

PARK B. DOWD

I was born in the little town of Guthrie Center, Iowa, where my father was the local druggist. I was still very small when he went off to war, having enlisted along with other Iowans in the Spanish American Conflict. There my father contracted Malaria and this precipitated our move to Canada where Dad went into the wheat-farming business.

But the "Grasshopper plague" one year, and an experience with "wheat rust" another year, it was not a successful venture. But I still remember my first iceskates there and all the snow on the hills where we raced our sleds.

Our move to California occurred after these discouraging set-backs and our relatives were urging us to come to the West Coast. I was eleven years old then, the oldest of three boys. We arrived in California, going first to Redlands. Later we moved to Hyde Park which was closer to my father's work in Los Angeles.

I attended Manual Arts High School where I became a member of the R.O.T.C. and in 1928 I passed all of the tests and was made an officer. ~~Many of my classmates had jobs and were earning money to put themselves through college. I sold magazines, had a gas-station job, became a pie baker for Bradley's, and was a strike breaker on the S.S. Antigua before enrolling in Los Angeles Junior College which had taken over the entire old campus of the U.C.L.A. They were building a new campus out in the county of Westwood.~~

Here I made the team on Ice Hockey, and in our last year at the college we beat the U.C.L.A. Bruins, and it was an exciting climax. I enrolled in the new U.C.L.A. in 1934 and here I won my letter. We had some wonderful games on the Sonja Henie Ice Rink. I was also on the rowing team there, and joined the athletic fraternity ALPHA GAMMA.

~~I studied German, and chemistry, and was told I could get a job in a laboratory until I had some practical experience. Through a close friend, I was given an interview with the shoe buyer at Bullocks, and I began to work there as a stock boy, but with the Depression at that time - I know I was lucky to get this break, and my first assignment was in the receiving room where the big cartons of shoes were unloaded. I learned a lot from my fellow workers about shoe styles, the big sales, learning to fit shoes, and much more. I was with Bullocks for 19 years.~~

In 1935 I was married to Bettie Thorne. In 1936 I became a member of a special training class at Bullocks, and was recommended as a potential future executive at Bullocks. I was very impressed with the Bullock's Ideals and with their high standards for merchandise.

I was 25 years old when I became a buyer at Bullocks, and with the interested and helpful advice from Mr. Winnett, the store's owner, I learned a great deal about design, and found as time went on that I was designing the shoes with the shoemakers. I became well-known for design and for setting trends in shoe styles.

- It was at the very beginning of the great depression that I graduated from the Manual Arts High School in the Summer of 1929. I shall never forget those very difficult times when it was so hard to find a job. I guess that is why, when I found a job at Bullock's I stayed for 19 years.

It was during the 1930-s and 1940's that women's fashions developed into a big business. I learned to buy and merchandise women's shoes

and clothing during the days when the movie industry was developing, and when the great fashion designers were influencing the way women dressed all over the world.

I learned the art of color coordination in shoes and accessories. It was the time that fashion cycles became so important, and being able to forecast trends and recognize fads was why I became so successful as a merchandiser. My hobby became the study of History of fashion through the ages. This was why I visited the museums in New York and Chicago.

I traveled to the east on the average of twice a year for over 30 years. That is why Bettie and I have enjoyed traveling all over the world. We never missed a chance to visit at least one Museum in every foreign city we have visited.

I was taught by a famous fashion director at Bullock's, "Madame Geffene" - that the reason the great artists through the ages created pictures and portraits that endured, was because they color-coordinated their line and design. She taught me to train my eye through great works of art, to be able to use good taste in merchandising items that sell in department stores.

Bettie used this test of good taste in decorating the many homes we have built. In fact we have found that building and decorating new homes became a joint hobby for us. We have been married for over 47 years and we love to work together in trying to make our homes look attractive and comfortable.

