

On the  
**SHOULDERS**  
of **GIANTS**

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE FIRM: 1946 - 2003

James A. Hamilton Associates

Hamilton/KSA

Healthcare Management Counselors

Hamilton HMC

Space Diagnostics

**KURT SALMON ASSOCIATES**

# **ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS**

## Recollections of the Firm: 1946-2003

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# Introduction

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The idea behind this collection was born out of the tribute book assembled in memory of James Hamilton upon his death in 1985. The original book consisted of stories - vignettes really -- contributed by colleagues, clients, and students, with many providing a fascinating glimpse into the history of the early formative days of the Firm and the personalities behind the work.

The purpose of this book is a bit different. It is not a tribute book *per se*. Nor is it a storybook about a random assortment of individuals. Rather, it is a deliberate collection of stories that builds upon the original submissions with new stories providing a flavor of developments since the 1980s. In the tradition of the first edition, these stories are told through the selected exploits of individuals, contributed by their colleagues and sometimes by themselves. After all, what is our Firm but the people who have been here over the years? The individuals profiled additionally in this edition include those who were “founders” of the practices constituting today’s Firm, as well as those who have retired over the past 20 years.

A few additional qualifying notes. First, all the stories included here have been left essentially “as submitted,” incorporating all of the grammatical quirks unique to the authors. The only exceptions have been the addition of a few (nondescript) titles when needed and a handful of edits to make occasionally nonsensical text at

least sensible. Additionally, those stories, both old and new, representing pure tributes to any one individual have not been included here at the sole discretion of the editor. Although surely a fine line of discrimination to judge, the intent of this collection is not to lionize or “thank” the individuals, but to provide a look into the history of the Firm through experiences with them. Finally, a few stories were submitted about current members of the Firm who are neither founders nor (at least not yet) retirees. These stories are for a future edition, to be passed on to the most likely future editor at the appropriate time.

We’d like to thank all those who contributed stories to this edition, and particularly John Sweetland, editor of the first volume and significant contributor to this one. Surely we all live for the future, but it is in the telling of what has gone before that we renew our great traditions and recall those memorable professionals, mentors, and oftentimes friends we’ve been privileged to call our *colleagues*.

M.W.  
Kurt Salmon Associates  
Atlanta, Georgia  
5 October 2003

# The One Page Overview: 1946-2003

by Mark Wietecha

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James A. Hamilton Associates was founded in 1946 by James A. One of the true pioneers, the Firm developed into a national leader by the mid-1960s. The Firm transitioned at that point to the next generation of leadership, led by Dave Damberg, John Sweetland, Jerry Bieter, Jim Stephan, and Doug Kincaid. Over the next 20 years the Firm continued to expand, transitioning yet again to another generation of colleagues including Bruce Miller, Chuck Killian, Bucky Knowles, and Dick Sawyer. By the mid-1980s the Firm began exploring the possibility of a major partnership.

Kurt Salmon Associates was founded by KS in 1935, and developed into a leading international consultancy over the subsequent decades. The 1970s saw the Firm with a small regional health care practice that essentially dissolved through departures over the subsequent decade. Barry Moore was brought in by then-President Dave Cole to lead the reestablishment of a health care practice in 1984, resulting in the original "HSD." Although the new practice grew with the addition of current-day Principal Mark Wietecha, a major partner was needed to accelerate growth and KSA merged with Hamilton Associates in 1986 to create Hamilton/KSA. Dave Ping had already been a member of the former Hamilton Associates, and a number of other current-day Principals subsequently joined the new Hamilton/KSA including Jim Berarducci, Craig

Acosta, Archie Aamoth, Scot Latimer, Charlie Cosovich, and Jeff Hoffman.

Hamilton/KSA expanded into IT in the mid-1990s, ~~determined a major partner was needed,~~ and initiated discussions with Healthcare Management Counselors (HMC). HMC was co-founded by Peter Weil in the early 1980s and grew steadily over the next 15 years, adding current-day Principals Elaine Remmlinger and Marilyn Wilson. HMC was nationally recognized in the field of information systems planning, but also determined a partner was needed and merged with Hamilton/KSA in 1997 to create Hamilton HMC.

Space Diagnostics was founded by Meredith Spear and Tom DeChant in the mid-1980s and developed into a national leader in facility planning over the subsequent 15 years. Both Space Diagnostics and Hamilton HMC recognized the potential in a merger to create the country's leading facility practice and combined forces in 2000 to create the current health care practice, once again branded as Kurt Salmon Associates.

The following chapters of stories mirror these epochs of the Firm's development in health care, providing glimpses into the individuals, clients, and considerations of the times.

SECTION 2  
**In the Beginning:  
James A. Hamilton  
Associates**  
1946-1986

# In the Beginning: James A. Hamilton Associates

by John Sweetland

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A combination of weak administrators and boards, the need to replace old facilities after WWII, and architects that were notoriously poor at estimating the cost of capital needed for projects, led to the creation of many consulting firms between 1945 and 1955. James A. Hamilton, who had been a professor at the Tuck Business School at Dartmouth then administrator of the Mary Hitchcock Hospital in New Hampshire followed by the Cleveland Metro Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio and finally the Yale New Haven Hospital in New Haven, Connecticut was asked by the Dean of the School of Public Health (a Dartmouth grad) to come to the University of Minnesota to start a program in Health Care Administration in the graduate school. The University, being a land grant university, did not have the kind of funds that it could budget for the course and because Mr. Hamilton was looking for a fairly large faculty, he decided to start the program in health care administration and the consulting firm at the same time in 1946.

The consulting firm was created so he could attract faculty where the consulting income plus small stipends from the University would make it attractive to get the kind of employees he was looking for. The combination was highly desirable because 30 potential customers were graduating each year. For the next three decades many others tried to copy what Mr. Hamilton had made into a tremendous success. Both the course and the Firm were quickly recognized at being at the top of the list of excellent courses and firms in the country, the intertwining of education and consulting was extremely strong while Mr. Hamilton was active. It waned slightly for the next 25 years and now appears to be of little consequence. I'm sure opinions regarding the severance of the two vary greatly.

During the first two decades of the firm's existence, very few consultants were hired who did not come from the program in health care administration. The Minnesota course spawned many more consultants who were to be found in firms all over the country than from any other courses. To show how far consulting had come since 1946, when Mr. Hamilton first started he would often be asked to visit a hospital. He would arrive early in the morning, tour the facility, ask some questions and then meet with the Board and administrator that night to tell them what the problems were and how to correct them and be gone in the morning.

The early consultants were assembled from all over the country. From 1946 to 1950 the prominent consultants were Hazen Dick (facility consultant), Hal Mickey (role and program and organizational consultant who later was CEO of Rochester Methodist Hospital), Jim Stephan, Doug Kincaid, Fred McNamara (from the State Department in Washington), and Madelyn Sturtevant, who was a researcher and also supervised James A.'s library. She did extensive research at Rochester Methodist Hospital of the patient satisfaction and merits of circular nursing units versus the more traditional rectangular designs.

Dorothy Heyman and Russ Nye (the then CEO of Northwestern Hospital) were others in the organization at that time. By 1950, three or four classes had been graduated from the course, and from 1950 to 1960 Mr. Hamilton used the firm to give graduates a place to work while they were between jobs or for those wanting to try consulting. It was also during that time that he had a couple of graduates writing cases for the casebook he used in the course in problem solving. They also worked on his book on organization and management of hospitals.

Bright Dornblaser, who later became the director of the course, and David Youngdahl, a consultant, were primarily working on the manuscripts.

Others with the firm at that time were Orin Govier, Telmer Peterson, Bob Michaels, and Art Hennings, and all came to the firm during that period of time. It was also during the 1950s that Jerry Bieter, who later became the second president of the firm after Mr. Hamilton's retirement, came to the Firm.

Between 1946 and the mid-1960s the Firm's offices were located in University space. When I came to the firm the offices were in the basement of Centennial Hall, a University dormitory. Most of the consultants of the firm in the 1960s could be characterized as mostly mid-westerners, avid sports enthusiasts, and most were golfers. The group was very hard working, loyal, solid professionals who enjoyed their profession and work. We were a family.

When Mr. Hamilton retired and control of the firm was taken over by Jim Stephan, Doug Kincaid, Jerry Bieter, David Damberg and me, it was the start of a major shift in culture of the firm. No longer was the firm headed by a very dominant individual with a national reputation, but by five individuals whose egos didn't make it important to always be in the limelight. The firm prospered and five additional owners were added in the 1970s and early 80s and new owners were brought in as equal partners.

This led to a couple of more decades of success while other firms dominated by one individual treaded water, shrunk in size or disappeared completely because the dominant leader could not easily give up control. They all appeared to have huge egos and had a very great dislike for one another. Soon after joining the firm in 1959, I attended the annual meeting of the Consultants Association with Mr. Hamilton. I vividly remember a luncheon with all the firms' leaders at which the topic of "How's business?" was discussed at great length. The conversation ended with each person writing the total year's revenue for their firm for the past year on a slip

of paper and putting it a hat. I can't conceive any of them didn't inflate the true numbers significantly, but then the hat was emptied and the numbers read and supposedly you got an idea of where you were. The main effort was to guess which firm had put in which number. This procedure was followed very religiously for a number of years.

The early work was role and program studies (now called strategic plans) and community studies for large metro areas (Cleveland, Detroit, Minneapolis, and many more) to evaluate which hospital should add beds if a hospital should close and where a new hospital should be located. This evolved to include master plans, organizational studies and building consultation.

Timeframes were longer, and where you now must complete work on a project in 30-60 days, the corporate windows are only open for a short period of time, we had 6 months to a year to get work done and that was the norm. A master plan today is considered obsolete in no more than 5 years while in the late 50s we were doing master plans for a period of 25 years. There was always a concern regarding the capital cost of building projects, but little or no concern regarding the operating cost of the facility was present in the planning. This was because operating costs, no matter how huge were a direct pass through with the structure of reimbursement at that time. That of course has completely changed.

Doctors were not competing aggressively for the outpatient diagnostic work in those years. The major focus in building planning was on the beds, not on the D&T services. Architects had their own configurations and we, as a firm, had ours. Ellerbe was primarily doing circles, Herman Smith and most of those outfits were doing racetracks, and I think that Hamilton Associates preferred a T rather than the other configurations. The beds were mostly in 2-bed rooms or 4-bed wards, and Hamilton Associates was one of the first consulting firms to embrace the concept of all private room hospitals.

Organizational studies were also done, but the reason for them was primarily that the Board's objective was to have someone else suggest that an administrator be fired. The organizational management studies were eliminated by 1965 because the firm was getting the reputation of "beware - hire Hamilton Associates and be fired."

The competition amongst hospitals became stronger and this led to the demise of community studies. They did not want to all be looked at together. Master plans, strategic plans, facility consultation have all endured the test of time. The specialty consultant was not to be found in

the 40s, 50s, and 60s as most of the firms were made up of generalists.

One thing that has definitely not changed is that quality work is still the main determinant as to who gets hired for a project. Recently it appears that the larger studies, which were done by large firms, most of them from the accounting field, have been losing favor and that the firm that was able to do quality work, come up with sound judgments, and therefore solve problems became the firm that was succeeding. I think that in the future this will certainly continue.



## James Alexander Hamilton

### *The Minnesota Connection, University of Minnesota, Fall 1985*

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Jim Hamilton was educated at Dartmouth College and taught in the graduate school of business there from 1923-1936, during which time he was also the superintendent of Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital. He went on to be superintendent of Cleveland City Hospital from 1936-1938 and director of New Haven Hospital, Connecticut, from 1938-1946, holding the position of professor of hospital administration at Yale University. His service as consultant to the War Productions Board and the Budget Bureau during World War II began a series of relationships with the U.S. government including the State Department, the U.S. Army, and the World Health Organization.

Convinced of the importance of professional organizations, Hamilton worked actively as a member of many regional, national, and international associations. He served as president of the New England Hospital Assembly in 1930, the American College of Hospital Administrators in 1939, and the American Hospital Association in 1942. He received the AHA's Award of Merit in 1948.

In 1946 Hamilton was asked by the University of Minnesota to establish a graduate course in hospital administration. He built the curriculum, attracted the faculty, and created the Program's niche within the University. He wrote an important textbook, *Decision Making in Hospital Administration and Medical Care*.

As a professor he found fascination in the areas of problem-solving and decision-making. Rather than tell students about them, he would lead them through these processes, all 14 steps! He relished the Socratic dialogue, luring students to

probe into ideas rather than simply take notes. Although he often left them shaking and sweating in the classroom, behind his confrontational method lay his deep commitment to each student's outcome in the field. Dr. Robert Howard, former dean of the medical school at Minnesota, once identified the Hamilton Effect: he could take a student who had only vague ideas of what he was doing and produce a graduate who "knew where he was going and had some ideas for how to get there ... It is not just administration . . . not just teaching . . . but witchcraft."

Students were given opportunities to work closely with practicing administrators who acted as preceptors and clinical faculty. His own consulting firm, James A. Hamilton Associates, gave significant support in this way. He encouraged the building of the Alumni Association to provide a network of collegial support and ongoing mentorship between students and practitioners.

At the time of his retirement from the University in 1966, Hamilton was lauded as the "organizer, the director, and the genius of the Program" by Dr. Gaylord Anderson, dean of the School of Public Health, and as "the dean of all hospital administrators" by his friend and associate, James W. Stephan. In his very active retirement years Hamilton continued to teach and advise students and alumni. A pilgrimage to Duxbury was often an important step before a major career decision.

James A. Hamilton passed on in September of 1985, and in the words of Dave Damberg, everyone had lost "a piece of the rock."

# In the Early Years

by Fred A. McNamara

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In 1939 I enrolled in the first seminar in Hospital Administration conducted by Mr. Malcolm McEaheran in Chicago under the auspices of the University of Chicago. At that time I was employed by the Veterans Administration making management surveys of VA hospitals.

During the first several days of classes, I was shunned by most of the other students, all of whom were voluntary non-profit hospital administrators. They tried to make it clear to me that a federal hospital person was not welcome in the seminar. I felt completely ostracized and decided to withdraw from the program.

Fortunately for me, one afternoon after class one of the students came over to me, stuck out his

hand and said, "My name is Jim Hamilton - meet my friend Oliver Pratt - we would like to have you join us for dinner tonight." I gratefully accepted their invitation, and we had a delightful evening together. They made me feel most welcome, and I spent every evening thereafter with them.

Eventually most of the other students welcomed me, and several of them joined Jim, Oliver and me in our evening gatherings.

This encounter was the beginning of a wonderfully close and intimate friendship with Jim Hamilton. I found over the years of our association that Jim always had a deep consideration for the welfare of other people.

## On the Job With James A. Hamilton Associates

by Dave Damberg

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Probably my favorite story about Mr. Hamilton relates to the time in 1965 that I walked into his office and told him that all of my files on my 8x10 office in the basement of Centennial Hall at 425 Harvard Street were filled. I had ongoing project papers to file, and I therefore went to our storeroom to see if I could transfer some of my files to the Hamilton storeroom. The storeroom measured approximately 50x12 or 600 square feet. I told Mr. Hamilton that upon looking at the storeroom, it was absolutely jamb-packed full of everything including, in my humble opinion, a lot of junk. I suggested to him that on some Saturday morning all of the consultants assemble at 425 Harvard Street, I would bring my pickup truck, and we would have a session of cleaning out the storeroom and disposing of non-essential reports, project papers, etc. In this way we might create space in the storeroom for the consultant staff to use to place working papers or dead files from projects that they did not want to throw away.

