

Stan's Tree

For nearly twenty-five years, Stan Silverzweig, Nick D'Agostino and I conducted dozens and dozens of Entrepreneurial Institutes around the United States for families who owned grocery stores. We would meet on Saturday evening to review our workshop agenda, and the background of the families who were attending, and then conduct all day sessions for the families Sunday through Wednesday. The idea for the workshop was Nick's, who owned twenty-six stores in Manhattan and wanted to help families plan ownership transition to the next generation to avoid tax and personal issues in the future. The National Grocery Association thought the idea had merit and agreed to serve as the sponsor. Though all of these meetings, Stan, Nick and I became like brothers...in my case the brothers I never had. We would probably still be doing these Seminars, as they were in great demand, but unfortunately, Stan died of a perforated aorta, undetected by the hospital staff on a weekend when the hospital was understaffed. Being with these men changed my life for the better. Nick always introduced our team as a Jewish boy from the big city (Stan), a Protestant farm boy (Me) and a Catholic boy from Manhattan (Nick). As different as our backgrounds were, these differences complemented each other and we became a great team.

Prior to one of our seminars, I was visiting Stan and Mary at their home in New Town, New York. Their home had been designed by John Houseman, famous British-American actor (made more famous by his Smith-Barney television



commercials (“Smith-Barney makes money the old fashion way...they work for it.”). The house was very unique and in the yard was a very large, beautiful Japanese Maple tree. Under the tree were a number of small tree “starts” and I mentioned to Stan that some day I would like a small “start” to put on our property in Ohio.



Stan, with his son, Joe, under” his” tree.

Several days after I got home, I received a “start” from Stan, as a joke. It was in a regular envelope, with no dirt on the roots and no moist tissue covering the

roots...just this four inch Japanese Maple “Tree.” I planted it and sent Stan a picture. Well, over the probably thirty years since, it has become a thirty foot tree in our back yard, fighting for sun as it is surrounded by other trees.



Our Tree that Stan sent us over thirty years ago.

The years have passed...Ruth, Mary and I have stayed in

touch...we even visited her in Park City years ago. Recently, in an text, Mary said, “When are you going to send me a “start” from Stan’s tree?”

I said I would get on it and dug three little “starts” and UPS’d them overnight to her in an elaborate box of crushed paper, bubble wrap and moist paper towels (Unlike Stan’s earlier mailing).



Mary potted the “trees” and they look pretty healthy for such a long trip (Kent, OH to Park City, UT). So Stan’s Trees will live on in the Utah soil, just as the memory of this wonderful man lives on in so many hearts and minds of those who loved/love him.