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Childhood Heroes  
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For so long, I have envied so many of you. I have heard papers about mountains climbed, business deals aborted, childhood rooms redecorated, hardscrabble upbringings, small town memories, medical meanderings, even graveyard explorations to seek the tombstone of a favorite poet.

And I have thought: Why can't you, Polk, serve up something about your own past that might keep your clubbable peers at least half-alert before refreshments are served? Why make every paper a dense, journalistic inquiry into topics that run the risk of anesthetizing all in attendance? Even the how-to-write-a-paper instructions to new members encourage personal revelation. Fellow Literarians like learning something about you, we are told. And so I have thought: How might I comply? What from my own experiences might qualify as paper-worthy? Have my 71 years on the planet been so uneventful that there is nothing to report?

I am not sure.

In the seventh grade, along with a good friend, I destroyed with cherry bombs an imported Italian marble bird bath that his parents cherished. Maybe a year later, at a summer camp in the Quetico-Superior, I humiliated myself by falling straight backwards – as if felled by an arrow – when a counselor outfitted me with a backpack that was more than I could handle. The simile is apt because, at the time, we were at the beginning of a canoe trip, and we were launching from an Indian reservation, and all the Indians were watching – and laughing – and I have never forgotten the moment. Then there were the years when I was a perhaps-too-willing denizen of this city's debutante circuit. I thought I might explore the rituals and protocols of that vanished era as if from a Margaret Mead perspective, but Tony Cavotta told me absolutely not. Never mind that, amid the excess, there was a beauty and elegance about those parties that I would never experience again. None of the above, however, was formative. When I really drilled down on my past, and tried to conjure what had had undeniable influence on me growing up, the answer was people – three of them. One was Richard Deupree, my step-grandfather, and in the years of my youth, the chairman of the board of Procter and Gamble. He was the wisest person that I ever knew well. One was a family friend, Art Hailand, whom I knew in the summer, and who was as close to a real-life Pied Piper as most children will ever meet. The third, Walt Disney, was my creative muse. In those dark-ages days before Star Trek and texting, before I-Pads and cable and mass-culture sports, any kid's best escape was television and the movies. For sheer variety and batting average of compelling fare, no one served it up better than Walt. From an early age, I thought I wanted to work for him.

These were my childhood heroes, and to some extent, each remains influential in my life today. I'll talk about that. As important, I have come to perceive each one differently than I did when I was young, but that evolution, I think, says

more about me (and/or growing up) than about them. I'll reference those shifting perceptions as well.

Childhood heroes, of course, have many incarnations. In the early to mid-50s, when I still qualified as a child, there were the "singing cowboys" – can you imagine! – like Roy Rogers and Gene Autry. There was the Lone Ranger, best remembered for the William Tell Overture, who said, in one of the great jokes of the era, when he and his faithful Indian companion Tonto found themselves surrounded by hostile redskins, "Tonto, what are we going to do?" And Tonto replied, "What you mean 'we' Kimosabe?" There were local baseball heroes like Ted Kluzewski, Joe Nuxhall and Roy McMillan, and comic book heroes like Superman and Batman, and flash-in-the-pan heroes like Davy Crockett. (The latter, of course, was a Disney creation, with "The Ballad of Davy Crockett" becoming an overnight sensation nationwide and sales of coonskin caps – I had one – reaching 10 million in just six months.)

Over the generations, heroes morph: It may say something that my eldest son, now 43 and selling real estate in Los Angeles, was reading "The Art of the Deal" by Donald Trump when he was in the eighth grade. To this day, he cannot cite anyone who made a bigger impression on him as a child . . . but he did vote for Hillary Clinton last month. His firstborn, now 14, requested superhero wall decals from the grandparents a few years back; the icons he chose were Darth Vader, Kobe Bryant and Batman. Homer's real hero, however, is Tom Brady, quarterback for the New England Patriots. When Brady was in trouble over "Inflatagate" recently, and the league temporarily suspended him, Homer was incensed and would aggressively challenge anyone questioning Brady's integrity. Had I felt strongly, which I did not, I could not have imagined taking him on.

