

Mike Berman's

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HOWARD PASTER

December 23, 1944 – August 10, 2011

I do not recall exactly when and under what circumstances Howard and I met. I do know it was in the early 1980s. When we met, we became friends and that friendship simply grew and grew. What follows is a picture of the Howard Paster that I know.

Howard received a Bachelor Degree from Alfred University in New York and a Masters Degree from Columbia University's Journalism school in 1967.

Howard's Professional Career

Howard's entrance into government service was in the office of Rep. Lester Wolff (D-NY) followed by a stint in the office of Senator Birch Bayh (D-Ind).

In 1977 he left the Hill to join the Washington office of the United Auto Workers where as the head of the legislative team, he represented the interests of auto workers, including work to protect their interests in the 1979 Chrysler Bailout.

His next move came in 1980 when he joined Timmons and Company, a premier government affairs and lobbying firm in D.C. where he worked until 1992.

In the fall of that year, Howard left the world of direct lobbying and became the head of the Washington office of Hill and Knowlton. Keeping his eye on the possibility of additional government service, his contract stipulated that he could leave his new job for that purpose.

And that is exactly what happened. I recall in mid-October of 1992, I was working on the Clinton campaign in Little Rock, Arkansas when I received a call from Howard. After the usual pleasantries he asked me a question, "When Clinton wins, are you planning to go after the job of head of legislative affairs?" I told him I did not have any plans to try and go into the government. He then said, "I would like that job and would appreciate anything you might do to help me."

After Bill Clinton won the election, I did weigh in on his behalf but I think the real driver was the push that came from Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich) and

others.

Howard was selected and soon joined the Clinton/Gore transition team. At the outset of the administration he was appointed Assistant to the President and head of the White House Office of Legislative Affairs. While in that position, he led a number of legislative efforts. The most consequential achievement was the passage of the Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 which passed on August 5 and 6 of that year by a single vote in each chamber. This piece of legislation is often credited with launching one of the most prosperous decades in U.S. History. He also led the White House effort on behalf of the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Those who worked with him always admired the fact that no matter how hectic things were in the White House, Howard always slipped away to catch his son Tim's baseball games. And it is also here that he picked up the nick name Hoho because no matter how tense things became, he was always optimistic and positive.

At the end of 1993, Howard left the White House and ended his career as a lobbyist. Shortly thereafter he rejoined Hill & Knowlton, this time as chairman and CEO of Hill & Knowlton World Wide, a position that he held until 2002.

In that year he became the Executive Vice President of WPP Worldwide, the parent company of Hill & Knowlton and various other public relations, communications, media and public affairs firms. He held that position at the time of his death. For a number of years he also served on the Board of WPP.

Another of Howard's worlds

Howard loved baseball. I recall any number of times that Howard invited me to watch his son Tim play. He was also a regular at professional games whenever time permitted. That interest led him to the Little League Foundation.

Beginning in the late 1990s, Howard chaired a fundraising campaign that raised \$20,000,000 to foster the growth of baseball and softball leagues in urban areas. It provided baseball programs for disadvantaged young people in these communities.

In 2002 Howard became the President of the Little League Foundation Board of Trustees. In 2005, Little League International created the "Howard and Gail Paster Little League Urban Initiative Volunteer of the Year Award". It is given annually to an adult volunteer involved with the Little League Urban Initiative.

Howard was a dedicated member of the Board of Trustees of Tuskegee University where he chaired the development committee until this spring.

Gail Paster served for many years as the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library and Howard became a regular and enthusiastic supporter and fundraiser. Howard had a way of soliciting that made it easy to say no if that is what you wanted to do but when Howard asked you really did not want to say no. He was sensitive to the possibility that the solicitation of a particular person directly by him might make it awkward for them to say no he found a way for that person to be solicited by someone else. In 2011 he Chaired the Annual Gala at which Gail was honored for her years of service as Director. I remember the pleasure he expressed in a phone call when he said “We have raised more money than at any other single Folger event.”

In 1993 Howard was the President of the Sidewell’s Friends Parents Association.

And then as if he did not already have enough to do, in late Spring 2008 he became the Chief Operating Officer of Hillary Clinton’s Presidential Campaign and saw it through to its end.

In May 2011, Howard was honored by the Columbia University School of Journalism. He was awarded the Dean’s Medal for Public Service in a special ceremony at the school. The award is given to graduates “who have made a significant contribution to society through professional accomplishments and civic involvement.”

Howard and his Family

Howard was totally and madly in love with Gail and their family. The pride that he felt in Gail’s successes was palpable. It isn’t that I saw Emily and Tim that often but I heard about their lives in detail through school and work and Emily’s marriage to Elliot Regenstein in 2002 and Tim’s marriage to Erica Barrett in 2004. And then came the grandchildren, Zoe and Jamie Regenstein and Max and Ryan Paster. Zoe in particular had a way of getting Howard to do anything she wanted.

It is hard to forget how excited Howard was each time he told me that he and Gail were heading to Chicago or New York to baby sit or just to visit.

A Special Person

Since Howard died I have had many conversations with folks whose lives he touched in a loving and positive way. Many have been public in their expressions

of sadness and fond memory.

President and Secretary Clinton issued a statement shortly after his death which included the following “ We will remember Howard for his passion and candor and his dedication to public service....We are thankful for Howard’s friendship and we will miss him.”

One of my favorite descriptions of Howard was contained in a statement sent out to the people who work at Hill & Knowlton by Jack Martin the current Chairman and CEO and Howard’s friend 25 years. “More importantly, he was one of the finest men I’ve ever met. I used to always tell Howard that he was one of those people in my life that I would have felt comfortable playing poker with over the telephone. His integrity, compassion and deep love of his family were inspirations to all of us. I will miss him as my friend and my colleague, and I believe that we are all better off for having known him.”

When you sought advice from Howard it was thoughtful and straight forward but delivered in a way that made everything okay. In describing Howard on the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism website when he received the Dean’s Medal the following was included, “Paster is known far and wide for the wisdom and fearlessness of his counsel. Along the way, he has served as a generous and wise mentor of countless young people.”

I have been struggling to find the right combination of words to describe the importance to me of our friendship and how much I will miss his advice and thoughtfulness ladled out as he carefully covered each half of a bagel with his favorite smoked salmon spread.

At the saddest moment of my life, suddenly there was Howard at my side. He took me by the arm and led me through a most difficult time.

Many people will sorely miss Howard, foremost among them Gail, Tim and Emily and their families. I am right behind them.

Mike

Howard’s family has designated the following organizations to which donations might be made in his memory.

Little League Baseball Urban Initiative, P.O. Box 3485, Williamsport, PA
17701

Or

Brain Cancer Research at Johns Hopkins Dept of Neurosurgery c/o Kim
Metzger, 100 N. Charles St. Suite 434, Baltimore, MD 21201 or on-line at
www.hopkinsmedicine.org/neurologyneurosurgery/makegift

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