

# A Tribute to Robert Leo Hulseman, Inventor of the Red Solo Cup

Robert Leo Hulseman, creator of the Red Solo Cup, died last Wednesday. He was 84.

When I saw that he had died (news of his death started pick up steam on social media last night), I decided to look at his life.

Hulseman is described in [news reports](#) as “a devoted Christian and family man who was married to his late wife Sheila for nearly 60 years.” A man who started working at his father’s Solo Cup Company at age 18 and never looked back. (You can read more about him in his [obit, here.](#))

It struck me as odd that I had never heard of him, despite the fact that his product, the 16 oz. Red Solo Cup—cheap, sturdy, sleek, and (somehow) flashy—had achieved iconic status.

In my, ahem, studious years as an undergraduate in college, I had used the Red Solo Cup in hundreds of games of beer pong (a sad but true statistic). It was the standard at fraternities and house parties, used in great quantities on campuses across the U.S. It was so ubiquitous, in 2011 country singer Toby Keith even made a music video about it.

Yet, to my surprise, I discovered that this inventor, entrepreneur, and philanthropist doesn’t even have a Wikipedia page. Why not? All he did was create an efficient, inexpensive, well-designed product used by hundreds of millions of people, while employing thousands more.

It occurred to me that we don’t really give entrepreneurs the attention they deserve. In many ways, they are the people who

make our world go 'round. But they are often invisible to us.

Perhaps, however, that is the way they like it. If so, I find something reassuring about this. In an age in which many [people attach meaning to visibility](#), it is good to know there are still giants who walk among us who relish their anonymity.

2016 will be remembered as the Year of the Celebrity. One was elected president. Numerous others died: Bowie, Prince, George Michael, Alan Rickman, Muhammad Ali, Glenn Frey, and now Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds, among others.

We'd be remiss, however, to overlook the contributions of Robert Leo Hulseman, and the men and women like him. With that, here's a tribute to you, Mr. Hulseman, creator the Red Solo Cup:

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