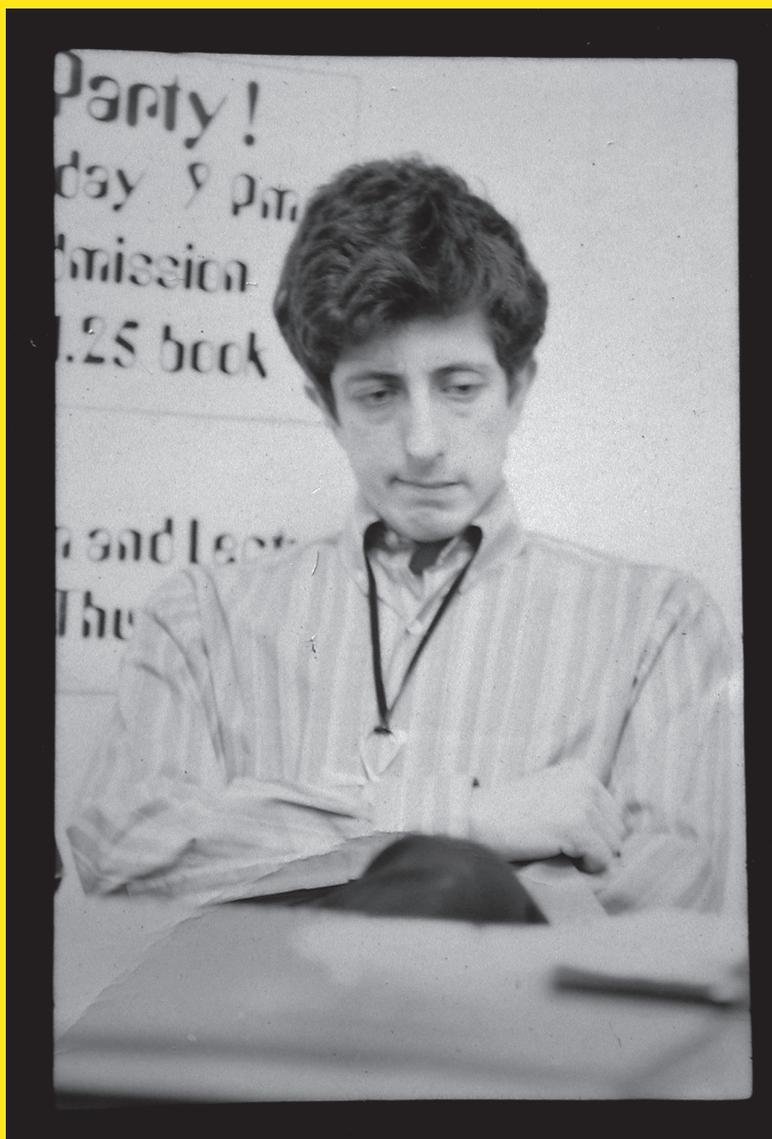


Howard Rower 1939-2000

In Memoriam



Howard Rower 1939-2000

In Memoriam

Edited by Kenneth Rower

Howard Rower 1939-2000 In Memoriam

Biographical |
Kenneth Rower

Memorial & Testimonial 21

Patch Adams	54
Nick Balamaci	41
Winston Headley Barnes	60
Eliza Bates	48
Paul Binder	49
Helen Chardack-Portale	79
Chou Wen-Chung	59
Christopher Clapp	78
Heston Clapp	71
Chiara Clemente	69
Jennifer Clothier	76
Mike Davidson	55
Jean Detiere	76
Dimitri and Gunda	75
Susan Edery	68
Guillaume Fonkanell	74
Helen Fotopulos	75
Karen French	73
Carolyn Garcia	76
Leonie and Parsons Geddes	51
Alex Gillmor	75
George Gillmor	52
John Githens	73
Milly Glimcher	74
Herb Gordon	71

Robert Grudin	70
George Hannides	21
Jonathan Harrison	25
Gail Harrity	79
Pete and Maggie Hart	79
Ken Hayes	74
George Host	62
Kaia Huseby	68
David Kennedy	57
Brice Marden	72
Andrew Mathews	68
Sarah Melvin	47
Walter Melvin	45
Patricia Michael	76
Eli Noyes	78
Katherine Perls	77
Fred Pfening	72
Drummond Pike	34
Peter Pinchot	37
Sally Schneider	80
Daniel Shapiro	59
Walter Shapiro	29
Cynthia Sherman	74
Jeremy Sherman	72
Roger Sherman	78
Louise Solomon	80
H. Peter Stern	76
David Stiffler	26
Dean Stokes	45
Nina Stuart	71
Francisca Sutil	77
Sean Sweeney	30
Natasha Thompson	68
Geoff Toll	56
Judy Upjohn	79
Eric Utne	75
Nick Voeikoff	75
Harriet Weinfield	78
Chris Wells	27

BIOGRAPHICAL

HOWARD FRANK ROWER was born June 20, 1939, at Lynn, Massachusetts, to Harry Rower, aged 39, and Gladys Rower, née Cushing, aged 25. Harry and Gladys first lived on LaGrange Terrace in Lynn, not far from Harry's mother Dora, in a three-decker house with a piazza at the back. I came along in 1942. Harry and Gladys soon moved to a neighborhood elsewhere in Lynn, near the Swampscott town line, into a spacious three-story nineteenth-century house with a mansard roof and a full front porch, at 11 New Ocean Street, almost in sight of the Atlantic Ocean, where we four Rowers occupied the middle and top stories. Harry was a shy fellow who would go to Boston every morning to pursue his dental supply business. Gladys was more vivacious, and harbored property ambitions. She also harbored resentment and believed, as we learned later, that she had married the wrong man. But we were not aware of that poison at the time. The big house sat on a busy corner, on a lot that also included a slate-roofed carriage house accessible from both New Ocean Street and Eastern Avenue. We called the carriage house "the barn," and to me as a very small child it was a dark and fearful place, inhabited by rats. Once Howard jumped or fell out of a window on the second story of the turreted tower on the front of the barn, and landed on his feet in the driveway, his knees coming up sharply to strike his chin and drive his teeth deeply into his lip. That he was not more badly injured was noted and remarked upon: he had landed on his feet.



At 11 New Ocean Street, a granite retaining wall ran the length of the lot along the Eastern Avenue side. It was by pushing off from this wall that Howard and I learned to ride our two-wheelers. But we didn't do a great deal together. Three years was a vast developmental abyss between us. We had one friend in common, Vinnie Lamarro, who lived down Eastern Avenue. We had a Lionel Train set more or less permanently installed in the Big Room, as we called it, on the third floor of the house, and we did play with that together. And once we had a terrible fight outdoors, with Howard shoving



Facing page, Howard in the early 1940s, standing in front of 11 New Ocean Street. Above, a few years older, sitting Indian-style on the back lawn near Eastern Avenue.

and punching me as we stood in the embrasure of an internal corner at the back of the house, while I tried to fend him off or pin his arms, because I had been taught he wasn't to be hurt, he wasn't strong. And it was true that I was able to run and play normally while Howard was not. Asthma had already laid down its boundaries on the pattern of his physical life, even on his chest, and Howard's needs directed the lives of the rest of us. There were many consultations with allergists and many scares, long wakeful nights while Howard coughed and choked, and midnight trips to

the hospital for adrenaline shots. There was bacon in an otherwise kosher larder. There was constant conflict between Howard and Gladys, who devoted herself so completely to his welfare that she flew into rages at his absence of gratitude. But how could he feel grateful when he knew no other life? And who was wise enough to imagine that I might later have difficulty seeing clearly the older brother who entirely captured my mother's attention?

In 1948 we all went by train to Phoenix, Arizona. Allen Cushing, whom Gladys called "My kid brother Allen," was then an aspiring young advertising man in a young city. He lived in a cabin at the edge of the desert, where Howard and I and Gladys stayed on after Harry soon went back to Boston to tend to business. Howard thrived in the dry desert atmosphere, and we would explore the desert around the cabin, being careful of Gila monsters and tarantulas. In short order, Howard managed to acquire two pet dogs, one of them able to climb the odd tree in our surroundings.

After some months, Gladys enrolled Howard at the Judson School, which I believe was at the foot of Camelback Mountain, and took me back to Lynn. She eventually returned to Phoenix to retrieve Howard, against his will, for reasons that were not described to me. Also not described to me, until Howard himself did so decades later, was Howard's early career in banking and real estate.

As a sub-ten-year-old, he noticed that his friends were often short of money because they spent their allowances too quickly. With little to tempt him personally, he had enough cash to lend and apparently grasped the usefulness of the service by charging a good rate of interest. He also noticed parcels of land in the vicinity of the Judson School for sale at prices that seemed low even to him. He tried to interest Gladys in endorsing his investment, but she apparently dismissed the idea, instead buying an amount of common stock in his name and holding it in trust for Howard. This fraught gesture later led to considerable animosity.



Phoenix, Arizona, January 1948. A sidewalk photographer captured the family, if with imperfect framing, and postcards were made. Howard, on the left, was eight.

Since the house in Lynn stood in a coastal climate, and dampness was thought to be a stimulus to Howard's asthma, and since Howard was not to be left on his own at the school in Arizona, and since my father, who was otherwise submissive, was unwilling and probably unable to leave the only cities he had known, Lynn and Boston, we must find a drier climate near Boston. So Arlington Heights provided our next home, in the shape of a brick-fronted duplex house, rather young, sitting on another corner at 28 Appleton Street, a climbing branch road just above Massachusetts Avenue, within hearing of the Brill trolley cars that ran clanging and ringing down through Arlington Center and North Cambridge to Harvard Square. Howard must now have been about thirteen and I ten, and though we continued to share a bedroom, we had our own friends. Or I should say Howard had friends. I was usually alone, having been pushed ahead a couple of years in school and grown more and more shy and bookish.

Howard, a year ahead of me in school, but still three important years older, ran in a gang with a faintly disreputable boy called Johnny Snow, who lived at the top of the hill. To our mother, Johnny was automatically disreputable because he wasn't Jewish. I never found out what, if anything, was disreputable about Johnny because I was never invited to see what he and Howard did. What Howard and I did together at 28 Appleton, once, was to experiment with hand-rolled cigarettes made with tea purloined from the kitchen (not successful), and again once, to have another of our violent fights in which I tried to make sure he didn't hurt me. And, more than once, we would band together whenever necessary against parental unreason. Howard's pets took a new turn: one day, a baby alligator appeared in the bathtub and stayed there for some weeks. I don't remember what became of that creature.

As Howard and I reached junior high school age, our mother resolved that we must move again, this time to a town with a prestigious school system, and so we next found ourselves in Newton Centre, in a brick house built in 1928 at 11 Maplewood Avenue, exchanging the steely noises of the trolleys in Arlington

for the long sighs of the unceasing traffic on the nearby Worcester Turnpike. In this house in Newton, we had our own rooms and I lost touch almost entirely with Howard, except for the period of an ambitious project to transfer the running gear and drive train of a '39 Ford coupe into a chromoly tubing space frame of my design. In a telling division of labor, Howard found and acquired the Ford for \$50, while I went to the Boston Public Library to research the frame design. We managed to get the Ford cut apart and the tubing bent, and that was about the end of the story.

Despite Gladys's well-intentioned calculation about the Newton school system, Howard expressed a desire to follow the trade school curriculum then offered at Newton High School. But the school refused (on grounds of his native ability to follow the college curriculum) to put Howard in the trade school, and in revenge he spent all possible time with Charlie Chase, adviser to the stage crew, learning wiring and carpentry, and paying as little attention as possible to his academic subjects. As a result, Howard knew how quartered oak looked and how a dovetail joint worked long before I did, even though such questions later became the center of my professional life rather than his.

Meanwhile, Howard's social life evolved out of our sight. Never interested by religion, he did accept the urging of a friend and joined a youth group called Aleph Zadik Aleph at the Newton temple. He soon became the president of his AZA chapter and then traveled to a national conference in Pennsylvania. He returned by Greyhound bus, persuading the bus driver to make a special stop to drop him near the end of our road, thus saving Howard the trip back out from Boston. The driver probably didn't know that the friendly teenager asking him for a favor was carrying on his person a snake he had caught in Pennsylvania.

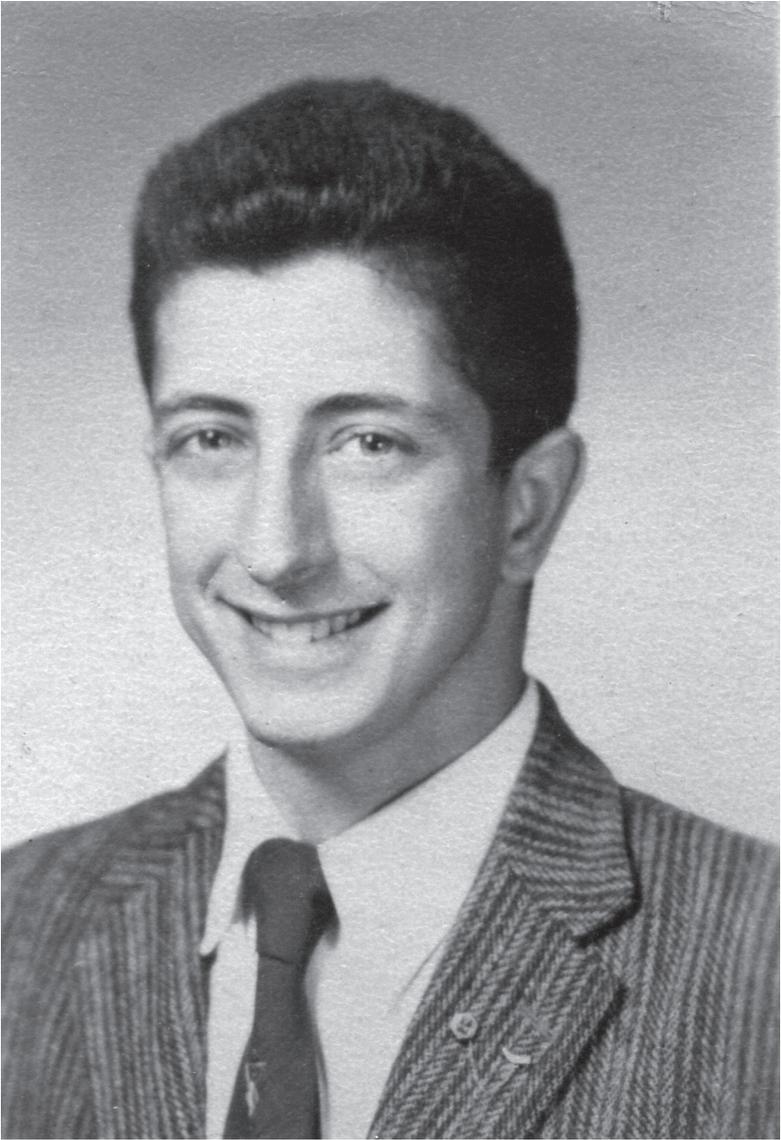
Howard had plenty of friends at Newton High School, but I only caught sight of them when one might turn up in a car, briefly, at 11 Maplewood Avenue. As the younger brother, and more bookish than ever, I was invited to glance at French pictures flashed by one of his more daring friends, or told tales of terrible

disasters with cars, or given unsolicited advice how to get a girl.