After proposing this to Mr. Hamilton, he immediately ripped me up and tore me down and spent 15 to 20 minutes telling me why that was an absolutely ridiculous, nonsensical idea. His major thesis was that he was not going to come in on Saturday and, therefore, there would be no one to make a decision as to what to throw away. Hamilton's bottom line to me was that if I went through my four 5-drawer file cabinets and carefully reviewed the contents, that I probably had 50% nonessential contents. Therefore, if I threw them away in the wastebasket, I would have filing space for many months to come.

A postscript to this story: Jim, Doug, Jerry, John and I bought Mr. Hamilton's business on July 14, 1966. Several weeks later, when Mr. Hamilton had departed and was detached from the Hamilton Associates business, I did, in fact, bring my pickup truck to 425 Harvard Street and did, in fact, clean the storeroom and brought two pickup trucks full of materials to be discarded to the University of Minnesota incinerator.

## On the Job With James A. Hamilton Associates

by A. Douglas Kincaid, Jr.

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On one occasion - while working with Fort Worth Children's Hospital - Jim, Hal Mickey and I met one evening with a group of pediatricians to sell them on a plan of building a new children's hospital next to Harris Hospital to maximize joint endeavor and to minimize costs.

All of us who have worked with physicians know how obstreperous they can be at times, especially when they don't agree with you.

It was a long meeting and Jim had handled difficult questions in his usual masterful way. During the session one doctor had asked several

dumb and pointless questions, much to the discomfiture of his colleagues. Jim answered him patiently. As the meeting was ending, he asked his only intelligent question, "Where had any children's hospitals been built next to a large general hospital, as we were proposing?" Jim simply looked at him and replied, "I am not even going to bother answering that."

As soon as we were outside, he turned to Hal and me and said, "For God's sake, find out where they have done this before. We may need it."

# On the Job With James A. Hamilton Associates

by John Sweetland

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One of my first consulting efforts was in a hospital on the East Coast where I was doing a master plan. James A. used to review the reports and, in this particular instance, decided that he ought to go with me to the presentation. I had worked on this project for about six months and could tell you everything you wanted to know about that hospital down to the most minute detail. I had developed the list of issues and had come up with alternative solutions (and finally the best solution) and was absolutely sure that there was no way that anyone could question the report.

Typical of James A., he would tend to procrastinate. Normally it wasn't until you got on the plane that he started asking questions about the project. As we flew out to the East Coast, however, I wasn't able to interest him to ask any questions as he was preoccupied with some other activity. I started to worry because he also had said that he would present it - to show me how it was done. I kept asking him if he wouldn't like me to go over it with him. He said no, he would wake up early tomorrow and if we had breakfast at 6:00, he would ask all the questions he needed

and he would be ready. Six o'clock came, we had breakfast, I had awakened at 3:00 am to anticipate his questions. I had my briefcase filled with every piece of paper, every work paper, and the report itself. When we got to breakfast, he said, "I would like to ask you three questions. The first one is, what is the correct name of this hospital? The second questions is, tell me who are the powerful people on the board, and thirdly, I would like to know in two sentences what the two main problems are with the facilities." I responded to all three questions within 30 seconds, and he asked me no further questions. I could see a bomb about to fall.

About two hours later, we arrived at the hospital for an 8:00 meeting. He presented the report (which took him one hour) and all he talked about were those two main problems. He so developed them, however, that to be against what he was saying would be against motherhood. All the details I had put together were never used. The audience cheered, put him on their shoulders, and carried him out of the room an absolute hero. This was my first hands-on "the forest for the trees" lesson.

# On the Job With James A. Hamilton Associates

by Jerome T. Bieter

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No other executive, teacher, or consultant was quite like James A. - so dominating, so engaging, so mentally quick. To watch him in action was to watch the ultimate health care professional.

I discovered this quickly after joining the firm in 1956. The client was Michael Reese Medical Center, Chicago. The setting was our introductory meeting with the Board of Trustees to start a planning and development study. Doug Kincaid and I were quiet as James A. outlined his own education and experience background, our backgrounds and then went into the working relationship he wanted with this high powered group representing an eminent Jewish hospital: "I know you're all highly successful in business or professions. I, too, am highly successful, and health care is my field. I've worked for a number of Jewish boards, and found them argumentative. This won't be true here with you. I'm in charge of this project, and you'll agree with the recommendations I present. Period." The room became very quiet and remained so.

Yet, James A. could be as engaging as he was overpowering. A case in point was the seminars on hospital administration he conducted in Manila for the World Health Organization in

1961. At a banquet attended by the Secretary of Health and other government notables, James A. extended greetings and best wishes in the native Philippine language - Tagalog. The audience roared its approval, and the Secretary subsequently noted that no representative of the United States has made a bigger impact on us than has James Hamilton.

Among the legion of stories of James A.'s mental agility is one in a report presentation setting in El Paso, Texas in the 1950s. In highlighting the study recommendations, he noted serious questions about one of them so as to introduce an alternative. This prompted a doctor in the audience to rise and ask why a paid consultant couldn't be absolutely definite about his recommendations. "What's your specialty, doctor?" asked James A. "I'm an internist," the doctor replied. "I'll be specific with my recommendation if you can describe for me a cure for the common cold." This answer ended the dialogue.

Working for James A. had its problems. But problems are long forgotten while the benefits linger on.

## David Damberg

by John Sweetland

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Dave was one of the five partners to take over the firm from Mr. Hamilton in the late 1960s. He was as unique as Mr. Hamilton but in different ways. An optimist, an innovator, and probably the most knowledgeable of the firm's building consultants, he was just as comfortable in the outdoors with a pack on his back, a canoe on his shoulders with both hands full portaging in Canada as he was in the board room. For every 10 wild schemes he thought up, there was always one or two that had some merit. Dave came to work at the firm three months after I did, and one of our first projects was to review the space for every hospital in Cuyahoga County (Cleveland Ohio). Jim Stephan had a membership in the racquetball club on Euclid Ave in Cleveland and he arranged for David and I to stay there in the attic. It was summer time and we soon got into a routine of visiting a hospital each day, collecting the plans and then tacking them up on the ceiling and at

that point we would take off and play handball, racquetball or tennis for an hour or two which was then followed by a shower and dinner. Cleveland had an Italian section with four or five very good restaurants and a few excellent Chinese restaurants in another area. We were both hefty eaters and we soon had settled on the best of both. In the Italian restaurant the chef would make us anything we wanted. Those meals usually had five courses to them, and we would always eat every scrap. In the Chinese restaurant we would order dinner for four. After the waiter gave up on telling us we were only two people and there would be way too much food, we convinced him that we wanted the meal for four and the two of us once again would eat everything. Consulting certainly had its wonderful side, and going out on a job with David was always an experience.

# Driving Mr. Hamilton

by David H. Hitt

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One of my duties as his resident was to drive Mr. Hamilton to the airport. We always left late because of last minute interruptions. Since the freeways had not been built, we had to use streets congested with cars, trucks, and streetcars. If the traffic was slow, he would instruct me to use side streets and then be equally unhappy about the outcome. If I drove the speed limit, he would remind me of the plan schedule and press me to drive faster (which suited me at that time) but would then be very critical of the risks. Probably the low point of the year for both of us, was the day I passed a streetcar on the left side. The unhappiness

usually would dissolve when we got to the airport in time to make the plane, and occasionally he even offered a semi-apology.

Another feature was that during even the most hectic drive to the airport, he would list matters he wanted me to handle for him, usually things he had not had time to do or had forgotten before he left. Trying to remember and understand up to six items while receiving his "driving lessons" was a severe test for me, and I did not always pass it. The consequences of failure were memorable.



# Jim Stephan

by John Sweetland

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Jim Stephan and Doug Kincaid were two of the original group who bought the firm from James A. in the late 1960s. They had joined the firm in the period of 1946 to 1948. Jim had a personnel department background with hospitals in Ohio, while Doug came from the Duke Endowment. Jim was principally to teach in the course, but later became one of the lead facility consultants for the firm. Jim was also the first president after Mr. Hamilton's retirement.

Unfortunately, Jim was plagued by bad luck. We often received phone calls in the office that Jim was snowed in, delayed by mechanical problems or his plane was fogged in elsewhere in the country. He was like Joe Btfsplk, the character in the comic strip Lil Abner that always had a dark cloud over his head. There were two investments he made that followed the same pattern. He bought a piece of a huge commercial houseboat on a lake in northern Canada. Unfortunately the

Canadian Corps of Engineers opened up a dam and drained the lake, leaving the houseboat high and dry in the mud.

The same people who thought of the houseboat in Canada also came up with the idea of bringing lobsters back from Tasmania. Tasmania has live fresh water lobsters and the plan was to bring back 12 of them to the US and start a lobster farm. Tasmania let them bring the lobsters out, and a pond was developed in Arkansas where the climatic conditions were as close to Tasmania as possible. Jim, along with many prominent Minneapolis businessmen, waited the news of the first crop of babies. I should add at this point that no one knew if they had males, females or a combination of both. Jim's bad luck reared its head again as a crop duster sprayed the pond and killed all the lobsters. Tasmania no longer would allow lobsters to be taken out of the country, so this was one more rainy day in Jim's life.

# Adventures in Sales: Following Mr. Hamilton

by Dick Sawyer

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Methodist Hospital of Indianapolis, the premier hospital in all of Indiana, put out a proposal for a master plan project. We made a pre-proposal visit and seemed to hit it off well with the VP leading the selection process. My recollection is that we had a team of two or three at the interview.

The interview started well, and we thought we were making good progress. After it had started, Jack Hahn, the almost-retired CEO who had been a person of some stature in the field, came in and sat in a chair along the edge of the conference room. He didn't participate in the questions or discussion. We finished with the feeling that we had done well and should have a good chance at the project. A few days later we got word

Herman Smith Associates was their choice.

Later I mentioned the experience to Fred McNamara. He laughed, and said I should have asked him first before going there at all. This was the story. Jim Hamilton had done a study for Methodist, long enough before that everyone had forgotten about it. Fred worked on the project and Hamilton invited him there for the final report to their board. Hamilton made some recommendations that Hahn didn't agree with, and he spoke up about them. The discussion got so heated that Hamilton asked the chairman of the board to excuse Hahn from the meeting so he could finish the report. Evidently Mr. Hahn subscribed to the "don't get mad, get even" course of action.

## Doug Kincaid

*by John Sweetland*

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Doug Kincaid was a southerner with all the polish and charm of a true southern gentleman. He did role and program studies and previously had done all of the large community surveys. His reports were quite thick, but what was most impressive was that he dictated every word including the punctuation. The reports were usually so perfect they did not need to be edited. When we went on a job with Doug, the younger

consultants always had fun with him because he wanted to drive. He was such a gentleman that he had trouble coming right out and saying he wanted to drive. We would order the rental car in our name and after seeing Doug squirm for a while, would let him drive. After that the days on the job were very enjoyable because Doug was happy as a clam.

# Visits to Duxbury

by Dave Damberg

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During the summer of 1960, I was the low man on the roster of Hamilton Associates in terms of seniority. It was, therefore, my duty to mow Mr. Hamilton's grass while he spent the summer at Duxbury. This being Ellen's and my first year in Minnesota following my residency, we lived in a duplex on 50th and Penn Avenue in Minneapolis, not too far from Mr. Hamilton's residence. We did not have a shower in our duplex. Mr. Hamilton had several nice showers, and it became my practice during the summer not only after mowing the grass, but several times weekly to take a shower at Mr. Hamilton's house because I had the keys and no one was there.

During the course of the summer activities in mowing Mr. Hamilton's grass, I happened to look into his refrigerator in the basement which contained approximately two to three cases of San Miguel Philippine beer. This appealed to me, and during the course of the summer, between the lawn mowing sessions and my showers, I drank all of the beer in Mr. Hamilton's refrigerator.

Around Labor Day, when I anticipated that Mr. Hamilton would soon be coming back to Minneapolis, I went down to Haskell's liquor store in downtown Minneapolis and contacted a man by the name of Morrie who was Mr.

Hamilton's personal representative at Haskell's, and I told Morrie that I wanted to order three cases of San Miguel beer. Morrie promptly informed me that Haskell's had changed distributors of San Miguel beer and was not able to obtain any at that time. Utilizing my conceptual skills learned in the program, fostered by Mr. Hamilton during employment, I immediately told Morrie that there was a major problem. I explained to him that during the course of the summer, in Mr. Hamilton's absence, I had drunk three cases of San Miguel beer and he had to find me three cases to replace them or probably I would not have a job after Mr. Hamilton returned. Morrie, possessing great conceptual skills in the liquor industry, immediately understood my problem and said he would do everything possible to find three cases of San Miguel beer.

Several days prior to Mr. Hamilton's return for the start of the 1960-61 academic year, Morrie called me and told me he was getting three cases of San Miguel beer on a special parcel shipment from Chicago that would arrive on X date. I picked up the beer late in the afternoon on X date, took it over to Mr. Hamilton's house, stocked the refrigerator, and two days later Mr. Hamilton returned to Minnesota.

## Lunchtime at James A. Hamilton Associates

by Bruce J. Miller

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As a student in 1965 at the program in Hospital Administration at the University of Minnesota, we would frequently see James A. Hamilton and selected associates walking to the campus club for lunch. Later I learned that at these lunches James A. would often select a current project and staff to challenge and debate issues/direction such that the noon meal was much less enjoyable for some. Fortunately, that “custom” retired in

1967 with James A. and lunch became a great time to compare project issues and “know your peers.”

However, some things never change. Roughly 20 years later in the Minneapolis office, the lunch crowd usually convenes around 11:30 a.m., few really knowing why that is lunchtime versus 12:00 noon.

# Jack Dumas

by John Sweetland

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Jack had been administrator of Hennepin County Hospital and was very much involved in the Minnesota political arena. Jack was a strategic consultant and an avid sports enthusiast. When in the course he was always organizing one athletic event after another. Jack's account of a meeting with James A. to convince him that the firm should buy the student basketball team uniforms was always fun to listen to. But as Jack explained it, after meeting with James A. who listened to him intently, he then told Jack to write a dissertation on why that was such a lousy idea and that it didn't make any sense for James A. to buy those uniforms and to bring it back to him tomorrow and they would see where they would go from there. The next day Jack brought in his list of why it didn't make sense but he also added

to his list why he thought it was a good idea. At that point Hamilton soundly rejected the idea and told Jack he could better spend his time preparing his course work than trying to get uniforms for the students. A few weeks later James A. went to watch the basketball team, made up of his students, and after the game commented to Jack that they would look a lot better if they had matching uniforms. Jack got his uniforms paid for.

Jack invariably would just barely make a plane, arriving just as the plane door was being closed. He left the firm after a few years and unfortunately he made a flight in California that crashed in mid air with another plane.

# Recollections of Ancient History

by Dick Sawyer

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Before joining James A. Hamilton Associates in 1975, I had worked for Tony Rourke for six years and had occasional contact with Hamilton senior staff at AAHC meetings. Tony wouldn't let us join, but he would let us go sometimes. After Tony died and his son John took over, I left to form my own firm. The following summer (1974) at the ACHE sessions preceding the AHA, I ran into Jim Stephan and his son Jim, and Jerry Bieter. While with Tony, I had worked with the son at the Lake County system east of Cleveland, but had not seen him since the previous November, and I knew the elder Stephan from contacts over the years. We had some brief pleasantries, and went on our way.

