



Bruce Sherin Dunham Jr.

August 11, 1942 - September 20, 2021

Baltimore Advertising Executive Bruce Dunham

Ask Bruce Dunham what it takes to build a successful career, and he wouldn't talk much about what he did. He'd be too busy giving the credit to everyone else.

The highly respected marketer began his career in the 1970s in Philadelphia as a salesperson with the radio conglomerate Metro Media. Fresh out of college at age 21, he was up against skilled salespeople accomplished at selling media to regional and national advertisers. He turned them into his friends.

"You succeed through people, not over people", Dunham recalled. It worked. He didn't just succeed. He flourished.

Two years later, JM Korn & Sons, a Philadelphia packaged goods advertising agency, approached him. Would he be ready to handle account responsibilities for products commonly found on supermarket shelves? Ready for his next challenge, Dunham began working for an agency vice president who was a former executive at the A&P grocery chain. During his tenure there, Dunham's assigned brands rose to the #1 position in annual sales, including products from Mrs. Smith's pie company, Mrs. Paul's frozen foods and Pepsi-Cola beverages from ethnic markets. That two-year dive into the packaged goods marketplace would prove to be pivotal to his future work.

WB Doner, a prestigious Baltimore advertising agency, needed an innovative thinker with consumer product experience. Soon Dunham was handling advertising for several coveted accounts, including Commercial Credit and the National Brewing Company, for which he handled the National Bohemian, National Premium and Colt 45 liquor brands.

The assignments for National Brewing extended to four smaller regional breweries located in strategic markets across the United States: Regal Brewing in Miami, Altus Brewing in Detroit, A1 Beers in Phoenix and Stag Brewing in Seattle. The Baltimore Orioles baseball

team, also owned by the brewing company, was another cornerstone account and offered extensive TV and radio network opportunities to promote the beverage brands.

Dunham's trademark philosophy encouraged advertisers and coworkers to be bold. As such, Colt 45 became the crown jewel of Dunham's accounts. It was during the filming of Colt 45 commercials, often considered to be classic advertisements from the era, that Dunham began a longtime friendship with actor Redd Foxx. A special source of pride was winning national and international advertising awards for these Colt 45 and other brewery commercials, including an esteemed CLEO, considered the gold standard of broadcast advertising honors. In addition, a Colt 45 commercial based on the movie "Jaws" led to the construction of two mechanical sharks that spawned a shark rental business featured in numerous TV productions. Despite the accolades, Dunham preferred to stay in the background, giving the credit to the team around him.

"I grew up in a people business and it was all about service", he would say. "You've got to love dealing with people, motivating them and learning from them".

Dunham would add accounts such as McCormick Spices' retail and food service business, meat packer Doxsee Food Corporation, DC-area Oresman Group car dealerships, the Pimlico Race Course and the historic Triple Crown horseracing competition. Using a trailblazing marketing approach, he secured the first Good Housekeeping seal for women's radio programming. Dunham always maintained a deep involvement in local media, leading advertising work for WBAL-TV, WFBR-FM, and the launch of new FM station B104 that ascended to the #1 ranking during Dunham's tenure.

Advertising was his occupation, but he also made his mark in civic affairs. During William Donald Schaefer's tenure as mayor of Baltimore, Dunham was appointed to an advisory board charged with improving the city's image and stature in the East Coast market. The effort would become legendary in the annals of urban renewal projects.

Dunham and the committee took swift to clean the city's Inner Harbor, upgrade the visual appeal and convert it into a recreational venue. The momentum continued with other "firsts", such as the OP Sail exhibition that featured the historic "tall ships". The event drew over 500,000 spectators and proved people would come downtown for entertainment.

As people began to gain renewed confidence in the city, he helped create the "Baltimore is Best" program to recognize people and products emblematic of Charm City.

"It's the people, stupid", he said when looking back years later. "People made the

difference, not the real estate. Get involved with people, work with them to make a difference and help them achieve".

The cornerstone of work to develop a permanent, exciting Inner Harbor experience was an agreement with Rouse & Company to build two festivals pavilions called Harbor place. The facility would house retail shops, bars, and dining, including a seafood restaurant from the local Phillips family. Next came the construction of the Maryland Science Center featuring the first IMAX theater. Another milestone was the sale of Baltimore's mass transit system and airport to the state to finance construction of the city's National Aquarium as another fixture of the Inner Harbor.