My heroes were closer to earth – and to the day-to-day world. I don't know if Procter & Gamble still has an executive dining room, but in the middle '60s it certainly did, with glass walls, allowing all other diners to see in and, perhaps, aspire to its rarified air. More than once I had lunch there with Pappy, as the grandchildren called him, who I think enjoyed exposing me to the corporate executives. I also think that he was hopeful that I would sometime go to work at P&G. Following lunch, we would return to the sixth floor of what is now the Central Building, to his office, a wood-paneled outpost on the building's northwest corner, with a soft carpet and a desktop free of anything too urgent. By then, Pappy was about 80 and long retired from active involvement, but he could not resist coming into the office daily. As he said of another, younger executive then struggling with whether to retire, "It's your life's work; you don't give that up easily."

On the wall of the office was a small oil portrait of William Cooper Procter, the last member of the founding families to have run the company and a mentor to Pappy, who followed him in 1930. Pappy would look at the portrait and say to me, "Whatever you end up doing, somebody's going to help you. You can't do it alone." (Which, by the way, I subsequently found to be true.) And then, "He was a great man, and no one remembers him now." Among other things, Procter had introduced P&G's famed employee profit-sharing plan, a five-day work week and guaranteed employment for 48 weeks a year – all, in their day, radical innovations. He was also a formidable civic leader, prompting the Enquirer to say in a eulogy that he was "the most valuable citizen the city has possessed in the last fifty years."

Undoubtedly ruminating on his own mortality, Pappy would add, “You’re very soon forgotten after you’re gone.” And finally, as a kind of coda to our time together, “You are your age; don’t ever forget it.” As I have grown older – and seen on the cover of the AARP magazine pictures of contemporaries bungee-jumping or para-gliding, I have thought often of that simple but sound advice. It was so typical of what Pappy had to share.

Richard Redwood Deupree, his full name, was born in rural Virginia and raised in Covington. He was 20 in 1905 when he went to work as a clerk in the treasurer’s office of P&G. At that time, it was one of the nation’s two or three largest producers of soap, with gross sales of \$10 million. The sales were generated by four brands of bar soap – with Ivory far in a way the leader – and two brands of soap chips, sold nationwide to laundries, hotels and hospitals. Eager, enterprising and inquiring, Deupree was quickly tapped for sales in the soap chip division, where he was first assigned to a list of laundries in Chicago – “the deadest, hardest, most miserable prospects in the country,” he later told me, with the exception of New York. His mission, to introduce Amber Soap Flakes, a genuinely “new and improved” product, filled him with purpose; he knew that Amber’s formulation bested any competition, and he was determined to deliver the message, whether a prospect wanted to hear it or not. Sometimes it was sufficient to describe the soap, and sometimes it was necessary to roll up his sleeves, don workpants and actually demonstrate Amber’s prowess. He was driven. Within two years, he had replaced his boss as head of the soap chip division.

I might insert here that Deupree’s formal education had stopped with the sixth grade. His family, including seven siblings and virtually no financial cushion, needed help. So he went to work early, taking whatever pickup jobs he could get – office boy, errand boy, shipping clerk – until by age 14, on four dollars a week, he was totally self-sufficient, buying all his own food and clothing. From the time he left grammar school, and for the next 13 years, he received night school tutoring in English, algebra, geometry and trigonometry. He was also reading, and internalizing, as a personal credo, Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essays on “Self-Reliance” and “Compensation.” He told me once, although I think it could have been hyperbole, that he reread them annually. He also told me, and I know he meant it, that Benjamin Franklin was the greatest American. He had absorbed Franklin’s autobiography, especially noting an incident in which a woman came into Franklin’s shop intending to buy a spool of thread. When she heard the price – say a nickel – she balked. “It’s too much,” she said, hesitating. When she later relented, Franklin told her the price would now be a dime. “You’ve taken up my time,” he told her. “Time is money.” Pappy loved that.

By the spring of 1911, as the soap chip manager overseeing an important new-product push into New England, he was working (quote)“fourteen and sixteen hour days without lunch, and we were lucky to have supper.” (unquote) Hard work and sacrifice, he preached to the 15 salesmen reporting to him, were critical to building the confidence they would need for success; so was honesty, a thorough knowledge of one’s products and business, resourcefulness, tact and courage. It all folded neatly into his philosophy of company service, repeated to me many times over the years: “Thou shalt have one god in front of you.”