Janet and our children were vacationing in New Hampshire with my parents and Aunt Ruth while I was in Chicago. As I recall, I returned to New Hampshire Wednesday afternoon to find a message from Jerry Bieter, who wanted me to call him back. When he first called, after having gotten the number from my office in Greenwich, my aunt answered the phone. Jerry asked for Dick Sawyer, and she said there was no one there by that name and hung up. Fortunately, Janet realized from the conversation what had happened - no one in my family used that nickname and Janet only used it for purposes related to my work, as I did - and managed to intercept the call and take the message. When I got back to Jerry the following day, he asked whether I would be interested in joining forces with them. That was how our 20-year association started. I was the first non-Minnesota graduate since Jim Stephan to be a long-term principal, but not the last one.

I started traveling to Minneapolis one Saturday a month for meetings of our owner/board members. There were two retirements in 1975,

Stephan and Doug Kincaid, and four new members: Bruce Miller, Bob Larson, Chuck Killian and me. I kept the office in Greenwich, in part because we believed local service was better and in part because my hospital management acquaintances were mostly working in the east. We had three consultants and a secretary.

The only time I ever met Jim Hamilton in person was at the AAHC gathering in Atlanta, probably in 1977, at a gathering of the firm's principals and some of their wives. His reaction to my presence was "Why do you want a branch office?" About that time, business took a little dip and Minneapolis was going to reduce its staff by two junior consultants. It would only be fair for Greenwich to let go one of our three, which in proportional terms was a lot more impact. Then in February, I got snowed in Philadelphia and there was no air or train service from the city starting Friday morning until late on Saturday, so I missed the regular monthly meeting. Within a few days Jerry Bieter called to say the group had voted to close the Greenwich office and wanted me to move to Minneapolis that summer. My remaining consultant, Don Flynn, was not included in the offer. I convinced the group they should wait another year, since we would have two children making school transitions, one out of high school and one into it. Don found other work that fall and I spent the last few months in the office myself.

Later I asked several of the group to enlighten me on the reasons for the decision, but no one did. I suspect it had something to do with career objectives of other principals, though that has not been confirmed. All's well that ends well, as the expression goes, and with the merger into KSA and the changes that followed, I am satisfied with the results.

# The Mop

by Bruce J. Miller

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In the early 70s Hamilton Associates had five partners and approximately seven to ten associates. About once a month on a Friday at 3:00 p.m. the associates would gather together and go to the local watering hole. We would proceed to walk out past the observant partners who were still working. At the local watering hole the business meeting would convene and

include Liar's Poker. The person in the group who had had something unique occur since the last meeting received a traveling award, which was a mop (the old-fashioned kind, yellow-handled). The mop would be placed in the office of the latest recipient until the next associate's "meeting."



# Interviewing for Graduate School

by Jeffrey J. Frommelt

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Like most of the early graduates of the University of Minnesota, I have a number of stories to tell about Jim Hamilton. However, I don't have the nerve to write most of them down because I fear that Jim will catch me some day at a meeting and ask me, "What do you mean?"

My first encounter with Jim Hamilton was before my acceptance into graduate school. During Christmas break of my senior year in undergraduate school, I was busy filling out applications to graduate programs in hospital administration. Hours were spent filling out questionnaires and writing papers on why I wanted to enter the field.

During this process, I learned that the director of the program at the University of Minnesota lived less than a block from my home in Minneapolis. Eager to improve my chances for acceptance, I put on my Sunday best and trudged up the street to a house which I never saw anyone enter during the 10 years I lived in the neighborhood.

Although in my youthful zeal I failed to make an appointment or call ahead, I was greeted

graciously at the door and ushered into a room to meet with James A. Hamilton. I shared with him my application and asked if he had any hints or help to give me. This was my first encounter with the challenges and questions that Jim Hamilton could ask so well. "Why?" "What do you mean?" "I don't understand!" The knives went up one side and down the other. Once he started, he would not let me leave. I felt shattered and totally out of control.

Bloodied, I returned to my home and began to reexamine the application forms for Michigan and Northwestern. I knew whatever chance I had to get into Minnesota was probably gone based on how I handled myself during that visit. But then I got mad. I started all over again to rewrite my application to the University of Minnesota.

This was the first but not the last time Jim Hamilton used his "teaching style" to reduce me to a semi-functioning human being. It wasn't till quite later I realized each time he did it, I questioned what I was doing, learned and tried a lot harder.

# In the Classroom

by Scott Parker

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After about three weeks into the problem-solving course, my number came up and Jim Hamilton called on me to give my solution to the case problem. As expected, he found very little that he liked in my recommendation, and he liked even less my weak defense of his critique. When he had finally backed me into an intellectual corner and pressed his final argument, all I could think of to do was give up with a smile. I was void of logic or defense, and I just shook my head with a smile when he pressed me for more.

His response to my “white flag” and smile was as

follows: “What I expect from you is some solid thinking, not a big smile. That smile might have served you well when you were a Mormon missionary and you could fall back on charm any time you wanted, but that won't work in this classroom so come on - let's get on with it.”

What followed as another painful hour of “one-on-one” with Jim Hamilton, the professor, and a lesson learned from him that has been remembered for a lifetime. There is nothing wrong with a smile and a little charm, but it is never a substitute for solid preparation.

## In the Classroom

by Gordon M. Sprenger

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My most memorable story is how the first day I came to class in my best Pat Boone sweater and white bucks - no one telling me to wear coat and tie. Dorothy, the secretary had given all her husband's ties out to the foreign students, so

there I was in the front row. He glared at me and began his opening lecture on how from this time forward we would look and act like hospital administrators. That demanded a new wardrobe.

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# Problem-Solving in 14 Easy Steps

by Bruce J. Miller

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James A. Hamilton developed a 14-step approach to problem-solving that was drilled into all Minnesota Hospital Administration graduates. In 1986, David Damberg elected to start his own firm, Damberg Ltd., versus joining KSA. The following is a summary of the 14 steps, including his note that he provided me several years later.

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THE 14 STEPS FOR PROBLEM DEFINITION AND PROBLEM SOLVING BASED UPON  
JAMES A. HAMILTON'S ORIGINAL INPUT AND PRACTICED BY HAMILTON  
ASSOCIATES, HAMILTON/KSA, AND DAMBERG LTD.

1. Define the problem by apprehending the real issues of the situation and stating the problem precisely.
2. Budget the time as well as the effort available and necessary to arrive at an acceptable solution.
3. List the areas necessary for consideration to determine the best solution.
4. Limit the elements to be measured and the best means of measurement.
5. Plan, make contact, collect and classify data.
6. Make comparisons with others, with existing standards, or with past experience.
7. Interpret results of comparison by seeking the real reasons for variance.
8. Develop temporary conclusions.
9. Consider various solutions, choose the best, not the first acceptable.
10. Take a fresh look at an approach to the problem and the selected solution.
11. Develop a plan of accomplishment for the solution.
12. Determine recommendations which invite action.
13. Prepare and present a report to those who make the final decision.
14. Implement the action to carry out the selected solution.

NOTE: It would be naive and foolhardy to suggest that anyone of these 14 steps is more important than the other 13. Nonetheless, because the problem definition step is the first one and all subsequent steps are based on it, special emphasis must be given to the crucial nature of proper problem definition.

## Career Advice

by William Kreykes

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In the spring of 1977, having coped with Hennepin County politicians for 11 years, I suddenly found myself with two new excellent career opportunities. Needing all the advice and counsel that I could get and being scheduled on a business trip to Boston, I called upon James A. to seek his counsel.

James A. kindly invited me to his home in Duxbury for a Saturday afternoon visit. I was as nervous as a young lad applying for his first job. I was scheduled to meet with him at 1:30 pm, but found myself pulling into his driveway by 1:00, nattily attired in slacks, sport shirt and sports coat.

I found the old man in work clothes in the backyard cleaning brush. I immediately offered to help but he replied, "Ridiculous, you're not dressed for it. Go up to the house, get a lawn

chair and come back and let's talk."

I followed his directions and found a chair next to the house. I brought it back and positioned it in a shady spot so we could carry on a conversation while he finished his task. At least, that is what I expected to happen. It wasn't long before James A. was sitting in the lawn chair, holding my sport coat and I was working. It was a remarkable transition, but one that I thoroughly enjoyed.

The afternoon with James A. was a delight. I had the pleasure of fixing his lunch while he showered and the rare opportunity of being with him for several hours all by myself. I believe I got to know him better that afternoon than I had in the previous 13 years that I had known him. We had fun and I also left Duxbury that day knowing I was much wiser than was the case when I arrived.

## Visits to Duxbury

by Dave Damberg

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When I was on my residency at Rhode Island Hospital, I visited Mr. Hamilton several times in Duxbury, the first to deliver a station wagon full of manuscripts in cardboard boxes that were the genesis of the Hamilton Casebook. That particular summer, Ruth Ingram spent time at Duxbury with Mr. Hamilton to work on the manuscripts and compile the casebook. After cordial conversation with Mrs. Hamilton, I immediately got a dressing down because I was late in delivering the boxes (which I had transported from Minnesota) and the fact that

some of the boxes had water stains on them. I indicated to Mr. Hamilton that because I slept in my station wagon during the trip from Minneapolis to Providence, I had to take the boxes out of the station wagon and place them beside the station wagon at night in order that I might sleep. One night it rained, not hard but enough to stain some of the manuscripts and the boxes. He couldn't understand why I didn't sleep in a motel and leave the boxes in the station wagon. I told him it was very simple; I didn't have any money.

## Adventures in Sales with Dick Sawyer

by Dick Sawyer

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At the interview for the project at Alta Bates-Herrick Hospital in Berkeley, CA (run at the time by Al Greene, who I worked for also in Detroit and Milwaukee), one of the hospital staff asked how many times I had presented conclusions and recommendations to a local government body run by communists (which at that time the

Berkeley City Council was). I said I had never done so, but would be perfectly happy to do so if needed.

Whatever the question really meant, we did get the project and some subsequent design consultation.

## Attention to Details: Bob Larson

by Bruce J. Miller

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In 1969 Hamilton Associates' partners who recently bought out the retiring James A. Hamilton decided to expand and added six to seven associates, more recently minted graduates of the "Program" - the Minnesota Masters in Hospital Administration. One of the exceptions was C. Robert "Bob" Larson, an experienced hospital equipment salesperson assigned to the building consultation group. In working with Bob Larson on projects he would get to know the names and titles of a variety of key people as well as secretaries. Little did one know back at the office he would keep these "details" on file and would be reviewing them while on a plane or car

trip to a client site. When walking into the administrative office he would stop by and say hello, addressing each person with a big smile and handshake. I cannot recall how many times he stopped people in the halls, etc., again, addressing each by name. Later in the project these informal recognitions proved to be invaluable in having brief side-bar discussions on key issues without setting up formal meeting times. Clearly, these helped build long-term client relationships for Bob and the firm and this recently minted MHA product tried to follow his example.



## Ken Kelly

by John Sweetland

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Ken came to the firm by way of the FBI and the course. The firm at that time (60s) also had a long-time friend of James A. as a consultant, Fred McNamara. Fred lived in Washington and had worked for the State Dept where he and James A. had met. Fred had done all kinds of consulting as did Ken. They were assigned to work together on a job in Nebraska (the two had not worked together before), and the first night of the job they decided to go to a famous steak house. When they got there, there was a long line

waiting to get in. Ken told Fred to stay in line and wait there. He came back about 10 minutes later and told Fred to follow him and to just play along with whatever was said. Whereupon they went around to the back door and into the kitchen. They were greeted by the owner, and Ken proceeded to introduce Senator McNamara from Washington to the owner. The two were shown all around the kitchen and then brought to a very nice table where they had a great meal on the house.

# Meet with the Troops: Dave Damberg

by Bruce J. Miller

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Hamilton Associates meetings of partners and associates (consultants) occurred, at best, once a year, but they were always informative and produced some serious headaches for several.

The meeting sites rotated from office settings to hotels and athletic clubs in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Following the meetings, the tradition of cocktail hour started and were well attended by partners and associates alike, but quickly trickled

down to one partner, David Damberg, staying alone with the seven or so younger tougher associates. These discussions were intense, issues were wide-ranging and time-passing, but Damberg hung in there, listening and raising his glass of cheer with all, never backing down on any topic. It was a great forum for discussing issues of the firm, except for the post-discussion headaches suffered by some the following day.

# John Sweetland and the Big Project

by Bruce J. Miller

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The Hamilton Associates partners were equally compensated with the exception of the President, who received a token amount for a job from Never-Never Land. From 1967 until 1986 the partners-at Hamilton-were-the-Board. In the late 70s, as the original five expanded the partnership to include myself and several others, the monthly Saturday Board meetings became longer and longer. The building consultation business was a core service and revenue generator. In the early 80s John Sweetland sold a grand project at the Cleveland Clinic, a "comma, comma" project - "big money". At a year-end Board meeting midway through the Clinic project the

compensation for the partners and staff was on the agenda. Several on board indicated that John Sweetland needed special consideration for landing the "comma, comma" project that had significantly helped that year and the following year's performance. John listened briefly and then played with the watch he had removed from his wrist (nervous?) and said, "Gentlemen, I am not interested in special consideration. We are all in this together and equal treatment is fair."

What a trait and value that most organizations have lost in pursuit of the big green grab.

## Bob Larson

by John Sweetland

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Bob was a facility consultant who primarily supported David Damberg on his projects. Bob was great at keeping David, who was not well organized out of trouble. Bob had a remarkable talent. To this day I don't know how he did it, but we would be in a hospital for the first time where he would meet a load of people. Six months later we could go back to that hospital, and he would recognize and know the first and last name of everybody he had seen before. I will always marvel at this ability. Bob also had come out of the hospital equipment and supply field. One of the questions of him when he arrived, as it was

with me when I first arrived having been previously with American Hospital Supply, was whether Hamilton Associates should offer equipment planning. His answer was exactly what I had indicated earlier and that was that we didn't want to touch that with a ten-foot pole. The problem was that in the equipment area products would change so quickly that to give quality service you had to spend all your time keeping up with what was happening in the field and very frankly none of us felt that it was very challenging or something that we wanted to be involved with.

## What Do We Do Now, Doc?

by Chuck Killian

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David Damberg and Bob Larson have both passed away but some of the stories about them are the best.

David was a friend and mentor for both me and Bob when Bob and I went to work for Hamilton Associates in 1969. David and Bob were actually graduate school classmates at Minnesota's MHA Program in their earlier years. The three of us did a lot of master planning work together in the years following our joining the firm. Bob and David had this "thing" with each other, where they referred to one another as "Doc." The three of us were driving back from St. Francis Hospital in La Crosse, Wisconsin, after a lengthy dinner somewhere along the way. David was driving his infamous International Traveler (and no one took worse care of their cars than David). About half-

way home Bob says, "Hey, Doc, do we have enough gas to get home?" "We've got plenty, Doc," David responds, "I know this gauge is always a little off." About ten minutes later we run out of gas. One of us walked to a yard with a light on and came back to the car with a small can of gas. But the can did not have a nozzle for pouring into the car's gas tank. "What do we do now, Doc?" Bob asks David. "Here's what we'll do, Doc," David says, "make a funnel out of that roll of schematic plans of the Rehab wing at St. Francis Hospital and we'll pour the gas through it into the tank." "Are you sure, Doc? Won't that ruin the plans?" Bob questions. David responds, "Don't worry, Doc, that smell will go away." So we used the plans and got most of the gas into the tank, got to a gas station, and finally got home.

# Jerry Bieter: True Mentor

by Bruce J. Miller

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Jerome T. Bieter was a true friend and colleague at Hamilton Associates. I was hired in 1969 and was fortunate that Jerry would be my boss, mentor, and, eventually, friend. As one of the original partners of Hamilton Associates Jerry played a key role in its success and more importantly in the development of people who worked with him. I recall my Saturdays at the office working with Jerry who, at that time, was a heavy smoker, as he looked at initial drafts of consulting reports I wrote. He'd lift his head and smile, then proceeded to help rewrite the draft with me. Those were some frustrating times and Jerry realized it, pausing to review rationale and logic along the way of making the changes.