Through his teenage years, Howard's relations worsened with Gladys. Whereas our father Harry stood for peace, at almost any cost to his self-esteem, Gladys stood for justice, and indeed later died prematurely, of anger. Her fights with Howard no longer needed particular justification, merely a stimulus. Late in his high school years, Howard moved out of the house to take up residence at the Boston YMCA on Huntington Avenue. I don't recall how he financed this arrangement. He was still enrolled as a student at Newton High, and in some fashion he continued to attend classes, making his way out from Boston by whatever means might be at hand. He did in fact graduate, though perhaps not with his class. I believe his diploma was awarded in absentia.

I would now see Howard rarely. Meanwhile, on a student exchange program between Newton High and the Putney School, I met Mary Calder, but of course I had no inkling of the part she would play in Howard's life.

I FINISHED high school in 1958, and set out on my own odyssey, proceeding along byways for the next four years, avoiding any main road. Perhaps in the same year, Howard moved to Symphony Road in Boston, a nineteenth-century street of brick houses near Symphony Hall, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Fenway, though for all that an inexpensive student neighborhood. With his practical skills, and pretty sure he could handle the problems that might arise, he took a job as the super in his building in exchange for free rent in a first-floor apartment. He grew his hair extremely long and affected a straw lion on his shoulder. He gathered around him a new gang, with the resources of Beatnik-era Boston now at his disposal rather than the more-uniform population of Newton High School. Here he joined the first of the several cults that were to appeal to him over the years. This particular group of people centered on a middle-aged woman in possession of a special test that she would administer on request and that would tell you whether you were a creative,

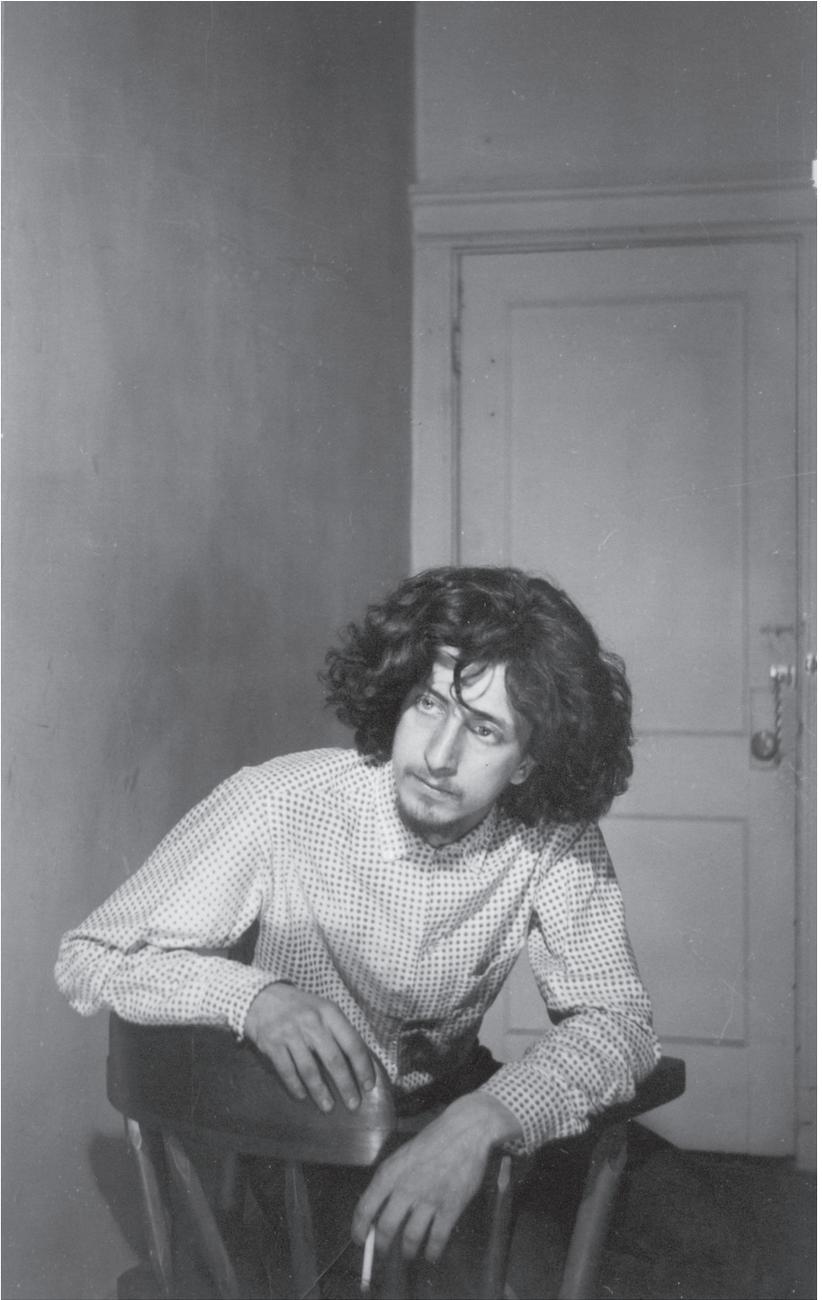


Howard as a student at Newton High School.

spiritual person, or a rigid, mechanical person, all depending on whether you reacted more strongly to colors or to forms, to dominant or to subordinate figures, presented in the test questions. In this belief system, color-reactors were by definition all good people, some damaged by a form-controlled world. Most of the bad institutions you might think of, like corporations and armies, were run by form-reactors. Here was a convenient way for Howard, who tested a strong color-reactor, to understand why he fit where he did, why our father, whom he persuaded to take the test, was such damaged goods, why our mother such a tyrant. I fell somewhere in between, because I saw too soon the drift of the test and could not give honest answers. But I secretly accepted that I was indeed a form-reactor and thus undesirable. For long after this era I felt distinctly excluded by Howard.

In this period as well, Howard met Mary Calder. The Hayes-Bickford's in Harvard Square, a place no one would associate with great events, was nevertheless auspicious for Howard. Mary was visiting her friend Vickie Chess, who lived on Symphony Road and so knew Howard. She and Mary had gone to the Bick in Cambridge that day for coffee. Howard strolled in accompanied by another Putney connection, Peter Knoll. It is now fixed tradition that Mary's first words upon seeing Howard were, "Who is *that* creep?" But Howard had a different impression of Mary, and we may suppose that by sweet persistence, not to mention cutting his hair and shaving, he overcame this premature reaction. He followed her to New York, meeting her remarkable family, and persuaded her and them of his uniqueness and resourcefulness. Years later, when I knew Mary well enough to ask such a question, I asked her what had been Howard's special appeal for her. She opened her eyes wide and said, "He's just fantastic."

At twenty years of age, Howard moved to Greenwich Village, became a New Yorker and took up his life's work, though it began deceptively in desultory fashion—sorting mail for the Remington Corporation on Park Avenue, installing blinds and shades for Abbey Shade on the Upper East Side, working for a plumber



Howard at 19, on Symphony Road.



at the Café Bustelo plant in the Bronx, and then, improbably, clerking at the Wall Street law firm Cravath, Swaine & Moore. I would visit Howard and Mary at Mary's apartment at 20 Jones Street, a floor-through in a brownstone, with a jogged extension at the back providing a galley kitchen and a small dining room, where we would sit and have Mary's terrific shepherd's pie. A lot of people passed through that place, even in those early days. I recall Howard once kindly rubbing the feet of a weary visitor stretched out on the sofa. I thought this a surprising intimacy. New York seemed to suit Howie. Even the climate he found not especially irritating to his asthma.

But it was at 84 MacDougal Street that life gathered speed. Holton and Sandy had been born while they lived at Jones Street. In 1964 Howie and Mary moved into a more-commodious duplex house, with quarters for the four Rowers on the first two floors and direct access to the gardens outside the French doors at the back of the basement story. In the late summer of 1963, just before the place was renovated, I stayed some weeks in this house, alone except for an apparently unaccounted-for working telephone in one of the bedrooms and a duck in one of the bathtubs. I had suspended my wanderings in favor of a return to college, and I spent the next three years in Cambridge. One summer I came back to MacDougal



Howard in the kitchen at the Calder house in Roxbury, Connecticut. Probably the Cravath, Swaine & Moore period, on the evidence of the suit. Facing page, Howie, much hair lost in the move from Symphony Road to Jones Street, and a playful Mary, clowning around.

Street, for Howard had discovered a new cult, and he wanted my help and partnership in setting up a food business.

This was the Macrobiotic period. The magic of Yin and Yang, the appealing notion of balance and healthy living through diet, seemed to offer a new chance to Howard, a new way to approach his lifelong struggle for breath. The maximum leader of the day was George Ohsawa, author of many volumes, who assured his followers that it was perfectly all right to down a bottle of Scotch, so long as you balanced it with an extremely large, rare steak. But Howard's first focus was whole grains, and he had bought a tiny Meadows Mill which he wanted to set up to grind grist in a former egg-candling loft in Duane Street, in the old Washington Market. We went down to 100 Centre Street and registered the Infinity Food Company with the State of New York. I designed a little label and we found a bag maker in Brooklyn. Had Nabisco started this way? Who could tell?

Howard had rented the loft from an old fellow called Scheiner, who had more complaints even than our mother. "My wife got sick on me," he would say. Or, "The elevator broke on me." Or, "The city put a violation on me." These reflexive complaints became our daily patter, brought back to the dinner table for Mary's amusement. Scheiner eventually sold Howard the whole building at a very favorable price, but meanwhile we had the task of making the egg-candling loft clean enough for food manufacture. I refused to let Howard even be present while I sanded the floor, which was encrusted with albumen from the many eggs dropped over the years, and in consequence I discovered vividly and unforgettably what he had been struggling with all his life. I spent a day sanding the floor with a roaring machine, and that night at MacDougal Street, I found I could not breathe properly. I was short of breath and I wheezed loudly. If I tried to lie on my back, I rapidly became alarmed that I would choke to death. I had to sleep sitting up for three nights until the condition cleared. So now I knew firsthand what my brother had been fighting pretty regularly for twenty-five years.

Infinity Foods (slogan “Nothing Added, Nothing Removed”) rose and fell. A larger building on the other side of Duane Street, with much more space and a trailer truck bay, became new quarters for Infinity Foods. Employees appeared. But in the end Howard put the company into bankruptcy, which dismayed me when I heard of it, even though I had signed over my original interest years earlier. It seemed wrong to me to kill a thing like that. But I was thinking only of its symbolism and the hope it had represented at the outset. Howard’s interest now lay primarily in bargain real estate, and he had some time since discovered a third cult, Scientology. Scientology offered a new set of practices and beliefs, which proposed to go to the core of a person’s eternal being. Surely this would give relief at last to Howard’s asthma?

The Scientology period, a very long stretch of time, presented new difficulties in my relations with Howard. Scientology is a compelling church. If you don’t believe in it, you are made to feel wrong by its partisans, and if you do believe in it, you can incur serious obligations to the church. There isn’t much middle ground, or there wasn’t twenty-five years ago. For Howard, and soon Mary and the two boys, Scientology supplied a special viewpoint on all the ordinary transactions of life, and a special language in which to communicate. The viewpoint and the language tended to exclude an outsider, and I found it now especially difficult to be with Howard. As a way to reach Howard as much as for any other reason, I did explore Scientology a little and took some training and processing, but my native skepticism kept me from a commitment. While I never observed any salutary effects of Scientology on Howard’s health, I did notice how he blossomed personally as the director of a sizeable group of people at his Scientology franchise office on Sixth Avenue at Tenth Street. Ignoring the subject matter and looking at the structure, I could see that Howie was now running a thriving service business with numerous employees and customers, and it seemed to suit him very well. Later, after difficulties with the parent organization, he moved the office downtown to Chambers Street, and then,



disillusioned, closed it entirely. That he had been under an illusion was not a subject that he ever raised, and I took no satisfaction in having my skepticism vindicated.

Our conversations almost always took the form of Howard telling a story of his triumphs over circumstance and other people, while I skeptically questioned the probability of the events, as if at an unconvincing movie. Or he would show me his collections, which I failed to appreciate, or his exotic animals, whose captive state was more significant to me than Howard's pride and pleasure in their company. We rarely discussed events outside Howard's direct interests—no politics, no events of the day—although we could and did discuss how things worked or what they were made of, and often supplied each other with information. We surprised each other with what we knew. He was very well informed.

Illness was a ruling theme in Howard's life, but he never complained to me about the injustice of his position, or about his failures. The search for health drove him to Macrobiotics and Scientology. His steady curiosity about everything and anything seems to have been a pure gift, untraceable to either parent, unlike his acquisitiveness, which was a trait of both of his parents. Though he did so not at all to please her, Howard realized the frustrated property ambitions of his mother, and he amassed a collection of salvaged objects far surpassing his father's.