Pappy was tough, but as I came to understand, 'tough' not in the sense of 'mean,' but in the sense of 'determined.' Determined to do what was needed, to do what was "right," as he liked to say, and not to be deterred by the quotidian distractions that so often deflect good intentions. An employee charged with keeping glycerin at a steady price during a period of economic duress asked how he was supposed to do that. Said Deupree, "It's not my job to tell you how. It's my job to tell you to do it, and your job to figure out how." In 1912, when he was promoted to box soap manager in charge of the western division, stretching from the Mississippi to the Pacific, he quickly fired eight of the ten managers reporting to him. "Why they were old, some of them, and lazy," he told me years later. "The first man I got rid of I ate lunch with, and he ordered everything in sight. He drank four or five quarts of beer and we spent two hours there. I said, 'this man is not for us.'" At the same time, he believed profoundly that – again, in his words – "You don't build a business by firing people. You build it by helping them to do a better job." The eight he let go those early days in box soap were victims of their own incompetence, pure and simple.

At the same time, he had a wry sense of humor that most often surfaced in private conversations, but occasionally in public, as in this exchange with an irate shareholder from the late 1930s:

"Mr. Deupree, with all due respect, I find your salary outrageous." At the time, Deupree, as president of the company, was making about \$200,000 annually. The figure had been published in *The Cincinnati Enquirer*.

"Well first let me ask you, do you think I'm doing a good job?" Deupree responded.

The shareholder said yes.

"Why then, how much would you give me -- \$150,000?"

No, the fellow said, still too much.

"\$100,000?" No, not even that.

"Would you pay \$75,000?" Deupree persisted. No, again. FDR made \$75,000 a year, and certainly the President of the United States should make more than the president of P&G.

Unfazed, Deupree asked if the man would pay him \$60,000 annually.

Yes, came the reply, yes, he thought he would.

"I wouldn't work for you," Deupree said – but then went on to explain: Competent administrators could command large salaries with any number of firms; they were that hard to find. This being the case, he suggested, wouldn't the stockholder be happier that his own stock was in the care of capable management? The gentleman left convinced that the P&G president was worth his salary, as the president knew he would.

Pappy was named general sales manager in 1917, a member of the board of directors in 1924 and general manager in 1927. As he later recalled it to me, Mr. Procter had identified a few contenders to succeed him for the top spot; occasionally he would ask his general manager: "Red, what would you think if I put so and so in charge?"

Pappy's response was typically direct: "Mr. Procter, if he's got it, I'll stay and work for him. But if he hasn't got it, I won't be here long."

I could go on with Pappy stories, but let me wrap this portion of my remarks with a couple of lasting impressions. One was his conviction, often expressed, that “It is all most men can do to take care of themselves and their families.” As a youth, I found the remark odd; surely the people I knew had their private lives well in hand. Many were civic presences as well. In Pappy’s library was a photograph of him with Dwight Eisenhower, reflecting just one of several government assignments he had successfully completed. His national and local contributions were substantial; I didn’t bother to think that they might be unusual as well.

In the same way, I see now how clearly I failed to remind myself that Pappy himself was highly unusual. I wasn’t objective in assessing him, and more importantly, in assessing myself in relation to him. Knowing that he wanted me to work for P&G, I succumbed to the flattery of his iron-clad belief in the importance of good people to a business. As he said at a company dedication in 1928: “Of course it is a very simple thing to say that if you have the right man in the job he will make things go. He will see to it that the right things are done in order to promote your business. Though it is simple, it is the greatest truth we have to face for the future welfare of the company. We are absolutely helpless without it.”

Over the years, I heard that repeatedly, though usually in less stentorian tones. Sometimes he would add: “I like ‘em with a smile. But if they don’t have a smile, and they’re competent, I’ll take ‘em.”

Someone who had a smile, but who might not have been Pappy’s first choice for a P&G hire, was Art Hailand. Art was from suburban Chicago; when I knew him, he lived in Lake Forest, Illinois. Our families went to the same place in Northern Michigan in the summer; the Hailands and my parents were close, and so I saw a lot of Art. He had boundless energy and a crazy, zany personality that manifested itself in gushers of unlikely expressions like: “Hold ‘er newt!” or “Stand by one!” or “Hit ‘em high and hit ‘em low!” -- the latter when at a backgammon table looking for doubles or playing golf and hoping for a decent shot. He also had a habit of clucking his tongue (example) at the end of many declarative statements; he was beyond “fun.” With three children of his own, Art had unalloyed affection for “the kiddies” as he called us. “Yes, you neat little guy,” he would say when any of us approached him with a question or a request. Or, “I think you’re great. I don’t care what your Mom and Dad say.” (cluck)