Another trait of Jerry was stopping by each

morning and checking in with each staff member who reported to him, frequently spending time to resolve an issue that was impeding progress on the consulting project. Those were hours added to his work day/week, but they were invaluable to all.

Jerry was an avid golfer and after retirement relocated from Minneapolis to Sun City West with his bride, Sue, where he lived until passing away in 2002. On one of his return trips to Minneapolis we always found time for a round of golf and lunch, frequently at the gold club I play at. Sure enough, one day on the 7th hole, par 3, Jerry, at age 70, hit it in the jar for an ace! As usual, after my wife and I confirmed it, that great smile came out.

# On the Job with James A. Hamilton Associates

by *Vernon E. Weckwerth*

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As the official retirement time for Hamilton approached in 1966, the behavior of the faculty and Hamilton Associates was increasingly showing the anticipation including the stress of the unknown. The questions being addressed varied from wanting a farewell party of great adulation to those of silence followed by an explosive party of freedom.

The recalling of stories involving Hamilton increased dramatically for weeks both before and after the midnight hour.

There was clear adulation and a deep respect for his incredible skills. Particularly, there were multiple recollections of his skill in taking on individuals who had prepared themselves not to

accept what he said or not to do what he was going to assign or demand of them to do. An then an unfolding of the way he “turned it around” so that the person left the encounter not only wanting to do it, but thinking it was her/his own intent.

There was also a heavy mixture of pent up expression of being freed from the control and a range of responses from scars to joys.

That night of the event there was a very touching array of stories, poems and songs. At 12:01 the corks popped along with pent up emotions. No better description could exist than “and in passing, left his footprints in the sands of time.”

# Reflections on James A. Hamilton

by John Sweetland

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Much has been written about the firm's founder that I shall not rehash here. A few comments about a very unique complicated man might be of interest however. Many of the patterns of organization followed by Mr. Hamilton were based on his Dartmouth experience as a student, professor, and alumnus.

For years Dartmouth always had the highest percentage of alumni giving to its yearly campaign. The college also never forgot their alumni. There were always many ways in which the college made sure that Dartmouth was always in one's mind. Mr. Hamilton patterned the program for the alumni association after the Dartmouth Alumni Association, and it seemed to work pretty well as the Minnesota alumni program for years had been very, very supportive. As a student he was a boxer, student assistant to the athletic director, sang in the glee club and took part in many musical roles on the stage. He also was very proud of his library of stories and jokes that he would use when giving speeches. He was a very dynamic speaker, and one who often was quoted in various periodicals. He taught by using the Socratic method of making you think. There were few who came into contact with him over the years that would ever forget him. He never let you assume anything and always kept pinning you down, but his major objective was to make you think.

His ability to look beyond the end of his nose was remarkable.

In the 1950s he headed a study of Hennepin County (Minneapolis) that was soundly rejected because it called for hospitals to go out of

business, merge with others, be relocated and/or change its major focus. Too many local administrators were affected and they killed it. However, if you were to read that report today, 50 years later, you would see where health care found in Hennepin County is pretty much exactly the way he recommended that it be. He was just a few too many decades ahead of his time.

There was no such thing as a committee or firm meeting in our offices. That was a waste of time. Any communication between the consultants was handled at lunch. Around 11:30 in the morning a booming voice would cascade down the corridors - "How about lunch?" Hungry or not, we would all troop over to the University's campus club, which was an eating club that faculty could join and was very heavily utilized by faculty. Once one got his lunch, Mr. Hamilton would then have one of the consultants *for* lunch. After this period of what was basically education for all the rest of us. Once it was over, he would quite often say, "Let's go play pool." Up above the eating club was a large pool hall with many pool tables. Also, this pool hall was quite often our base of operations until around 3 pm. There were very many pleasant periods when the friendly, casual fun side of this man was very evident.

Mr. Hamilton was very sensitive to his dual role at the University and also because his consulting firm had space in University property. He was very careful to buy the least expensive car available. If the family had a larger, newer, more expensive car, it was never parked in his parking place in the garage at the hospital.



He also was a superb teacher of organization and management and like so many gifted educators, he had great trouble in following his own teachings in his own firm. If there were any policies or procedures, they were never written down - it was a very loose organization. And I'm sure this is exactly the way he wanted it and why he didn't write anything down and why we didn't have meetings of any kind except at lunch. This was so he could decide on a moment's notice what he wanted to do, how he wanted to do it and he would then proceed.

The other characteristics that still stand out - he was a great procrastinator. He would wait to the last moment for everything. Often to avoid completing something he would leave the office around 2 pm and go to the movies. Expense reports to our financial person might often be 6 months late. At the same time, this was a very remarkable person, loyal to his associates, a wonderful teacher who was the smartest person I have ever known. You couldn't help but be a successful consultant under his tutelage.

# Milestones at James A. Hamilton Associates

## Among the James A. Hamilton Associates, Inc. Achievements:

- 1947** Its first long-range planning study for a major metropolitan area.
- 1948** Its first management study to provide a measure of hospital cost-effectiveness.
- 1948** Its first study of the health and hospital needs of an entire province.
- 1950** Its first master site plan for a university.
- 1950** Its first satellite hospital study.
- 1950** Its first study to recommend location of doctors' office building adjacent to a general hospital.
- 1950** Its first hospital merger study.
- 1951** Its first comprehensive study proposing the sharing of services in a hospital complex.
- 1953** Its first study to include relationship and responsibility between hospital and public health services.
- 1956** Its first ambulatory care center study.
- 1957** Its first study to recommend mechanized materials processing and handling in a hospital.
- 1959** Its first study of a health science center.
- 1960** Its first study of outpatient needs for a major metropolitan area.
- 1961** Its first study to recommend computer application in hospital data processing.
- 1962** Its first study for a metropolitan planning council.
- 1964** Its first study of county medical care services and costs.
- 1968** Its first comprehensive study of a voluntary hospital chain.

**SECTION 3**  
**Climb to the Future**  
**Hamilton/KSA**  
**1986-1997**

# Recruiting Barry Moore

by Dave Cole

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I recruited Barry after I became KSA President in July of 1983. At that time, we had a very minor HSD practice, along with both Mining and a Hospitality practice, and that plus all of CPD the prior year only totaled \$16 million. We were spread too thin as a company and had declined in volume in absolute terms for 10 years. We were

chasing too many things with no critical mass. With help from others, RMF and I convinced our board that we should abandon mining/hospitality and bet big on retail/CPD and either get in or get out of health care. To be in we needed a leader, so I went on a recruiting mission. The rest is history.

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# Starting a New Practice: HSD

by W. Barry Moore

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On January 4, 1984, I arrived at 400 Colony Square to head the KSA Health Services practice. It wasn't hard to manage. By the time I arrived, it was a one person practice, me. All of the twenty plus consultants who had been in the practice had left. Most were in competition with KSA. I had been out of consulting for two years so my contacts were a little stale as well. It was a lonely feeling. Most people would have been too smart to do it.

The rest of KSA was very welcoming and supportive. Freddy Wood, Tony DeMaria, Fernando Silva, and Ken Osborne came by, took me to lunch, and offered to do anything they could to help. It made me feel much better.

Some of the people who were not in health services, such as Mac Ryland, Frank McMillan, and others, but had worked on the major KSA Health Services project the Oral Roberts City of Faith offered to help. Two people who did not like apparel plants asked to transfer to Health Services and they joined. Company was definitely needed.

Dave Cole who had brought me in was very supportive. We concluded that there were three strategic directions that should be pursued. One was to sell some work. It is hard to justify a service group with absolutely no revenue. The second was to find a merger partner who had a very strong position in the Health Care consulting market. The third was to hire strong people around whom the practice could be built.

The initial focus was on selling business. KSA was not getting any RFP's. The phone did not ring. Former clients were all being served by the people who had left the practice. Our only reference that no one else claimed was Oral Roberts' City of Faith. Try selling that one to cold call prospects.

Easter came and no sales. Memorial Day came and no sales. The Fourth of July came and no sales. Dave kept saying don't worry the sales will come in time. I doubt that his colleagues were telling him that. It was a very harrowing time. A consulting practice with no sales is an unhappy place.

We tried direct mailings with follow-ups. There was finally a hit. American Medical International (AMI) had its Southeastern Regional Office in Atlanta. They agreed to meet in August and we gave it our best shot. We very rapidly sold a series of interesting and profitable projects. We didn't have any philosophical problems about working for for-profit hospitals. Work was work and we were on our way. By the end of 1984, we were selling work at an annual rate of over \$1 million.

We got very lucky on our third strategic goal as well. Mark Wietecha agreed to join us late in the first year. He must have seen the potential because the practice wasn't very impressive then, but we had great vision and enthusiasm. We also hired some experienced health care consultants. They didn't stay with us for a long time, but provided great assistance and support during a crucial period.

The most significant event was when we had the good fortune to merge with Hamilton Associates. To really get the practice on track, we needed to merge with a firm that had a good reputation and solid footprint in the health care industry. It would have taken years for KSA to develop that on our own. There were three candidates, Herman Smith, Douglas, and Hamilton Associates. I put out the word with the American Association of Health Care Consultants that we were interested in a partner. Just before Christmas of 1985, I got a call suggesting that I

should meet with John Sweetland of Hamilton Associates. The AAHC never wanted anyone to know that they made the introduction. This was particularly true after we became so successful together.

I met John Sweetland in the Crown Room of the Atlanta airport for a brief talk. He was on his way to Florida to see his mother with two big bags of presents. We had a good discussion and agreed that we would talk again after the Holidays. The rest is history. By the end of

January, key KSA and Hamilton Associates people had met and agreed to merge. We were able to complete the merger by April and were on our way.

It was an unusual merger because it worked well for both parties. The combined entity was much stronger than would have been the sum of the two companies working independently. The resulting culture was a blending of the best of both companies. Over the years that culture has been strengthened, but clearly reflects its roots.

## Early Days in Health Care at KSA

by Beth Souther

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In the early 1980s, just prior to Barry's arrival, it was determined by then President Jack Ullman that we should carry on with health care trade shows despite the fact the former health care leaders (Flood, Lamb and company) had departed. I was tasked with arranging logistics for a Southeastern show booth in New Orleans and recruiting booth talent. At this brief juncture, there was really no health care staff, but we had committed to a booth. With Jack's help, I coaxed Dean Vought (KSA CPD retired) and Bob Frazier (KSA CPD retired) to staff the booth with me. On a hot, humid day in New Orleans (is there any other kind), I arrived first at the convention center to confirm we had a booth and materials. While I was setting up, Dean Vought and Bob Frazier arrived. Dean took one look around and asked, "Where are the sewing machines?"

Some two to three years later, with Barry Moore now heading the practice, we found ourselves at the AHA Convention in Denver. Once again, I was supervising set-up of the booth and organizing materials, when Barry appeared. He looked around at the dim lighting and very low ceilings, and said, "this doesn't feel like a convention center to me; where are we?" Barry departed the booth on an exploratory mission and returned laughing. He discovered that our priority rating for desirable booth space was so low, we were relegated to exhibit space in a parking garage and the measurement for our booth space was 3 parking spaces. At that show, we made our first inroads: Potential clients actually talked to us, but Barry admits his biggest fans at that show were nuns from Catholic hospitals whom he had charmed with his grin.

# Travel Lessons From Barry Moore

by Mark Wietecha

It was only April in Miami and the thermometer registered a totally humid 95 F each day with annoying regularity. I was well into my first major project since joining KSA in January, working under Barry Moore and hammering my way through a cost reduction job at AMI Parkway Regional Medical Center in North Miami Beach. The project routine resembled trench warfare, a department-by-department hunt for unproductive time and bodies. And, similar to the Hunter engagements of current day, nobody on the client end was terribly delighted to see me on their schedule for the day.

My logistics in Miami were on a comparably routine plan. I was halfway through 16 consecutive weeks of catching the 6:30 a.m. early bird out of Hartsfield on Monday morning, and returning to Atlanta on the 6:00 p.m. flight on Friday. The intervening 4 nights were spent at the designated project lodgings, the Golden Glades Holiday Inn, a delightful spot located right off the busy interchange at I95. The Golden Glades establishment was your classic "motel" with all the amenities you might imagine, including old carpet, lumpy mattresses, sagging sinks, occasionally leaking ceilings, and the round-the-clock drone of the interstate traffic that readily penetrated every corner of the facility. My most vivid memories, however, were the window-mounted air conditioning units, which worked most of the time but rattled in the casing so severely I just could not sleep. To remedy this situation, I discovered I could mount the chairs in the room upside-down on top of the units, and the added weight and cushions served to dampen the racket somewhat. This bit of engineering also required some foam rubber and elastic cording, both of which I specifically acquired for this

purpose and packed in my travel bag each Monday.

Despite all this, I was making progress on the client site, and learning a lot about how hospitals really worked and how health care people respond to change, lessons that would serve me well in later years. But, the routine was mentally tough and I really looked forward to Barry's periodic visits to audit the project, convene meetings with the senior management team, and take the poor staff guy to lunch. These visits occurred every couple of weeks, with Barry typically doing a day trip and leaving the same evening. Sometimes I drove him to the airport and wistfully watched him leave for some (surely) more attractive project destination, before I trudged back to the Golden Glades to pile my room chairs up on the air conditioning unit and turned in for the night.

Finally, Barry announced he would be coming for two days and staying the night at the Golden Glades. I was heartened. After all, he was the *Big Tuna*, and if he could put up with the air conditioning, damn it, so could I! I didn't see Barry much the day he arrived as we had separate schedules at the client site. Moreover, he had his own rental car and so was handling his own logistics. We had no confirmed plans but I generally expected we might touch base at the motel after work. That evening I headed back to the Golden Glades and checked in with the front desk at to Barry's status. The clerk checked the book and announced Barry was not registered. After some sorting around, he found a brief message and read it aloud: "Mr. Moore has cancelled his stay here and has checked into the Resort Marriott in Ft. Lauderdale for the night."



Well, I promptly jumped in my rental car and drove north to Ft. Lauderdale and found Barry at his lodgings at the new and beautiful dockside Resort Marriott, and of course asked him why he had moved. Barry looked me straight in the eye and proclaimed in his finest North Carolina twang: "Ha'ell Mark, if we can't do better than that dumpy Holiday Inn, we may as well get out of this business *right now!*"

The next morning I checked out of Golden Glades, leaving my foam and cording under the bed for the next sleepless guest, and I've *never looked back!*

# Recollections of Bruce Miller

by W. Barry Moore

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There are so many wonderful recollections of Bruce Miller that it is hard to know where to start. What a professional and what a character!

~~We first worked together after the merger~~ between KSA and Hamilton Associates to present a proposal for a strategic plan to Blodgett Hospital in Grand Rapids. It was Bruce's contact and he had prepared a fine proposal. We met the day before the presentation and carefully planned how we would use the 30 minutes that we had been given to sell ourselves. There were three firms presenting to about 15 people that morning.

It had been planned that I would start by introducing the firm and presenting the background. Bruce would present the approach and the deliverables, and then I would close with a short summary. It did not go that way. I got started and then got on a role or at least I thought I was good. Bruce finally interrupted me with seven minutes to go to do his part. To say the least, I had blown our whole presentation strategy.

When we got in the car on the way to the airport, Bruce said "at Hamilton we usually debrief after a presentation". I said "well how do you think it went"? He replied "that was the most h---- s--- performance that I ever saw. You had diarrhea of the mouth. We don't stand a chance." I felt that he was correct. You don't have to worry about Bruce telling you what he thinks. He is always honest.