In compiling material for this book of memoirs, I read some five hundred-sixty condolence notes and letters sent to the family upon Howard's death. Howard, the person depicted in these notes and letters, who charmed and encouraged and helped and amused so many people, is not entirely a stranger to me, but he remains a separate character from my brother. After reading those hundreds of messages, I feel some shame to have questioned his stories, skeptically viewed his cults and failed to admire his collections.

Howard in training in England as an advanced Scientologist.

In 1999, at the double 60th-birthday party for Howie and Mary, I stood with Howie receiving the guests and felt the end of envy, and in its stead pure joyous pleasure in his success, as couple after couple, person after person, old and young, appeared to greet him, touch him and murmur a word or two. We had earlier in the day talked briefly about success, what it could possibly mean, and he had said something that surprised me, that he felt unsuccessful. Standing next to him now, I asked him in a whisper how he could possibly feel unsuccessful with all these people having come to express their affection. He nodded but made no answer.

Late in his life, Howard grew interested in finding distant family members on our father's side. One summer afternoon we thus found ourselves standing outside a house in a suburban cul-de-sac in Chestnut Hill near Boston, where we had just had a reunion with a score or more of the cousins—Carl the optometrist, Ron the dry cleaner, and so on. Howard, who had not been seen by most of them since childhood, recognized a number of them and could pick out others by name, even their parents, from photographs, bringing oohs and aahs of pleasure to the company.

But there had recently been a small misunderstanding between our two families, Howard's and mine, and before we got into cars and hurried off, I wanted to use this meeting, standing there in beautiful late afternoon sunlight at the edge of a bright green wood, to clear it away. When I finished my part, Howard said, "Well, it's all about love, isn't it?" At the time I thought this remark a cliché, that it seemed out of character. But now that I have seen how the world saw Howard, I think it was not.

—*Kenneth Rower, Newbury, Vermont*



Howard and Mary, January 1996.

Memorial and Testimonial

George Hannides, West Hempstead, New York

I MET Howard at a party in 1969, where he told me about the Infinity Company and how it had been in a dormant condition for several months. After a few meetings I agreed to help him get the company going again. It wasn't hard to get sales restarted. I called the health food stores to introduce myself as the new manager of the company and found a core of very loyal customers who would have waited any amount of time for Infinity products. I worked with Howard at the Infinity Company until 1974, when I decided to go off to do other things. Howard bought out my shares and we parted as friends.

The Infinity Company was the only producer of stone-ground flour in New York City. We were grinding over 20,000 pounds of flour a month and selling to all the health food stores in the Northeast as well as to some upscale stores like Henri Bendel, Zabars and Balducci's. Stone-ground, organically grown whole-wheat flour was more and more in demand by bread and bagel makers. We received regular shipments of organic wheat berries from farmers like Gordon Overbow of Devils Lake, North Dakota. The Infinity Company bought the entire wheat crop from the Overbows' 6,000-acre farm. We also bought wheat from Deaf Smith Organic Farms (Texas) in 100,000-pound railcar loads shipped directly into midtown Manhattan. Unloading was truly a family event, with the Rowers and the Hannides taking 2,000 bags of wheat berries out of the railcar and loading them into

trucks for hauling downtown to the warehouse. Each fifty-pound bag was carefully stacked onto wooden pallets and loaded into the Infinity building at 171 Duane Street.

The stone-ground flour was just part of the Infinity product line, which included a complete line of Macrobiotic foods. The Infinity Company was first to import Tamari soy sauce from a six hundred-year-old factory in Japan. Infinity was able to import organic peanut butter from Argentina, and other organically grown produce. The product line grew to include fresh-baked granola and banana bread. As the demand for natural products grew, the Infinity Company expanded its product line beyond Macrobiotic foods. The new products included a small line of vitamins and snack foods. The challenge of maintaining a continuously revolving inventory of products and raw material was solved by the implementation of a Nixdorf computer system. This was one of the first point-of-sale computerized systems used in the food industry.

Howard and I were partners in at least three spin-off companies. Llama, Toucan and Crow, a food distribution company in Brattleboro, Vermont, supplied the New England area, while Mattina Cereal Company was the granola maker and the Thomas J. Perseverance Company was the banana bread bakery.

The Infinity Company was instrumental in supplying the Woodstock Festival with Macrobiotic food, including 1200 pounds of brown rice, six fifty-gallon drums of organic apple juice concentrate and five kegs of Tamari soy sauce. Of all the problems at the festival, food shortages were not among them.

While all of this went on, we still managed to have some fun. Henri Treflic, an importer of wild animals, had a fire in his warehouse, and so we got to keep a lion cub in our building for a couple of weeks. I will never forget the time I walked the lion across Broadway and he decided to lie down in the middle of the road. He was just a cub, but he weighed around one hundred-fifty pounds and he had fierce claws. Dave Stiffler fed the lion whole beef kidneys every day. One day, by mistake, David gave the lion



Howard (at left) with George Hannides and the lion cub.

one extra kidney and then tried to take it back by picking it up off the floor. The lion clawed his arm and we had to take Dave to the hospital. In the emergency room we told them that Dave had scraped his arm on the edge of a garbage can so that they wouldn't report the incident to the police. Naturally the authorities would frown on keeping lions in a factory building in Manhattan.

The Infinity Company was in the news often. Howard was heard on WOR radio talk shows, newspapers would write stories about "new generation business men" and celebrities like Bob Dylan and John Hammond Jr. would stop by to visit. The years I spent working with Howard included some of the best times of my life, and if I could do it again, I wouldn't change much.

HOWARD was always looking for something. He was the human equivalent of a search engine. In those days (pre-Internet), when you wanted to find a particular item, it took a lot of detective

work, and that's where Howard shined. He was able to find true organic farmers like Gordon Overbow in North Dakota, and he found a farmer in Argentina who did not spray or fertilize his peanut crop, so producing organically grown peanuts. (The problem with American peanuts is that they are grown in the same fields as cotton, and cotton is treated with many chemicals.) The challenge was that at the time it was against US law to import peanuts. But Howard found that it was not against the law to import peanut butter. So he had the peanuts roasted and ground into a delicious butter. The peanut butter was shipped into New York in fifty-five-gallon drums, and Howard found a food pump strong enough to move the peanut butter out of the drums and into one- and five-pound jars. The peanut butter was a big success in the stores.

Howard would find other stuff as well. Once, a few blocks from the factory on Duane Street, Howard saw a cabinet being abandoned that he wanted to put in his bedroom on MacDougal Street. The cabinet was around three feet high and seven feet long, and very heavy. Howard, Dave Stiffler and I moved it up to the house and then, because it would not fit up the stairs, through into the back garden. Howard's idea was to rig it up the back of the house with a block and tackle, and then pass it through a bedroom window. The cabinet was just too heavy for Dave and me to handle once Howard moved to the upstairs position. Howard then said to take a break and went off to get help. Ten minutes later he came back with a fellow named Bob, who helped us get the cabinet into the house.

We worked at hoisting and dragging the wooden monster through the window for about two hours. After the cabinet was in place, Bob left, exhausted. Dave looked at me and asked, Do you know who that was? I said, You mean Bob? Dave said that it was Bob Dylan. The next day I was walking down MacDougal Street when someone yelled, Hi George! It was Bob: I had made a new friend. Howard was great at putting people together and was very casual about it.

I WORKED for Howard back in the seventies, for his Infinity Food Company. Infinity might seem like a funny name for a food company, but not when you consider our competition in Boston was named Erewhon (nowhere spelled backwards), after Samuel Butler's Utopian novel. One of the things Howard did was to get to know very well the farmers who supplied him with his products. I think they all considered Howard a very close friend. One of the farmers he visited, a devout radish farmer in Ohio, was called Farmer Graber. When Howard got back from one trip, he was totally convinced that Farmer Graber's decision to diversify his crops with beans and vegetables (following Howard's own recommendations), together with the fact that Graber had been using organic seaweed fertilizer for a number of years, would allow Infinity Foods to break into the organic vegetable market and take Manhattan by storm. We thought we would at least move the Hunt's Point Vegetable Market in the Bronx back to its original home in the old Washington Market, where we were.

I was the one chosen to manage the operation. In preparation for the auspicious event, the first trailer truck load of organic vegetables coming from Ohio to Manhattan, Howard took out a full-page ad in the Village Voice. He handcrafted the ad himself, writing an invitation in his own script following a spiral pattern to the center of the page, inviting all New Yorkers to come down to Infinity Foods to celebrate this great event.

Three people came. One was a woman who had been high all night tripping on acid and hadn't come down yet, but wanted to meet all the happy elves who of course help organic vegetables grow. Another was a journalist looking for a story. The third was a local derelict who used to unload vegetable trucks in the old days and wanted to know if this was the beginning of a new era for the neighborhood.

But those were frontier times. Our most promising vegetable was the organic carrot, the gold rush item of the health food

movement, and we did sell a lot of carrots, even zucchini squash as big as watermelons. And people did show up eventually, and some were famous and important people at that. I know a few suits from Grand Union showed up one day wanting to speak to Howard about lettuce. And I know I did sell organic carrots to Bob Dylan on one of those days.

I might say I think famous people recognized in Howard a kindred spirit and saw how his unabashed enthusiasm for new ideas helped make the world go round. If they got to know Howard well enough, they might also have seen that he had a unique mix of authentic wisdom and authority that was inspiring and made you want to follow him into the next human dimension.

David Stiffler, New York City

I HAD just been devastated in Vietnam by a horrendous experience that shattered my soul and body beyond repair, manipulated by agents of a Great Satan with unlimited high technology. Returning home to America was a numbing experience, punctuated with flashes of paranoia. I prayed, I meditated for direction, for healing, for an answer. After some time a voice answered, “Come to New York, come to New York right now!”

Traveling to New York was my last hope before I gave up and dropped out of society. Hitchhiking up from Pennsylvania, I found myself in New York at the Paradox restaurant. I was looking for someone who could teach me astral travel and to speak with spirits. I needed to make contact with an “extraterrestrial,” or at least to find a spiritual community that recognized the crime of the Vietnam war and knew a psychic way to end it. At the Paradox, I explained my plight to David Simon, who was mopping the floor. He said to go and see Howie: an intense man with gold wire-rimmed glasses and a golden ankh around his neck who evoked confidence and strength—the enlightened one? Thumbs

of a miller and the wisdom of a Zen master, could he help me to recover and grow strong? He gave me hope, a place to stay and a job. Infinity Foods was a refuge: flour milling, umiboshi plums, miso, habucha, bancha and hiziki. Bags of flour, Bo Atkinson delivery in a Citroën and the Comm course. Howard always a genius and always creative, he taught me the seven-day work week and to be successful. Facsimiles Press, T.J. Perseverance, Krax, Sansfin, silk screening, lofts, Crow & Coon, etc., etc. Under his tutelage I learned well. More than a friend, more like a father, Howard was the person I loved more than anyone else in my whole life. My only regret is that I didn't get to say goodbye.

Chris Wells, Santa Fe, New Mexico

THE day I met Howard in 1967, I was a young hippy on the streets of the Village, walking barefoot in overalls, obsessed with the notion of finding “ethical work.” In exploring for this one day, I walked into a then-rare health food store and saw on the counter a business card with an infinity symbol on it, with the words “Nothing added, Nothing removed” and “Natural foods.” I thought, hmmm, maybe that's it, and walked over to the address on the card, 84 MacDougal Street, and knocked on the door.

Howard answered the door, and I recall he made some off-hand comment like “Ethical work, well that's a strange thing to look for in New York!” He laughed and invited me in for lunch, which Mary was preparing jovially by the kitchen hearth while Sandy and Holton ran around like hobbits in the garden. Howard offered me a job immediately, and we went down to the warehouse loft, where he set me up with a place to live and showed me how to roast and grind sesame and sweet rice and chestnuts and how to run his fancy new super-quiet mills and the old-timey peanut roaster.

And there was John Hammond Jr., the blues-singing neighbor who was roasting grain between gigs. Howard commenced to tell

me the inside stories of George Ohsawa and Macrobiotics, of his trip to Japan to obtain the Emperor's soy sauce, all with a beaming elfin grin under that tough façade that hooked me forever. He loved this stuff and these explorations. One day Howard said, "Well, you want to come to Scotland with us?" and I thought, well I am Christopher Ayers Wells and I better go check out my roots. Off we went to study on another one of the endless explorations for truth and beauty that he and Mary put themselves through time and again.

I was forced into exile during the Vietnam war. I became one of the first longhairs on a road I still work through the Andean countries. (Of course we all know that Howard was a first wave longhair before they put a name on us—but always his own eccentric character.) Six years later, when I was able to return, I found myself on a very different wave from most. I was charged by the mountains to make a difference for the earth, by helping to create the community ecology festival and education program All Species Project. I met John Steiner, who told me to apply to a certain little avant-garde foundation, and much to my great surprise and in deep affirmation of the vision, I found out that this Threshold Foundation I was applying to "coincidentally" included as a founding member Howard Rower! I thought I must be on track. Howard for me was always a premier pathfinder, a benevolent uncle, a clever brother, and then became a generous philanthropist for some of the seminal projects of our times that most of the mainstream foundations would never understand.

For quite a while after that, Mary, who was with this every step of the way, and Howard joined the All Species Project board and kept us afloat until we got on our own, always giving sound advice and excusing the informal organizing tactics. Then there were the years I would stop in when coming back to New Mexico from projects in Russia or Sweden or with Bread & Puppet, and I was always welcomed as we shared our tales of exploration. He had gone to Australia, right into Alice Springs, and was busy in his exchanges with Aboriginal people's art. Once I brought my son

Chalo to meet him because he was such a great storyteller (and Chalo too sends his love here in this memorial, remembering the joys of this guy who would leave a surprise under the plate).

