



THANK YOU, BOB

The End of an Era

Bob's legal advice has been pristine & flawless

by: Frank Cannata, The Cannata Report

Editor's Note: On June 30, 2024, Bob Goldberg will retire from his service as general counsel for the Business Technology Association (BTA). He has served in that role since 1977. On July 1, his son, Greg Goldberg, will become the association's new general counsel. The two have worked together for many months preparing for the transition. This is the last of five articles to pay tribute to Bob, thanking him for his many years of service to the association and the office technology industry.



Much of what Bob Goldberg has done for BTA dealers is well-known and the applause he has received is well-earned. I would like to use this article to cap off Bob's 47 years of service to the industry by sharing three simple stories that sum up what he has given and what he has meant to many of us.

When Bob was hired by the National Office Machine Dealers Association (NOMDA; now BTA) in 1977, I recall how many of the typewriter dealers grumbled that they were concerned about how this young, inexperienced (about selling typewriters) man could help their organizations. He woke everybody up and convinced the naysayers that he could be of great help when he contributed to the congressional debate about laws preventing the dumping of typewriters in the United States by Silver Reed, a Japanese manufacturer.

The dumping was destroying the typewriter business and making it nearly impossible for dealers to compete because Silver Reed was selling products far below market value. Bob was able to provide information on the damage this dumping was having on a select group of businesses in the United States. The 1979 Antidumping Act provided that an additional antidumping duty shall be imposed if foreign merchandise is sold or likely to be sold in the United States at less than its fair value to the material injury of a U.S. industry.

The next challenge Bob faced was the problems dealers were encountering from Japanese copier manufacturers. Plain-paper products began coming into the United States in 1972. Konishiroku (Konica) was the first company with the Royal RBC-1, followed by Canon in 1974 with its NP-70. The Royal Bond Copier was a disaster for multiple reasons, and the Canon product, the first liquid plain-paper copier, was an excellent product for that period. Unfortunately, Canon released a 15-page-per-minute (ppm) console in 1975 that was as bad as the RBC-1, creating problems for the dealers selling those products.

When the Copier Dealers Association (CDA) was formed by Paul Shields and a few other Canon dealers in 1977, its main purpose at the time was to sue Canon. Eventually, CDA invited Bob to speak at its meetings, and his message was one of caution: "Don't sue, just settle."

Similarly, we were at a CDA meeting in Utah many years later when ECI purchased OMD, the company providing an operating system developed by dealers, for dealers. The original com-

pany sold its operating system. The original contract called for a forgiveness of 5% for use of the operating system in perpetuity. The new owners did not see it that way. They rescinded the 5% and dealers had to pay it going forward. Bob was invited to represent the dealers in a lawsuit against the new owners for refusing to accept the terms of the original agreement. It was a heated atmosphere and I distinctly remember Bob cautioning the dealers by saying: "Yes, you can win, but the cost will far outweigh the benefit. Settle for a fee you deem reasonable."

More recently, I would like to address what Bob has done for us. If you have attended our Annual Awards & Charities Galas in recent years, you would have seen Bob serving as our emcee. He was and is impeccable in the role. He keeps the flow going and interjects his unique sense of humor. We received many compliments for our 2023 Gala; however, without Bob, it would never have been as good. At our rehearsals, he is always calm, and you see him there and know everything will be more than OK.

How do you sum up a man whose service to the industry has no equal? The number of things Bob has taken on to help the industry and his friends is unbelievable. His legal advice is pristine and flawless.

The office technology world is a better place because of Bob Goldberg's contributions. All of us who have had the privilege of collaborating with him, whether on business matters, personal matters or charitable causes, have been lucky to know him and, yes, to love him. We will never see his level of competence, sacrifice and commitment to others again. ■

Frank Cannata is founder of The Cannata Report.

He began his career in the office technology industry in 1970 with Saxon Business Products, later working at Saxon Industries, Royal Business Machines and Canon U.S.A. Inc. Cannata can be reached at fgcannata@cannatareport.com. Visit www.thecannatareport.com.

