

Howard Hughes Dies at 70 On Flight to Texas Hospital

Billionaire Was Flying From Acapulco With Undisclosed Illness

By JAMES P. STERBA

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HOUSTON, April 5—Howard R. Hughes died today in a private jet that was carrying him from Acapulco to Houston for medical treatment. He was 70 years old.

Officials of the Methodist Hospital issued the following statement:

"Today at 1:27 P.M. en route from Acapulco to Houston by air, Mr. Howard R. Hughes expired." The nature of his illness was not disclosed.

The hospital officials said that they could not themselves confirm that the body was that of Mr. Hughes, but a physician for the Summa Corporation, which handles the Hughes interests, said tonight: "Howard R. Hughes is dead."

Mr. Hughes left an estate estimated to be worth \$1.5 billion or more. The heart of his empire was the Summa Corporation, a holding company based in Las Vegas, Nev.

Mr. Hughes's wishes for the disposition of his holdings were as completely shrouded in secrecy as his life had been in recent years. His movements were always the subject of rumors but the rumors were rarely confirmed.

Larry Mathis, a vice president of Methodist Hospital, said the hospital was telephoned at about 9 A.M. today by representatives of Mr. Hughes who said he would be arriving here this afternoon. Hospital officials would not disclose the cause of Mr. Hughes's death nor any



United Press International

Howard Hughes years ago

preparations they had made for his arrival.

The Hughes plane, a Lear jet, arrived at Houston's International Airport about 2 P.M. On the plane besides Mr. Hughes were two unidentified physicians and an administrative aide.

The body was taken 28 miles by ambulance from the airport to the hospital, which is in the Texas Medical Center.

[The Associated Press said that Ed McLellan, also a hospital vice president, confirmed that the dead man was Mr. Hughes.]

The hospital referred all inquiries to a spokesman for the Hughes interest in Los Angeles.

Mr. Mathis declined to comment on the cause of death or the disposition of the body.

"It is the body, but I can't tell you if it is Howard Hughes," Mr. Mathis said.

By that he said he meant

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that a body identified to the hospital as being that of Howard Hughes did arrive at the hospital this afternoon.

The body was in the pathology laboratory in the basement of the hospital early tonight. Two city policemen stood in front of the door. Some hospital personnel said they heard that the body was to be removed from the hospital.



Associated Press

Howard Hughes with Ava Gardner in 1946