When ASP went international with our projects in Chile, Howard was right there backing us up with Threshold. It's as if I could feel him over my shoulder as I do now, telling the doubters, "Hey, we've got a planet here to take care of. Let's stay with this."

Howard knew the front edge of frank wonder and, for a guy with severe health problems since youth, he'd learned how to rise above the pain and could find the wry edge of humor and beauty in a mean clinch.

He was a joy and, out of many magnificent and strange friends, one of the great eccentrics. His stories always raw, contrary and humorous, and the collections, the endless collections of treasures, many that others couldn't recognize until they looked through his eyes. Art wouldn't be much without eyes and ears, and Howard had an eye for beauty and an ear for the deep old cultures of the earth, which made him one of the great life artists, a connection that helped form my ways and that of our larger work in ASP.

Howard was always an angel stooped over in my direction, so I won't be surprised as I walk down the road toward where we all join the Great Spirit to find him there again greeting me on the other side. Remembering him, we recall and retrieve and revive the wonder and beauty of our own given lives.

Walter Shapiro, New York City

Today, in our culture, individualism is not in fashion. Perhaps, by definition, it never is. When I think of my friend Howard Rower, first and foremost, I think of a true individual. On the occasions when I mentioned Howard to someone who did not know him, I was always a little tongue-tied in trying to describe him. Where

do you start? He was a man of dizzyingly diverse interests, interests which he pursued with an astounding appetite. He was that rare breed—both a dreamer and a doer. Though he was not an artist in the formal sense, he lived creatively, and he had a quality that is common to men and women of creative genius—he was incalculable.

I first met Howard some thirty years ago. Although we were good friends, we dropped in and out of touch over the course of those years. But it was most often during my bleakest hours, when I felt most alone and bereft, that the phone would ring and I would hear a deep, gravelly voice on the other end, “This is Howard Rower.” We would usually get together several times over the next few weeks or months, and I was always the stronger for it. This happened many times. For all his elusiveness, Howard was, for me, a rock.

Howard Rower was a lucky man. Despite an always problematic physical constitution, he passed more than sixty years on this earth. He raised two sons and lived to see grandchildren. He had a deep and intimate relationship with Mary. His friendships and associations were legion and diverse. I don’t feel sorry for Howard. He had a helluva run and now he’s at rest.

It is for myself and for others here that I reserve my sympathy. It is we who must go on without him. I am a poorer man in spirit today, but my heart is, and will always be, enriched by his friendship and his memory.

Sean Sweeney, Newport, County Mayo, Ireland

I SEE Howard standing in front of us, with his thumbs hooked into his galluses and smiling his slow, enigmatic smile. Perhaps it is the purpose of our meeting this evening to try to solve the mystery of that smile. No one of us has the solution. Every one of us has a piece of the puzzle. If we fit our pieces together by sharing our memories of Howard, we may come closer to an understand-

ing of our dear friend, the brother whom we loved. In Ireland, where I live, we would call this memorial for Howard a wake. A wake is never a sad affair, but rather a celebration of the happy times of a life which is past, especially those happy times shared with others. Friends and family gather together in the kitchen of the house and share recollections, anecdotes and stories. They sit on chairs ranged against the wall, each talking to his or her neighbor in voices which are never raised, in voices which are low. The wake continues throughout the night, but it is always a celebration, never a mourning.

Of course, it is absurd to compare a wake in the kitchen of an Irish farmhouse or cottage to a memorial in a huge space in Tribeca with an international crowd of artists, musicians, circus people and New Yorkers, but I think Howard would enjoy the comparison. He greatly appreciated the absurd. I remember, not one year ago, laughing and laughing with Howard as we watched the elegant, but absurd, clowning of W. C. Fields on a video. And Howard went much further in his appreciation of the absurd. He told me of his concern for the disappearance of the sideshow folk who traditionally accompanied the circuses: the midgets and the tall men, the bearded ladies and the trainers of fleas, the contortionists and even the geeks who were shown in cages, acting as wild men.

Here, as in so many areas, he amazed me with his encyclopedic wealth of arcane knowledge. But his interest stemmed from and resulted in kindness and generosity. There was no morbidity in Howard. He was concerned that, with the shutting down of the sideshows, the sideshow folk would fall on hard times. He recounted to me the sad loss of Hubert's Flea Museum on 42nd Street where one could attend performances of trained fleas wearing tiny tutus performing circus tricks and strong-man fleas pulling toy cannons. With his usual eccentric generosity, he organized financial support for the sideshow folk.

So, in the celebratory spirit of a wake, I will recount a couple of my happy reminiscences of Howard and encourage others, in

turn, to recount their reminiscences of the many facets of a truly complex individual: Howard in Australia, Howard in the circus, Howard in Club Vinyl, Howard's travel to Japan for his Infinity Food Company.

I will remember Howard as a kind and gentle person. I had an uncle who was also kind and gentle. My father explained to me that he believed his brother was kind and gentle because he had been in poor health throughout his life. The suggestion was that long suffering from illness can cause a person to become kind and gentle.

Howard recognized the great importance of laughter for everyone. Again, he went further and recognized the special importance of laughter for those who are desperately lonely or seriously ill. Perhaps it was this recognition that led Howard to clown in the Russian orphanages.

Another enigma. How to explain Howard's extraordinary rapport with animals? I think of a photograph Mary has of Howard standing face to face with an ostrich. They appear to be communicating through Howard's smile. There is a total lack of aggression on the part of the ostrich. Howard seemed to communicate by some interior means—with the wolves that howled at the moon from the roof of this building, with Alfred, the formal, black-tie rabbit of MacDougal Street and Mortise the Tortoise and George the Parrot (who loved Howard and announced his love frequently and vociferously), to the sugar gliders and the long-necked turtles and the hens that laid eggs in Club Vinyl and even the goldfish from the waterhole in Roxbury.

I always wondered whether this extra-sensory gift for communication was related to Howard's great success with the Aboriginal People of the Northern Territories of Australia who formally adopted him. The Aboriginal People have a reputation for uncanny feats of communication across the great distances of the Outback.

My own experience with this dimension of Howard's psyche may seem mundane and simple. I wished to rent a work space



Howard with ostrich at Fossil Rim, Glen Rose, Texas, 1999.

from Howard. We had come to agreement on all the arrangements and details, but we had not mentioned the figure of the rent. I said, "Now we have to discuss the rent," expecting some negotiation. Howard replied, "The rent? Oh, that's easy. Here's a piece of paper. You write down what you think would be fair. I'll do the same on another piece of paper." This sounded like a bad idea to me. In fact, it sounded like a recipe for disagreement. But Howard just smiled. I wrote down a figure on my piece of paper and Howard wrote on his piece of paper. We folded our papers and put them together. Finally we opened them. Exactly the same figure appeared on both pieces of paper. To this day I do not know how this perfect result was achieved. Perhaps Howard was in control or perhaps it was that we had some common psychic chord which permitted us to think in tandem.

I could go on all night, as one does at a wake, relating anecdotes about Howard's arcane areas of information or about his colorful interest in bow ties or Mah Jong sets or shoes made of elephant leather, or about the night we, between us, finished off all the herrings in oil in Chez Georges near the Porte Maillot. But so can we all. And that's what a wake is about. We all share. Everyone knew Howard in a different way. Let's see what the rest of us come up with. I close with a line from another wake, James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*: "Loud, heap miseries upon us, yet entwine our arts with laughters low!"

Drummond Pike, San Francisco

BACK in the glorious days of my youth, in 1984, I was struggling to make Tides Foundation a viable enterprise. We (my assistant and I comprised the entire staff at that point) were approached by Michel Henry, Robert Cabot and sundry other ne'er-do-wells, to consider entering into a contract to manage a new but struggling enterprise called the Threshold Foundation, which had grown out of the Donut gatherings of wealthy, socially mindful people. At that time, the Donuts were a rag-tag group of maybe fifty or sixty folks who gathered together several times a year beginning in 1980. They held common values and inquired how to live in the world while possessing both wealth and strong social concerns, to make the world a better place. As a part of the inquiry, they also looked deeply inside themselves to include personal growth, but in no exclusive way—sort of New Age, progressive minded, therapized, often Buddhist and eastern oriented, and decidedly not doctrinaire.

Now, I was twelve years out of grad school, a good suburban California boy with a deep social conscience. I didn't do therapy, had never meditated and thought that New Age fads were distinctly weird. But I was hungry to make Tides work. Tides was committed to working with progressive and open-minded donors

to help them help social change. If the donors had Buddhist leanings, well, we could live with that, just as long as they didn't expect us to join in.

So, this New York outfit calls us to say that they are a group of dozens and dozens of rich folks with progressive leanings, and they need help managing their philanthropic efforts through their Threshold Foundation. To us this was like manna from heaven. You can't just go door-knocking to build relationships with rich folks, and we were doing it one referral at a time, but now here was a whole room full of the folks we wanted to know, and they were interested in *us*. Before heading to New York to "negotiate" the contract, my assistant and I took their specs and figured out just how cheaply we could make their operation work. We pared and pared, knowing that we had to put something realistic in front of them, but that they wouldn't want to pay much. On the other hand, these were New Age Buddhists, so they wouldn't be that pushy, we supposed. A challenge, but it came together. Late one cold December morning, I found my way down to the office I had been directed to . . . on Wall Street. That should have been a hint.

I walked into what turned out to be the most intense office scene I had ever witnessed. There were video screens everywhere and people screaming to buy this or sell that, all while talking into two or three phones at the same time. I was already choking on the rare tie I had forced round my neck and could barely utter the name of the man I was to meet, Alan Slifka, to the receptionist. She promptly walked me down to the one private office in the place. There, Alan shoved papers aside as a servant showed up to set the small table with linens and silver for an in-office lunch. I was so confused and intimidated, I could barely make small talk. Alan was fine with that, because he was jabbering away about a deal on the phone while waiting for the other "negotiator," who just then showed up. I glanced up and did a double-take. Into the midst of this arbitrage chaos strolled a pale, sharp-nosed fellow with a twinkle in his eye and a grin on his face. He wore a large

puffy down vest with a rainbow embroidered on one side, and, as he turned a corner, I saw a ponytail down to his waist. I thought I had landed in a Fellini movie. Howard Rower sat down and handed me a business card. "Last Gasp Realty," it read. I glanced from one to the other, trying to figure out which, in my limited suburban experience, was weirder. I couldn't decide. Thereafter ensued a lengthy lunch (quite good, by the way) during which Howard and Alan took turns beating my poor pathetic numbers to death. This was something beyond my imagination. Slifka, especially, was unrelenting. He wanted to know my assumptions behind everything, even the postage line item. (I told him I really hadn't added up the number of letters I was going to be sending out, an admission that cost me half my estimated, already rock-bottom number.) It went on and on. I didn't have any margin to begin with, and I was reeling.

All through this, Howard beamed. His role seemed to be comic relief. A joke here, a story there and always a smile. Meanwhile, I'm dying. Eventually some deal blew up, and Alan had to show us out and into the sleet. We caught a cab, and Howard, completely aware of what had happened, leaned over and said, "If I were you, I'd take the deal." He then looked around and brightened up the day by telling me how he did his real estate deals, explaining the art of "flipping" to my virgin ears. That morning is vividly etched on my mind. Many great and wonderful things ensued. Howard became my friend and was the most marvelous presence on the board of the Threshold Foundation during his two stretches, separated by seven or eight years. He kept everyone centered by never fearing the telling of a bad joke, a practice upon which many of us became dependent. These days, Threshold gives away \$1 million a year to some of the most wonderful and creative groups out there. Tides, too, has thrived, and now serves hundreds of donors and foundations, and it has spawned four related organizations, all of which support social change. Over one hundred people now work here, but only a few of us know that our early days were nip and tuck. If Howard and Alan

hadn't beat me down below my costs, and then persuaded me to say yes anyway, we'd never be where we are today. I will sorely miss Howard.

Peter Pinchot, Milford, Pennsylvania

LAST weekend I was building a new set of stairs for a porch on an old farmhouse in Pennsylvania that we have been restoring for several years. As I was struggling to figure out how stringers, risers and steps fit together to make a stairway, I was thinking about Howard Rower and a ghetto rehabilitation project I helped him with in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn. That project, twenty years ago, was my baptism into a lot of things, not the least of which was how buildings are put together.

I first met Howard and Mary when I was a college student in the late 1960s, at the Paradox, a Macrobiotic restaurant in the East Village. I remember sitting at a long table in the dimly lit restaurant talking to Howard with his wry smile. Howard was instantly warm, yet he was always probing for some element of the bizarre that would provoke an outburst of laughter. Once you demonstrated some deeply human incongruity to Howard, you were in, and you were embedded in his memory permanently. I don't think I passed the test in the beginning.

That first night at the Paradox, I met a fellow who worked at the New York Scientology organization. That meeting eventually started me on a path parallel to one of Howard and Mary's—running a Scientology center. It wasn't until a decade later that I really got to know and appreciate Howard and Mary. By then we were both near the end of our Scientology experiences. We spent many evenings in a restaurant or at their house trading war stories, clinging to our humanity in the face of ludicrous demands for loyalty from the parent organization. Often when we were reeling from the latest fusillade, Howard would lower his head slightly, fix us with his best hypocrisy-piercing grin and then make

a devastating parody of the absurd situation we were in. Underlying the laughter that followed was Howard's remarkable capacity for holding every individual to the same test for human decency. This was Howard's real genius. It made it possible for many of us to act pretty well during a terribly difficult experience.

By 1982, many of us who had run Scientology centers suddenly found ourselves cast out of the organization, contemplating the next venture in our lives. One night I told Howard and Mary that I was looking for another opportunity to help people, an impulse that had originally led me to Scientology, but in a setting with no Big Brother organization and where I would be free to test out new ideas. Watch out what you ask for. Howard grinned and said, "Peter, I think I have just the job you are looking for." In retrospect I am not sure I looked quite closely enough at the nature of the grin on Howard's face.

