

Industry luminary

Remembering Jack Friedman

A family member recalls Friedman's influence, both professionally and personally

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When my uncle, Jack Friedman, passed away this past August, it was a double loss for family members who also related to him on a business level. We knew him as a kind but firm mentor and as the driving force at the helm of Florasynth Inc. for more than 50 years. Now, one year after his death, it seems comforting to recall him, as well as all that he represented to his family and to his industry colleagues.

Jack, the son of Polish immigrants, grew up in Chicago. My uncle's humble beginnings contributed to his characteristic unpretentious style that led him to always strive to "do the right thing." In later years, even when he had become a successful and well-known industry leader, a strong measure of down-to-earth values prevailed, complementing an innate graciousness and concern for those not as fortunate.

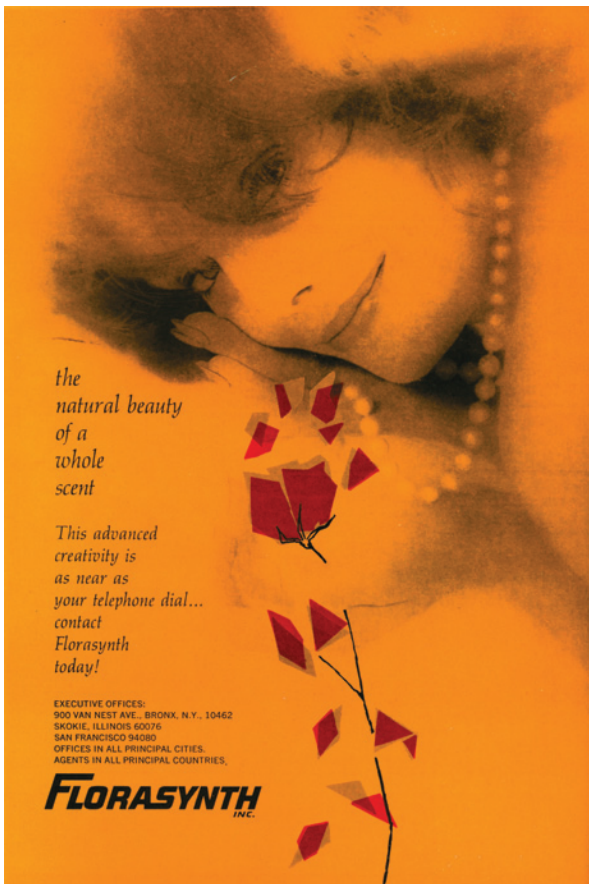
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Jack served honorably as a Marine in the Pacific during World War II. Upon his return from the war, a family member introduced him to Lorraine Lakritz,

who Jack later married. Lorraine's family had a small, yet prosperous fragrance and flavor company, and Jack was recruited. It was the beginning of his decades-long career at Florasynth, during which he transformed the modest but successful company into a multinational flavor and fragrance organization that ranked among the top 10 in the global arena.

Professional Successes

There are vast differences in the way in which flavor and fragrance companies operated in the 1950s, especially when you compare the attitudes of days gone by to today's corporate environment. Jack Friedman was truly a man of his time, closing deals with a handshake and a smile. He relied on relationships that he had painstakingly cultivated throughout the years, which were based on mutual trust. He adhered to the principle of "taking a man at his word." This style prevailed even in dealings with sophisticated notables, such as Charles Revson. By the early '70s, Florasynth had achieved a reasonable standing as a fragrance supplier with Revlon, albeit not as the top player. Jack was well respected for his integrity — something that Revson valued highly. Jack's insights into what the market was ready to accept, combined with Florasynth's high-quality essential oils, resulted in Revlon's stronger commitment to Florasynth's resources. Together with Paul Woolard, Charles Revson's key strategist, Jack helped to mastermind *Charlie*, the huge 1973 fragrance success that contained a unique mix of fresh, clean floral and green notes.



A Florasynth ad appearing in a 1970 issue of *American Perfumer and Cosmetics*

remember his enjoyment of the camaraderie experienced on happy occasions when he took a break from work to share a festive lunch. His passion for dining on the Osso Buco prepared at Il Vagabondo in New York during the early years was legendary. Many recall Jack's whimsical search in New Jersey to sample his favorite entree at endless restaurants in the area. We anticipated that his final verdict always would be the same. Even though quite acceptable offerings were to be found, none compared to Il Vagabondo's delectable rendition. His colleagues were familiar with his talent for shared enjoyment, and people at all levels of the Florasynth staff knew him as an employer who was approachable. His open-door policy made for compassionate leadership.

Selling Florasynth to Bayer was not an easy decision. But Jack was accustomed to hard choices and weighed the options carefully. He stayed on as a consultant after the acquisition, and made important contributions to the integration of Florasynth's and Haarmann & Reimer's resources.

It was this same kind of intuitive foresight that led to the launch of the top-selling *Giorgio*, the fragrance that rocked the '80s. Jack, ever the innovative formulator, had a fragrance concept that he had been working on, trying and testing a blending of notes that captured the sophistication and extravagance of the times. Although he may have had better-known fragrance manufacturers on his mind when he was developing the scent, Jack welcomed the opportunity to run the concept by the Haymans, the then joint owners of the trendy Beverly Hills fashion palace. It was a perfect match, and *Giorgio* went on to enjoy a 10-year market leadership position, becoming a favorite with high-end consumers throughout the world.

While Florasynth and Jack Friedman were making their mark in the fragrance world, flavor development accelerated, too. In those years, flavors represented just 20 percent of Florasynth's business. Jack renewed the company's commitment to flavors, and increased the flavor and fruit fillings business at a number of companies. Another pioneering accomplishment distinguished Jack's career. He established a joint venture in China — the first flavor and fragrance company to do so — in an agreement with the Shanghai Chemical Company.

I would be doing Jack a great disservice if I limited recollections of his professional life to business achievements. Many of his colleagues will

Personal Achievements

Jack's loyalty in business relationships was exceeded only by his devotion to his family. Soon after selling Florasynth to Bayer, Jack and Lorraine moved to Palm Beach, Florida, where they spent a decade enjoying friends and family and contributing to the community. As parents, they were proud and pleased when their children entered the business or became part of a related enterprise. The joy of family life became even richer when eight grandchildren arrived into the Friedman family.

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Many people are not aware of Jack's exceptional generosity to charitable causes because he and Lorraine always were reluctant to accept praise. In fact, Jack hesitantly accepted an award from Catholic Charities. In addition, the Friedmans gave a \$6 million donation to Brandeis University. There were many other donations that remained out of the public eye because Jack believed that his ability to give to others was its own reward.

On a personal level, I can't even begin to touch on the positive influence that Jack had on my life. I remember when I first joined Florasynth, he rejoiced with me at early accomplishments, always ready to offer encouragement in both business and personal matters. Overcoming the challenges of keeping family relationships intact is no small feat, but Jack managed to achieve a balance by giving family members the emotional distance that was required to grow and succeed, while remaining a caring husband, father and uncle. Now, almost a year later, it can be said quite simply: We miss him.

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