At the airport, Bruce called the CEO and found out that we had been selected, in spite of my performance, by a vote of fourteen to one. It proves that sometimes you win even in spite of yourself.

We did the engagement and produced a very good strategic plan that proved to be very beneficial to Blodgett. Bruce continued to work with them regularly. Colleagues and clients value honestly and objectivity.

# John Sweetland: Gaul

by Scot Latimer

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As a new consultant I had the opportunity to work with the company President, John Sweetland, in the 'Boston' office (conveniently located in Duxbury, location of John's summer home). I was excited to learn everything I could from a man who had been consulting successfully for several decades, and was thrilled when invited to accompany John on my first business development call. We had a project underway at Rhode Island Hospital and arranged a meeting at (pre merger) Meriam Hospital, also in Providence. As we drove to the meeting, I asked John what his objective in meetings of this kind was. "You want a client to know you're smart," he said, "smart enough to solve whatever problem he has."

After introducing ourselves and exchanging the usual Minnesota mafia information (I did not fully appreciate at this time that smart helped, but being a member of the mafia helped most of all) the potential client asked John what he thought a master plan for Meriam would entail. "This project reminds me of Gaul," he said, "it has three parts..."

"Wow," I thought, "that man is perhaps the smartest man I have ever met. Scholarly, learned, professorial. With some hard

brainwork, I stretched my mind far enough to grasp his point. Of course! Gaul. Perfect analogy!" We concluded the meeting and returned home, where I excitedly shared this revelation with my wife, congratulating myself on the decision to join such a smart group of people.

The next day found us in Worcester, structuring a new project at Worcester Memorial (now part of UMass-Memorial). John began the session, "This project reminds me of Gaul," he said, "it has three parts." Crestfallen I had not seen it before, I nevertheless wondered if somehow this revelation wasn't tainted. Didn't Gaul belong to Meriam? Vaguely disappointed, I went home that night.

A week later, we were at Nantucket Cottage Hospital, outlining the final master plan report. That plan, it turned out, had three phases. Miraculously, it also reminded John of Gaul. As did some work later that month in Delaware. My real education in consulting was beginning. Smart was not only in solutions, or in convincing potential clients we were the best choice. Smart was ultimately remembering which analogy you had used with which client, and never repeating yourself (I never heard John use the same cliché with the same client twice!).

## Montana Boys: On the Road with Chuck Killian

by Bruce J. Miller

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One late winter day, two consultants, Chuck Killian and Bruce Miller, were in Helena, Montana at St. Peter's Hospital, completing our visit of a couple days by mid-morning. The next plane out was late that day, so we decided to drive to Billings, several hundred miles away, to get a plane home from there. The true consultant push, to keep moving; we did not, realizing there were several mountain passes that needed to be crossed, however. Near the last mountain pass, the weather really was getting bad, bad - wind,

snow, and more snow, but we proceeded ahead with the radio on to help assess conditions. Coming out of a mountain pass, the radio announcer says that all travel in that pass is discouraged as the conditions were worsening. Chuck looks at me and calmly says that is where we are. About a mile later we saw a road sign - we both saw the summit of the pass. We made the plan home from Billings, and these two city slickers were true Montana boys for a day.

# The Professor: Dick Sawyer

by Jim Berarducci

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Dick was well known to take the newest consultants in the firm and work with them on projects, not an easy effort since most of us knew very little when we joined the firm. Dick was also one of the few in the firm who could speak equally intelligently on both Strategic and Facility issues with clients.

One of my initial projects with the firm was a strategic facility master plan at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago. I followed Dick around that campus and learned a tremendous amount on how to conduct interviews, probe questions, and incorporate that qualitative information along with quantitative analyses into conclusions for the project. One of our interviews was with a

chairman of medicine at the University of Chicago, on the edge of one of the tougher neighborhoods of Chicago. While Dick could speak very intelligently on a number of topics, I think he might have failed in geography because he was instructing the taxi driver on how to get to the U of C via a shortcut. The driver shook his head, mumbled something, then drove on per Dick's directions. After traveling through several blocks of stripped and burning vehicles we arrived at the U of C campus. The route may have been a little shorter saving the client a buck or two, but we took the drivers advice on the way back and avoided the scenic route.

# Bucky Knowles: No Half Measures!

by Scot Latimer

Bucky was, I learned early, a guy who never took the easy way out of a situation, or did anything halfway. When I was interviewing with KSA, I met with Bucky in a Marriott near a client site for dinner. Since I was to work initially under the direction of John Sweetland, as Bucky had early in his career, I asked Bucky the secret of success with John. "Think of everything he could possibly ask you for, and complete it in half the time you're given," he replied. "Here's a guy who's found a happy balance in his work life," I thought. But as I came to know Bucky better (and appreciate his preparation for any contingency), I found this mindset applied to the rest of his life, as well.

"Planted bulbs this weekend," he noted in his usual clipped manner at the lunch table one day. "Really?," I replied, "So did we. Two dozen along the edge of the woods." "I planted two gross," he said. "Took me all Saturday." I came to learn they were on perfect 4-inch centers, as well.

I found working on his house and yard were Bucky's passions. I needed advice on a retaining wall, so he invited me over to show me one he had built in his front yard. His was brick, four - five feet high, 40 feet long, curved, enclosing a brick paved area of about 500 square feet. French

drains. Tree wells. I shoved my sketch of my 6 foot by 18-inch high railroad tie wall back in my pocket as he described his concrete supporting structure. "Bummer was when I had the house's water supply shutoff valve leak," he noted. "It was six feet down behind the wall."

Bucky's deck, which he built, took longer than a weekend. But it had six levels, connecting stairs at 45-degree angles, and very complex railings. "Ever built a deck before?" I asked. "Nope, but it didn't make sense to do something that I'd wished in a few years I had done more extensively. Made sense to do it all now."

The first thing to learn when working with Bucky was that you could not out work him. "I don't have any work to do tonight," he confided in Boston one evening after dinner. "First time in years I can remember. What do you do (in this situation)?" The next thing was not to take it personally.

"Fertilized this weekend," he said. "Aerated, overseeded, put in a sprinkler system." It was January in Virginia. "Aren't you a little early?" I asked. "Never control dandelions if you wait until after the crocuses bloom," he answered. "You're doomed."

## Barry Moore

by Bucky Knowles

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In the early 90's just as managed care was beginning to develop and we had less than a decade before the Year 2000 - the next millennium, we began talking about what would happen to hospitals. Barry, Bruce Miller and I decided to develop a position paper titled "The Hospital of the Future" even though there were several other consultants that were starting to publish on the same topic. The position paper ended up being a 70-80 page booklet.

Later that year, Barry and I were selected to present to the ACHE Congress on the topic. It was one of the keynote topics scheduled in one of the larger meeting rooms.

Now Barry is not fond of having handouts at meetings but the ACHE requires them so we had no choice. Just before the meeting, the ACHE told us what the expected attendance would be so we could have enough handouts of our presentation for each of the participants. As it turned out, the interest in our presentation far exceeded ACHE's projections. The room was

packed; with a number of the audience having to stand in the rear. We had to get the conference staff to scramble for as many additional chairs as they could fit in the room.

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After dealing with a very irate crowd over the lack of seating capacity we had also run out of handouts. Of course Barry is now telling me that he knew we shouldn't have brought handouts in the first place! But making the most of the situation, Barry indicated to the audience that everyone that left there name and address would not only get the handout but the 70-80 page booklets as well. Not only did that allay the crowd but it required a number of participants, who we would not have had a chance to meet, to leave their business cards.

Turning a very difficult situation into an opportunity, we followed up with a number of the leads we got from those contacts. A number of them turned into very nice strategy and facility assignments to assist them prepare for the "hospital of the future".

# John Sweetland: Talent Search

by Jim Berarducci

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I first met Mr. Sweetland as a student in the MHA class of '88. John was active in teaching the problem solving course, continuing the tradition that James A. Hamilton began many years before. The entire grade was based on the paper and presentation made to your fellow students, John and one of the U of MN faculty. John's reputation preceded him as a very difficult member of the audience. As I watched John skewer my classmates in the question and answer period I began to get nervous along with the rest of us who had not yet presented. The interviews were conducted in the Minneapolis Hamilton/KSA office with John seated at the opposite end of the table from the presenter.

My time came up; I turned on the overhead projector and began my presentation. Shortly into my presentation, John wrote something down on a piece of paper, slid it over to the other faculty member and they both chuckled out loud. Undaunted, I completed my presentation,

answered their questions, and John asked if I had any questions for them. I said as a matter of fact, yes, I have one: what did you write on the piece of paper that turned out to be so humorous? John chuckled again and said that I had said 42 'umms' during the first 2 minutes of my presentation. I appreciated the comment and thought that would be the last time I would hear from John or Hamilton/KSA.

I was quite depressed after that since Hamilton/KSA was one of the top firms I was interested in joining. Well, within a week I received a call from John's secretary that he would like to speak to me. I was sure he wanted to provide another piece of advice, so when we talked and he offered me to come to Boston to interview for a consulting job I was shocked and delighted. John's ability to see through the rough edges and recognize potential in people is a true talent and one of the reasons Hamilton Associates was so successful.



# Program Guru: Working with Dick Sawyer

by Mark Wietcha

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It was 1993 and we were on a roll. We had a vision to work for the best clients in the world - become the best in the process -- and the focus was beginning to pay off. After we cracked the door with the first Hopkins job in '91, we began to pile on the wins: Beth Israel, Mayo, Mount Sinai, Penn, Duke, one after another. We were pumped. We were Tiger Woods, Bruce Springsteen, and the Terminator rolled into one, steroids on-board, having our competition for breakfast - *Oh Yeah!*

It was in this environment I began to worry about our strategy product. Was it contemporary enough to keep us going? Too many SWOT hours? Too many low-level interviews? Not enough strategic concept engaged up front? Taking too long? How do we get on *out there*, on the cutting edge, how about on the *bleeding edge*?

I was ready for the quiet call: "Hi Mark, it's Dick Sawyer. I have a project opportunity I think you might be interested in...a different approach to putting a plan together." I was ready. Dick Sawyer was a well-known, unassuming individual with an incredible consulting history and a long experience record dating back to his early days in, of all places, Beirut.

The client was the AMC setting of Pitt County Memorial Hospital and the East Carolina School of Medicine down in Greenville, NC. Dick and I met in Raleigh, loaded into a rental car, and drove the two hours onto the rural flatlands of eastern North Carolina. The concept was fairly simple. Pile the top 20 senior client personnel and the "been there, done that" consultants into a room for two days, brainstorm the strategic directions by key area and synthesize an overall framework, tacking it all up around the walls as you go. Got data? We don't need no stinking data! Prove out your null hypotheses with data as the *follow-up*

step. Two-day strategic planning template to kick-start the full planning process. Execution of this type of kick-off? No problem.

Game plan was, I lead the programmatic strategy discussion and Dick leads the facility discussion.

Everyone assembles and the process begins. First up is heart and I'm leading, pretty conversant here, having done a fair amount of CV work in several settings. Dick chimes in a bit. Next up is cancer and again, I get the discussion moving, holding my own. Dick fills in multiple gaps and brings to light an array of new information. Next up, neuro, and here I'm showing even more gaps. Not to worry, Dick again steps forward on every conceivable aspect of neuroscience technology, subspecialties, economics, medical education, research, unbelievable! Next up is ortho, and once again I'm soon on my fanny taking notes as Dick steps up in his quiet unassuming way: interventional imaging, prosthetic advances, fellowship training requirements... After that it's a blur of discussion, Dick leading the way into women's services, sup-specialty pediatrics, radiology, psychiatry, geriatrics, pathology, pain, even podiatry! You name a program, Dick has the information. I'm taking so many notes I'm no longer facilitating anything but my own professional development. As the first program session winds up, Dick gets ready to lead *his* session on facility implications! *I am not worthy...*

The process goes well, and the two-day concept proves out to a reasonable idea for the right kind of client in a certain kind of situation, all of which happened to be the case in Greenville. Interested in giving this type of approach a try with your own clients? Fine, but let me give you five words of advice: get yourself a Dick Sawyer!

## Another Bruce Miller Recollection

by Barry Moore

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Bruce always felt that he was entitled to a paper at his hotel in the morning. One October we were working at Henry Ford in Detroit. We had meetings early in the morning on Halloween so we had to spend the night before in Detroit. If you know Detroit at all, you know that the area around Henry Ford is not a place to be on Hell Night when hundreds of vacant homes in the area are torched to see them burn. We stayed out in Dearborn at one of the few hotels we could find instead of our usual digs near the hospital.

We weren't regulars or high levels members of their honored guest club. We were just no status guests. As we got up very early the next morning, Bruce went out to get his paper. As a

no status guest, there was no paper. However, there were papers in front of most of the rooms. I leave to your imagination to decide what happened.

As we were checking out, Bruce casually said to the young women at the front desk "do you know that they left my paper in front of someone else's room this morning. You just need to do better". She quickly replied "but Sir you weren't entitled to a paper". Then she panicked and said "Sir what room was it. We have to get the paper back." Bruce was grinning as I assured her that he was only kidding. We hustled away and I didn't ask for any details. He was kidding, wasn't he?

## Back of the Napkin Consulting: Bucky Knowles

by Jim Berarducci

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I worked with Bucky Knowles for several years in the early '90s on a number of large projects. Bucky always put me in positions of more and more responsibility with each of those clients. Many of those clients such as Henry Ford and MUSC continue to be major clients and references for the firm. One of the challenges was getting enough time to work together as I was in Minneapolis and Bucky was in the DC office. In addition, Bucky was the national director of the group at the time so his time was spread quite thin. In order to maximize our time together we

made dinners a work session. We completed most of our work and drafted many documents on the paper tablecloths in the Italian restaurants we both enjoyed along with a number of napkins from the bar. The biggest challenge was not interpreting Bucky's thoughts or voicemails, but in recreating all of those thoughts amongst the red sauce and red wine. I appreciate the opportunities that Bucky provided and enjoyed the back of the napkin consulting which we continue to do on all of my current projects.

# Saudi Project: Dick Sawyer

by Bruce J. Miller

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Richard Sawyer, an experienced health care consultant, joined Hamilton Associates when his firm was acquired and he relocated to Minneapolis to be part of the building consultation practice. Dick had international living and consulting experience, so when Hamilton Associates received a request for qualifications from Saudi Aramco's representative in Houston, Dick was asked to head the project. Dick was starting to wind down his career to enjoy a well-earned retirement and probably thought his last client work would be stateside versus Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Dick headed the team developing the proposal and coordinating an office visit by a Saudi representative group to check out the consulting firms being considered. Hamilton was selected and Dick, as an "associate" retiring partner

headed a team of six to seven staff. Bruce Miller was part of the original site visit team and participated with Dick as he directed the program and facility development plans for Saudi Aramco. Little did Dick know his fine work efforts would lead to a long-term relationship. He successfully transferred the client to Bruce Miller and Mike Boguszewski with assistance from Barry Moore, and then again the relationship was transferred to Jeff Hoffman. Jeff then directed clearly the most complex of the engagements with the Saudis in developing a game plan to wind down the company-provided health care facilities to selected private providers. Richard Sawyer, in the retirement phase of his career, positioned Hamilton/KSA very well for a significant client relationship that rounded up some solid bills for HSD in the comma, comma range - BIG.

## John Sweetland

by Bucky Knowles

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We went through a period in the mid 80's where we would have poster boards professionally printed for our major presentations - back before there was PowerPoint and In-focus! This particular-time-taught-me-a-lesson-on-focusing-on-the-message-rather-than-the-medium.

