

A (SELF) TRIBUTE TO COREY

by Joshua Bienstock at Corey's *Homecoming* hosted by FDR Lodge #613, Knights of Pythias

At my age it's hard to remember what my name is, where I am or what I'm doing here!

Corey! Is this a roast or a tribute to Corey? Well it really doesn't matter! It's the same story!

I have known Corey since Hofstra Law School for over 30 years when he had a lot more (and longer) hair and less Corey.

Even then everyone knew him as Corey (no last name). The world has Madonna, Prince, Beyonce! We have Corey!

And, everyone still knows him as Corey! At times it can get frustrating! When I go with him to Ben's Best in Queens, as I'm introducing him to the owner Jay Parker; the owner – you might have seen the segment on Diners, Dives and Drive-ins – shouts out “Hi Corey”. When we attend an event at Hofstra Law School, as I'm about to introduce him to the Dean, she rushes over, gives him a big hug and says hello Corey!

It seems like every place we go together people all know him and know him as Corey! In Albany lobbying to defeat Congestion Pricing, he takes Vincent and I off the beaten path to see legislators from Brooklyn, Queens and The Bronx – we get welcomed warmly despite not being on their busy schedules.

To describe Corey suffice it to say he is a puzzle inside a riddle within an enigma wrapped in a mystery! Corey is always thinking; you just never are sure as to what scheme he is plotting at any given moment! And, he is always 3 steps ahead of us all! To adequately explain, let me tell you a short story! I believe it is apocryphal:

Two men are being held up by a robber; we will call the two men Corey and Joshua! As the robber is demanding all the money and jewelry from them, Corey turns to Joshua, thanks him for the \$500 loan from the week before and returns the \$500 to Joshua!

Anyone fooled by that sweet, engaging almost angelic smile is doomed! Corey is always one step ahead of us! Another story comes to mind; Corey is responsible for Public Relations at the Queens Chamber of Commerce; Chamber meetings start at 8:30 a.m. sharp! As we all know Corey has issues with time management! In other words he is never on time (I suspect he will be late for his own funeral).

By the way, Shelly can confirm that Corey arrived on time 27 years ago tomorrow when they took their vows.

Anyway, Corey is notorious for arriving late to Chamber meetings; between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. We have a pool at the chamber to bet on who can guess how late he will be! Well Corey caught wind of our game, started calling a member who got to the meeting on time and told him to bet on Corey coming on time! Sure enough Corey showed up on time and shared \$50 with his co-conspirator to our chagrin.

Corey enjoys living in a world of ambiguity. For instance when I call him on the phone on time the conversation went as follows:

“This is Corey” (so I didn’t know if I was talking to him or his answering machine)

Q: Hi Corey!

A: Hi! Joshua

Q: Where are you Corey?

A: Here

Q: Where?

A: In my car?

Q: Where is your car?

A: On the Road!

Q: Where on the road?

A: In Queens

Q: Where in Queens?

A; on the expressway?

Q: What expressway?

A: Does it matter?

Q: Where are you will you be on time for the 8:30 Chamber meeting?

A: Maybe!

And this exchange will go on and on for a very frustrating 15 minutes!

On another occasion we had the following verbal exchange:

Q: Corey are you meeting me at the Chamber meeting this afternoon?

A: I have it in my calendar!

Being on to Corey's ability to give ambiguous answers I went in for the kill:

Q: I'm glad you have it in your calendar, but are you coming?

A: Are you?

Q: Yes I am!

A: Then I don't have to go!!

Q: Where are you?

A: On the deck?

Q: Where

A: At the pool

But since I have been chosen to shed light on Corey's being, I am duty bound to tell the whole story!

Corey is one of the kindest caring considerate human beings I have had the privilege of sharing time on this planet with. To capture the essence of Corey in one word he is a mensch (Which translated from Yiddish means a person of integrity and honor.)

Corey is a respected attorney, the commensurate Public Affairs advisor for various elected officials, including a member of congress, a labor union – whose president, by the way is a graduate of the prestigious Pythian Camp, and my organization Resolve It, Inc. Go to his website – CoreyBearak.com and see all the articles and commentaries he wrote, the laws he worked on, the things he got done in government such at the Recycling Law, or better the law requiring working smoke alarms in our homes. He a great community activist who turned surplus land at state psychiatric center into a school campus instead of some cramped residential or commercial development; at the NEQJCC, he is an environmentalist at Gotham Green (an environmentally concerned business group), he is active at the Queens Chamber of Commerce.

In short, he cares about his community and fellow man!

Of our worldly blessings, the enduring one is known in my religious tradition as "the crown of a good name": a good reputation among people worthy of our respect. We earn that through good deeds.

Rabbi Shimon used to say: There are three crowns--the crown of the Torah, the crown of the priesthood, and the crown of kingship, but the crown of a good name surpasses them all.

(Pirkei Avos 4:17)

If one is to be judged by our actions, our good deeds, and how we have lived our life, Corey has indeed set a very high bar for the rest of us!

Congratulations Corey on a life lived well!