

Years ago a book was written about my impact in the business world. Since then, I've often been asked to write my biography. No thanks. I had too much else to do. Besides, once it was written and published, what about the rest of my life. There always seemed to be so much more ahead.

And there was. I've been blessed to have touched millions of lives. What I've learned and done has enriched my life and will enrich yours, too. It will give you and your children what I discovered too late to give to my own three children, and can only hope they have learned on their own, or will from this...

So, starting now, here it is. Condensed. My life story...

The Beginning...

I've been taken in by sob stories and con men, fought years of legal action to get an apology and retraction for a false accusation made against me, been featured on magazine covers, lampooned for having so much in Providence bearing my family name, been advised by a king, had a best selling book dedicated to me by a minister I never met, nuns who call to say they love me, a rabbi who regularly brings me gifts and says he is 'one of my children' and an Indian doctor I never met who made me famous. I'm an honorary Irishman, Italian, Armenian, Pakistani – with apologies to any other nationalities I may have forgotten. Have a great wife of 40 plus years, three children and four grandchildren whose heritage is a blend of Caucasian, Asian, African American, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Moslem. And another 100,000 youngsters who call themselves 'Feinstein Jr. Scholars', pledged to do good for others, who even have schools named for them now in other countries.

People wonder how and why I give so much money away and how I made it all. This is my story and the people – good and bad – who helped make it... A story I don't think you will ever forget.

Steel Gloves: My first memory – wearing steel gloves to bed at age 8 or 9 to keep from scratching a bad case of eczema that, thankfully, gradually abated.

Had a rather ordinary childhood, growing up in Boston and then on to college at Boston University majoring in journalism, a C student, named most popular, no real goals. After graduation I wrote a little advertising column for the Boston Traveler, the former afternoon companion to the Boston Herald, with short spells at a few other forgettable jobs. My only notable memory from that period was expressing my trepidation about a charismatic figure emerging in my area, Louis Farrakhan, well before he became nationally known for his admiration for Hitler and contempt for white America.

I returned to school in 1956 to get a Master's Degree in education and then began teaching. My first class – 6th grade in Mansfield, MA was the best year of my life up to then – the memory of those great youngsters

remains with me today. I still hear from some of them. Just recently the son of one of my students from that class came to meet me with his son. He brought me a photo of his mother the same year she was my student and to let me know how she often spoke of me throughout the years. She had since passed away. The photo he brought me is exactly as I remember her from that sixth grade class 50 years ago.

While teaching the next few years, I spent most nights writing - a novel published in 1958 to generally tepid reviews including a particular galling one that said "as an author I was a better teacher", and assorted other fiction that never went far either.

That was my life in the early 60's, teaching and writing and, in between, cramming in as much of a social life as I could.

But – suddenly - my life was about to drastically change...

(continued next month)