We had been working on a potential project and I had done all the pre-proposal work but needed a "gray hair" to come along for the final presentation. John agreed to join me, but of course, as the young Principal, I had to prepare and lug the poster boards for the presentation all the way across the country.

The client was located in a rural town in central Florida and its' board of directors, who we were presenting to, was made up of "good ole boys" - but very good business men. Well when we got to the Hospital, and with me dragging the poster

boards, John began to get a sense of the individuals we would be presenting to. Just as we were walking into the board room, John told me to "ditch the boards". I couldn't believe it - here I had carried these great looking poster boards through airports and rental cars and not even use them - what were we going to do???

Well we went into the meeting, introduced ourselves and sat down. John began by talking to these Florida crackers like they were his best friends. After John got them warmed up, I finished by explaining our proposal and then we opened for questions. We got the job!! On the way out I stuffed the boards into a trash can in front of the hospital.

John was a master at relating to his audience and not being afraid to change course to suit the needs of a given situation.

# Up the Down Escalator with Bruce Miller

by Chuck Killian

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In the old days Bruce Miller and I did a lot of projects together. Bruce did the Role and Program (Strategy) consulting and I did the Physical Development (Facility Master Planning) consulting. In those years we did a lot of work out west in Montana and Idaho. I can't remember exactly where we were coming back from, but we decided to try and make a tight connection on Northwest through the new Sea-Tac airport in Seattle. We probably did this because it got us home 45 minutes sooner than whatever connection it was that Margaret Roos had originally booked us on. We arrived at Sea-Tac on the first leg of the return with less than 15 minutes to make our connection and had to leave one terminal to get to another. We are running

through the airport with Bruce leading because he got directions from someone when we got off the plane. We rounded a corner that was suppose to put us at the escalator to take us up to the ticketing and gate level for Northwest. The escalator was there alright, a two-story one at that, but it was the down escalator from the floor above. "What do we do now?" Bruce asked. "We run up the steps," I replied, and we both started jogging up the moving steps of the down escalator. We reached the top and sprinted for the gate and made the flight just as they were about to close the door. But, that was the last time I let a strategy guy lead me through an airport facility!

## Dick Sawyer: Sleep v. Food?

by Scot Latimer

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Dick told me the ground rules early on. “You’ll eat well,” he said. “But I pick the hotels.” I didn’t know that Dick was notoriously tight when it came to lodging. Red Roof Inns were his favorite. Motel Six were a close second. “You’re asleep,” he intoned, looking down his Yankee patrician nose, “you’ll never know how nice it is while you’re asleep.”

Once, I had to pick Dick up for a meeting in Boston when he was helping with the wind-down of the Duxbury office. He gave me the address of his hotel, 20+ miles away from the office in the notorious Roxbury district. There had been two shootings in front of his Red Roof the night before. “Couldn’t see the justification for more money just to be closer. And downtown Boston was out of the question.”

Yet, Dick searched out the best restaurant in every town we visited. Boston. Scranton. Wilkes-Barre. It seemed he had favorites in every city. And the dinners were long affairs. “No need to hurry back to our rooms,” he noted.

Once, I made the mistake of booking a Sheraton for the two of us in Scranton. Dick was tight-lipped at breakfast that morning. “If a question comes up about the expenses, I’ll direct it to you,” he said. It was \$10 more a night than the Red Roof.

Dick’s client’s loved him, and he them. Once, Jim Brady (formerly of Geisinger, who was then running a Rehab Hospital at which we were working) took me aside. “Dick got you staying at the Red Roof?” he asked, with glee in his voice. “I told him about all of the more expensive places around here just to torture him.”

Eventually, we all move out from under our mentor’s shadows. My Hilton and Marriott status would be a shock and affront to Dick’s sensibilities, as would my standing request for ‘quick’ when it comes to dinner. But the thoroughness of examining a problem and seeking the kind of relationships Dick shared are aspects of consulting I aspire to every day.

# On the Job with Bruce Miller: Lessons in Quality

by Mark Wietecha

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I was a hotshot strategy staff consultant when the health care practices of KSA and James A. Hamilton Associates merged in April of 1986. At KSA, I'd led the application of the brand new DRG forecasting and value-based planning techniques to hospital strategic planning with the AMI system. I had just over a year consulting experience on two projects...and all the answers. By the end of the year, I found myself on a project with Bruce Miller at Bethany Medical Center in Kansas City. Bruce had a reputation as a high-quality consultant and I looked forward to a strategy assignment with him such that he could get a sense of what I could do.

It was quickly apparent our working styles were different. My approach was heavily focused on the strategic concept at "10,000 feet." And, although quite quantitative, I placed a low priority on schedules, booklet format, methodology, and project logistics such as providing a map of the campus and the like. Such administrivia seemed insignificant to me compared to the *Big Picture*.

From the beginning, Bruce applied a constant stream of advice as to how I could and must improve the level of detail in the project, and my management of the same. He provided examples of how it was done at Hamilton. He cajoled me for better preparation in advance, rehearsal of presentations, and ruthless scrutiny of all data. Much of this I avoided. Finding myself busy, getting good results at the client presentations,

and mostly convinced my approach was the best way, I managed through to the end of the project despite the protestations of Mr. Miller.

At the final board meeting to review the recommendations, we assembled our slides over a school desk in the hall prior to our presentation, Mr. Miller visibly unhappy with yet another "last minute escapade." We made our presentation and got an ovation from the board and very fine comments. As we left the room, John Millard, Bethany's CEO, walked over and shook our hands. "Nice job," he smiled. I was feeling vindicated.

We all returned to the executive offices and discussed the next project prospects. As we discussed the process, John looked over at me and stated that while the project we just completed was fine, "the only thing we felt separated *your work from being first class* was the preparation and detail. Maybe we could get materials in advance, review things more as a group, and get the details down before having the major meetings?" I nodded at John. Mr. Miller stared at me without comment - his mouth the taut unsmiling line many of us have experienced over the years. He was not amused. My ears were bright red.

At that moment I understood the full definition of quality from the client's view - the view that matters - and why Bruce Miller was right. I still had much to learn about *The Big Picture*.



# Chuck Killian: The Big Teddy Bear

by Jim Berarducci

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While all of us know Chuck Killian as a ruthless competitor, he actually has a big heart who likes to have fun. Chuck's competitive nature is legendary, whether it was on the gridiron for the University of Minnesota or the boardroom for a major potential client.

When I first started with Hamilton/KSA my wife and young daughters would come to the office occasionally and we would have a picnic in my office, actually it was more like an oversized broom closet. It was located a couple doors down from Chuck's office and during one of our

picnics, my daughter crawled out of my office and into Chuck's office. Chuck was busy working and talking on the phone when Gia sat up in his office and mumbled something. Chuck peered over his stacks of papers, completed his phone call and joined Gia on the floor to play with some toys. It was an example of no matter how busy you are there should always be time for you to spend with your family. Chuck now has grandchildren of his own, but I appreciated his taking the time to get to know my family and make them feel part of the KSA family.

# Adventures in Sales with Dick Sawyer

by Dick Sawyer

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One of the fascinating projects of my final years was the first project for the Saudi Aramco Medical Services Organization. When the RFP came, it went to Bucky Knowles. He called me to see if I was interested in following up. We had some previous unfortunate experiences with work in Saudi Arabia for which we were not paid, and Bucky wasn't very enthusiastic. However, when he told me who the client was, I could hardly wait to get my hands on it. The Herman Smith people had done a lot of work in Saudi Arabia for the government, and evidently were well paid for it. At that point, I may have been the only one who realized that the client had more money than we could imagine, being the government's monopoly of their sizable oil business.

I got permission to make the pre-proposal trip to Houston (by this time, I was on associate status), competing against three other firms. I thought Smith had the advantage because of their years of experience in Saudi Arabia, though my own background in Beirut probably offset that. We prepared the proposal with lots of help from the team we planned to use, and included several of them when the selection committee came to Minneapolis to interview us in the offices on East Hennepin. Their team included Scott Shannon, their US procurement officer, Dave Collier, in charge of planning for SAMSO, and a Saudi engineer named Ubaidan. The interview went well, but I still thought it was something of a long shot. During the interview, Ubaidan asked me what my role would be in the project. I told him I would manage it, coordinate between our two organizations, be the leader of the on-site team, prepare major parts of the report and be

responsible for all of it, and make the formal presentations. He seemed surprised, evidently since the senior people at other interviews were expecting less involvement. As I recall, the proposal included our work plan and chargeable hours, which came to over six hundred thousand dollars. To my surprise (and I think others complete astonishment), we were selected.

Our first trip to the Kingdom included a team of seven or eight, and we were scheduled to be there for two working weeks. We arrived on Friday, and prepared to go to work the next morning, since Thursday and Friday are the weekend of the Muslim world. The first trip Saudi Aramco's guest house for visitors was in renovation, so we stayed at a hotel. Subsequent trips, involving three of us or less, we stayed at the guest house and ate most meals at the company's cafeteria. The food was actually pretty good.

The first weekend we were there, it was reported there would be a public execution in Al Khobar, the place where shops and restaurants could be found. Several of the more adventurous of our group wanted to attend. Rather than forbid them, I scheduled a team meeting for a review of the first week's activity. Attendance was not optional, and everyone came. Since I would have sent home any one who did not, it worked out well.

The most satisfying aspect of this project is that there have been additional contracts with SAMSO since I have left KSA. It is good to know that they were satisfied with the work we did on the first one.

# Client Relationships 101 with Bruce Miller

by Jim Berarducci

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Bruce Miller was the ultimate in being prepared. We would discuss what needed to happen next after an important meeting, usually in the 90 minute car ride to the airport...maybe that is why he worked in Jackson, TN, Eau Claire, WI, etc. He was always trying to stay ahead and plan for the next meeting. What data did we need, revise the map, check the spreadsheet for data errors, and conduct a couple more interviews to verify our conclusions were all activities we would discuss on these long car rides. We would establish a schedule for when the various tasks would be completed with reminders via direct conversations or voicemail (I think Bruce loved voicemail, hates email though).

This was all part of his plan: be prepared which leads to the highest quality work which contributes significantly to developing client relationships. Working with me brought a unique challenge for Bruce: "Berarducci time". I have

always been kind of a last minute person and have had a 10-minute problem in my life...I am habitually 10 minutes late for everything (except client meetings). While most of the consultants I work with have created workarounds for me, Bruce would just shake his head. I have probably contributed to some of his grey hair.

However, we developed quite a working relationship with active debate that created the best outcomes for our clients and allowed us to develop key relationships with Mayo Clinic and maintain relationships Bruce created during his career such as Alegent Health (Immanuel Medical Center) and West Tennessee Healthcare (Jackson Madison County General Hospital). It was a pleasure for me to have worked with Bruce and see how those CEOs trusted his advice and counsel for so many years and most importantly how that advice contributed to their organizational and personal success.

# Persistence Personified: Working with Bucky Knowles

by Mark Wietecha

The summer of 1988 found Bucky and I working on a strategic plan for Lapeer Community Hospital. Lapeer is a small rural community in mid-Michigan, and we were scheduled for a final Board Retreat even further north, on Mackinaw Island, which sits between the upper and lower peninsulas.

Although I had handled the majority of the actual work on the engagement, we had made a decision to have all the deliverables produced out of the Washington D.C. office where Bucky was located. Our protocol was fairly straightforward. Since this was the era preceding e-mail, I just faxed or overnighted my hard-written materials to Washington where they were produced. Bucky then brought the finals to client sessions. In those days, I usually had my materials into production the day before the meeting, so I almost never saw the finished product until Bucky and I met at the client site for the actual presentations.

The retreat at Mackinaw was a typical weekend affair, with morning meetings and afternoon recreation, and we were all to arrive Friday evening such that we were ready to go first thing Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m. Bucky and I were to rendezvous in Detroit on Friday evening and together catch the last flight to Sault St. Marie, 300 miles north. From there, we'd travel by rental car to Shepler's Ferry, make the ride across the straits to Mackinaw Island, and then catch a taxi to the retreat hotel. Pretty simple.

Friday night, I'm standing in the concourse in Detroit, final boarding call for the last flight to Sault St. Marie resounding through the terminal. Bucky is nowhere in sight. Bouncing anxiously on the balls of my feet, peering down the length of the terminal, I strain for a glimpse of Bucky. No Bucky. The gate attendant is now imploring,

"really sir, we have to shut the door now..." No Bucky. This being the era before cell phones and voice mail, I had no way to reach him, nor him me. It's not just that I needed him at the retreat.

Bucky was carrying the presentation and slides (of which I didn't have a copy), had directions to the hotel (I had no clue where we were staying), and had the agenda for the retreat (again, I had nothing...). The only thing I did know as I boarded the plane was 50 people would be waiting for me at an unknown hotel on Mackinaw Island for the final strategic discussion of our work at 8:00 a.m. the next morning.

The flight was gloomy, as I constructed scenarios for conducting the retreat alone and without any materials. I landed, got a rental car, and drove to the nearest hotel as I had missed the last ferry to the Island and did not know where we had reservations. The next morning I rose early, took the first ferry, found information, and was informed by an annoyingly cheery tourist attendant on the dock that things were not so bad, as there were no more than 20 facilities on the Island that could accommodate a meeting for 50 people. It hit me like a jolt of electricity -- *no more than 20!* Good God! Resolutely, I acquired a Yellow Pages, stepped into a pay phone booth, and began to call the possibilities in alphabetical order. Nobody was answering promptly at 7:30 a.m. on a Saturday. Things were getting worse by the minute. I started to sweat in the rising Michigan sun.

Listening to the ringing of the phone, I sullenly watched the next ferry arrive. Stunned, I see Bucky step off the ferry, all materials in hand. With relief, I hop from the phone booth, receiver swinging on the cord, waving to Bucky. He smiles, waves back, points up to my right. I turn, look up, and see a dozen of the Lapeer retreat participants standing in the second story window

of the hotel right in front of my phone booth on the dock. They are waving to me! I numbly wave back. Incredibly, in a few heartbeats everything has changed, the day is saved. The retreat goes off without a hitch; a huge success. How?

Bucky Knowles, though no fault except the fortunes of nature, missed the connection in

Detroit. Not to be deterred, Bucky Knowles rents a car, drives 300 miles straight through the rural Michigan night, arriving just before dawn at the ferry. Bucky Knowles, persistent, driven, gets a quick coffee, catches the ferry, gets to the retreat, delivers the goods. I learned that day the value of persistence, and the role it plays in our being able to *rely on each other* to get the job done. I've never forgotten the lesson: never give up!

# Dick Sawyer

by Bucky Knowles

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Dick and I didn't work together on projects very often but during my first years as a new partner, he was a great mentor and friend as I held various positions at Hamilton.

I remember one time I was having a very difficult time dealing with an internal situation (those do occasionally happen!) and I had written a long memo expressing my frustrations (no names mentioned!). Since it was before the age of faxes or e-mail I couldn't just send it out quickly without a second thought. Before I had it typed,

I decided to call Dick for his thoughts on the memo before I sent it out. I'm glad I did.

We discussed the issues I was going through and after we had talked through my frustrations he then said "now it's off your chest, don't send the memo". After listening to his reasoning, I tore the memo up!

The situation eventually resolved itself. It was great having Dick's support and counsel during a number of other situations over the years.

# John Sweetland: Case Study

by Scot Latimer

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When a new consultant in the Duxbury office I learned gradually of John's reputation as a feared teacher of the 'Problem Solving' course at Minnesota. One day he tossed a sheet of paper on my desk. "Read this over," he said. "Tell me if you think it's OK." It was a write-up of a situation we'd recently confronted with a client that he proposed to use as a case that winter in his class.

