

Andrew Heiskell, a Former Chairman of Time Inc. and a Civic Leader, Dies at 87

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By MICHAEL T. KAUFMAN

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Andrew Heiskell, a former chairman of Time Inc. and a philanthropist whose efforts at civic improvement helped rescue the New York Public Library and Bryant Park from shabbiness and decline and provide low-cost housing on a large scale in New York, died yesterday at his home in Darien, Conn. He was 87 and also had a home in Manhattan.

Mr. Heiskell retired from Time Inc. in 1980 after a 43-year career, during which he rose to chairman and chief executive of the media empire started by Henry Luce. With retirement came the blossoming of a second career, whose mission - urban good works - required the time, money and political muscle of the prominent and persuasive business leader he was.

Mr. Heiskell became chairman of the library in 1981 and raised hundreds of millions of dollars to improve the citywide system and restore its landmark Fifth Avenue headquarters, enlisting the help of Brooke Astor, the library's patron-in-chief, and bringing in a new director, Vartan Gregorian.

The library's director of development at the time, Jennifer Herring, said: "Andrew had a wonderful way of talking about the progression. The first thing he said was that everyone stop talking about all the bad things. Only the good things. Second, they put a management team in place and decided what resources were going to be necessary to improve the library."

The upbeat tone he set seemed to reflect his lifelong disposition toward work and accomplishment. Shortly before his retirement, he was asked by The New York Times if running a publishing empire had taken a toll on his personal life.

No, he replied, adding that he never took his worries home.

"Look, I don't come in early in the morning," he said. "The main thing is: what the hell is work? If I read the right books, that will do more for me than reading 1,600 memoranda that come across my desk. If I travel, it will do more for my job capacity than sitting at my desk."

"I have tried only to make the major decisions. But I didn't want all the problems reporting to the 34th floor."

Mr. Heiskell's publishing career began when he was hired in 1937 as a 22-year-old to produce and edit pictorial articles about science and medicine for Life magazine, then in its early stages. Two years later he moved from editorial duties to concentrate on business, and at the age of 30 he was named publisher of Life, the popular photojournalism weekly that provided images of the war years to many millions in the era before television.

From 1960, when he became chairman of the entire Time Inc. operation until his retirement, Mr. Heiskell presided over a growing conglomerate that, in addition to magazines, was involved in book and newspaper publishing, pulp and paper production, films, cable television and data marketing. In the 1960's, he also became increasingly involved in urban affairs and philanthropic causes. With his wife, the former Marian Sulzberger Dryfoos - a member of the family that controls The New York Times Company - Mr. Heiskell often lent his name and his presence to fund-raising events for cultural institutions.

During his years at the helm of Time Inc., he reluctantly closed down Life, which had steadily lost readers and advertisers to television. He also first imagined and in 1974 brought forth People magazine, which quickly grew into a prized asset yielding enormous profits.

Regretted Later Merger

When Mr. Heiskell finally left in 1980, there was little to suggest that within nine years Time Inc. would be absorbed in a merger with Warner Communications orchestrated by Steve Ross and would later have its identity further diluted in the subsequent amalgamation with AOL.

However, in his privately published memoir, "Outsider, Insider: An Unlikely Success Story," Mr. Heiskell lamented the fate of Time Inc. and accepted some responsibility for having personally selected and promoted J. Richard Munro, who made the deal with Mr. Ross. "My big failure," Mr. Heiskell wrote.

With unmistakable rancor and sadness, he added: "I left my company in good shape - financially, spiritually, ethically. Its reputation was splendid. Times change."

In the memoir, written in 1998, Mr. Heiskell revealed a peculiar mix of candor, self-confidence and self-deprecation. He portrayed himself as a puckish figure who enjoyed getting away with things and cutting corners. He was clearly proud of having talked himself into his first job at Time Inc., as Life's science editor, despite having no obvious qualifications beyond his imposing appearance: good-looking and self-assured, he stood 6 foot 5. With similar insouciance he explained how he demanded and received a raise three months after his hiring, and how as a young man he kept taking four times as much vacation time as his colleagues.

Mr. Heiskell, who lacked a college degree despite a brief brush with Harvard and, later, its business school, described with pride and satisfaction being elected a Harvard overseer and then spending 10 years on the seven-member Harvard Corporation. This delight was also evident when he wrote about his clandestine romance and subsequent marriage to Madeleine Carroll, the film star and stage actress who was often described as one of the world's most beautiful women.

