was Tober's business partner for 51 years.

"He was bigger than life," Odell said. "He made everybody feel special — everybody. He's an icon and he'll always be."

Tober was fighting a "devastating" disease, "especially for someone as active as he was," Odell added.

Still, the suicide was a shock.

"I talked to him yesterday and certainly, no. There was no indication whatsoever."

A Harvard Law School grad, Tober was a former chairman at The Culinary Institute of America and a founder of City Meals-on-Wheels.

He was the husband of Barbara Tober, who worked for three decades as editor-in-chief of Brides magazine and was a former trustees board chair at the Museum of Arts and Design in Manhattan. The couple lived on the building's 11th floor.



"Donald IS Sweet'N Low," then-president of Sugar Foods Steve Odell said in a 1995 interview.
Clint Spaulding /PMC

While it stopped distributing Sweet'n Low fifteen years ago, Tober's company currently manufactures a range of sweeteners and other products for supermarkets and foodservice industries under the N'Joy and Blue Diamond lines.

"He was much more than just one product," Odell said. "A thousand people a second use our products."

He added, "Donald left us with eight words, and we live them every day. The first two words are 'Be prepared.' The second are 'Show up.' The third two words are 'On time.' And the last two are 'Follow through.'

"He did that every day, all day, through his career."

Additional reporting by Amanda Woods

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