Several days later, we were headed out Flatbush and Myrtle Avenues to Bushwick, then probably the most rapidly degrading ghetto in Brooklyn. As we got to the neighborhood where Howard had been buying up distressed multifamily houses, at least one quarter of the surrounding buildings were either bombed-out shells or boarded up by the city after they had been stripped to the point where they were economically irretrievable. This was a neighborhood of very few legal jobs, and virtually every tenant was on welfare. Many buildings were in a continuing standoff as landlords failed to make repairs and tenants refused to pay rent and the city rightly made it very difficult to proceed with evictions. The result was intense hostility between tenants and landlords in a setting with lots of heroin and guns. Welcome to Bushwick. But I still had a choice. The incredible thing is that I told Howard "yes" and babbled on about what a great opportunity this was.

Howard at the time was very successful at buying apartment buildings just outside areas of gentrification in lower Manhattan, fixing them up and then turning them into coops. The Bushwick project was one of Howard's plans to use this expertise to give

something back to New York. It was a noble idea. Reagan was drastically cutting back federal funding for public housing. The result was a wave of abandoned buildings with few new buildings to replace them and a rapid rise in the homeless population. Howard's idea was to buy up distressed buildings cheaply, fix them up and get the tenants paying rent as their buildings were rehabilitated. He hoped he could make this entrepreneurial venture at least marginally profitable and provide a viable alternative to massive public funding for low-income housing.

So off I went to Bushwick each day with a few tools and a little cash for materials. Tenants faced absolutely appalling conditions in the buildings when we bought them. Roofs leaked almost everywhere, most windows had several missing panes, toilets were often totally dysfunctional, walls had large, gaping holes, electricity was turned off in many apartments, boilers ran only a fraction of the time and rats overran the buildings. But that was nothing compared to the human conditions. Because of the chronic housing shortage, several families often lived in a one- or two- bedroom apartment. With very few jobs in the community, human intelligence and ambition were largely wasted. Most of the tenants were struggling but losing ground.

For instance, Alejandro was the superintendent in an eight-family house we bought. Although he grew up in Bushwick, he somehow got the opportunity to go to high school in Madison, Connecticut. Later Alejandro studied political science at City College until he got his girlfriend pregnant, and then he dropped out to get a job. Soon he was unemployed and on welfare, acting as superintendent to earn a little cash on the side. Another superintendent, Frenchy, was a highly decorated Green Beret in Vietnam who came back to his neighborhood, found no work and ended up with a family on welfare, and began drinking his life away. Juan, a hard-working fellow who helped us rebuild a number of apartments, had two wives, each in a different building, each with three children. Both wives were on welfare, and he worked at whatever jobs he could find to help support both households.

The big question in Howard's mind and mine was whether we could turn these buildings and their tenants around. Could we sell Bushwick welfare tenants on the premise of a fair exchange? Howard loved talking to the tenants, both to explore who they were and to try to figure out how to make deals with them that would get them involved in fixing up their buildings and changing the trajectory of the neighborhood. He suggested that we make a verbal contract with each tenant: "If we give you a rehabilitated apartment, you agree to pay us the rent." The tenants said "Yes," never imagining we might actually follow through and fix their apartments. A fair exchange with a landlord was not part of their conception of the world. So we hired Juan, Frenchy, Alejandro and many others to help renovate the buildings. With their help, we repaired roofs, windows, bathrooms, patched the walls, set out rat traps, repainted and so on. But collecting rents turned out to be a much harder job than fixing the buildings. In many buildings we got one-half or two-thirds of the tenants paying rent after their apartments were relatively functional. But getting a higher ratio of payment proved harder than either of us had imagined. We had to deal with junkies and heroin dealers who terrorized the buildings, and tenants who simply drank away their welfare payments before we could collect the rent.

And there were even more serious problems collecting rent. One day late in December I went to talk to Fernando, the superintendent in one of our buildings, about his rent. Over Christmas the boiler had broken, and I had spent three days before and immediately after Christmas frantically getting the boiler fixed. Fernando railed at me that we had just been trying to save money on oil and that he was not going to pay rent. I made the mistake of telling him to go to hell and then headed upstairs to talk to other tenants. Twenty minutes later I stepped into the hall and Fernando was walking up the stairs, drunk, with a baseball bat and cursing me. I was alone, without allies and with nowhere to run. I walked downstairs slowly toward Fernando, unable to think of anything to say. At the last moment, my anxiety got the better

of me, and I burst into laughter. Fernando had no idea what to make of someone laughing instead of fighting or running, and, bewildered, he put his bat down long enough for me to apologize to him. That is when I realized how little it took to become a statistic in Bushwick.

A few months later, I left the project to go back to graduate school in forestry. I am not sure what the outcome of Howard's experiment was in Bushwick, but I know that we definitely improved the lives of the tenants in our buildings at least for the short term. However, I don't believe Howard was ever able to turn a profit on managing housing for welfare tenants. He later told me that eventually the neighborhood began to gentrify, and he sold the buildings at a good price. But the Bushwick project had other benefits. Howard was an important mentor for me throughout this venture. It felt brutal, but he threw me in over my head into a setting where I had to deal with people and situations I had never conceived of. Through this experience and through watching Howard, I gained skills that I use all the time working with communities on forestry and environmental issues. Probably the most important thing he taught me was to focus on the underlying character of the individuals in a project, no matter how much I would rather concentrate on the idealistic goal of the venture. I will never achieve Howard's genius for eliciting the most revealing stories from people, but he certainly helped open that door for me. And perhaps what saved my life on that stairway in Bushwick was that I had learned to appreciate the absurdity of situations through Howard's eyes, and thus I was able to disarm Fernando. Thank you, Howard.

Nick Balamaci, New York City

HOWARD was probably the most anti-authoritarian person I have known. This is kind of funny when you think about it because I got to know him when we were both involved with one

of the most militantly authoritarian organizations of our time, the Church of Scientology.

This paradox deserves an explanation.

Some people are authorities because they've been elected; others are self-proclaimed. It didn't matter to Howard—whatever they were, appointed or anointed, he distrusted them all.

I believe he got involved in the health food business because he didn't trust what big corporations were marketing as food. The authorities said that Frosted Flakes with pasteurized and homogenized milk from hormone-injected cows were good for you, but Howard knew better. So he threw his considerable talents and strength behind an alternative to corporate chow.

It was the same with Scientology. Authority over our physical and emotional health was in the hands of MDs and psychiatrists, but Howard—in trying to deal with his own illnesses, allergies and imperfections—had met enough health care professionals to know they weren't all they were cracked up to be. They didn't have all the answers, but they didn't always have the humility to admit it.

So once again, he threw his talents and energy behind an alternative approach to healing body and mind—and in those days, make no mistake about it, Scientology had all the trappings of a revolution against the power and authority of the medical and mental health establishment.

If you're a friend of Howard's, you most certainly know this already—we live in a funny world. Show authority the door, and it comes back in through the window. The Romans overthrew their Senate and in came a long line of Caesars. The French overthrew their monarchy and in came the Reign of Terror. The Bolsheviks overthrew the Czar, and . . .

For those who became involved with it, Scientology overthrew the prevailing wisdom about the human condition, along with all the pipe-smoking, golf-playing health care professionals who dictated that prevailing wisdom. I am sure that this spirit of revolution attracted Howard—and a lot of other people, myself

included—to Scientology. But in the end, authority came back in through the window and drove *us* out of the house.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Scientology started out as a tool of the people. L. Ron Hubbard published a book of his ideas about how to improve your life, and people began to use his techniques. It was a fairly democratic movement, and probably because Hubbard and his circle had few resources at the time, no real attempt was made to control things.

Shortly after Howard became involved with it, Scientology began to build a centralized, hierarchical organization to rein in this tool of the people. One of the barriers to centralized control was the existence of “franchises”—semi-autonomous groups started, owned, and managed by enterprising people like Howard.

In New York City, there was a central organization under direct control of the hierarchy, but there were also three franchises, each with a different character. On the Upper East Side there was Celebrity Center, which was aimed at the kind of pretentious, self-important people Howard detested. On the Upper West Side there was Geltman's, a more down-to-earth crowd but one with the air of affluence and clear aspirations to much greater affluence. In the village was Scientology Fifth Avenue, an odd collection of blue-collar workers, mystics, comedians, and ne'er-do-wells that is best described as Howard and Mary's extended family.

The process of bringing the franchises to heel took about fifteen years. I was with Howard and Mary for only five of those years, but there are two incidents that stand out. The first took place when I was director of the franchise (which also tells you something about Howard—that he would entrust his extended family to a kid from the Bronx who had barely graduated high school and was clearly still not firing on all cylinders). Howard, great entrepreneur that he was, had made a package deal with the New York central organization when they were desperate for cash—he had purchased training programs for perhaps twenty of his staff at something like half-price.

A few years later, in the continuing process of asserting centralized control, representatives of Scientology's enforcement wing caught wind of this, denied that their organization had made such a deal and cancelled it outright. Howard was outraged—to him, deals and promises were near sacred and not broken without extremely good cause—and he refused to accept the injustice. Over the next few weeks, he and Mary and I pieced together a paper trail that not only documented the deal but also led right to the very office that had tried to cancel it. It turned out that one of their number, in an earlier capacity, had actually undersigned the deal. We forced the authorities to change their minds and savored that victory for a long time.

The second incident took place after I left the franchise, in fact after I left Scientology for good. Howard and I remained close friends, and he told me about a strange visit he had one day from several representatives of the central organization who called themselves “the Financial Police,” not the kind of name that would endear its bearers to Howard. At any rate, these characters apparently were a kind of final solution to the unruly franchise problem, and they asked Howard to turn over all his records to them, including the personal files of the entire Fifth Avenue family. Of course the answer was no. Howard closed down the franchise rather than cede control to these guys.

Years later, after I rejoined the mainstream, went to college and got a job downtown, Howard and I had lunch regularly. We called ourselves the P.T. Barnum Club and marveled at this strange period in our lives when we bought into the deceptions of an authoritarian movement dressed in revolutionary clothes. We also laughed a lot—at the grand cast of characters we came to know in Scientology, but especially at ourselves, because as any friend of Howard's most certainly knows, we live in a funny world.

Dean Stokes, Dallas

HOWARD was a force in and of himself. He was involved and interested in life. He had his own—quite—understanding of life and of right and wrong. He had a strong sense of justice without judgement. He was a very loyal friend. When a friend was in need, in danger or in trouble, Howard was there and gave a helping hand. His friendships went beyond individual relationships, by befriending many causes and groups of people.

Howard and I were involved in a large organization. Because of my rather vocal views on the subject of reform within that organization, I became politically out of favor. I suffered a great number of personal and economic attacks. Despite his personal, political and financial risks, Howard, without hesitation or waiting to be asked, showed up in Dallas with but one question: What can I do to help?

Howard was a spiritual entrepreneur. He used his life to bring good works to life. That was his art form. If wealth is measured by true friendships, Howard was one of the wealthiest people on earth, enriching many lives during his journey. He continues to be an inspiration to me. I am honored to have had Howard as my friend!

Walter Melvin, New York City

HOWARD. Of the people I have known in New York City, during the nearly forty years that I have been observing the activities of New Yorkers, Howard's is the name that comes to mind when "unique" is the descriptive adjective. In a city of people who try to be individualistic, who try to create an image that conveys "I am the only one like me," Howard was the one who was, without ever having to try.

One day in a building in lower Manhattan, the elderly elevator operator said, "I remember you!" I corrected him, saying that

I had never been in his building before. He said, “No, not here, in the subway last week. You were with the man with the embroidered vest and the ponytail.” Howard had such a unique character and style that random people would take notice of him, and even remember the guy in the suit who was talking to him in the subway. Watching Howard maneuver through the ancient buildings of Tribeca, dealing with tenants, and making grand plans on one day and on the next day seeing him make an eloquent speech at a Governor’s reception for a Calder installation, gave Howard a bigger-than-life image. Seeing New York from his point of view was an enriching experience.

One winter day many years ago, the Rowers’ Citroën was retired from the New York scene to Roxbury, Connecticut, for rest. Howard was assigned to the task of driving this somewhat dilapidated machine, and I was assigned the task of accompanying him on the trip. Howard’s driving was not one of his skills in which I was most confident. He always seemed to me to be focused on something other than the road and the car. The Citroën was suffering some problems of its own. It couldn’t seem to keep its doors closed without the aid of a rope tied to each door and passing through the passenger compartment. The tires were suspect, and the bodywork had suffered greatly from many years on the streets of Manhattan.

It was a very cold trip as the windows couldn’t be closed due to the ropes holding the doors. After the car started weaving badly, Howard pulled off to the side of some parkway in northern Westchester. “Gosh, Walter, we seem to have a problem,” said Howard, in his usual understated way, which had a strong implication of, “What do we do now?” After stumbling around in the cold and dark for an hour, we managed to attach a spare tire, which was significantly less reliable looking than its now flat predecessor. We finally got under way again, after much tying and untying of the door ropes, and shivering in the cold. Howard never once gave a single indication that any part of this trip was one bit extraordinary.

Sitting in my car recently on MacDougal Street, where I often met up with Howard and where he would have a few words and at least one short story to tell, I noticed a figure moving in the reflection of my side mirror. “That’s Howard,” I thought to myself. Then I realized that it wasn’t, and it would never be again. I guess Howard was the part of the trip that was extraordinary.

Sarah Melvin, New York City

HOWARD had a spiritualness, almost an omniscience, that was quite remarkable. He was a person in touch with life at all levels. When I see the elusive beauty of opals from Australia, I think of Howard. Each refraction sending out brilliantly colorful arrangements of light, but ever changing as one moves the stone forward or backward. Much like Howard moving through life, ever changing, always adding new dimensions. His affinity with the earth, the sea, the land was always present. Rocks and stones would strew his table. Art works of bark, earth, shells and feathers lay about. Sea creatures and endangered species were always being harbored. Turtles, tortoises, hedgehogs, ferrets, wolves, monkeys, parrots, geese, sugar gliders, rabbits, emus and many other friendly creatures shared Howard’s life from time to time.