We have moved to a new home on the average of every four to five years during our marriage. Each house has been a bigger or better home, so we never have had to pay Capital Gains tax and have ridden on the crest of inflation until we arrived at Leisure World, and now the cash position lets the high interest rates carry the ball and we can continue to travel twice a year to foreign lands.

I was sent to Brazil as a consultant and there taught the Brazilian businessmen the basic business principles I had learned so thoroughly at Bullock's. These fundamentals of good merchandising, good store-keeping and good service are recognized by customers all over the world.

In 1953 I met Mr. Aaron Frank, who later invited me and my family to visit him in Portland, Oregon for a long week end. They wanted me to become their new Shoe Buyer. After due consideration, I wrote a letter of resignation to Bullock's and gave them a month's notice.

On October 5, 1942 our daughter was born. The drift toward war started in the summer of 1940. I was drafted into the Army just eight months after Denise was born.

I was 30 on that fateful day when it came over the radio: "The Japs have just bombed Pearl Harbor!" I had been taking Japanese at U.C.L.A. Extension, and had worked hard at night trying to write and speak the language. It was taught by a Korean and my friends thought I was crazy to take the time and effort to learn such a difficult language. An interesting article by the president of the Univ. of California, Dr. Robert Sproul, in a yellowed 37 year old copy of the "EXTENSION NEWS" under the topic "A People's War and a People's Future, or to fight a World War III."

One evening a major in the U.S. Army came to our Japanese class and explaining that the Army was very short of combat interpreters, and he

was making a survey of university students of this language. I was encouraged by my co-workers to choose the Navy because of their program. I took the examination. One day I received a letter from the War Department, saying that I was drafted.

I was sent first to Fort McArthur, and soon I was sent to Fort Warren in Cheyenne, Wyoming. One morning at Roll Call the sergeant called my name and read my orders that I was to proceed immediately to Ann Arbor Michigan where I was to join a Japanese Language Training Unit at the University of Michigan. It was a secret unit and called a Division for Emergency Training. Our instructors were top officers from Army Intelligence.

No one had ever heard of a man being transferred from the Army to the Navy. I received my discharge from the Army and after three weeks with my family, I returned as a Second Lieutenant in the Navy Supply Corps.

On August 2, 1945, I received orders from the Bureau of NAV/Pers in Washington to proceed to San Francisco and report to the Twelfth Naval District. From there I was ordered to Pearl Harbor for further orders and assignment. The Barracks where I stayed was only two blocks away from the dock that the U.S.S. Arizona was tied, when the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor on Dec. 6, 1941.

My overseas orders were to the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, a very hush-hush project, carrying the highest priority. I proceeded to Guam, then to various places in the Pacific Ocean area, including the Southwest Pacific and the Asian Mainland and in the United States.

In the spring of 1946, I was finally released from the Navy. Bettie and I found a little place in Temple City and I returned to Bullocks who gave all of their returning veterans a wonderful welcome. It was great to be back in the fashion business again, and Christian Dior showed his first collection of dresses. The papers were full of the "New Look" and women's clothes lost that "skimpy war time" look and the next few years from 1947 to 1949 proved to be very successful for me at Bullocks. I became the better shoe buyer and spent hours attending Millinery shows - "Hattie Carnegie, John Frederics, and Lilli Dache" indicating that matching gloves and handbags and shoes were required to match these accessories.

During the ten years we lived in Oregon, our daughter Denise, finished high school in Portland, and went on to the University of Oregon at Eugene. We had built two beautiful homes in Portland, and the last one was designed to be a show place, all in Oriental type design. It was here that we had a beautiful wedding for Denise.

I joined Rhodes Chain of Fashion Department Stores in 1963 and later became the 1st Vice President and General Merchandise Manager of 13 stores, doing \$70 million dollar business in seven western states. I negotiated a merger with Amfac of Hawaii and changed the name of our stores to "The Liberty House."

