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Subject: PublicAffairs at 20

Not long ago, we were having dinner with our son Evan and his wife Sarabeth. She started to tell a story about sitting next to an important Washington journalist who was, at best, condescending to this excellent young woman. As is a habit of mine, I launched into a collateral story about the same fellow. Pop, said Evan. This isn't about you.

And that's the way I feel tonight. Everyone in this room who has brushed against PublicAffairs over the decades is responsible for what we are. And, as you may have heard me say, if we weren't different, we wouldn't be necessary.

I'd like to recognize Bob and Helen Bernstein, the B of BBS. Bob has been an extraordinary publisher, Doctor Seuss and countless others. But he has combined that with a passion for human rights in the broadest sense. Ben Bradlee and Izzy Stone are no longer around. But you can get a sense of Ben from the HBO documentary about him coming in December and as for Izzy, if you've never seen the I.F.Stone's Weekly film, a 1973 top ten film of the year, you can now catch it on You Tube featuring a cameo, by a much younger version of me.

Thanks to Kayce for making her apartment available. Peter Jennings used to say he had made only two private investments, a failed salsa company and PublicAffairs. I would like to tell you this apartment was purchased with his profits, but that would not be true.

Charlie Heyward was a VIP at Simon and Schuster and Little Brown. In the early months of PublicAffairs he joined me in making the pitch to investors and shaping the business plan. He gave me considerable needed credibility in crucial meetings. I tried to persuade Charlie to stay with Perseus but he wanted to go into to a more reliable field, horse racing.

I'm not a fan of excess effusion in acknowledgments, but I want to try some. Employees 1, 2, 3, 4. Robert Kimzey came from Human Rights Watch where he had worked for my wife Susan. She said that if I hired him she would consider killing us both. I did and she didn't. Robert memorably described the early period of PublicAffairs as Mr. Toad's Wild Ride.

Lisa Kaufman joined me at Random House in 1985. We grew up in publishing together. She designed our sales material and edited many of our best books.

Geoff Shandler redefined casual Friday with Orange running shorts and clogs. As the first editorial director of PublicAffairs, he acquired Blind Man's Bluff, which sold 400,000 copies and gave us ballast.

And Gene Taft was our publicity director with energy and skill and so much dedication that I had to order him to take a vacation which he spent in a casino in Atlantic City. When he told us that he was moving to Washington to get married, I couldn't have been more surprised than if he had said he was now a Yankees fan.

Darrell Jonas and I were together for almost a quarter century and as I said when she retired, it was the longest relationship I had with any woman who was not my wife or daughter.

Matty Goldberg, supermensch from day one, Carolyn who sold George Soros' first book the Crisis of Global Capitalism in 35 foreign markets. Liz Tzetzto whose selling talents matched her belief in what we wanted to do. And Sabrina McCarthy whose grace made us all better and who has ascended steadily in 20 years in the business, as of, we're told this Friday. They've moved on. All our alumni have donated their spirit to us.

David Steinberger came to Perseus in 2004. I will concede that it took us a while to find a compatible rhythm. But we did and it is without any doubt that the Perseus Books Group became viable under his leadership, a mini-major. His legacy is a source of pride to us all. And Joe Mangan was his partner. He wanted to be here tonight, but said he had to be in a New Jersey traffic court to pay a speeding ticket.

Susan, Clive and Jaime have been running this enterprise for ten years now. Suffice to say that we all know how well they have done in among other things, abiding the founder.

And finally, Susan, the wife. We have been a couple since Aug. 29, 1971 in Saigon. If you ever need very sound advice on any topic, she's the person to call. Let's drink

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