

Granville D. Trimper

The owner of the century-old Ocean City amusement park also served as a city councilman and county commissioner.

Granville Daniel Trimper, who was a hands-on owner of Ocean City's famed seaside amusement park and was active in local politics, died Monday at Atlantic General Hospital in Berlin. He was 79.

Family members said no cause of death had been determined but that Mr. Trimper had been treated for an infection after knee-replacement surgery this summer.

"After a lifetime spent running all manner of careening, tilting, whirling or spinning mechanical thrill rides, the 70-year-old patriarch never seems to tire of the nightly spectacle," said a 1999 *Sun* profile. "Trimper's the big fellow clutching a walkie-talkie and surveying the flash of lights, the sonic blast of Top 40 tunes and the delighted squeals and screams of his customers."

The article noted that his family's conglomeration of rides, miniature golf courses, hotel rooms and gift shops - three city blocks' worth - has been a fixture on the boardwalk, and near it, for as long as there has been a boardwalk.

Born in Ocean City, he was the surviving grandson of a German immigrant, Daniel Trimper, who in 1890 founded Windsor Resort-Trimper's Rides, one of the country's oldest family-run amusement parks.

A lifetime resident of Ocean City, Mr. Trimper began work at the summer operation as a boy.

"He started working at age 10 or 11, and he was operating and setting up the Ferris wheel," said a grandson, Gordon Brooks Trimper of West Ocean City, the park's operations manager. "The wheel was the first ride where he had sole responsibility."

For many years, Trimper's rides, which faced the town's inlet at the south end of the boardwalk, closed at Labor Day. Mr. Trimper then helped disassemble the rides and took them on the road to carnivals and fairs throughout the Mid-Atlantic.

A 1980 *Evening Sun* article noted that Mr. Trimper had hired Maryland Institute College of Art students to help restore his 1902 Herschell-Spillman carousel, whose 52 animals and three chariots were carved by German immigrant artisans. Mr. Trimper resisted offers to sell off the carousel's figures, which are sought by collectors.

"The carousel is part of our family and part of Ocean City, and we want to keep it that way," he told the reporter.

Mr. Trimper served on the City Council of Ocean City for 18 years in the 1970s and 1980s until losing an election in 1988. He was at one time City Council president and

spent four years as a Worcester County commissioner. He served briefly as interim mayor after the 1985 death of Harry Kelley.

"He was a hardworking man who loved to get down and work on the rides. He could get bathed in grease," said Roland "Fish" Powell, a friend and former Ocean City mayor. "He was a good, local hometown boy. You knew where you stood with him. He served his town and county well."

In 1983, as council president, he brushed off a study prepared by the Maryland Coastal Zone Management office to plan for a major storm or flooding. "I don't think anything will come from the money spent on" the study, he said in remarks in *The Sun*. "My family's been here for a hundred years. Storms come and go, and we're still here."

Mr. Trimper was a past president of the Ocean City Lions Club and belonged to the organization for 58 years. He was also a lifetime member of the Ocean City Fire Company, past president of the Ocean City Hotel Motel Restaurant Association, president of the Ocean City Museum Society, and past president of the Downtown Association and the Ocean City Chamber of Commerce.

He served on the board of directors for Peninsula Bank and was a 32nd-degree member of the Evergreen Masonic Lodge. He also belonged to the Scottish Rite, the Boumi Temple and Ocean City Shrine Club.

Mr. Trimper was the Ocean City Citizen of the Year in 2000. This year, Gov. Martin O'Malley recognized "his lifetime of community service" in a proclamation "for his endless efforts in providing amusement and diversion for generations of Marylanders."

A funeral service will be held at noon today at St. Paul's by the Sea Episcopal Church, Third Street in Ocean City, where he was a vestryman and past senior warden.

Survivors include his wife of 17 years, the former Martha Messick; a son, John Douglas Trimper of West Ocean City; two daughters, Linda T. Holloway of West Ocean City and Stephanie T. Lewis of Snow Hill; a sister, Alice Bligh Salisbury of Raleigh, N.C.; and nine grandchildren. His first wife, Joanne Morgan Trimper, died in 1991.