At the age of 60, I entered the Real Estate and Investment field. I went to work for Coldwell Bankers and later got my Real Estate Broker's license which I considered quite an accomplishment at my age. Later I became Vice President of Systec Financial Corporation which was the company that purchased large apartment house complexes and converted them to condominiums.

It was in 1972 that I accepted an exciting offer to go to Brazil as a volunteer executive for the International Executive Service Corps. The I.E.S.C. was created by President Johnson and David Rockefeller in 1964 as a business - and - government partnership run by business men. Its purpose: to help developing nations in achieving self-sustaining growth to become full partners in a world community.

It was a big honor for me to be chosen to travel all over Brazil with my wife. I was the retail consultant for the Ducal Company which had a large chain of department stores in Brazil. All of our expenses were paid and we lived in a grand style in Rio de Janeiro, and traveling to Brazilia, Bello Horizonte and to the seldom-visited Iguazu Falls in Paraguay, the largest Falls in the world.

We flew to Buenos Aires in the Argentine for a wonderful shopping trip. My assignment was to help the store executives install a central buying procedure that would fit their economy. I could not speak Portuguese, so I worked always through my own interpreter and traveling secretary. It was a successful and exciting experience and I was hired to return the following two years. I did not want to stay away from my home too long, so each trip was for three months only.

I have always been interested in Sports. I learned to ice skate in Canada, and when I went on to U.C.L.A. I won my Varsity "Big C" playing ice hockey against the big three: U.S.C., Loyola, and U.C. at Berkeley. And this was the first Ice Hockey Team on the new U.C.L.A. campus at Westwood. We played in the Sonja Henie Ice Rink which was build in the middle of Westwood Village in the early 1930's.

I was defensive guard on the U.C.L.A. team. During the years my daughter was in high school, I taught her to water ski, as we always had powerful boats that we could ski on the nearby lakes and rivers when we lived in Portland, Oregon.

During the six years that I worked at Meier and Frank Department Store in Portland, my daughter Denise, and I would ski at Mt. Hood almost every week end. My wife, Bettie, did not participate in active sports, but she was a good sport and always went with us to the mountains.

On a big ski holiday at the famous Ski Lodge at Sun Valley, I had a disastrous accident. I had considered myself an expert skier and while skiing at high speed, I fell, and my bindings did not release, so I twisted my leg completely around and broke my thigh in many places. I was in a body cast for over nine months. I never skied again, because for a time I did not know whether I would ever walk again.

I was very lucky though, as the four stainless steel pins I now have in my right thigh do not bother me. I love to play golf and try to play two or three times a week, struggling to hold my handicap below 20, and I enjoy the exercise.

Our last three homes have been on the edge of golf courses. Round Hill Country Club in northern California, Marrakesh Country Club in Palm Desert, and now on the fifth hole of the small Leisure World Gold Course.

At present I am Past-President of the Foreign Policy Association in Leisure World; and this year's President of the Kiwanis Club - Saddleback of Laguna Hills; a member of SCORE, and a participant in the Emeritus Institute. Recently, I was elected a Director of the Third Laguna Hills Mutual.

A deep concern of mine at this time is the Nuclear Weapons situation. I have spoken to groups about "THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE" and the dire results of even the beginnings of use of the powerful weapons now in the hands of our own country and of Russia. The possibilities are beyond description.

Thirty six years ago, I traveled to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I was one of the first men to stand on the spot called "GROUND ZERO". At the time I was a Naval Officer attached to the United States Strategic Bombing Survey. I led a survey party just 73 days after the Bomb was dropped, and the devastation was unbelievable.

When the Pope visited the Peace Memorial near Ground Zero on Feb. 25, 1981, he said: "To remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war. To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace."

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My hope is in the young people of the world, who have many years yet to live, and who believe that world peace is important; they represent the greatest single hope that we have!

We all have a duty to save our world and everything in it from senseless violence in a nuclear age. There must never be a Nuclear Holocaust!