But most of all, Howard was a people person. He enjoyed a rich sense of humor and a keen appreciation for the ironic foibles of our lives. A good joke or a richly told story was right up his alley. To be in the company of Howard was often an adventure. He found the “games” of life ever amusing, if not frustrating. People of all walks of life were important to him. He supported and advised people in need: often the underdog. He understood better than most that the basic spirit within each of us is equally precious. Howard worked hard in making life here on earth better for us all. But just knowing Howard here on earth made life better for us all. Howard will be deeply missed, but always held very close in my heart.

MY mind keeps flickering to different images of Howard: having lunch with him at Aggie's, sitting up late nights at Circle meetings, listening to his stories, being so tired I just had to go to bed—but so wanting to hear the end of the story that bed just had to wait. Watching his excitement as he shared with me the first draft of the annual report that we worked on together, he the artist, me the editor. And then watching that sly smile cross his face, as people began to look at the annual report and expressions of delight started to cross their faces. I think I will always hold that image: him standing there in his down vest, hands in his pockets, posture slightly leaning back, beaming, as Threshold members applauded. I think of another evening, at your house: you were away, I was staying there, just to be there. He had recently had a change in his meds. So we sat at the table while he took his meds and followed the chart that you had made up for him. We were surrounded by these extraordinary animals that he wanted to take to the club: a hedgehog, some sort of flying squirrel and a couple of others. Then I would go off to bed and he to the club. In the end I'm not sure why I was there, but I was glad for the time with Howard. I think of going to hear the Glass Menagerie and always looking for Howard, sometimes to sit with him or to just say hello. He was always there. And then there were those times, those incredible meals that you would whip together at your house, wonderful people milling around, Howard holding still in the middle. . . .

I didn't know him as well as many others. I'm just glad for the chance I had to know him at all. His spirit never really did fit in the confines of a human body, particularly one that wouldn't expand to the fullness of what he wanted to take in of life. I like to think of his spirit now being free to really kick up his heels, take a deep breath and soar.

Paul Binder, New York City

HOWARD was always fascinated with the ability and precision of the circus working men, particularly when it came to their operation of heavy equipment. Ex-teeterboard acrobats could drive eighteen-wheel tractor-trailer units down interstate highways. Or operate Bobcats, forklifts or dual-wheel pickup trucks



Paul Binder of the Big Apple Circus, left, takes instruction from Howard.

with the skill necessary to keep the circus moving up and down at each stop. I remember the time he was watching Hungarian-born Charlie Hortobagyi on a forklift, maneuvering an eight-ton, forty-two-foot, fifth-wheel travel trailer through a ten-foot opening alongside the Metropolitan Opera House. “What talent,” he said. “What an amazing talent. Almost impossible to fit through that space.” What he didn’t say was: “Like driving a camel through the eye of a needle.” (Howard, after all, was not a religious man.) But that reminds me of another story.

Howard often expressed that it might be “fun,” (read: “exciting”) to drive a trailer from one circus lot to another (a thrill that most of us have long since grown tired of). Bobby Gibbs, the camel trainer, gave Howard his big chance. He was to drive a truck pulling a trailer loaded with six dromedaries from the circus lot in Staten Island to the lot in Prospect Park, Brooklyn. The shortest “jump” on the tour. All was going fine until, nearing the end of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, as fate would have it, the truck got a flat tire. Howard, with the guidance of Bobby, his co-pilot, managed to bring the rig to a safe place at the end of the bridge. Now, in order to fix a flat on a truck pulling a trailer, one has to relieve the load by disconnecting the trailer. Our two intrepid warriors managed that and replaced the damaged tire with a spare. Problem was, when they put the trailer back on the hitch, they failed to do it properly. As our hero pulled out, the trailer—ever so slowly—slipped off the truck hitch. By the time they’d traveled fifty feet, the trailer reached the limit of its safety chains, pulled hard on them and lurched forward, camels and all, toward the truck, “crawling” up the bed of the truck toward Bobby and, yes, Howard. It was only then that Howard truly understood the skill of the circus working man. Bobby talked Howard to the side of the road with the skill of a 35-year circus veteran. Only then did they breathe. (Howard, of course, in his own way.) Then they got out of the truck, rehitched and set on down the road once more. To the best of my knowledge, Howard never asked to drive again.



Howard on the beach in Nevis, 1997.

Léonie and Parsons Geddes, Nevis, W.I.

HOWIE and Mary came to us many times. The things we did and talked about are too many to list, but our memories of Howie are ever on our mind.

Howie was a person of many projects. When they came to Nevis, he became very interested in the Island. On one trip they arrived in time for dinner, and when we had finished, it was dark and the tree toads were out singing their songs. Howie left the house to see if he could catch one. In a short while he returned with a live one in a little grass for feed for the captive, ever thoughtful of the toad's well being. It was the first live toad we had ever seen.

The next project was to find out if coconut palm wood could be bought for a friend in N.Y.C. who was in the furniture business. Howie found a man who owned a coconut palm tree grove, so we went and called on him. He advised we go to a mill in

Charlestown. He found they were using the wood for floor tile and siding and was told it could be used for many things. This seemed to be enough information to take back to his friend.

We introduced Mary and Howie to a local drink made from grapefruit and produced on the next island. We had never come across it in the US. Well, Howie thought it was great, so when he got home he did a little shopping and, lo and behold, he found a distributor in the Bronx. We now have it in our cellar. No stopping that man.

He was forever finding driftwood and flotsam on the beach. He picked up a large bolt and took it home. The next thing we knew he had made a wonderful box to fit it and sent it to us. He also made a little stirring spoon and twelve small cheese spreaders and made a wooden box to hold them. We still have them here and use them all the time. No end to what he could do. He was a delight to be with, curious, ingenious and funny. To us he has always been *Howie*.

George Gillmor, Scott Depot, West Virginia

I HAVE thought a great deal about Howard. We became friends more than forty years ago. Even then Howard was an iconoclast—and even then he was marked by a mysterious flaw in his physical health. Looking back, I have to marvel at how long Howard battled that invisible adversary and how well he lived his life in the face of its relentless opposition.

Notwithstanding his health problems, Howard was invariably cheerful in our many talks over the years. He was funny, as well, and even hopeful—nay, convinced, that healing would occur. But how convinced? I am not so sure. Howard was a complex man who sometimes spoke to me in complex codes. As to those things which mattered most to Howard, however, he did speak plainly. I don't believe there was ever a conversation in which [Mary was] not mentioned—and always with great affection. Howard's love and enthusiasm for Holton and Sandy were ever present as well.

Howard's life was short but full; Howard fought the good fight; Howard experienced love. He has not only my love of many years but my admiration as well. My profound admiration. . . .



A merry moment with George Gillmor, about 1993.



Howard visiting orphans with Patch Adams in Russia, 1991.

Patch Adams, Arlington, Virginia

As a weird person, I quickly recognized that Howard was weird. Living in an ocean of correspondence, I read thousands of letters a year. Only a few make me sit up and call a friend over and say look at this, the weird ones. Howard's first few letters were cryptic on hilarious stationery. Later he came to visit us in Virginia (this is another glorious trait of Howard's—he investigated things, it was a hunger he fed). Much of that first encounter we spoke about animals and odd pets. He liked Zag's ferret. He had ferrets

and big turtles and a wolf in his office. I gravitate to those who hop around on the rim of the bell curve and, if they are willing, we become friends. That was sixteen years ago. We both stayed weird. We visited each other's homes and cared about each other's families. When weird doesn't meet and play with weird, it can go to madness unwelcomed. When it does, it is madness welcomed. Thank you Howard for the comfort and friendship: it has given me Rowers for my ship of fools. I love you.

Mike Davidson, Surrey, England

I FIRST met Howard in 1969 on business. It would seem unlikely that I, a poverty-stricken British ex-academic and he a rich (to my mind) hippie entrepreneur adorned with a three-foot pigtail, would hit it off. However, I was struck by his warm attitude, completely open communication and perceptive understanding of people and issues. This did not mean that he liked everybody, but if he didn't like or agree with what you said, he told you without equivocation. He was a great raconteur, and I hope some of his stories have been retold by those who witnessed events first hand—for instance, attending a meeting of the staff of an upstate business who were protesting their takeover by a New Yorker and being elected to present their grievances to the new boss (Howard), and, on another occasion, his riposte to a saleswoman who insisted to him that she could “talk to anyone about anything—and you could be like me.”

My wife Rosemary and I visited New York many years after my business acquaintance came to an end, to renew our friendship with Howard and Mary. As part of our trip I wanted to repay their kindness by taking them out to dinner. My idea was the restaurant at the top of the Trade Center. Howard, however, knew just the place in Greenwich Village! I was horror struck to find ourselves in what we in England call a “Sweaty-Betty”: a room not much more than ten feet square, piled high with cardboard boxes,

the floor covered in sawdust, the rather large proprietor sweating profusely over a hot gas stove. The seating, a couple of old settees, was just adequate for our party. The menu however was the longest I have ever seen with probably a hundred dishes from all continents. We stayed only for the first course, proceeding to two other restaurants for main course and sweet to complete an unusual meal out! It was a most enjoyable evening.

Then there was the day we were invited to see his “office” in lower Manhattan. There *was* a desk—and a chair, a telephone and other office equipment. The rest of the space, which seemed like several acres, was occupied by an amazing collection of inanimate and animate objects. For example, a jeep, a couple of ferrets (alive, not stuffed) and towers of junk of all descriptions (or what seemed to us like junk, but not of course to Howard). All this was, I think, on the third floor. I thought the ferrets might be being kept for a ferret-down-the-trousers endurance competition, but Howard assured us that this latter was a peculiarly British pastime. I half expected, knowing Howard’s entrepreneurial skills, that he would introduce this sport into America. Had he done so I am sure it would now be an Olympic event.

Howard was always on the move. He made the most of his life and along the way helped a lot of others to do the same. I am sure he will be missed by more people than we can count.

Geoff Toll, Melbourne

I THINK my fondest memories of Howard come from sitting around with him in his amazing office, surrounded by stuffed bats, crocodiles, the collection of traps (is that what they were on the wall?), weird things in jars and didgeridoos. I felt right at home. Here was a real adventurer. He would have been with me running around in the remote bush in northern Australia if his health had allowed him. (If they had seen his office the producers would have used it as a location in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.)

Behind the office, the back room turned out to be an entire floor of a warehouse. Here the collection of weird stuff reached new heights. There were just small paths through stacks of boxes, crates, bits and pieces of treasure. It went on and on, and one can only imagine what things were there.

Howard was so generous he would help anybody, and it was only because of him I was ever able to stay in New York. He really looked after me. Once when I was suffering in love and visited a fortuneteller on Fourth Street, the seer wanted *my* fortune in exchange for vital information about the Colombian girl I was besotted with. Desperate, I got Howard to go and get the information for me. He got it for \$20. Howard was a once-only human. The Gods threw away the mold after they made him. He was my best mate. He was one of the few people in the whole world I could trust implicitly. I miss him.

David Kennedy, Alice Springs, Northern Territories

IT was 1988. I was working at the time for Dalgety Australia (a stock and station company, which trades cattle and rural properties), when two men walked into our Alice Springs office. One was a local real estate agent, the other was Howard. "We would like to talk to someone about the purchase of a rural property."

I had recently completed study in Real Estate and was summoned to attend to these two gentlemen, and so started my friendship with Howard. It was at our first meeting I recall hearing Howard's account of his impressions of Central Australia. He had just driven across the Tanami Desert and was taken by the red sand. He said it was for this reason he had decided to buy a bit for himself.

He told me how he had been to another company before coming to our office, inquiring as to the availability of rural properties. He had been told they had none and told he could leave his name with the office girl. This was to our benefit, as the only

property available at the time was indeed listed by them. Howard was told this and we subsequently sold Ooratippra Station to him. It turned out that Howard was originally turned away on the grounds of his appearance: not only did he not look like a rural land holder, but he was also driving a hired *pink* mini-moke, which on subsequent trips he would hire again.

I married Howard up with Graham and Robin Fulcher, who were also looking for a property but did not have the capital to buy on their own. They remained partners for some eleven or twelve years. I'm never sure whether I did the right thing or not, that's another story.

Howard would meet people in all walks of life. Some we would take out to his Ooratippra Station, and alike, all would see something different in this "Yank with the long hair." I recall on such a trip to Ooratippra, Howard wanted some lemon for his tea, but there was no lemon, so orange marmalade was used as a substitute. The look of shock on one visitor was a laugh. When Howard was presented with a boiled egg in an eggcup for breakfast, he asked, "What do I do with this?" We all had a good laugh. He went on to peel the egg and put it on his toast.

I could talk for hours on his antics. Needless to say, after many hours driving backwards and forward to Ooratippra, I got to know Howard quite well. He knew me sometimes better than I did myself. This was evident when, after working in the pastoral (farming) arena all my life, Sonja and I decided to buy a motel. "Why?" he asked. "It's not in you." How right he was; we're back in Alice Springs, and I'm back working with farmers.

We had a visit from Howard and Mary while in Robe, the town in South Australia where we owned the motel, and even then the topic was the red sand of Alice Springs. For some years after our return to Alice, I kept an eye out for a business which would have suited both of us, but that was not to be.

Daniel Shapiro, New York City

I KNEW of Howard's involvement with and love of horses, the circus, Aboriginal peoples and, of course, Club Vinyl. Still much more for me was Howard with his graying ponytail, wry smile, throaty laugh and sharp analytic mind. I remember the first time that he and Sandy [Rower] came to my office. I don't think I was ever cross-examined—both visually and verbally—as much as I was then, and by such an unusual twosome. I thought that Howard and Sandy saw me as the “bad guy,” counsel they didn't want to have to deal with. You can imagine this was not a very bright prospect for a lawyer who is in a service profession to help people who come for aid. I was being grilled as the criminal: unsavory and unwanted.

