



# The Goodbye I Hoped Would Never Happen

By the time I joined the staff at the Business Technology Association (BTA) in 1986, Bob Goldberg had already been the association's general counsel for nine years. I was only 24 years old at the time and was still getting used to working in the "grown-up world." Early on, when I basically only knew Bob as the association's "lawyer from Chicago," I would address him as "Mr. Goldberg." That didn't last long. "Call me Bob," he quickly requested. Naturally, that put me at ease and marked the beginning of a long and rewarding friendship.



Yes, I was introduced to Bob for the first time 37-plus years ago. Much has changed about the association through these many years — the volunteer leadership teams, the BTA staff, the nature of the office technology industry we serve and, well, essentially everything else. But not Bob. I am very grateful that he has been the "one constant" during my career at BTA. That has always brought me a comforting assurance that all is well. Collectively, Bob's wisdom, class, confidence, humor, dedication to the dealer channel and his guidance have always provided me — and BTA — with a very solid foundation. It has always been obvious to me that when Bob is involved — whatever it is — you can plan on the outcome being successful.

When I became executive director for BTA back in June 2006, it was (and still is) important to me to have Bob's guidance and support. Along the way he has provided me advice that has served me well. He has also encouraged me in my role, never hesitating to offer praise for my efforts. That, as you can imagine, has been a great source of motivation. Bob is quick to compliment others but

does not hand out compliments willy-nilly. Knowing that makes his compliments all the more valuable and, again, motivating.

As many of us have fondly been recalling our "Bob memories" as we approach his retirement from the role of BTA general counsel on June 30, two memories come to mind that I would like to share. The first involves my two sons. They have been around Bob at least twice. The first time they met him, when they were 14 and 17 years old, the conversation led Bob to remind my sons: "Success comes with hard work." We have repeated that in our household a number of times since then. In fact, it became a guiding principle as my sons (now 29 and 32) were growing up — a succinct and impactful reminder that will forever and always be ingrained in my mind.

The second memory I would like to share is really more of an observation I've made about Bob. You know how some people frequently use a word that becomes his or her "signature" word? Well, he may not know it, but Bob's word is "wonderful." What a great word, right? To me it's a word that has a particularly unique meaning and, so, it always grabs your attention. In fact, I've noticed that I am using it more and more because of Bob's influence.

Finally, this is a perfect opportunity to share that Bob falls into a small group of individuals in my life. He is among my role models. I have had six of them: My dad, the only grandpa I ever knew, a carpenter I worked for in high school and college, and three individuals I've worked with at BTA — Bob among them. "Role model" is defined as: "A person looked to by others as an example to be imitated." Yes, I think that is a wonderful way to describe Bob.

Thank you, Bob, for helping to make BTA great and for having such a positive influence in the lives of so many people. ■

— Brent Hoskins

**Executive Director/BTA  
Editor/Office Technology**

Brent Hoskins  
brent@bta.org  
(816) 303-4040

**Associate Editor**

Elizabeth Marvel  
elizabeth@bta.org  
(816) 303-4060

**Contributing Writers**

Frank Cannata, The Cannata Report  
www.thecannatareport.com

Ralph Gammon, Infosource Software.  
www.info-source.com

Greg Goldberg, Incoming General Counsel  
Business Technology Association

Reena Philpot, Reena Philpot Sales Coaching  
www.reenaphilpot.com

Cody Walton, Konica Minolta Business Solutions U.S.A. Inc.  
www.kmbs.konicaminolta.us



**Business Technology Association**

12411 Wornall Road  
Kansas City, MO 64145  
(816) 941-3100  
www.bta.org

Member Services: (800) 505-2821  
BTA Legal Hotline: (312) 648-2300

Valerie Briseno  
Marketing Director  
valerie@bta.org

Brian Smith  
Membership Sales Representative  
brian@bta.org

Alicia Hinton  
Administrative Assistant  
alicia@bta.org

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## FLASHBACK



The association's magazine cover 47 years ago this month — the NOMDA Spokesman, June/July 1977.