He was the most social person I have ever met. He loved parties, people, and the music of the American Songbook. Songs like “Fly Me to the Moon” and “What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life” became summer themes, and he would whirl around the dance floor in his latest, snazziest sports jacket, singing, two-stepping, exhausting his partners. The words to “You Go to My Head” – “with a smile that makes my temperature rise/like a summer with a thousand Julys” – were magic for him. But, then, Art particularly loved summer. He had a boat, a 40-foot Chris-Craft sea skiff, with his philosophy of life emblazoned on the transom: the “Joie de Vivre” it was called – the joy of living – and oh how he made it work for all of us in those earliest years of my life.

There were trips to the many islands of northern Lake Michigan: Beaver, High and Mackinaw, with adults on the rear deck and children crawling over every flat surface, bow, sides, and cabin below. We would arrive at Mackinaw and he’d put

everybody on one of the ubiquitous horse-drawn carriages and take them to the Grand Hotel for hamburgers. When the Mackinaw Bridge, uniting Michigan's two great peninsulas, was to be completed, by the summer of 1957, Art – who piloted a Cessna among other hobbies – assured us all, “We’ll fly over it, we’ll drive over it, and we’ll sail under it – and you can’t beat that.” (cluck) He loved to plan. “And tomorrow,” I heard him say at the end of one particularly good day, “we’ll do something else gay and elaborate.” And he loved control, I figured out later.

Art grew up in Barrington, Illinois, the son of a man with a small family insurance business. He attended Amherst, enlisted in the navy (he always loved boats), and at the conclusion of World War II returned to the family business. Along the way, he married Mildred Bunn, an heiress to the Sangamo Electric Company fortune in Springfield, Illinois, and together, they became a greatly beloved duo, he with his talent for living, and she with one of the great dry senses of humor. Shy by nature, Millie was inherently quiet and inclined to a low profile: I always thought it was one of the great examples of Divine Intervention: the Lord granted her someone who could light up her life; she enabled their outsized lifestyle.

As the years went by, Art's family insurance business was sold to a larger outfit, and Art went with it. But his destiny was not to become a mogul, although he knew and admired many. He eventually left insurance and involved himself with a number of investment opportunities, one of them a regional airline. Some of it, I had the sense, worked out all right; some of it less so. I remember asking him once about a particular investment that a number of people we knew in common had made – and his response was a choking outcry of pain. In his later years, Art gave up business altogether and occupied himself with fund-raising for various schools that he and/or his children had been involved with – and in that capacity, I think, he did a lot of good.

I never heard him say a negative thing about another person. I never knew him to be less than 100 percent helpful in any way he could when a friend needed a favor. One of his children told me recently that every day he woke up and all but cried out: “Isn't this a great day! How can we make the most of it?”

He wasn't perfect – is anybody? – my brother, who is gay, told me recently that once Art learned of his orientation, he was cool to him forever after. Another brother, who pulled an embarrassing prank at one of Art's children's weddings, was never forgiven; how Art's society friends perceived him was of outsized importance. Money, and the kind of lifestyle it had afforded him, was also very important.

As I became more self-aware, I sensed I was never going to live like Art, and I recognized that my own sensibilities were very different from his. Still, Art's personal glamour and zest for all things fun and exciting, never failed to dazzle. To this day, when I am in New York and passing by the 21 Club on 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, I still see him leading a group of us through its wrought iron doors and telling me to order the Senegalese. “Polk,” he would say. “It is out of this world!” (cluck)

Walt Disney, the third of my childhood heroes, was such a towering figure in the evolution of Baby Boom America that it's a little hard now to remember the shadow he cast. “Snow White,” his first feature-length cartoon movie, pre-dated my contemporaries by about eight years. But by the time “Peter Pan” was released, in 1953, and we were old enough to pay attention, Disney had us in the palm of his

gifted, albeit heavy, hand. We flocked to “The Mickey Mouse Club;” we learned about the American frontier through the amusing vantage points of Davy Crockett and Mike Fink; we got a thrill-packed glimpse of the Civil War in “The Great Locomotive Chase;” we got nightmares of giant squids from “20,000 Leagues Under the Sea;” we saw “The Living Desert” and “The Vanishing Prairie” as introductions to ecology before the word entered general usage; we watched *Zorro* and *Disneyland* with religious fervor. By the middle 50s, the advent of Disneyland itself, the themed amusement park that was to raise forever the bar for its American – and later the world’s – counterparts had every sentient being in the nation counting the days until it opened . . . and when it finally did, in 1955, it did not disappoint.