I returned it 15 minutes later, proofed and corrected for typos and grammar (which was

what he really wanted). "You left out the key part about the competitor's actions" I pointed out. "They'll never be able to solve this as written. It's unfair." His grin broadened. "Perfect," he said. "Don't want them to think this is easy"

I came to learn that failure was part of the exercise. I was how you dealt with it that was his point.

## Bruce Miller and Chuck Killian

by Bucky Knowles

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Both Bruce and Chuck had a pretty good reputation of being well prepared for meeting with a client. An opportunity at an Academic Medical Center in the mid-west to propose for an Ambulatory Care project had come in. It was agreed that it should be done out of the Minneapolis office. We had recently completed several similar assignments in the East so I went out to Minneapolis for the day to help prepare for the presentation.

Well as we got into the draft presentation the discussion got very loud- with three very opinionated and successful consultants trying to agree on the best approach---to the point that the office manager came and closed the conference room door.

The debate continued throughout the entire day. And there were many stares though the glass as consultants walked passed. At the end of the day, however, we had challenged every aspect of the presentation but were very comfortable that this was the best approach that we could take.

The presentation went smoothly and we had prepared for every question that came up from the client. The selection committee was a tough audience. In typical academic style it had almost twenty members from the Medical School Faculty and Administration!! WE got the job.



# Apprenticing with John Sweetland

by Mark Wietecha

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One of the good fortunes of my career has been my early mentoring by John Sweetland. John was one of those proverbial “larger than life” consulting personas. It was Sweetland who pioneered the historic “first generation” ambulatory projects at Henry Ford, UCLA, and Cleveland Clinic in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Sweetland who innovated the now renowned “mall” concept at Dartmouth, and Sweetland who had many of the big-name clients when we merged with Hamilton Associates in 1986.

It was from Sweetland that I first understood the competitive edge of having the nation's best medical centers as clients, and how having these relationships projected credibility and reputation into the broader market. From this, I first envisioned how we could shape a strategy for national leadership despite our smaller scale as a firm...how, in short, being *The Best* could be achieved. John Sweetland' influence shifted my entire view as to how I'd pursue a career in consulting, creating the foundations for the next 15 years of focused work.

Even prior to the formal merger, during the Dartmouth project on which I played a staff role on the KSA side, John took a liking to me. He subsequently brought me into a series of assignments across several clients, but it was on a community hospital sale in Venice, Florida that I first saw John in action at a promotion. John

had been keen to land the Venice account in part because he and Joan had a condo on nearby Longboat Key, and the project afforded him an opportunity to connect down to Florida from the big-house-in Duxbury.

The opportunity at Venice involved a facility redevelopment requiring the usual front-end strategy, and we were to meet with a group of the senior management first thing in the morning. As we entered the conference room John radiated a palpable sense of presence, commanding the attention of the room. We walked through the work plan, addressed several issues, and on selected examples John would judiciously cite examples of how similar situations had been dealt with at Cleveland Clinic or Deaconess in Boston. This was done in a fashion that left *no doubt* in the client's mind as to our *absolute stone cold competency* to do the work. We obviously won the assignment.

John always told me the key to selling any type of intangible service such as our own advise was predicated on conveying an immediate sense of confidence. Further, one must accomplish this sense in the very few first minutes of impression since that is often all the time one has in a sales situation. His combination of personal style and big name clientele represented a powerful strategy for selling along these lines, and I never forgot the lesson.

## Bruce Miller and Elmo the Intimidator

by Jim Berarducci

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Bruce Miller had a huge elk head mounted in his small office on East Hennepin Avenue. It was an imposing part of Bruce's office and anyone visiting Bruce had to sit directly underneath this monstrous stuffed head...this was my first impression of Mr. Miller. You see, Bruce happened to be my University of Minnesota Clerkship advisor for my summer internship between the two years of grad school. I was married, had a young daughter and was doing my internship at North Memorial Hospital in Minneapolis. I was counting on spending some quality time with my family and finding out how some of the staff areas (e.g. finance, marketing, planning, HR, etc) of a hospital functioned. Mr. Miller would have no part of my plan.

We had to submit progress reports based on a schedule that was established at the beginning of the summer...perfect for Bruce (he likes schedules). My first submission was quickly approaching so I asked a secretary (this is pre-laptops folks) to type up a brief overview of what my problem area was and how I was going to

approach the problem. I set an appointment to see Mr. Miller on my way home to start a long weekend with my family. To get on his good graces by sending him something in advance, I had the secretary fax the page to Bruce, even though I had not reviewed her typing.

I walked into Mr. Miller's 8x10 office and sat down with Elmer hanging over me and stacks of papers everywhere. The next 45 minutes were kind of a blur, except for something about "...coasting...", "...lack of discipline...", "...piece of crap...". I left thinking how could I have possibly been unlucky enough to end up with this guy as my clerkship advisor! I could not have more wrong. Bruce ended up teaching me a great deal about responsibility, respect for ones time, quality of work, and having the discipline to put forth your best effort even though the project may seem unimportant.

I got an A (first impressions are not what they seem with Bruce) and Bruce made a lifetime impression on a young man.

# Recollections of Dick Sawyer

by W. Barry Moore

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Dick Sawyer is one good consultant. Many of his projects were innovative and blazed new trails. One of the most interesting was our project at the National Institutes of Health. We were asked to assist an architectural firm to plan the replacement of the massive clinical research facility on the main campus. A major requirement was to determine how much space was needed. Our project team developed a very intricate model that started with the projected funding of the numerous institutes and then calculated the clinical research activity by type that would be conducted in the facility. We strategists and Dick were probably the only people who understood it, but it was so complicated that no one could possibly challenge it.

When the space requirements were applied to this activity it all looked good and was logical relative to the current situation. The only

problem was that we were working with the government. The final conclusion was that this was all very reasonable and correct, but they could not figure out how to conduct and fund the almost ten year program required to redo the building in phases. NIH did not have a process to make commitments over that long a time frame. Great project, but a flaky client.

Dick Sawyer was always one of my favorite people to travel with. He had the world's best talent at finding the cheapest hotels and the best restaurants any where in the country. Only with Dick did I sleep in \$12 a night hotels (not in big cities) that were clean and acceptable. Not fancy, but acceptable.

Where ever we were, Dick knew several good restaurants and we were sure to visit them. Dick has his priorities right. I will take a great meal over a fancy hotel every time.

# Selling with Chuck Killian

by Mark Wietecha

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The Ramsey Clinic, a large multispecialty in the Twin Cities, had contacted Chuck and asked for a proposal for some ambulatory clinic planning. As Chuck and I had successfully collaborated on the ambulatory replacement facility at Northwestern, he called me, we put a proposal together, and made the short list for orals. Although I had worked with Chuck on projects, I had yet to work with him on a sale. As a former starting down lineman and captain of the University of Minnesota football team, Chuck was known to be competitive and had a strong reputation as a “stand-up” seller. I looked forward to seeing him in action.

I landed in Minneapolis on a brutally cold February night, and met up with Chuck the following morning. We split up roles for the presentation, met with the Ramsey committee of mostly physicians, and went through our points. A lively discussion ensued after we completed the structured part of our presentation, and I found myself embattled around how we would forecast demand, how would we model operating flow, how we handle funds flow, and the like. Chuck watched all this, but said little. In fact, he didn't say anything after he completed his formal presentation role. I was becoming alarmed. Here I was sweating out a firefight with a seemingly hostile selection group and my purportedly highly competitive senior colleague is taking notes and sitting quietly!

Finally, Bob Garland, the gruff and glowering client CFO who had convened the meeting, stood

up and looked solemnly at the two of us. Gathering himself together, he pronounced that while we certainly seemed to have the credentials they were looking for, and certainly seemed to have the technical skills, he wasn't at all convinced that we at Hamilton/KSA really wanted the project, were really interested in Ramsey Clinic. You could hear a pin drop in the room - moment of truth upon us.

Chuck Killian looked up. Clouds of consternation rolling across his face like an oncoming thunderstorm. The veins in his neck began to stand out. Chuck Killian stood up, rose to his full height, spoke. “Thanks, but let there be no mistake *we want this job!* Our Firm was founded in this city. We founded and teach in the program at the University. Our largest office is in this city. In fact, I am myself a Ramsey County *landowner* and am personally committed to making this project successful!” Chuck Killian looked around the room at each individual, nodded once, sat down.

Big bad Bob Garland stared at Chuck, thinking, nodded, sat down. We wrapped up the meeting.

The following morning Ramsey informed us of our unanimous selection for the project. I could ask for no clearer lesson as to the importance of conviction and emotion at the moment of truth in a sale, and the importance of timing and interdiction in making this conviction known. And, I also understood at that moment why Chuck Killian was the successful competitor he was known to be.

## The Fairness of a Firm

by Bruce J. Miller

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In 1985, Hamilton Associates realized the need to partner with another firm. KSA appeared on the radar and meetings began in early 1986. Initial meetings focused on understanding cultures, scope of services, and later, benefits of KSA and Hamilton Associates. Clearly, for both parties, there was interest in making a partnership happen, especially by Barry Moore. The discussion on benefits was getting hung up and Barry offered Hamilton staff be grandfathered into KSA with credit for Hamilton years of service for the Target Plan, vacation, etc. Although at that time I didn't think it was a big thing, that point seemed to break the logjam a bit. Little did I know, but a few years later an extra week of vacation was coming my way and that put me in front of Mr. Moore's vacation allowance. Needless to say I did call Mr. Moore and advised him of this. We traced back to those initial benefit discussions and realized the value of

crediting years of service in both this and several other benefits.

A second event occurred, roughly a year or so after Hamilton Associates joined KSA Barry Moore and I were jogging along the Mississippi River and discussing a few issues related to the integration. Barry mentioned that KSA had worked on a transaction for Burlington Mills and that it appeared a windfall payment would be coming to KSA for their work and all staff would share in it, including the recently acquired Hamilton folks. Pressing Barry further, I found out this work was started before Hamilton joined KSA, but the discussion was to share the windfall across the board. My jog was made a lot easier when realizing yet another value of KSA culture being demonstrated in more than words.

SECTION 4  
**Eyeing the Summit:  
Hamilton HMC and KSA  
1997-2003**

# The Good Old Days of HMC

by Elaine Remmlinger

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Peter Weill and Helen Levine spun off the health care IT practice from Booz Allen Hamilton in the late 1970s. With a few clients, no employees, and a small office in a brownstone in the lower part of Manhattan, they established Healthcare Management Counselors (HMC). The first employee they hired (away from a client) was Elaine Remmlinger.

When the practice grew and additional employees were hired, the offices were moved to 19th Street and Park Avenue South. Two floors were rented and renovated, including installing beautiful glass doors in the 3rd floor lobby. Apparently the neighborhood was not the best and one morning, Peter arrived at work at his usual time of 6:00 AM and found the glass doors shattered by a brick and all the computers and office equipment stolen. Not to be run out of his domain by the criminal element, Peter replaced the glass doors with a solid brick wall and installed three locks and a security system. As the story goes, Peter built the wall over the weekend himself. The security was so complicated that staff received special training and a one-page write-up in order to lock down and open up the offices. Routinely, the alarms were tripped through a procedural error, police arrived on the scene with guns drawn, and Peter or Helen were called to verify the identity of the red-faced employee.

Before the days of voice mail, HMC employed a receptionist who called and screened every telephone call. A VERY LOUD overhead page announced the call for everyone in the office to hear. Before the days of the internet, other administrative help and interns maintained an extensive health care reference library. Before the days of word processing and central file servers, multiple paper copies of all documents and letters were retained by client, by consultant,

and by date.

The first Friday of every month was Office Day where a young consultant was responsible for lining up a vendor, an outside speaker, a presentation on an assigned educational topic, and probably the lunch menu. A big sigh of relief could be heard when Office Day was over.

Peter and Helen are close friends but usually could not work well together. Peter's favorite response to this situation was "you are getting two different opinions for the price of one." Of course Peter was always on the opposite side of every issue:

- Community Health Information Networks (CHINs) - would never work (he was right)
- HL-7 - would never work (he was wrong)
- IDNs - would never work (he was right)
- Y2K bug - no big deal (he was right, but it was a consulting success!)

Before the days of business casual, Peter had a reputation for not being able to put an "ensemble" together. Before a big presentation, Helen would label all the components of a coordinated outfit for him (socks, tie, shirt, suit) with a letter "A" and an alternate outfit with the letter "B" to ensure a GQ effect.

Peter is a great consultant and tackles multiple clients and engagement concurrently. Keeping track of everyone's details is very difficult but Peter always pulls it off - somehow. If he is confusing one client with another, he blames his accent and that the client just didn't understand what he said.

Buying gifts for Peter was always pretty simple. Almost every year he could use a new daytimer and portable phone, to replace the ones he

routinely left at clients, on airplane seats, or God knows where! However, he never seemed to lose his expensive Mt. Blanc fountain pens with the purple ink.

Peter routinely forgets where he is going, who the client is, and the date of the meeting. Elaine and Peter went to Lifespan. The meeting was in RI, but we went to Massachusetts. He has also been ~~know to show up the wrong day for a sales presentation.~~

Peter will always say that the document is great...but that means he has not read it. The next day it shows up rewritten, and he says, it

was a good job, BUT...

Peter always exaggerates on how many employees and client we have. At this point, we are in 48 states, and work for every hospital in the US, and we have a staff of thousands!

Peter is an incredible salesman....he has an amazing ability to turn every opportunity into a sale.

Peter continues to be more than 100% billable as he approaches his 70th birthday, and he has no plans to retire! He is truly amazing!



# Cash Flow in the Early Days of Space Diagnostics

by Tom DeChant

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A classic early Tom and Meredith road trip found us on a morning cruise from Madison to Green Bay for a visit to St. Mary's Hospital. After two hours in which our backsides and bladders were jostled by every pavement seam and ripple, courtesy of Tom's tightly-sprung little Integra, Meredith called for a much needed breakfast break. Peeling into the first McDonalds we could

find, we proceeded to the counter to order caffeine and sustenance. In our customary mutual courtesy, we each offered to pick up the tab. However, upon closer examination of wallet and purse, it turned out that we had a total of 63 cents cash between the two us. Needless to say, the single small black coffee order that resulted was carefully savored and shared.

# Meredith Spear and Her Ruby Red Slippers

by Priscilla Arsove

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Anyone who's visited Meredith's office might have noticed a particular ornament - a red high-heeled shoe, adorned with sparkling red glitter - amongst her artifacts and knickknacks. This red high-heel was a token gift from us Space DX cohorts, symbolizing some of Meredith's legendary moments in client history.

The legend actually began with a pair of red slippers - not high-heels - but became generalized over time to a genre of footwear more suited to Meredith's style and pizzazz. In fact, the shoes in this story were the ones worn by Dorothy in the Land of Oz, and they weren't ornaments, but a graphic adorning a now-infamous t-shirt. The t-shirt ended up becoming the metaphoric Call to Action for two of Space Diagnostics' powerhouse clients. Now, it takes a little imagination - and more than a little chutzpah - to turn a t-shirt slogan into a Call to Action, but Meredith managed to do it, in her unique and inimitable style. I never witnessed the command performances myself -- only heard the stories recounted by others - but then, such lore is the stuff of which legends are made.

Minus the flare and drama, the story goes something like this. Meredith is before a group of senior executives at New England's oldest and most venerable teaching hospital, leading a presentation on master plan findings. The group is having a hard time letting go of old and functionally useless buildings in the heart of its campus - clearly in the way of its desperately needed replenishment plan. How to unleash their thinking? Start with a story.