That was long ago. While never taken into the family, I do feel and hope that Howard and Sandy felt me more friend than lawyer—and certainly not an enemy. Howard grows on you like a friendly rebel or perhaps a circus performer, someone clearly not like others, clients or friends, special, unique, very much his own person.

Thus I was very surprised to be asked to write for Howard's admission into the Century Club. Sandy and I even joked about it. Howard becoming conventional—never! I wrote with great pleasure to tell the Century how lucky they were, as I was, to have a chance to be and talk with such a wonderfully different and special man.

Chou Wen-Chung, New York City

I AM writing in support of the nomination of Howard Rower [for membership in the Century Club] as proposed by Sean Sweeney and seconded by Thomas Messer. . . .

It is a pleasure to join Messrs. Sweeney and Messer in recommending Howard for your favorable consideration. While I am

not in a position to speak about his dedication to the arts, as illustrated by his capable steering of Sandy Calder's legacy, or his many qualities as demonstrated by his love for all things related to the circus, I am a neighbor of his.

I do not remember how long I have known Howard, but we have been neighbors at the MacDougal-Sullivan Garden for decades, where my family and I moved a little more than thirty years ago. . . . At the Garden, an incredible sanctuary in the midst of the hubbub of New York, where we both brought up our children, Mary and Howard have consistently worked for the well-being of the Garden.

Perhaps Howard does have that air of being an "American eccentric," as suggested by Sean, and perhaps in the tradition of Calder. It was not an uncommon sight in the Garden to see a box turtle with a red "R" painted on its back lost in its ambling, fugitive from 84 MacDougal Street. All of which is to say that Howard is a good man, caring, willing, and not afraid to speak his mind—and then some. All of these will he bring to the Century.

Winston Headley Barnes, Bronx, New York

HE was my good friend, like a father. Such a wonderful person, because he was always willing to try to help. He was so nice to work with. With Howard, a worker never gets hungry.

He loved his animals a lot and so many of the little things—from the flea markets. Two or three weeks before he went to the hospital, we went to Brooklyn, to Coney Island. We used to go a lot together—go for a walk on the boardwalk, and get snacks all the time. Then just sit on a bench and snack and look around.

One time, we were in Brooklyn and he wanted to try some fried green plantain that I was eating. I warned him that he would need some water to help it down, but he refused since I wasn't having any. He took a bite and right away started to choke, and I got him some water.

“Winston, how do you eat this?”

Well, Howard, I said, I’ve been eating it since I was a young child.

He loved the little sweet part from a chicken wing, vegetables and liked squid with noodles a lot.

He always said he was sick from when he was young and he was sickly, but I didn’t expect him to go so quickly. It was painful to see him in the hospital; my heart went out to him. I didn’t know he wasn’t going to be here with us. I miss him so much.

[Winston Headley Barnes came from Jamaica to New York City in 1980. He was 35 years old and had worked as a driver for a construction company. He went to a department of employment office and was told that there were no jobs listed. His wife was with him and she pleaded with the clerk, “Please look again.” The woman behind the counter said that maybe her friend Captain Crow needed someone and that maybe Winston would get a call. Sure enough, Captain Crow/Howard called him, and Winston has been doing a little plumbing, electrical and construction work for him ever since. He worked for Howard the longest of anyone, and their affection for each other was completely mutual. “Winston, what are you going to do today?” was how Howard began the work day. They worked out together a plan for what was going to be accomplished that day, which often included lunch together at Thai House or down on Chambers Street. “Just do what you have to do, Winston.” Sometimes that meant helping Mary with something on MacDougal Street. “Just work out with her when you can go, Winston,” Howard would say.—*Mary Reath, Princeton, New Jersey*]

George Host, Greenwich, Connecticut

I THINK often of a sunny summer day in 1996 when Howard was conversing with Elizabeth, Brooks and Paige on the stone terrace behind the Boathouse. He was looking out over the Pond, and then he turned to the children and said that he wanted to send them each something that they really liked. He needed their help, however, in telling him what they really wanted.

I watched them struggle with this opening, wondering whether to reveal their real desires or to be politely modest. With some encouragement, Elizabeth let on that she liked sculpting in Fimo, and Brooks averred that he had a passion for knives. Paige, just turning five, had no trouble saying that she only really liked jewelry.

Soon afterward, each found a package in the mail. Howard gave Elizabeth a fine set of Fimo tools and Brooks a sharp Opinel knife. Paige unwrapped a bright owl pin that Howard had found in his drawer and a bead necklace, treasures that she keeps separated in her jewelry box.

Each present came with a note on distinctive letterhead—Last Gasp Realty, North American Zoological Conservatory, and one unusually annotated drawing of a crocodile sporting a crow on its back. The letters to Elizabeth and Brooks warned them to stay alert and not damage themselves or cut someone they liked. The note to Paige invited her to let Howard know if she liked the jewels so that he could get her more.

These children were convinced that being a Rower was cool. They heard of wolves and tortoises and circuses and realized life's opportunities were vast. . . .

When she heard that Howard was in the hospital, Paige wanted to pray regularly for him and asked about him daily. When she heard that he had died, she tentatively asked if she might be allowed to go the funeral because "he was one of my best friends, you know." When I read her the list of Howard's diverse accomplishments, she said, "I think Mr. and Mrs. Rower were the

perfect couple.” I agreed that you seemed so well matched, and she corrected me, saying, “no, not just perfect for each other, just perfect.”



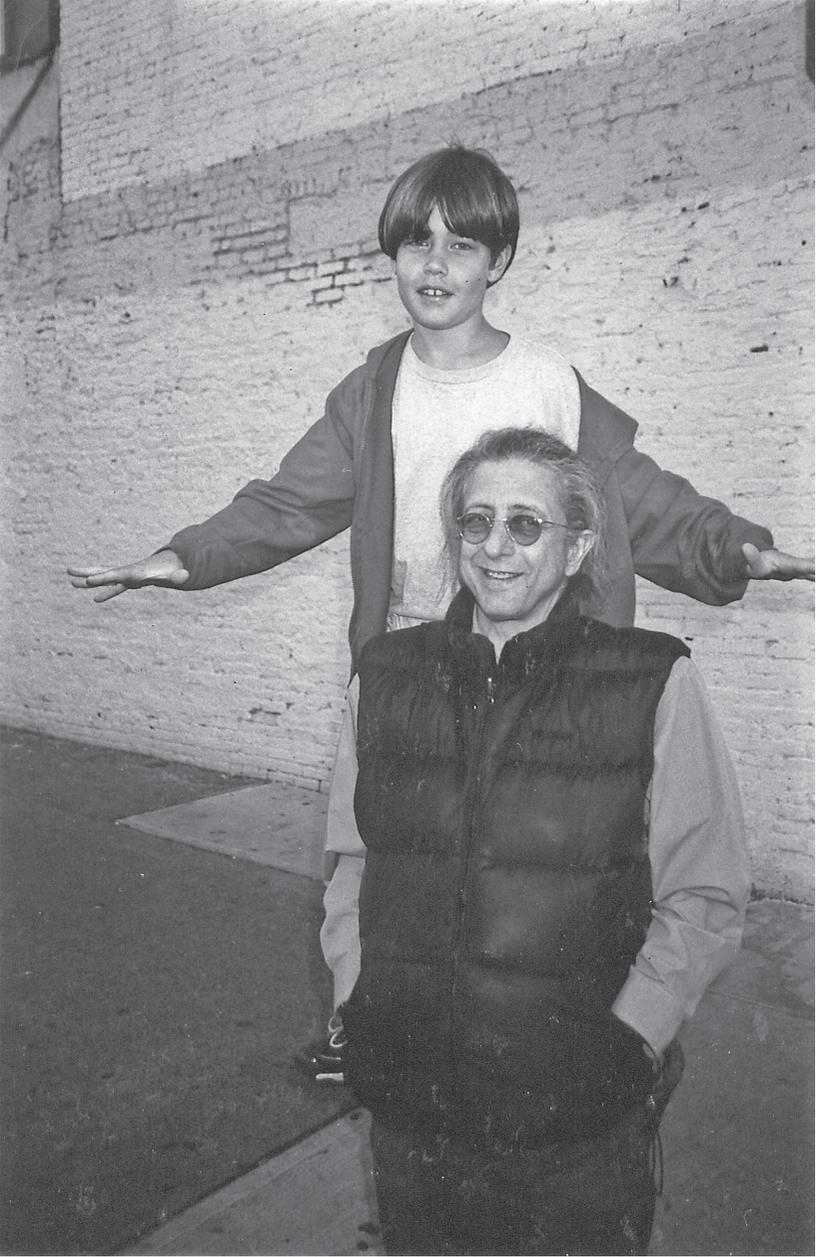
With first grandchild, Gryphon Rower, about 1991.



With granddaughter Sofia Rower (left) in 1996 and her sister Isabel



With Sandy assembling a mobile in Jerusalem, 1978.



With grandson Gryphon on Houston Street, about 1997.



Terry Lorant

With Mary in Santa Cruz, California.



With Sandy, Mary and Gryphon, Storm King, N.Y., about 1998.



A.S.C. Rower

With Holton at MacDougal Street (top) and in Philadelphia, mid-

Susan Edery, Dallas

Although Howard and I were never really close as brother and sister, I have always admired him and enjoyed hearing of his many and varied endeavors and adventures. He was a man who lived his life with joy and wonder—and he will be missed.

Natasha Thompson, New York City

. . . . He was the Coolest adult to me. Whether it was an animal or a magic trick, Mr. Rower always had something neat to share with me. He is someone who will not be forgotten. Mr. Rower had a great character and was extremely caring. He always helped with the garden and was happy to let me see Mort [Mortise the tortoise]. I will miss him.

Andrew Mathews, Oaxaca

I remember well how much fun we had together at Howard's club last New Year's. He had such pleasure in the eccentricities of the world of young techno dancers, in which he was involved through the club.

Kaia Huseby, Oaxaca

I will miss all my wonderful conversations with Howard on my visits to your house. What amazingly different passions he had—from African beads to sugar gliders! I have never known anyone like Howard and always left your home with my eyes open to something I had never noticed or known about in this wide world.

Chiara Clemente, Rome

A full moon dissolved in the city lights
Winter winds in this summer night
A wolf howls. . . a dozen wolves cry
Singing a sad song in memory of a lost friend.

New York City, Downtown,
A hidden garden.
A jungle full of beasts
Its king
A man with a small cricket box
In this box infinite stories
That at their time travel
To the ear of a fortunate listener.

In this jungle there is a queen
Who wears a cloak of silver hairs
With magic hands and a magic voice
A magic spoon and magic toys.

This disco jungle
With chicken dances
And mammal birds
A speedy tortoise skips to the beat
A babbitt rabbit wears the latest fur.

Their king and queen dance all night
Through the day and past the light
On and on
For lives to come
No one can stop them
Not even time. . .

Robert Grudin, Portland, Oregon

I first met Howard Rower in Paris in the summer of 1960. We'd taken adjacent rooms at the Hotel d'Alsace in the Rue St. Louis-en-l'Île and fell into conversation when we both happened to be leaning out of our windows at the same time. After that we spent an evening or two on the town. Howard told me that he was in love with a woman in America named Mary Calder, and that he'd telegraphed her to come join him in Paris. When she didn't accept the Paris invitation, Howard asked if I could use a passenger to Zurich on my motorcycle. From Zurich, a few days later, he telegraphed Mary Calder again, with a second negative response from her. So it transpired that Howard was my passenger again, over the Swiss Alps and along the then-unfinished Autostrada to Florence. Safely arrived, he fired off a third telegram, and this time his invitation was accepted. My offices as chauffeur no longer being necessary, I continued on my travels, leaving Howard in Florence.

I shot two rolls of color film that summer. In Greece they were mistakenly developed as black and white, and for many years I considered them ruined and never had them printed. Finally, in the early '90s, I gave it a try, and they all turned out blue. Anyway, there's one of Howard, sitting on my motorcycle somewhere in the Alps, radiating the adventurousness, humor and *joie de vivre* that were his trademark in those days, and that I'll never forget. The fact that everything in the photo is blue gives it a dreamy quality, as though setting it in another time or another world.

I spent the 1960-61 academic year at Trinity College, Dublin, and had just returned to the States when Howard asked me to be the witness at his marriage ceremony. He, Mary and I duly arrived in court, and in short order they were man and wife. Four summers later I weekendened with the Rowers at Alexander Calder's house in Connecticut. At a neighboring house we met some Calder family friends, including Slater Brown (who was the basis

for a major character in e. e. cummings' *The Enormous Room*). One night Howard and I used a flashlight and a .22 rifle to hunt frogs on the Calders' pond, and then prepared a frog's legs dinner.

Heston Clapp, Bethlehem, Connecticut

I am truly sad to hear of Howard's death. I think I was about thirteen years old when I first met him, and I thought he was the coolest, the hippest—and I still feel that way. I was so proud when he asked me to take care of his Shetland pony Cinderella, and I walked the beast from Roxbury to Woodbury. Cinderella and I never got along too well after that. Oh well.

Nina Stuart, New York City

He was such a good neighbor. I will always remember how he used to come and buy from my street sale. I always loved having him as my first customer.

Herb Gordon, Baltimore, Maryland

It brought forth a flood of old memories, as when I worked at Rower Dental Supply in Boston with him. He did maintenance and service work on the dental equipment. I worked mostly in shipping. I recall the time when someone had a Bar Mitzvah coming up and they wanted Howard to come, but they wanted him to cut his hair first, and somehow I was appointed the person to call him and ask him if he would consider "trimming" his hair. I am sure you know what his reponse was. Howard always listened to a different drummer

Brice Marden, New York City

When our own start dying, it gets much harder, sadder, triggering introspection, the questioning of our motives, deeds, misdeeds; our purpose. This sad news of Howard does this to me. Howie and I went way back [to] the early bloom of adulthood although his maturity seemed beyond mine. He was already taking care of things while we were just learning that that was what we had to do. So many fantastic things, indelible stories: mole people digging cellars, Australian driveways longer than here to Boston, the conquest of kudzu, Harry and Symphony Road, Santa on the roof, that twinkle and sly smile, a certain glee. There was nothing usual about him. I'll miss him.

