



THANK YOU, BOB

A Tribute to Bob Goldberg

Greatness is what one does when no one is looking

by: Jim D’Emidio, D’Emidio Consulting LLC

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 article is the second of several to pay tribute to Bob, thanking him for his many years of service to the association and the office technology industry.



I have been in the office technology industry for almost 40 years. You can’t be in this industry that long without having the pleasure of being in Bob Goldberg’s presence.

Early in my career, I was managing the dealer channel for Muratec America Inc. As a manufacturer, there are always disputes between dealers and manufacturers. Some of these disputes involved Bob contacting me on behalf of the dealers. These discussions began a relationship — and a friendship — of more than 30 years.

Muratec was always considered a dealer-friendly manufacturer. When problems were brought to my attention, Muratec handled them quickly and fairly. Bob and I found solutions for dealers without threats of lawsuits or legal action. He once wrote an article in Office Technology magazine stating Muratec was one of the organizations he fully trusted to always put the dealer first.

Bob always stresses the importance of being equitable and fair, so if you did the right thing by the dealers, they would never try to take advantage of the relationship. I learned a very simple business principle from Bob: Treat dealers — and others — the way you would like to be treated. Bob always did this in his business dealings.

I’ve never met anyone in this (or any other) industry who is more beloved and respected than Bob. For many lawyers, he is a disappointment to the lawyer community, as he is not a typical lawyer. Bob treats everyone well, is equitable and quick to return calls — almost the opposite of most lawyers I know.

However, the merit of a man is not merely what he does in his professional and public life. What is more important is how he conducts himself when others aren’t looking. This is where my respect for Bob has grown immensely. Almost 22 years ago, Muratec was planning a president’s trip to Punta Mita, Mexico,

a small village close to Puerto Vallarta on the west coast. Bob heard I was heading to Mexico and said he had some very strong contacts in the community, as he owns property there. He told me to use his name when I visited restaurants, bars and stores in the village.

The first place I went, I asked the owner if he knew “Bob Goldberg” and he said “no.” Then I asked him if he knew “Robert Goldberg.” Once again, he did

not recognize the name. Finally, I asked if he knew a lawyer named “Roberto.” A huge smile came over his face and he said he knew Roberto very well and our money was no longer good at his restaurant because we were his friends.

What I found was that people at every place I went in Punta Mita knew Roberto and loved him. He had helped most restaurant owners and merchants with different legal issues and challenges they had in their businesses “at no charge.” It didn’t matter if I was talking to Gustavo, Teresa, Jamie, Hector or Juan. Each of these owners had a similar story.

Teresa told me that Roberto “helped our restaurant by contacting manufacturers to get the products fixed and replaced.” This was after months of trying to get the attention of the supply manufacturers.

Hector told me that Roberto helped his son get into the University of Illinois. Roberto sponsored Hector’s son and allowed him to live with his family for a while in Chicago, Illinois.

Roberto also helped others with legal work, all at no charge — unless you consider he has free tequila for life!

I see the love we have for Bob in the BTA Channel. He also helps other associations that equally love him for his humor, intelligence, quality of work and ability to find solutions without legal recourse. This is typical for a lawyer, but Bob comes up with solutions that are best for all parties, not necessarily what is best for the lawyers.

This world needs more Bob Goldbergs! It’s what he does when no one is looking that makes him a great person and someone you want to emulate. Thank you, Bob! ■

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