"My husband gave me a t-shirt that has a pair of red shoes on it," Meredith began. "The t-shirt has this inscription on it: 'Dorothy had the shoes. She didn't have the Vision.'

"Now I'm not an academic," she continued, "so I had to ask my husband to explain what this meant. And he explained that what it meant is that Dorothy could have clicked the heels of her magic red slippers and gone anywhere in the world she wanted to go. But Dorothy didn't have any Vision, so she just ended up going back home to Kansas."

And thus Meredith began the analogy of how Massive General was positioned to chart an exciting and bold course for the future - if only it could find the right Vision. And of course, with a little help from some visionary consultants, it did find this Vision. The buildings are coming down and Meredith cemented a long and continuing relationship with one of KSA's most prestigious clients.

The story doesn't end here. It picks up a few years later in a 20th floor executive board room in New York City with a sweeping view of the Manhattan skyline. The meeting, focused on preliminary master plan opportunities, would have tested the best consultant's resiliency and skill. The notoriously cantankerous CEO was particularly impatient about the lack of an immediate fix to some extraordinarily challenging facility problems. Meredith's presentation was interrupted. "Don't waste my time telling me about facility conditions. We *know* all that. I want *solutions!*" he thundered. A quick quip about "linear thinking" temporarily recovered the floor.

The next hurdle was the consulting team's suggestion that an age-old research building, part of the institution's heritage and name, might eventually need to come down. Heresy! Meredith was admonished that even *mentioning* this possibility would rile the research

community and undermine the entire master plan. Strike the topic from a medical staff presentation scheduled later that afternoon. Redo the slides.

By now you might guess what Meredith did next. She began the medical staff meeting with the t-shirt story. But there was one embellishment. Dorothy could have gone anywhere she wanted,

but she ended up just going back to Kansas *because she was in such a big hurry.*

By the end of the meeting, I am told, the medical staff had joined the rallying cry. Bring the decrepit building down! Build new facilities for research! Hail to a new future for Memorial Earth Shattering!

# Marathon Man: Peter Weil and the World Record

by Mark Wietecha

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There are moments I look up, reflective with the perverse pride that seems only acquired through the inhalation of untold hours of jet fuel fumes and think, "Hard to believe I've done this nearly 20 years, must be made of pretty tough stuff." And why not? By rough count, I've rung up over five million miles of airline credits, caught over 500 early-birds, slept over 2,500 nights in hotel rooms, rented over 1,000 cars, and worn through three rollerboards, all accomplished working with over 150 distinct client organizations. It's likely I've made over 25,000 phone calls in doing all this, all without a headset. Impressive, right?

Wrong.

In the big picture of personal career endurance and the long-term mental toughness necessary to sustain enthusiasm and high energy, I am nothing. I am a flea. An insignificant dust mite wedged in the keypad of one of Peter Weil's vast array of personal technology. You see, on this count, Peter Weil is *The Man*. *T-Rex*. *Gigantor*. *Dude!* Peter isn't just the *Father*, he's the whole damn *Fatherland*.

Peter Weil was a national figure and founding partner of HMC in the early 80s, before I even signed on as a clueless staff consultant, sold it twice including his deal with KSA, and is still going strong today, 20 years later. But there's more, much more, because he had *another* 20-year consulting career before HMC, including the national IT leadership role at Booz Allen. Peter Weil had already matched my existing career while I was still flopping around in diapers. And, he's not finished. He's after it all. The big one: *The Consulting World Record*. He's getting close.

Consulting lore has it McKinsey founder Marvin Bower is the man to beat. Marvin started in the 1930s and kept on going into the 1980s - maybe 50 years. Right up there with Marvin is KSA's own Ross Runnels. Ross joined KSA fresh off the Dartmouth campus in the 1940s, continuing on as an Associate right up through the 1990s, also 50 years or so. Peter is within striking distance, perhaps five, maybe seven years or so, tops, and he'll be *Number One*. And he can do it, because he'll only be 70 this year; plenty of tread left on the tires. Young guy in the Big Picture.

I hope I can last to see him make it!

## Behind the Wheel with Tom DeChant

by Tom DeChant

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Later in Space history, we undertook an OB plan for Newton Wellesley Hospital, a Partners affiliate. Arriving in Boston late the night before our team's first site visit, Tom volunteered his excellent chauffeur skills to drive Judy and Priscilla from Logan airport to the hotel in Newton. Being a Midwest driver unfamiliar with Boston's Revolutionary-era freeway system and user-hostile signage, Tom managed to spot the hotel at precisely the same moment he passed its highway exit. No problem. Taking the next exit and executing a series of rapid U-turns, including the last one over a benign little median curb, he was sure he was headed back in the right direction. However, upon encountering a pair of headlights bearing directly down upon him, and strongly encouraged by a chorus of sharp yelps from the backseat, he quickly bounced back over the median and out of the one-lane freeway exit ramp he was entering the wrong way. Judy and Priscilla haven't forgotten or forgiven to this day.

And, while "going postal" isn't a typical occupational hazard of consultants, there was at least one memorable occurrence of road rage in Space history. Again, Tom is at the wheel, taking Susan Mooney, Don Highlander and a representative of ARCHIBUS software to a major interview and demo at Northwestern in Evanston, Illinois. After an amicable rehearsal lunch, but possibly too much pre-interview caffeine, the team is slowly cruising through downtown Evanston, when a smart-ass black BMW rudely cuts off Tom's new Audi. In full competitive mode, and totally blanking on the fact that he had a car-load of people, Tom gave chase through the crowded downtown streets, staying about 10 inches off the Beemer's bumper at 40 miles an hour. Upon glimpsing the ashen faces of his passengers in the rearview mirror, Tom finally found his senses and his brake pedal in time enough for all to make it to the interview in one piece.

# On-Stage with Meredith Spear

by Mark Wietecha

Bouncing in a taxi down 5th Avenue in New York, I could feel the excitement in Scot Latimer's tone as his urgent voice message crackled over my cell phone: "Good news...we have made the final cut for orals at McGill!" I was thrilled. Scot and I had been dogging after McGill for nearly a year. We had made several trips to Montreal for facings; followed up with checklists for the McGill staff on what they should be doing to plan for their replacement campus; answered questions on the phone, and otherwise shoveled free advice and support into the McGill staff's insatiable appetite for information and dialogue. We had earned our place in the final bake-off.

The McGill replacement represented a billion-dollar endeavor — the biggest hospital project in Canadian history — and we had assembled the "A" Team to go after it including Space Diagnostics and Shepley Bullfinch Richardson and Abbott. The Space Diagnostics team was led by Meredith Spear, who had built a national reputation for herself as a smart, tough, speak-your-mind advisor on facility planning at the highest levels. Although I knew Meredith by reputation, having both beaten and lost to her on a number of ambulatory planning occasions (and still recently stinging from her beating us for the Colorado CAM), I did not know her personally. This was my first chance to sell something with her, and I looked forward to it.

Those working in administration in the Canadian Health System are a modest people, and the selection committee presentation was set up in the typical classroom environment with several long plastic tables and the usual metal and fabric chairs. The overhead fluorescent lights gleamed modestly through their plastic panels, set into the white dropped ceiling. No windows. No sweeping views. All business.

Our presentation team arrived, six senior selling personalities representing four major firms, the growing pulse of adrenaline becoming tangible. We flowed into the room to prepare, surveyed the scene, and immediately commenced to reconfigure the seating into every possible permutation. Straight rows, horseshoe, herringbones, circles, squares, you name, we tried it. After considerable negotiation, using most of our available time shuffling tables and increasingly exasperated, we finally agree on a modified horseshoe, took our places, and began finalizing sequencing and Q&A strategy.

Meredith stood by her appointed place, arms folded, a small frown creasing her face, not happy: "This won't work."

Five exasperated faces turn to Meredith. "What's wrong?"

"This won't work, the lighting over my seat is too dim. They won't be able to see me!"

Five individuals spring back into action, again rearranging tables, increasingly aware of the diminishing clock. Tables rearranged, all five stand back, look expectantly at Meredith. No good.

"What?" proclaim the five in near unison!

Eyeing the crowd, body trembling with conviction, hands outstretched, beseeching: "Because it is critical they - be - able - to - see me!"

The rest is history. We win McGill. KSA and Space merge. McGill becomes one of the two largest projects in HSD history.

What you may not know is, this is how I found myself standing on top of the tables 10 minutes prior to the presentation, removing each fluorescent tube in the ceiling in turn and changing them around to ensure the brightest light shined over Meredith's chair. In the end, she was right, they did need to see her!

## Tom DeChant: On Flora and Fauna

by Priscilla Arsove

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Travel enough with Tom DeChant and you'll be likely be exposed not only to an occasional hair-raising car ride, but to colorful commentary and a quick wit that is evident both on- and off-stage.

The same verbal dexterity that makes Tom so engaging to clients also makes for some entertaining moments for fellow travelers, especially over a glass of wine at the end of a long day. Ferreting out fine dining venues is another of Tom's many talents, and it was at just such a venue that the following story begins. This is one of those stories that is entertaining only in retrospect ...

Tom and I were in Syracuse the evening before a full day of user meetings. Tom managed to locate a nice restaurant with good food and ambiance. We ordered the exact same thing, with the exception of a sausage-stuffed appetizer Tom had before the meal. It was a good thing I declined Tom's offer to taste it.

When we met in the hotel lobby the next morning, Tom looked wasted. In fact, he said, he'd spent most of the night in the bathroom. Violent food poisoning. What was so quintessentially Tom was the way he described the episode. Anyone else in this situation, wiped out and exhausted, might have been a bit more graphic in relating what happened (as in, I was up all night - - k-i-n-g"). Not Tom. His description was this: "I feel as though I have no intestinal flora or fauna left!!!"

Never one to give up easily, Tom bravely made his way to the first user meeting. In his usual engaging way he let the group know that he was sitting near the door just in case he needed to make a hasty get-away. Which he did, about 10 minutes into the meeting. Tom spent the day crashed out in his hotel room and I carried on with the meetings alone. It's one of those episodes we'd just as soon forget, but I'll never forget the way Tom described it.

## Traveling with Tom DeChant: A Gift for the Kid

by Priscilla Arsove

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At an airport, heading home after several busy days at a client site, and browsing in a toy store while we were awaiting our flight, Tom was approached by a sales clerk. “And how old is the child?” she inquired. “Forty-four,” Tom said, without missing a beat.

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# Traveling with Tom DeChant

by Mark Wietecha

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In the spring of 2002 we were early into the work on a large project at MUSC in Charleston, South Carolina, and Tom and I were to meet in the morning to prepare for the afternoon sessions with the client. Both of us had landed the prior evening but had yet to catch up with each other given our separate and late arrivals.

As I got ready in the morning, I found myself eyeing my wardrobe for the week. My rollerboard contained everything I'd need for my five days out: two essentially grey suits, one pair of black shoes, five pairs of black socks, five shirts and three ties, all patterned to match in any pairing, etc. In short, I'd essentially be wearing the same thing every day until the following weekend. Pretty exciting. And, while I don't obsess over this type of thing, the fact that I essentially repeat this routine week-in and week-out can often feel stale. Wouldn't it be great to not have to do the "suit and tie thing" for 75% of the weekdays of the year?

In any event, this was my frame of mind that morning as I trudged downstairs in my nondescript grey costume to meet Tom.

The morning was very nice, and I found a seat outdoors in the patio garden of the small hotel where we were based. The courtyard was full of flowering trees, the morning breeze felt good, and the coffee was decent. Very civilized. As I collected my thoughts for the week, the door opens and out breezes Tom, looking like he just stepped off the front page of *GQ*: Light tan cashmere sweater, blue cotton button-down shirt,

dark brown trousers, and comfortable tasseled loafers. He waves, casually sits down, and proceeds to strike the relaxed pose most often seen in the Ralph Lauren Polo advertisements.

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I didn't say anything, but found myself wondering what his plan was for the day. Was this his intended wardrobe for the day? Some type of new approach with clients, what?

Tom looked over and proceeded to explain that he had somehow arrived in Charleston without a suit. Moreover, while he mentioned having made "provisions" to remedy this situation, he opined he might have to go out shopping that morning and re-suit himself at the local haberdashery. We discussed the timing and logistics of finding and tailoring a suit in time for the afternoon's meetings, when the door again opens and out breezes the front desk clerk with a Federal Express box. He hands this to Tom, who tears off the top and proceeds to produce a full suit, which had been expressed to him from Madison. He then leaves, changes, and we proceeded on to the client site for the day garbed in our usual costumes.

I have to admit being a little disappointed not to have learned some new innovative way we might conduct all this client business without the usual "suit and tie thing," and more than a little amazed to have seen the guy's clothes for the day arrive by FedEx that morning!

# Ode to Barry Moore

by Peter Weil

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Barry Moore was the primary reason Healthcare Management Counselors joined KSA early in 1997 - While Barry and Mark were integrally involved with HMC's transition to become HSD's Information Technology Practice, two events involving Barry come personally to mind.

The first was in late 1996 when Healthcare Management Counselors (HMC), a health care information technology (IT) strategic planning organization, was assessing options for being acquired. There were 8 offers, of which 6 were meaningful - Price Waterhouse, Superior Consulting, Pegasus, a venture capitalist organization; Flex Corporation, a local health care services organization; KSA, and an unnamed mid-size business planning firm.

It quickly became apparent that there was no cultural fit with the unnamed firms - their chief executive was so highly controlling that he even personally issued memorandums regarding how to tear up documents manually (4 folds and two tears). Price Waterhouse required us to move to Chicago. Flex was the high bidder (high is good when you are being acquired), but its reputation was, at best, marginal. Superior Consulting offered a lot of stock options (which subsequently proved to be of little value), but was intent on distributing HMC staff among its existing service-based practices. Pegasus was interesting, especially since its leaders were willing to commit to long-term investment and minimal functional control.

KSA, largely unknown to HMC, was the low bidder - the least financial commitment and loads

of contingent payouts). However, KSA was represented by Barry Moore (supported by a young, very articulate and highly vocal teammate, Mark) - Barry made us feel like we were dealing with a highly knowledgeable professional representing a management consulting organization whose values were virtually identical to our own.

Over the subsequent weeks HMC's internal decision-making leadership, which consisted primarily of Elaine, Marilyn, and Peter actively supported by our staff, decided that the appropriate decision was to join our future with KSA - a decision which proved to be prophetic. All of our staff moved over with no defections. Again, Barry (with help from Mark) was the catalyst to our making the right decision which favored cultural similarities over financial gain.

The second was in 1999 (or was it 2000) where an event occurred at the HSD annual meeting that, despite the best of intentions, was one of the most physically stressing exercises that I (and others) who were not in the prime of physical shape could imagine -- the Stone Mountain ascent exercise. For those of you who were not there, imagine a competitive climb of a 3000 foot high mountain (or was it 3 Million feet, sure felt like it) in a 90 plus highly humid temperature - with ten or so mandatory exercises along the route which often demanded that our team partially descend before proceeding up (it was so arduous that while only one participant was hospitalized with heat prostration, many of us wished to join that person for a long ride in an air conditioned ambulance).

The saving grace during this 3-hour ordeal was the frequent appearance of a disguised apparition, running out of the surrounding trees, who showered us with a water gun, a most appreciated and refreshing interruption. Guess who? Barry Moore.

It is not clear to us why Barry retired - he is far too young to laze away at the beach (or worse, play golf every day - after 18 lessons I quit this sport), but we all wish that he would reconsider. Personally, I have never met any one else who combined the highest caliber professional expertise and demeanor with an outgoing, sincere, and friendly personality one wishes for in family and intimate friends.

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