

20/20



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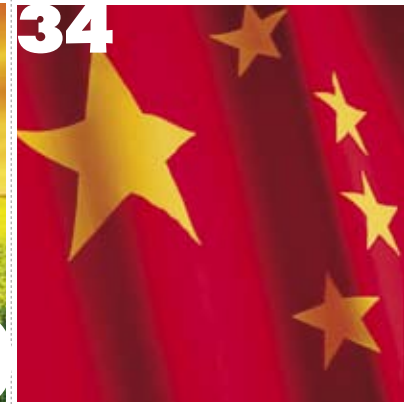
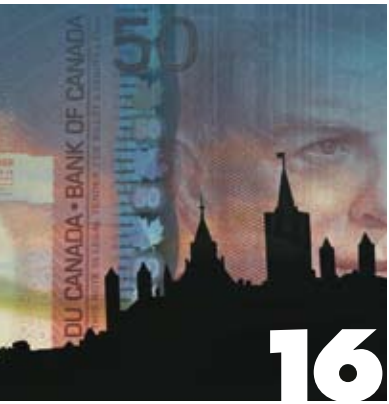
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20/20

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Canada's leading trade and industry association, CME promotes the continuous improvement of Canadian manufacturing and exporting through engagement of government at all levels. Its mandate is to promote the competitiveness of Canadian manufacturers and enable the success of Canadian goods and services exporters in markets around the world. Representing Canada's largest business network and with grassroots representation in every part of the nation, CME's membership is drawn from all sectors of Canada's manufacturing and exporting community and from every province across the country. The association represents Canada's leading global enterprises and more than 85% of CME's members are small- and medium-sized enterprises. Together, CME's membership accounts for an estimated 75% of total manufacturing production and 90% of Canada's exports.

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Celebrating a 20/20 milestone: Our first anniversary

By Jeff Brownlee

We meet many people during our lifetimes, some for only a brief moment, many without consequence, but others with a lasting impact.

Little did I know that one brief encounter with a man who called me “Hemingway” before I even met him, would stay with me for years to come, not to mention have a profound impact on what is now *20/20 Magazine*.

Harry Kalin. A character. A poet of life and what I would discover years later, somewhat of a prophet.

I vividly remember that sultry June day in 1993 when I knocked on the door of his two-storey home, once obviously brilliant in all its splendour years ago, but now showing the signs of decades of neglect. I was there to talk, to understand and to write about the driving force behind a man that had spent the past decade, since



his wife passed away, dedicating his life to the community in which he lived.

“Co’mon in Hemingway,” he said with what appeared to be some type of a southern drawl, but a locale difficult to make out. “Would you like a coffee? That’ll be a buck if you do.”

As I stepped into the 60s-era home, the musty smell from years of poor air circulation combined with stacks of old newspapers draping over every piece of furniture in the house, made it quite clear that Harry’s wife was the housekeeper of the family.

A powerful man for his 85 years, Harry stood well over six feet, had a full head of silver hair coiffed to perfection, yet he was an eccentric man and had the eerie ability to look at you with one of his piercing blue eyes while the other looked the other way.

Harry was a straight shooter and didn’t like small talk of any kind.

“You know Hemingway, I never understood your profession. How can you make money writing words? What’s the sense in that? What’s the value?” he asked as he rifled through a stack of newspapers dated 1990 on the floor. “I know you want to talk about my volunteer efforts, but it’s not interesting. Don’t waste your time on me – there are many better stories to tell.”

He stopped, and looked at me with his right eye while the left drifted off on its own.

“The truth is no one is going to read what you write about me – heck I won’t even read it. But this is your lucky day Hemingway, ‘cause I am going to give you a piece of free advice. What you

need to do is to write about something people care about, that affects them – their pocketbook.”

Prolific – no. Simplistic – yes. Accurate – absolutely.

It made sense, common sense. Tell people how and why they are personally affected by an issue and they will take interest.

I spent 20 minutes talking about Harry’s efforts giving back to his community and then the next three hours learning about a true Canadian entrepreneur, a manufacturer who delved into many different business ventures during his lifetime, some of which were profitable, many of which were not. But it didn’t matter to Harry Kalin, for he had just one business mantra that he was more than willing to share.

“You gotta shake up the apple cart, Hemingway. It’s about vision, a different vision than all the rest. You gotta be different, you gotta say ‘screw the status quo’, you gotta take risks and you can never accept NO as an answer. And jeezuz, you gotta have fun doing it. That’s the key to success and one thing I didn’t learn until late in life.”

Harry the prophet who boasted about keeping the first nickel he ever made – earned from a month’s worth of hard work cleaning animal remains out of his Dad’s Montreal meat shop.

I wrote the story about Harry Kalin, the volunteer, and never heard a thing until six months later when a package came in the mail. Inside was a note in barely legible handwriting and a nickel, bearing a date of 1919, taped to the bottom of the letter.