



**BROTHERHOOD IS GOOD BUSINESS**



*Each year, the National Conference of Christians and Jews presents the James M. Yard Brotherhood Awards to persons in Metropolitan Chicago who have done an outstanding job in the field of human relations, working at their neighborhood level. The purpose of the Award is to honor and to bring widespread recognition to men and women who work to bring understanding and cooperation among people of various national origins, races, creeds and economic standing.*

*Walker Sandbach, who is general manager of the Hyde Park Cooperative Society Supermarket, made this response on behalf of the Award Recipients at the James M. Yard Brotherhood Award Ceremony held in the Chicago City Council Chambers on February 12, 1959.*



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Unfortunately, there are still businesses in my community, and in yours, that practice discrimination in hiring, mainly because they are afraid to make the break. I understand this, because I was afraid, too.

However, the time is so late on the clock of human relations that we need to encourage these businessmen to make a start toward integrating their staffs.

Our best hope for the future, in my opinion, is in the schools. If we could get really integrated schools much of the prejudice that still exists would, in a generation, disappear.

My children go to a school that is 90 per cent Negro. Because it is a good, well-run school, they are happy even in this minority situation. But it would be so much better for all concerned in this school if the percentage of white children could get to be 25 per cent of the school population. We are working hard to achieve that goal.

In addition to three children born to us, my wife and I have an adopted American Japanese daughter named Jill. One day, when she was seven years old, Jill came home from school and said; "Daddy, I wish I could be Negro at school and white at home." She hasn't been able to achieve that, but last month her 5th grade classmates did elect her for an "Outstanding Student Award," so apparently she has solved her problems in other ways. I seriously doubt if we do our children any favors by making their lives too easy, considering the world which they will be inheriting from us.

In closing, I want to express my appreciation, and I'm sure, that of the other awardees, not just for the award, but also for the continuing work of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in furthering true brotherhood. I want to urge that we all keep everlastingly at the job of making the practice of brotherhood a reality in our homes, in our schools, in our businesses, and in our communities.

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by WALKER SANDBACH

It seems a little strange to me to be accepting an award for doing what comes naturally. In my case, and I imagine many of the awardees here today could say the same, the award probably belongs to my parents and to my teachers. There are others who practice brotherhood when they, because of their background and up-bringing, don't believe in it and don't like it. I have friends in that position, and I have great admiration for them. They do it out of a sense of fairness and, sometimes, economic necessity. They have practiced brotherhood while deep within they have wished desperately that the tremendous changes in our social and economic life had never occurred.

It is interesting to contemplate on how we arrive at the beliefs and principles which guide our lives. A short time ago my father, who is a Methodist minister in Iowa, was visiting me. I was telling him, with some pride, of this award. He replied, "I'm not surprised that you are getting an award for practicing brotherhood, because that is what we taught you. What I don't understand is why you accepted our teachings on brotherhood but completely ignored our training and example in politics."

Fortunately, brotherhood knows no party lines. If you were to poll this group of awardees I am sure you would find both major parties well represented.

I personally am very much encouraged by the progress that has been made in Chicago toward the ideal of having jobs available on the basis of ability without regard to race, or color, or creed. Of course, we still have a long way to go.

When I hired my first Negro sales girl in 1947 I was told by some of my business friends that I was committing economic suicide. The first day this girl went on duty, I began to wonder if they were right. I manage a Co-op supermarket. This girl was hired as a checker. At one time during that first morning two other girls who were also on duty were doing stock work on the floor, leaving the Negro girl as the only checker. A customer refused to be checked out by her and called for the manager. When I arrived she said, "I'm going to sit-down until you bring on a white girl. I'm not going to have a colored girl handling my food." I don't need to tell you how ridiculous was her stand.

Her calling this girl colored reminds me of a recent suggestion by Harry Golden, editor of the

Carolina Israelite. He says, "Since so many people insist on referring to Negroes as colored, we should start referring to whites as colorless." Then newspapers could run stories of today's event as follows: "The James M. Yard Brotherhood Award ceremonies, held today at City Hall, was attended by a large group of colored and colorless people."

To return to the woman who was on a sit-down strike, I told her she was welcome to sit. I even got a box for her to sit on. She had to wait an hour until the other girls were needed at the checkouts.

You know, that was the only trouble we ever had. And yet, how close I came at that point to backing down on my decision to have an integrated staff because I had half accepted the propaganda that disaster would strike if we tried to serve the public with an integrated staff. I was told by some that I would lose most of my employees and half of my customers.

Actually, we lost no employees and our business has prospered. It has prospered, as it turned out, in part just because we have had a policy of being willing to hire people of many different races, creeds and nationality backgrounds. We now include in our staff of 50: American Negroes; American Japanese; an American Puerto Rican; and an American Indian. In the matter of creeds we have had Buddhists, Jews, Catholics, and Protestants, as well as some young men who thought they were agnostics or atheists. One of our advertising slogans has been that the Co-op is a United Nations in miniature.

Recently a newspaper reporter asked me if our open hiring policy would work in places other than Hyde Park, which is a community of people of many races and creeds. My answer was that we had copied from Gimbel's in New York the idea of using the United Nations approach in advertising our integrated staff. It has worked. In addition, I was able to say that today our open hiring policy is not an uncommon one in Chicago and more and more retail businesses, particularly in the field of food distribution, have open hiring policies.

Another interesting incident comes to mind that I want to tell you about. Several years after we hired our first Negro, I had an application for a checker's job from a colorless girl with a strong southern accent. She had just arrived in Chicago and was an experienced checker. I told her I would like to

hire her, but I wanted her to know that we had several Negro girls on the staff and she would have to work closely with them, eat in the same employees' lunch room, and treat them courteously. Her reply was, "We don't do it that way where I come from, but if you say that is the way it has to be, I'll give it a try." It wasn't a month before I saw her and a Negro girl returning from a coffee break, arm in arm.

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