My own image of Walt Disney was largely formed by the avuncular host of *Disneyland*, his 1954 television show promoting – which no one seemed to mind – his cartoons, live-action films, documentaries, the construction of the park and anything else that he was of a mind to extol. I drank the Kool-Aid, and I was not alone. In its first season, *Disneyland* consistently attracted more than 50 percent of the audience in its time slot, climbing in the ratings until even its repeats outdrew every program on television save *I Love Lucy*.

In these years, I had pasted around my room Disney movie marquee posters and photos generously provided by my neighbor Bob Ott, of Hennegan Printing . . . things like a life-size image of “The Shaggy Dog” or Fred MacMurray in “Son of Flubber.” I read with enthusiasm Diane Disney Miller’s filial tribute, “My Dad Walt Disney,” showing a cover picture of the great man riding his famed model railroad around his property in Holmby Hills, sporting a smile as wide as Mulholland Drive. Long before Ivy League graduates like Matt Damon and Ben Affleck were making their way to Hollywood and finding success, I thought some attachment to show business would be a fine thing. I imagined that working for The Walt Disney Company might be close to paradise.

Was such a daydream anything more than a reflection of my own immaturity? Probably not. As I came to understand, the real Walt was very different from our TV friend.

Walt Disney was born in 1901 and spent most of his childhood in Marceline, Missouri. It was the prototype small-town America that he later apotheosized in his depiction of Disneyland’s Main Street USA, and throughout his life, he looked back upon it with both affection and nostalgia. At a very early age, prompted by a gift of crayons and a tablet from his uncle, Disney recognized that he had some talent, and possibly more important, an obsession with: drawing. Fresh out of high school, he went to work for a commercial art studio in Kansas City, then for a film ad studio, and from there it was a relatively short step to opening his own animation business. Still not more than 20 years old, he created a series of hugely popular cartoons for a local theater, called *Laugh-O-Grams*, and these enabled him to form a genuine studio. But it was not a financial success. By age 23, he had declared bankruptcy. Together with his older brother Roy, who was to be his financial guardian angel for the rest of his life, Walt moved to Hollywood to start over.

I will not take you through the subsequent ups and downs of a surprisingly tumultuous career. Unscrupulous distributors, precarious financing and too many poor box-office returns, a nervous breakdown in 1931 and an animators’ strike ten

years later all contributed to a never stable, rarely comfortable work environment. The great early successes – Mickey Mouse in 1929, The Three Little Pigs in 1933 and “Snow White” four years later – were indisputable bright spots on a too-often dark canvas. For years, indeed throughout his career, Disney insisted on implementation of his creative vision, whatever the consequences, and he expected Roy to find the money to support it, whatever that entailed. He was a workaholic of Steve Jobs-ian proportions, rarely failing to return to the studio at night despite patent devotion to his family. If he was, in the final analysis, only a pretty good artist, he was a great story man; his narrative sense uplifted many a Disney creation. He was a visionary of the highest order; almost all of the studio’s innovations had their gestation with him. Disneyland was the culmination of this outpouring, and with its instant and remarkable success, the studio was finally financially secure.

Over time, the stress transformed Disney into something of a tyrant. “Steel springs inside a silk pillow,” according to one associate. Neal Gabler, Disney’s most comprehensive biographer, notes that when an artist working on “20,000 Leagues” asked to be reassigned after a falling-out with a partner, Disney insisted he stay. When the artist pushed back, Disney barked, “I’m talking, you shut up.” Said the artist later, “He cut me down as if he had had a scythe in this hand.” Said producer Bill Walsh, “You were being patted on the head by this kindly old uncle who wanted you to be happy and have a nice warm lunch when you suddenly realized you were talking to Attila the Hun.” As the years wore on, Gabler writes, “Walt Disney, who had long been a distant and a terrifying presence, had become even more distant and even more terrifying.”

The first time I laid eyes on Disneyland, long a goal, was – perhaps ironically – when I was distributing free samples of Gain detergent for Procter & Gamble in Orange County, California, in 1967. Yes, Pappy’s influence had prevailed. While I still follow the fortunes of the Walt Disney Company the way some people follow baseball, I never sought a job there. P&G was the stronger lure.

