

A Tribute to Irving Schwartz

December 28, 1919 – December 14, 2001



It is with great sadness that we tell our SUCCESS readers of the passing of Irving Schwartz on December 14, 2001. A founding partner of Schwartz & Hofflich, and the originator of SUCCESS, he will be missed by us all.

Hank Hofflich, long-time friend and partner of Irving's, gave the tribute that follows. For those of you who knew Irving, it will make you smile and remember. For those of you who never had the pleasure, it will give you a wonderful picture of who he was...

“Irving’s family, friends, partners and co-workers, we have come to praise Irving, not to bury him, for who could bury as dynamic and upbeat a person as Irving Schwartz and who is more deserving of praise than Irving Schwartz?

During his almost 82-year journey through life, he touched and influenced innumerable lives, many of whom are here today. Irving was the

quintessential optimist. To him it wasn’t a question is the glass half full, or half empty, it was a question as to who would get the sponge to wipe up as the glass overflowed. Irving was not a complainer, although in his life, like in most of ours, there were times that warranted complaint. His answer to my question as to how he was feeling or how things were going was always “top notch.”

Most of us know Irving as the founder of a successful Norwalk firm of certified public accountants. But it took 35 years of his life to reach Norwalk, and the firm at that time was better described as struggling. He was raised in the Bronx the second son of hardworking parents whom he loved very much. He was very proud of his Hungarian ancestry. His career path was not straight public school, college, and CPA. He graduated from CCNY, attending at night, after working a full day.

Many a night he would fall asleep in the classroom. That he managed to pass the CPA exam is in itself, a tribute to him. He worked as a runner on Wall Street, owned and operated a factory that manufactured ballpoint pen cartridges, was a staff accountant for a New York CPA firm, and finally his own firm in New York.

Irving met and married his beloved wife Rita either during or shortly after World War 2. Their two children, Jane and Susan, were his pride and joy. This love of family was extended in later years to their grandchildren, Meira, Kalindi, and Joey, and their great grandchildren, Tmima and Tzur. After living in Fair Lawn, NJ, and Riverdale, NY, he moved the family and his practice to Norwalk

Although Irving was a CPA, and a business and financial advisor, his true love was for art, music, and design. He was very proud that one time he had been an extra in a performance at the Metropolitan Opera. In his youth he played the violin, and started to take lessons again in his forties. He was a collector of art, both modern and traditional, but he was truly in his glory agonizing over a font, rag content, and layout of the office stationery. The design look and feel of the office was all Irving. Money was no object. If it had the right look, feel and quality, it was worth the price.

That last sentence, if it had the right look, feel, and quality, it was worth the price, was why he wore Brooks Brothers clothes before he could afford them, drove a Mercedes Benz in 1958, a Jaguar shortly thereafter, and was one of the first owners of a Lexus in Connecticut. Whether it was staring down the desk clerk who dared to give him an inferior room at one of the world class hotels to which he and Rita often traveled, or explaining to

the snooty French waiter why he wasn't ordering wine with dinner, or regally dancing the waltz with Rita, or the manner in which he threw the dice in one of the casinos in Monte Carlo, the Caribbean or Las Vegas, or booking the best room in the best hotel in Venice, overlooking the grand canal, for an anniversary trip with Rita, in a word, Irving had class.

Irving was the most interesting conversationalist I have ever known. He could talk about a myriad of diverse subjects, and gladly take either side in a debate. The vastness of his knowledge was amazing from accounting and business matters, to history, religion, the arts, music, wines, horticulture, politics, and Israel. Irving was also a good listener. Many a time, friends, clients, partners, and employees, would seek his counsel on strictly personal and family problems. Most went away feeling much relieved after talking with him.

Irving loved Israel, and the many friends he and Rita had made during their 26 trips there. It also gave him much joy and pride for he and Rita to serve as tour guides, and introduce those of us who went there with them, to their Israeli friends.

In addition to the 26 trips to Israel, Irving and Rita made innumerable trips to places in the rest of the world. Their having taken foreign exchange students into their home, eventually led to trips to Denmark and Uruguay for return visits. Probably the only continent they didn't get to was Australia.

So dear partner and friend, as you take your last trip, I say rest well, because we here today selfishly need you strong, in order for our inner selves to continue to seek your guidance, as our outer selves have done these many years."