

# In Memoriam: Robert D. Kestnbaum

With a profound sense of loss, we share the news of the recent passing of a distinguished member of the Editorial Board, Robert D. Kestnbaum. It is a measure of Bob's stature in this profession that he was inducted into the Direct Marketing Association's Hall of Fame last October.

Bob was a gifted and unique individual who elevated the world of direct marketing in a number of important ways. Most fundamentally, he brought to direct marketing his intelligence, relentless push for innovation and the rigorous, sophisticated training of Harvard Business School. Thanks in large measure to Bob's many ideas and efforts, during his career the small, tactical business of direct mail was transformed into the relatively large, strategic business of direct, interactive, relationship-oriented marketing.

When Bob Kestnbaum co-founded the Robert Maxwell Company as a division Bell & Howell in the late-1950's, direct mail had almost no presence in major corporations (other than traditional catalogers) and the term "direct marketing" had not yet been invented. One of his first successes was convincing Bell & Howell of the then radical idea that movie cameras, a high ticket (\$120) item, could be sold using direct mail.

Bob's success at Bell & Howell led him to understand and be a missionary for the strategic role that direct marketing could play within major corporations. He helped

Hewlett-Packard launch and measure their success in the calculator business in its early years. Major companies such as IBM, American Express, British Airways, British Telecom and National Westminster Bank chose Bob to help them develop and implement their direct marketing strategies.

The high intellectual, personal and ethical standards that Bob brought to his work enabled him to attract and mentor many of today's direct marketing leaders. It was fitting that he was nominated for the DMA Hall of Fame by a former consultant of Kestnbaum & Company. It was similarly appropriate that a moving eulogy for Bob was delivered by a long-time former client.

A chapter of the Talmud instructs that one should "be deliberate in judgment, raise up many disciples...do much and receive all men with a cheerful countenance." Across many centuries that wisdom provides a fine distillation of Bob Kestnbaum's character and achievements. Direct marketers, and most especially Bob's many disciples, will sorrowfully miss his presence and vision.

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