

# Honoring Howard J. Rubenstein

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The world – and the PR profession – lost a great when Howard J. Rubenstein passed. His firm was the place I got my start at (thanks for taking a chance on 21-year-old me!) and I had the pleasure of spending eight-plus years there. I not only learned about excellence in PR from Howard, but also took away valuable business and life lessons that I carry with me today as I run my own agency.



Howard J. Rubenstein  
1932 - 2020

Howard had the unique gift of walking the line between being powerful and poised; influential and insightful; quick-witted and kind. He was the man in the room that everyone wanted to talk to, yet he took the time to listen to even the most entry-level associate. I fondly recall my first elevator ride with him. He casually smiled and asked me, an account coordinator at the time, how I liked it at Rubenstein Associates and suddenly I felt at ease.

It's true he knew all the big players, but he never got a big head about it. The office hallways were lined photos of him and every VIP, celebrity and elected official you could imagine. At his firm's ultra-memorable 50th anniversary party at Tavern on the Green, I saw how genuine he really was. I watched Howard rub elbows with Dr. Ruth Westheimer and now-President Donald Trump and then turn around and pour the same amount of energy into a conversation with my husband.

For years after working at Rubenstein, people would wondrously ask about the high expectations that came with working at the agency and note that, "If you can make it there, you can make

it anywhere." I'd agree. After all, Howard personally looked over all weekly and monthly reports from his publicists, wrote remarks and asked detailed questions. I welcomed it, because he put a high value on results and looking after each client personally, so much so that he wanted to know what was going on with each himself. I felt accountable and motivated. Many years later, I have held onto Howard's memos and notes of praise. Ask anyone that worked for him about his hand-drawn birthday greetings – they are legendary!

Though Howard is sadly gone, his presence is felt throughout New York City, among his noteworthy clients, with his beloved family who mourn his loss, of course, and in the many careers he's shaped. So many agencies, including mine, were launched and carry with them Howard's commitment to ethics, keen attention to news-style writing and respect for the art of public relations.

May Howard continue to mix, mingle and make headlines up above. And, if anyone needs PR in the afterlife, I know a guy.