Fred Pfening, Columbus, Ohio

. . . I'm very sad, and, honestly, a little angry he has been taken away. Howard was a wonderful guy and I'm sure going to miss him. He was a smart, sensitive person whose empathy and wisdom surpassed his considerable business acumen. He had an original and creative mind, which is not something I notice in many people. I liked his unconventional take on things. We had so many good times which flooded back today: scalping those Super Bowl tickets in San Diego, seeing Vargas and Soleil that same trip, visiting at the Ringling opening night parties, going to Howard's club, and most of all those great New Year's Eves at Big Apple.

Jeremy Sherman, Berkeley, California

That Howard Rower was a *mensch*, a love, a gentleman, a kidder. Putting me in mind of him brought him right back—a blessing to have known, a guy in worthy possession of his soul.

John Githens, New York City

I wish that I had known Howard better, but even I do have memories to keep, and to contribute—the memory, for example, of a chance late-night meeting with Howard, long ago, in the middle of Sixth Avenue near Tenth Street, as he was releasing a rodent he had caught in a Hav-a-Heart trap. Your young sons were with him, and I read this as a very efficacious lesson to them about dealing with problems, and still respecting life absolutely. I remember, too, Ingeborg's and my surprise at stumbling upon Howard's Australian Aboriginal art gallery on Greene Street, and thus discovering his extraordinary sensitivity to and enthusiasm for this special threatened culture. There always seemed to be new and surprising dimensions to Howard, the man. We miss the opportunity to know him more.

Karen French, Baltimore

Howard was very definitely a person who made his presence felt. I can still remember the first time I met him. I was fairly new to New York and was cycling around downtown just getting the feel of the place and getting to know things. I happened upon the Australia Gallery and was looking at the bark paintings and struck up a conversation with Howard about the painting technique and preparation of the bark as a painting support. I explained to him that I was a painting conservator at the Metropolitan Museum and we chatted away. He told me that he had a video of the Aborigines painting if I wanted to see it after he closed up the gallery. So I watched the video upstairs with him and chatted more. I couldn't help noticing that he was wearing a pin on his vest that said "Big Apple Circus." With my interest in trapeze, I asked him about the pin, and our conversation turned to the circus and his obvious love of it. I think within half an hour we were in his car and driving off to the big top of the Big Apple Circus. This was

how I first met Howard, and when I related the day to friends, they were shocked that I would have gone off in a car with a stranger like that—but I believe in following one's instincts and I was right.

Ken Hayes, San Jose, California

We will treasure the times we had together. Our swinging door to the dining room works fine—Howard could fix anything.

Guillaume Fonkanell, New York City

C'est avec grande tristesse que j'ai appris la disparition de Howard. Je ne savais pas qu'il était malade, et je l'admire d'autant plus pour avoir mené sa barque sans ne rien laisser paraître. L'énergie dont il faisait preuve en dirigeant "Vinyl" m'avait toujours impressionné, et je garderais toujours le souvenir de sa silhouette dans la pénombre de la salle de danse les quelques fois où j'ai été m'y amuser.

Milly Glimcher, New York City

He was such an extraordinary person, he always lit up my day when I saw him and I can't believe I'll never see him again.

Cynthia Sherman, Venice, California

[*To Howard in hospital.*] I loved the time you invited me to San Francisco to see the magical art exhibit of your father-in-law's creations. You have no idea what an experience that was, in my work-oriented, mundane life. I think you have a great sense of humor.

Alex Gillmor, Chicago

I enjoyed the few conversations I had with Howard. I loved the stories he told me about him and my dad. I wish I could hear more. At my dad's wedding (one of them), my good friend Lou went up to talk with Howard. Lou is probably the most outgoing of my friends. He asked Howard, "So, Howard, what do you do?" Howard replied, "I am a cowboy." At that point, I knew Howard and I had a bond, because I am a cowboy too.

Eric Utne, Minneapolis

I feel so grateful to have known you and Howard from our first meeting . . . at Esalen . . . to his and your support in launching *Utne Reader* . . . to his twinkling eyes and half-smile while I huffed and puffed over his didgeridoos He was wise beyond his years, but always playful. He must have been a marvelous playmate and life partner.

Dimitri and Gunda, Borgnone, Switzerland

On garde dans nos coeurs un merveilleux souvenir de cet homme extraordinaire. Quand des amis à nous, ici, l'ont vu pour la première fois, ils nous ont demandés: "Qui est cet homme fascinant!" Quand il commençait à raconter on restait tous enchantés de son don de conteur. On aurait pu écrire toutes ses histoires et cela aurait donné une pièce de théâtre ou un livre très beau.

Helen Fotopulos and Nick Voeikoff, Montréal

Not unlike a butterfly's, and an uncommon butterfly at that, Howard's life force will ripple indelibly through the years.

Patricia Michael, Austin, Texas

Sarah fished with him at two meetings. For me, when children and animals want to be with an adult so much, it shows a light that we sometimes can't see as adults. Howard's light was there for the whole of existence to know.

Carolyn Garcia, Eugene, Oregon

He somehow fulfilled my vision of what a life should be, and showed me what joy and courage can do.

Jean Detiere, New York City

It is hard for me to realize that I will not be calling Howard for his great insight on how to manage the Co-op on 57th Street. Over the years we had many exchanges and he always came up with creative imaginative solutions. He will be sorely missed.

H. Peter Stern, Mountainville, New York

Being with Howard always gave me a lift. His sense of humor, his understated way, his acumen, his compassion. . . . I for one will always cherish my own memories.

Jennifer Clothier, Meadow Vista, California

I had no idea he was ill or failing or fading in any way. He couldn't have looked more dapper or proud than he did at your birthday party. . . . His adventure and greatness he neatly folded and placed in a deep pocket of humility. As a teenager I was so

wrapped up in whatever it is that a teenager is wrapped up in . . . that I never even thought to ask. We never talked about his past . . . it seems so much time and energy is spent on the present and future when there is so very much to learn from the past. . . . I will always remember and hold dear the example you and Howard set for me at an age and time in my life when love and relationships were being defined. . . . It set a standard for me that one day I would find myself a life partner with whom I could travel time and explore the world, hand in hand.

Katherine Perls, Cambridge, Massachusetts

My memories of Howie are of a youth with courage and convictions who matured into a friendly man with wide-ranging interests. . . . My most recent memory of Howie is his proudly showing us the geese and chickens he was raising; such a wonderful use for a NYC basement!

Francisca Sutil, Valparaiso, Chile

I cannot forget his office, his loft full of things that nobody could have chosen to keep or value and many others so intense to keep and see all the time. He was for me a man of great personality, who did or thought only according to his own feelings. Everything showed that on himself. I value that enormously. To me, even though I didn't see him often, [he] was always very affectionate, open and communicative and I enjoyed his conversations very much. I will miss him a lot. I consider him a dear friend I lost in life and in New York. I will always keep a memory of his soul and of his image, I know.

Harriet Weinfield, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

My memories of Howie were of a small pale boy; clearly he made himself an incredibly creative and industrious man.

Roger Sherman, New York City

He seemed to enjoy giving me a hard time, but I never minded.

Eli Noyes, San Francisco

We cannot think of the world without Howard in it. He has always been there. And I think back to our long history coming to visit in New York, up in Connecticut, going with Howard to his various clubs, seeing him with his ferrets in his office, eating meals, going to the circus. Howard's stories, interesting and curious ways. His wisdom. His endless enthusiasm for trying out new things and embracing them into his life, his fearless embrace of interesting businesses and ways of making money . . . I am glad to have known him, and will miss having him as a part of my life.

Christopher Clapp, Woodbury, Connecticut

“Howie,” then, was a fresh wind when we saw him on Painter Hill. The Clapps were certainly captivated by his lessons, explorations and projects—from passing out charcoal tablets to everyone after dinner (once) to, successfully, freeze-distilling applejack in your parents' freezer. I told Susie were it not for Howard in the '70s, Woodbury wouldn't be home to New Morning Natural Foods—one of the two markets where she food shops.

Helen Chardack-Portale, New York City

Howard's life seemed so clearly his own. His accomplishments and who he touched were so deeply personal, connected and positive, a role model for us all. Life passes by our eyes like one of his parades and has no meaning unless we connect and really touch someone else.

Gail Harrity, Philadelphia

Last summer, when we all had dinner in the Village, I felt a true bond with him as we sat together. He regaled me with stories about his life, his adventures—from running Manhattan night-clubs to running through the wilds of Australia's outback country. I admired his spirit for the new, his ability to embrace people and experiences of great diversity and, most of all, his passion and dedication for his family. . . . He seemed to be simultaneously a world traveler with a curiosity to keep traveling and a stay-at-home-with-his-family man. What a remarkable person, what a gift to have known him. He will continue to have a presence for all of us, and he will continue to make us smile.

Pete and Maggie Hart, Chestertown, Maryland

We remember Howie as always peaceful, quiet and productive. The two of you took more interest in what Nevis had to offer—saw more of it than other visitors. . . . We will miss Howie.

Judy Upjohn, Woodstock, New York

I had just moved to the city and was enrolled at NYU. My brother Bill gave me your number. . . . Howard said, Let's meet for

lunch at a restaurant, 1 Hudson. I came in my sloppy corduroys and ratty nylon backpack, ever the student. When I mentioned Howard's name to the maitre d', he seated me smack in the center table, surrounded by suits and jewelry. Out of my element! I nearly left, I was so embarrassed. Then in came Howard (vest, etc.) and after brief intros, he said, "My wife Mary will be here shortly. You'll know her when you see her because she has the most beautiful eyes in the world." Then he told me he had pursued you all over Europe until you agreed to marry him. I felt like I had stepped into an extraordinary love story, and I guess I had. You and Vinnie came (I recognized your eyes!), and I went from knowing no one to feeling scooped up and at home. It's a common experience among all sorts who have met you and Howard, and uncommon in the world at large.

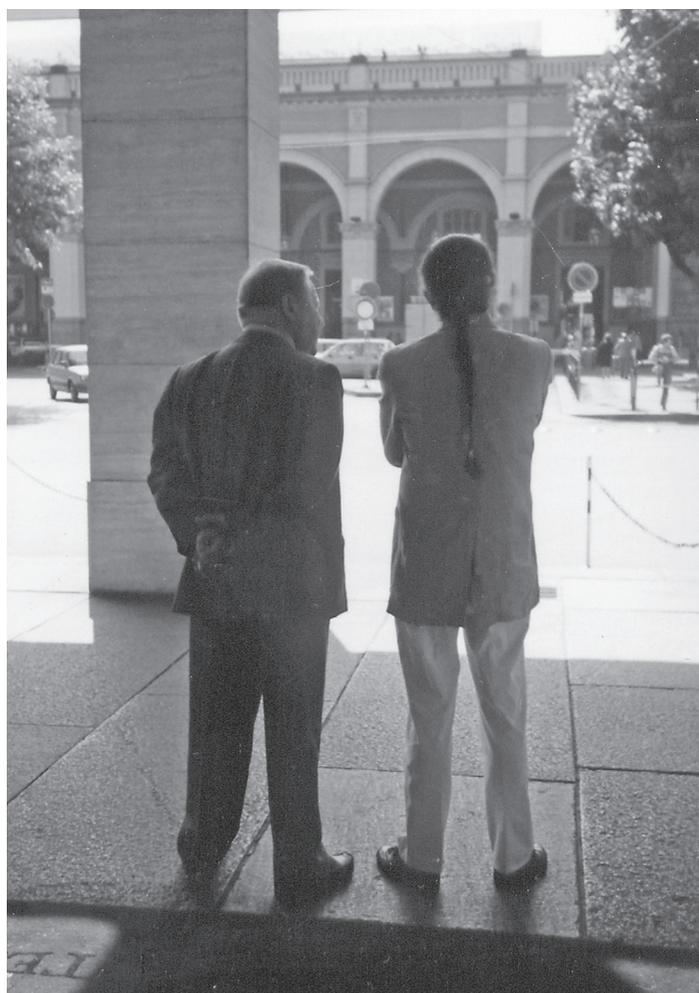
Sally Schneider, New York City

. . . . I found my own memories of Howard: as a little girl, being astonished at this man who was willing to sit at the old wooden table in your kitchen and talk to me for hours, the worlds he opened up, the stuff he knew about, and a point of view about life which I had never encountered. . . . Visions of sitting at Phoenix Garden eating turtle soup as the waiters watched in disbelief . . . of wandering around the East Village, of sitting with him in the middle of the night when he was having trouble breathing: not a complaint even then. . . . Some part of me doesn't really feel he's gone. It is clear he is still in the weave of my world, and so many other people's.

Louise Solomon, Cortes Island, British Columbia

Of all the many thought-provoking things Howard ever said to me, I often remember the time he asked me about singing, and in

summing up my responses, he said in his simple, straightforward way, “So, it’s funny that you don’t sing very much when you love to do it.” Hmm. On Thursday, early in the morning, in honor of the Summer Solstice, down on the beach where Howard so happily ate oysters, I’ll be singing because I love to do it, and in my own heart I will sing songs of thanks to my friend Howard who makes me smile.



Howard (at right) with Giovanni Carandente in Turin,

This book was designed by Kenneth Rower in Newbury, Vermont, and printed on kenaf paper by the Whitman Press, Lebanon, New Hampshire. The text is set in Adobe Garamond, a contemporary digital reprise of innumerable copies and adaptations of type originally cut in Paris by Claude Garamond (1480-1561). The display type is set in Gill Sans, designed in 1927 by the English sculptor, typographer and essayist Eric Gill (1882-1940).

*Kenaf paper is made entirely from the stalks of the fibrous plant *Hibiscus cannabinus*, grown in New Mexico. The pulp is processed without chlorine. This paper interested Howard Rower because of its environmental advantages.*