With all this economic and construction activity taking place, downtown Baltimore was changing and so was its attitude. Soon there were City Fairs in the area, spotlighting ethnic festivals and exhibits celebrating the diversity of Baltimore's neighborhoods.

Dunham credited efforts leading to Baltimore's rise and global reputation as his proudest contribution. Keeping with his appreciation for area residents, he spearheaded the "Maryland, You are Beautiful" recognition program saluting local heroes across the state.

Dunham's lifelong love of marketing continued into the 1990s and 2000s as he consulted with alternative energy companies and specialty agencies such as Schaefer Advertising, The Weightman Group, The Blakeslee Group and Top Banana Advertising.

While everyone was important to Dunham, he considered his family to be the most important people of all. In retirement, he enjoyed building a home in Lewes, DE, that could house his wife, children, and grandchildren for special occasions. Dunham is survived by his wife Dotti; his son Bruce Dunham III (Julia) and 5 grandchildren; his daughter Jill Wright; (Clayton) and his 2 grandsons.

Bruce Dunham departed this life on September 20, 2021.

Please join us in celebration over the loss of an unforgettable man, Bruce S. Dunham, Jr. We all know that he would want us to not dwell on the sad but remember the good. It is with this in mind that we plan to hold this celebration of life on Sunday, October 10, 2021, from 12:00 PM until 3:00 PM, which will take place at the home of Bruce S. Dunham III and Julia Arfaa, 7506 L' Hironnelle Club Road Baltimore, MD. Although he will be sorely missed, this will be the celebration of a man who was the kindest soul to friends and strangers alike. Please text (410)-852-7317 or email jdunham2290@gmail.com before Wednesday, October 6, to let us know if you will be joining us.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Bruce's name to Susan G Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, [www.https://secure.info-komen.org/site/Donation2](https://secure.info-komen.org/site/Donation2), or the American Cancer Society, [www.https://donate3.cancer.org/?utm_](https://donate3.cancer.org/?utm_).

Please sign the virtual guestbook located on the tribute page.

Comments



“ To say I was shocked when I read about Bruce is an understatement. As you know Dottie brought him to Baltimore for my Dad's Memorial. He showed how much he cared for my Dad and our entire family. Although I have not seen him for a long time, the memories of W.B. Doner, Preaknesses, his introduction to Cayman Islands for several years, his tutorage, friendship and love will never be forgotten. My hearts go out to all of you.
Love. Patti (Dee) Kenney

Patricia A Kenney - October 06, 2021 at 04:00 PM



“ Bruce and Diane Seward purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Bruce Sherin Dunham Jr..



Bruce and Diane Seward - September 29, 2021 at 01:14 PM



“ Dear Bruce and Jill and your families.....I only met your dad a few times, but I remember his charismatic presence and the delight he took in the two of you....I also clearly remember Dad in the “stadium” at Perry Hall High laser focused on the activity on the field, and his bellowing voice “Go Perry Hall; Go Bruce!!”.....he was always intent on keeping the spotlight on the two of you, not himself...Bruce S. Dunham Jr was an amazing man—his obituary speaks volumes about how he fully empowered whatever business or project with which he was involved moving it to penultimate success....such a stellar legacy.....more importantly he left a legacy of two amazing children, and grandchildren who continue to carry their Dad’s qualities and traits in their daily lives...Diane and I are so sorry for your loss....my father passed the evening before your Dad; so we are bonded in grieving and loss at the same time, and I believe we share the quest to celebrate the lives and the impact of two great men....prayers for peace and healing....much love...Bruce and Diane Seward



bruce seward - September 29, 2021 at 01:06 PM



“ Kathy and I were good friends with Bruce in the late seventies and early eighties.We went to the Preakness races together and had many wonderful times together.Bruce was a wonderful guy and a lot of fun to be with.He will be missed by many friends and family.
Gary Galloway
Ocean City,Md.

Gary Galloway - September 29, 2021 at 08:59 AM