

February, 2012

As I prepare for our 15th annual \$1 million giveaway to fight hunger, spearheaded by our thousands of Feinstein Jr. Scholars (\$1.25 billion raised to date, called the most successful ongoing effort ever to fight hunger), a pause for reflection...

How did this all begin? Millions of people joining in my annual campaign, over 100,000 Feinstein Jr. Scholars in 117 local Feinstein Leadership Schools pledged to do good deeds, even schools in Africa and Honduras named for them.

Never would have imagined this in my early years! I grew up in an ordinary, (so I thought), middle class family, harboring no special aspirations, pushing myself just hard enough to get a degree in education at Boston Teachers College. Taught school for a few years then met my wife to be, a psychiatrist from Thailand. After spending a year in her homeland, we came to Rhode Island when she was offered a residency in psychiatry and I a teaching job in Bristol.

We settled down in a modest home raising three children, envisioning a normal middle class future. But it was not to be... Instead it was the beginning of a most unusual life journey, interlaced with great men to thieves, from the King of Thailand and Presidents to scam artists extraordinaire. But the most impact on my future came from a man I would never even meet.

His name - Dr. G. Vee - an Indian business man/world traveler who happened to see a little weekly newspaper column I was writing in the early 1970s as a sideline to my teaching. For some unfathomable reason he asked if he could place it in newspapers in countries he visited on his business trips. Upon my consent, it soon began appearing in newspapers in Japan, Russia, England, Egypt and many other countries! I never met this man, never found out how he had such worldwide clout, or why he had so much admiration for my little weekly column, but with the exception of my wife he was to forever be the one most responsible for my exploding future.

How? Because he had entered my life when I had recently put my teaching career on hold and started a fledgling financial newsletter. His international placements of my newsletter column quickly branded me as an international syndicated columnist, helping to convince many thousands of people that my newsletter--and what I offered in it, was

worth their interest. And unlike other financial newsletters at that time, I had begun offering collectibles for sale along with my advice – coins, stamps and presidential autographs - something other financial writers then did not do, relying instead for their income solely on their subscriptions charges. I had broken new ground, resulting in a substantial ever increasing income from my newsletter, thanks in no small part to my unknown admirer and his international clout.

But there was an even greater reason for my rapidly growing financial success – my decision that I could further increase my collectibles sales by offering a full one year money back guarantee on anything purchased from me (an unheard guarantee of at that time). Combined with my reputation as a syndicated columnist and financial advisor, that guarantee unleashed a flood orders for everything thereafter I recommended. And my readership and income soared as news of my reputation and my unique one year money back guarantee spread, all due to my wife’s decision to accept that offer of a psychiatric post in Rhode Island hospital, bringing us here from her homeland. If not for her decision, I would likely still be there, living a quiet idyllic life...

As the years passed, my interest in children’s causes and in helping the needy had grown, finally overriding my desire to keep making money. So, in 1999, I had decided to retire from business and establish a philanthropic foundation with the bulk of the fortune I had accumulated.

Over the next few years, my philanthropy had evolved into two main efforts – a scholarship/school program promoting youngsters doing good deeds for others, and, starting in 1996, an annual \$1 million giveaway to anti hunger agencies nationwide for them to use as a spur to their own fund raising.

This month I finished up my annual yearly visitation to 118 schools in Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts known as Feinstein Leadership Schools, where they encourage their students (know as Feinstein Jr. Scholars)to do good deeds for others and report them to me. I, in turn, announce them on my TV PBS show I have every Saturday and Sunday. And now, I prepare to launch my 15th annual campaign to fight hunger, spearheaded by our army of Feinstein Jr. Scholars collecting canned goods for their local food pantries.

I can't recall how many honorary degrees I've received, speeches I've given or even how much money I've made, but I do know the most of it has gone to the above efforts. There are 45,000 plus Feinstein Jr. Scholars I speak to every year in local schools in Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts – plus other Feinstein Jr. Scholars in schools in Africa and Honduras, schools named for them for their good deeds. These youngsters with their teachers, my family and our 100,000 earlier Jr. Scholars – and the many people who join in my campaign each year to fight hunger - these are my treasures...

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