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## NEREJ Founder's Message: Friends from the past - by Roland Hopkins

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If your name isn't in this article, please do not get angry. Trust me, when people age, so does their memory. Do you recall where you were on January 17th, 1962? I do—my wife and I were helping two business partners (and their wives) put together the first edition of the 12-page New England Real Estate Journal. Let's see. I think that was about 55 years ago. That week I sold the first subscription to a nice lady on Charles St. It's one of those things that stick in your brain forever. I can see her face as she handed me \$12 and told me about her brother Lennie Abranson. He who owned the largest commercial real estate office in the area and was employing/training several brokers who all went on to open their own offices. Lennie became one of my largest advertisers, and all of his brokers also became clients.

In those early days, there were no computers or iPhones, so face-to-face was always the best introduction. I was fortunate enough to meet many individuals who went onto become very successful in the commercial real estate world. I obviously can't mention them all because the newspaper isn't big enough, but here are a few I'll never forget:

- Barry Horowitz of New York mortgage brokerage firm, Cooper Horowitz. I asked the secretary to speak to Barry, and she surprised me by putting him on. The first thing I asked him was why did he come to the phone? I was a nobody. His answer was, "I take all calls. You never know when one of them might be business." He bought a big ad, and has been advertising ever since. That was 50 years ago, and I never allowed a call to be screened in my office. Thanks Barry.
- The first profile I ever did was with a young Bill McCall at his office with the Nordblom Co. Bill went on to open his own office with Leggat, McCall and Werner—and then successfully McCall and Almy. Leggat also opened his own office and became very successful.

- Pelham Stephens ran the Previews office in Boston, and became like a father giving me tips on what to say to prospects. A week before he passed away he wrote me a letter, which I still have to this day. His son-in-law, Tim Gannet, founded Landvest, ran a ski mountain in New Hampshire—Crotchet Mountain—and was a great client.
- Andy Hickey, a former reporter for the Boston Post, became a great friend and the head of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board. Through his leadership the board became the second largest in the country. He believed in PR and invited all the newspaper reps to all the Realtor functions.
- One of my favorites was Bill Mallard of the Banker and Tradesman. I was very fortunate to steal away one of their best sales people, Jeff Keller, who still works at the Journal handling all finance sections.

As I explained earlier, all my contacts were face to face and remained friends and advertisers for many years. Sam Tamposi of Nashua drove me around showing me all the properties he owned. He also owned a large gated community in Florida where Ted Williams had his museum. Sam owned a small piece of the Red Sox and allowed me to sit in his owners box one day with my family when Roger Clemens was still a pitcher for the Sox. That was the last game I attended. Do the math.

Shown (from left) are: Editor Ben Summers, artist Marla Keys, sales manager Bob Lewis and NEREJ/NYREJ founder Rolly Hopkins in 1965.

I talked Jack Conway, probably the number one residential real estate company in the country, into hiring a commercial broker and selling commercial real estate. He eventually took my advice.

Here's a list of people who helped me and became good business friends—and please don't get upset if I leave you out. Julian Studley was probably the number one real estate broker in the country. He opened a small office in Boston and I was honored to have lunch with him. (I think I let him pick up the check). His Boston broker was Steve Davis who became a great Journal supporter. Joel Wilder started his own shopping center company and became ultra successful. John Ryan, being taught by Carlton Hunneman, became Boston's number one broker. Bob Spiller became president of Boston Five Cents Savings Bank. Jack Peckham became the number one investment property broker being taught by Abramson. Marty Berman didn't follow in his famous father's footsteps Bermanizing, but did an excellent job buying and managing top notch properties. Frank Perry ran for governor, didn't win, but owned lots of quality commercial real estate. Roger Nordblom was part of a friendly, interesting, and successful three generation real estate family. And I would guess it is now four. Ron Druker's grandfather and father were two of my first face-to-face ad sales. And they were always there when I needed them. Ed Zuker's father was a client and Ed went onto bigger and better real estate successes.

Did you know that nice guys finish first? Elliott Ravech was a great teacher for me. He had a lot of patience when he found out I knew nothing about real estate. Thank you Elliott. Chris Gistis bought many hotels and even let me stay in one. Thanks Mr. Gistis. Maurice Gordon, and his son Bobby, always bought an ad when I needed it and never even asked the price. Harold Brown was friendly and lectured at one of my early Bentley Collage monthly luncheon functions. Angie Kopka, who this year celebrated her 99th birthday, introduced me to my New Hampshire clients, and Jim Raleigh my Rhode Island clients. Tom Hill and Kevin Geenty to my Connecticut clients, and in Maine, Dick Wagner helped me out. John Fowler was always a good friend as was Steve Karp. And I can't ever forget Rene Poyant who bought a weekly ad, face-to-face, 55 years ago—and still has the same weekly space. Thank you Poyant family.

I humbly apologize if I left you out. Blame it on my memory. I'm proud of myself that I remembered this many of you. Maybe 55 years from now I will write another one of these—I mean five years from now. Happy birthday to Ben Summers who came to work as our first editor 52 years ago, and still works there one day a week. Thanks Ben. You were a big reason we succeeded. And of course the most important event—a guy named Bob Lewis walked into the Copley Sq. office one day when the Journal was two weeks old and asked for a job. He said that he was an ace salesman and had once owned his own newspaper. He said he could sell refrigerators to Eskimos, so we hired him. He became my teacher along with Earl Nightingale, author of *The Strangest Secret*, and the famous sales guy, Dale Carnegie. I studied both, and studied Lewis, becoming a good sales person always putting the client first. Thanks Bob.

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