I had taken a job in the company’s field advertising operation, a complex arrangement of company owned trucks, company employed drivers (called crew managers), and sample distributors hired daily at local employment agencies. The distributors would walk up and down the streets with a large box of samples strapped over their shoulders and chalk in their hands. When they reached the end of a block, they would “T” to the left or right, meaning that they would walk in one direction or another, and indicate which by leaving a chalk mark on the street corner . . . so that the harried crew manager, who was frantically dashing between the eight distributors in order to re-supply them, would know where he had gone. I was a crew manager; it was a 10-hour a day job if it was a minute; the quality of the distributors was rarely better than D minus; the pressure from the company, in the form of nattily dressed supervisors flying in to check on things, was intense.

I had started this madness in June in south Chicago, where one of my first distributing crews had allowed several packs of Bounty paper towels to fall from the back of our truck and I got picked up for littering. Our daily living allowance from the company was sufficiently slim that the best way to make ends meet was to live at the local “Y,” where I was propositioned by a fellow lodger my first night. Come the weekend, I sought refuge with the Hailands, in Lake Forest, where Art urged me

to forget it and let him take me to some of , as he put it, “the most elaborate coming out parties in the country.” But Procter had other plans. My next assignment was Beloit. “I won’t go to Beloit! I won’t go to Beloit!” I kept saying, and Millie picked right up on it, making “I won’t go to Beloit!” the comic mantra of that summer.

But of course I did go to Beloit, and then to Wichita, and to Lewiston, Idaho, and finally to Orange County. By then it was December, and by January, I had matriculated at the Wharton School of Business, where I hoped to get the M.B.A. that might be the ticket to a more appealing job at Procter. And that worked out. Two years later, I was a brand assistant on Biz, a pre-soak product whose laundry-day mission was to remove intractable stains from clothing by soaking before washing. I stayed in brand work about ten months. Among my lasting memories are the time I was invited in to see a rough cut of an upcoming Biz TV commercial. The higher-ups all critiqued it owlishly, and the ad agency, Tatum Laird Kudner, retreated to Chicago to amend it. Three weeks later we found ourselves back in the same screening room, and the “revised” commercial flashed on. Much better, much improved my bosses were saying. But the TLK people were uneasy. Something was wrong! Whoa! They were showing us the same thing we’d seen three weeks earlier! They had gotten the reels confused!

Other incidents that helped move me to the inevitable conclusion: First, the Biz bag, a promotional item to be given away in stores in return for a super-sized purchase of our product. The item had been generated at my request by the Promotion and Sales Development department, although it took some persuasion to bring them around. When I told my boss of their initial resistance, he said, “Those people are shit! Go back and tell them to do it!” The bag they came up with was richly colored in the Biz hues, but alas, could not withstand a proper washing without wrinkling and fading unacceptably. When I learned this, through a home trial, I had the questionable judgment of bringing in the bag and waving it around, flag-like, so that my fellow brand assistants could see. My boss did not like that, and made his feelings known. But I still have the Biz bag, the only one ever created, and tonight I will share it with you.

Then there was the memo writing. Every two months, like clockwork, the Neilson accounting of our case shipments arrived, and it was my assignment to turn around, overnight, an analysis of the data. To do so, I had to produce one of the famous P&G memos. At Procter, intra-company correspondence was a fine art that new brand assistants spent days and weeks trying to perfect. In fact, I was a pretty good memo writer . . . but a reluctant analyst at best. Soon enough, my boss and I agreed: this wasn’t a match.

When I told Pappy, he wasn’t outwardly exercised. “Well, we can’t all sell soap,” he said. He was disappointed, I knew, and someone else later confirmed it. But he was understanding with me, and I was grateful. To this day, when I am in a quandary about how to handle something, I tend to think: What would Pappy do? The answer is almost always clear.

The transition out of Procter wasn’t easy. The lessons to be learned – and there were several – would surface only in time. The largest, I guess, was one I am still learning: Know yourself, know what works for you, and make that your

compass. Childhood heroes can – or maybe should – take you only so far. Pappy's god before him was always the company. I was going to need to find another.

When I told my father that I was leaving Procter, his response was more judgmental. "What else can you do?" he asked.

A little startled, I said I wasn't sure . . . but that maybe I would try to write for a newspaper.

Thank you.