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Beacons Of Light



Ben Paulino

Walk into Official Offset's corporate headquarters in Amityville and there is no question about owner and President Ben Paulino's priorities. Plaques, certificates and letters commending his public service efforts cover nearly every square inch of the lobby's wall space —

floor to ceiling. Yet spend a few minutes with him, and you know you're in the company of a soft spoken, modest and unassuming person, a textbook example of the definition of family and civic values — ideals that have propelled Paulino to help dozens of non-profit causes over the past 20 years. His reason? "We try to give back to the community," he answers matter of factly.

Paulino's calm demeanor belies a boundless inner energy. At 58, he dives into a typical workday at 5:30 each morning running his 20,000-sq-ft printing facility and sometimes squeezing in two or three charity-related activities before the day's end. In fact, it doesn't seem all that remarkable to learn that at one time he raced cars at 120 miles an hour as a hobby.

Today he sits on the board of the American Cancer Society's Long Island chapter (Hauppauge). His mother-in-law's death from bone cancer in 1975 was his catalyst into the world of philanthropy.

Paulino serves on committees for dinner dances or golf outings (indulging his passion for the links) and often provides discounted printing to local chapters of the Epilepsy Foundation, Huntington's Disease Society of America, United Way, Leukemia Society of America and Boy Scouts of America, as well as Dowling College, WLW Public Television, Telicare, The Museums at Stony Brook, Suffolk County Council, Advancement for Commerce and Industry, and the St Ursula Center in Blue Point.

If Paulino has one weakness, it's his inability to turn his back on those in need. "Sometimes 'no' is not in my vocabulary," he says, admitting that his family life, despite a marriage that soon celebrates its 34th year, often comes last.

Nevertheless, Paulino who settled his family in Kings Park 30 years ago, has managed to wrap business and family into one cozy bundle. His wife Mary, known as Cookie, is Official Offset's bookkeeper; his daughter Philene, 33, is in charge of production; and his son Frank, 31, is the company's vice president of sales. Another son, Carl, 27, is in medical school in Grenada. A niece is the receptionist, a sister-in-law office manager and three nephews work in the pressroom and bindery.

In 1958, Official Offset, then a newly established printing firm in Mineola, hired him fresh out of school. He bought the company in 1976 and built it into an industry leader in commercial printing.

Although he concedes that his breakneck pace is not as easy to maintain as it used to be, Paulino is not about to rest on his laurels. When its time to step aside at Official Offset, he still wants to stay involved, albeit not in the daily nitty-gritty. And what about all the charity work? "I probably could give even more time when I retire," he says. "I'm an antsy person."



This article for Beacons of Light was written by Robin Bernstein, a member of the Long Island chapter of the International Assn of Business Communicators (Plainview).