

Tortuga Rum Company founder Robert Hamaty passes away



Robert Hamaty, Tortuga Rum Company Ltd founder and owner, passed away in Miami this weekend

Tortuga Rum Company Ltd founder and owner Robert Hamaty passed away on June 13 at Miami Baptist Health Center, aged 72.

Jamaican-born Hamaty lived in the Cayman Islands for 42 years and served as the Jamaican Honorary Consul from 1992 to 2009.

“Robert Hamaty will be sorely missed by family and friends who thank you for their privacy during this difficult time. Details of a memorial will be circulated when relevant,” said a press release from Tortuga Rum Company.

Hamaty’s legendary business life began in earnest in 1984. While working for Cayman Airways, Captain Robert Hamaty and his wife Carlene, an inflight supervisor, founded the Tortuga Rum Company Ltd. They introduced the first rums of the Cayman Islands, primarily to appeal as a souvenir to the growing tourist and cruise passenger business.

In 1987, they opened the first Tortuga duty free liquor store and later that year introduced the now world-famous Tortuga Caribbean Rum Cake, according to the company website.

The company integrated Carlene’s four-generation-old family recipe into the Tortuga line and sold it to local restaurants. The success of the cake paved the way for the Caribbean's first commercially produced rum cake.

In 1997, Tortuga Imports/Tortuga Rum Cake Company opened in Miami, Florida to handle worldwide distribution, mail order and online sales.

Tortuga products are distributed in many markets throughout the world and the company also runs

operations out of Jamaica, Barbados and the Bahamas.

Tortuga celebrated its 35th anniversary last year.