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### *What's "Right" With America*

#### **Profile: Jack and Jeanne Sander**

Jack and Jeanne Sander are likely the nicest people you'll ever want to meet. I'm blessed to work for a lot of wonderful people in my occupation, but I can say without fear of contradiction that they are a couple of the kindest, most genuine people I know, professionally or otherwise, and readers of this essay who know them would heartily agree, I'm sure.

Both Jack and Jeanne were raised by loving, middle class families, each with one brother. Jack was born and raised in Cincinnati, his father an employee of Cincinnati Bell who started his career climbing telephone poles, and who worked his way into a supervisory role, while his Mom was busy raising two boys at home, and eventually worked part-time in his high school cafeteria. Jeanne's folks, Harold and Alma Weiss (also lovely people and clients of our firm) made their home in Cincinnati as well, but Jeanne was born in Miami, while her Dad was temporarily stationed in the military before being shipped out to fight during World War II. It was in grade school that she and Jack met, and in high school they became sweethearts, eventually marrying in 1965, when Jack was 24, and Jeanne was, well, several years younger.

Jack attended the University of Cincinnati, graduating a year before they married with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Business, with an emphasis in Radio and Television. Jeanne pursued her artistic abilities at the Central Academy of Commercial Art in Cincinnati. They quickly got a family of their own going, with the first of their three daughters (Jennifer) coming along in 1967. Two more daughters (there's a "gender theme" going on here that will become apparent later), Jodi and Julie, arrived two, and four years later, respectively.

Jack jumped into the broadcasting industry with both feet, his first job right out of college in 1965 as a Sales Service Director for a Columbus, Ohio NBC affiliate, WLWC-TV. He was hired away soon thereafter by Cosmos Broadcasting Corporation, owner of a Toledo, Ohio CBS affiliate, WTOL – TV, where he became an Account Executive. He held various sales management positions there, and he was eventually named Assistant General Manager of the station in 1976. Recognizing Jack's sales and managerial abilities, Cosmo transferred him to their (larger market) New Orleans station, an NBC affiliate called WDSU – TV in 1978, as Assistant General Manager and Station Manager. Two years later, WTOL – TV came calling again, and brought him back to Toledo, this time as the station's General Manager. Two months after his arrival in 1980, at the ripe old age of 38, the title of Executive Vice President was added.

Two years later in 1982, this rising star was offered the job of President and General Manager of Phoenix's CBS affiliate, KTSP – TV, where he served for three years. In 1985, Taft Broadcasting's Television Division lured him back to his home town of Cincinnati with an offer to run *all twelve* of their television stations, a job he held through 1988, through Taft's eventual sale of their television group.

Next stop was Atlanta, with the opportunity to run Gillett Communication's WAGA – TV as President and General Manager, a major market station that was initially a CBS affiliate. During Jack's tenure, billionaire investor Ronald Perelman (Revlon, Marvel Entertainment, among others) purchased WAGA – TV, a six other CBS – affiliated stations through his New World Communications conglomerate, and transitioned them to Fox affiliates. Jack remained at the station's helm for ten years, until 1997.

It was at that point in time that A.H. Belo Corporation (now Belo Corporation, NYSE Ticker Symbol: BLC) of Dallas came calling, as they were morphing from a newspaper (print media) business into a media conglomerate that would come to hold 20 television stations and several cable systems as well. Jack was named Executive Vice President of Television Group, promoted a year later to President of the Group. In 2001, his title became President, Media Operations, responsible for all media operations, a position he held until 2005, when he was promoted to Vice Chairman of the Belo Corporation. We met, and began working with the Sanders in 2005, a year before he "retired" at the age of 65, in 2006.

As for community service, over the years he's served on the Boards of the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, the Salvation Army, the Phoenix Metropolitan Sports Foundation, the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, and the Red Cross, just to name a very few among many, many other community organizations.

I use the word "retired" loosely, as Jack's as busy today as he was when he was working. Always involved in civic affairs, industry groups and charitable causes, Jack has served on the boards of Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI) since 2004, and is its current Chairman. He's also on the Executive Committee of The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), the broadcast industry's lobbying arm, and was its Joint-Chair from 2006 – 2008. He served as Chairman of the NBC Affiliate Board of Directors, and he was also Chairman of the Television Bureau of Advertisers from 1990 – 1992.

His long career and estimable achievements in the broadcast industry were honored recently with his induction into the 2009 Class of the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame in New York, alongside a "Who's Who" of other broadcast executives. While NBC's Brian Williams introduced him, and his peers honored him for a lifetime of industry achievement, I know that for Jack, the best part of the event was Jeanne and their three daughters were in attendance at the Waldorf Astoria to share in his moment. For Jack, this was a *family* achievement.

Jack's experience in the media industry is truly unsurpassed, as his peers have now formally acknowledged, and his passion for broadcasting and for media issues remains bright today. We love to get him talking about television, its programming, media personalities, and show business in general. Listening to his informed take on what is going on within the ever-present broadcast network battles is like getting a tutorial in the "business" side of television, as well as an insiders look at the behind-the-scenes decision-making and politics that exist in every industry, but none more so than show business. Jack is the consummate manager, a competitive businessman who says that when he was managing television stations, he "*loved the fact that he got a grade every day*" in his station's ratings, and that he could have a direct impact on so many people's lives through their broadcasts. Today, Jack believes that the industry faces increasing challenges from online media, especially in the area of local news and communities issues, which online media sources tend to under-report.

Despite Jack's Hall of Fame career, whenever I think of Jack and Jeanne Sander, Jack's career and their financial successes are *not* what come first to mind. The Sanders are not simply defined in just those terms. In fact, I doubt the Sanders think of their successes in financial terms at all. They are first, and foremost, *family people*. Jeanne's Mom and Dad, the Weiss', are sweet people, and the Sanders spend much of their time with them, as they live in the Valley as well. But in addition to their three daughters, Jack and Jeanne have been blessed with seven wonderful grandchildren (all girls!!!), Natalie (13), Lindsey (11), Cassie (7), Sarah (7), Allie (5), Molly (22 months), and Emily (14 months), names and ages that Jack was easily able to rattle off, even though he hesitated when I asked him how many years he'd been married. (Don't worry Jeanne. He figured it out!) They split their time when Jack isn't travelling between their beautiful home in Troon, Scottsdale, and their second home in Flagstaff's Forest Highlands. The grandchildren are often in tow. We have pictures of all of them on our office refrigerator, as their proud grandmother sees to it that we get the most updated pictures of these beautiful girls. (We often tease Jack that it is a wonderful thing that these girls favor their grandmother, and wonder how, with a *wife*, three *daughters*, and seven *granddaughters*, Jack ever has a say in, ... well...anything?!) The truth is that Jack may not have much to say about how things are run around the Sander house, but he is a well-loved King, adored by all those girls, and secretly, I don't think he'd have it any other way.

The Sanders are hard-working people, born to Middle America, and they have achieved financial and professional success that few ever do. (How many people get inducted into their industry's Hall of Fame?) But as I stated at the beginning of this essay, the Sanders are, quite simply, the nicest people you'd ever hope to meet. They define wealth in family terms, and by those terms, they are very, very wealthy indeed.