Mr. Heiskell reported more good luck in describing how, as his marriage to Miss Carroll was dissolving, he met and fell in love with the recently widowed Marian Dryfoos, whose husband, Orvil E. Dryfoos, had succeeded her father, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, as publisher of The Times. The two were married in 1965, and in his memoir Mr. Heiskell credited her with providing the security and sense of family he had craved since his peripatetic childhood. In describing the moment when he finally learned that Miss Carroll had agreed to the terms of divorce and thus freed him to marry again, Mr. Heiskell wrote, "Marian had the pleasure of telling her father, 'Daddy, I'm going to marry the husband of your former girlfriend.' "

Born in Naples

Andrew Heiskell was born on Sept. 13, 1915, in Naples, Italy. His parents had left Wheeling, W. Va., to live as American expatriates on the Isle of Capri. His mother, the former Ann Hubbard, was the daughter of the man who ran Wheeling Steel. His father, Morgan Heiskell, was the son of the owner of a wholesale business. According to Mr. Heiskell, his mother's family was "upper crust" and his father's family was "sort of middle crust."

By the time he was 6, his parents had separated. At that point, his mother led him and his sister, Diana, who was five years older, on a nomadic life, moving from hotel to hotel in Italy, France, Austria, Germany and Switzerland. He wrote that neither he nor his sister ever learned the reason for the breakup of their parents' marriage. He did not see or hear from his father for 35 years until he looked him up in a Paris telephone directory

and called him. They met several times before the older man died. "I did not call him Dad," Mr. Heiskell wrote. "It was a bit late for that."

As a boy he learned the Neapolitan patois, proper Italian, German and French and good manners. He had occasional tutors but did not go to school until he was 10, when his mother settled into a Swiss hotel and sent him to a school in Lausanne. When he was 13, the family moved to Paris and into their first apartment and Andrew was enrolled at the École du Montcel, near Versailles. After he passed his baccalaureate exam at 18, the school invited him to stay on to teach geology and arithmetic. He did that for a while and tended bar and traveled to Spain. In 1935, he arrived in the United States, not feeling at all like an American.

Application to Harvard

Earlier, while in Paris, he applied to Harvard, claiming that he was qualified to enter as a junior. In reply, the admissions officers said he could come but only as a sophomore. He turned that down. Still in Paris he met Georges F. Doriot, who had been a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Business. Mr. Heiskell wrote that soon he received some business school questionnaires, that he filled them out, and that he received notification that he was to report for classes in September. Having failed to enter college as a third-year student, he was being invited to skip undergraduate studies altogether.

He wrote that he did well in his courses, but added, "I hated business school and after one year I quit." In 1936, with the country still in the grip of the Depression, he got a job interview at The New York Herald Tribune, where he was hired to cover "the most trivial stories" at \$25 a week. He stayed less than a year before getting the science job at Life at \$40 a week. That lasted two years until Mr. Heiskell, then 24, switched from the editorial department to publishing, no longer dealing with stories and photographers but with advertising sales, circulation, promoting, printing and finance. At this juncture he married Cornelia Scott, with whom he had two children, Diane and Peter.

Six years later, in 1946, he was named Life magazine's publisher. "I have always been lucky, and I have always enjoyed every promotion I ever got," he wrote. He directed and oversaw the magazine's gradual shift to more words, negotiating publishing contracts with world leaders and other notables. Those contributors included Winston Churchill, President Harry S. Truman, the Duke of Windsor, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Gen. Omar N. Bradley and Charles de Gaulle; of those, Churchill was paid the most and de Gaulle the least. Churchill was one of the very few who

enjoyed writing and who, as a former journalist, respected deadlines.

A year into the new job, living in the suburbs, he ran into Miss Carroll, whom he had met years earlier on a trans-Atlantic flight. She was 42 and he was 10 years younger. A romance developed, and after his wife agreed to a divorce, Mr. Heiskell married Miss Carroll in a discreet ceremony in a Baltimore church. They had a daughter, Anne Madeleine.

In 1960 Mr. Heiskell was promoted to chairman and put in charge of long-range planning and strategy. Some of his projects, such as Money and the expansion of Sports Illustrated, proved profitable, as did Time-Life Books, newly acquired television stations and the expanded pulp and paper mills. Later came the development of People. Other ventures, like starting TV Cable Week magazine and publishing foreign magazines, failed, but the winners outnumbered the losers.

After 15 years Mr. Heiskell's marriage to Miss Carroll ended. At 18, their daughter left her mother in Europe to live in New York, initially with her father and stepmother. When the daughter was 33, her father found her lying dead in her own apartment as the result of what he suspected was a drug overdose.

Besides his third wife, Marian S. Heiskell, he is survived by his sister, Diana Heiskell, of Marlboro, Vt.; his son, Peter Chapin, of Charlottesville, Va., his daughter, Diane Schetky, of Rockport, Me.; a stepson, Robert Dryfoos, of Poughkeepsie, N.Y., two stepdaughters, Jacqueline Dryfoos and Susan Dryfoos, both of New York; four grandchildren, six step-grandchildren and six step-great-grandchildren.

Even before he retired, Mr. Heiskell devoted himself energetically to many civic and charitable causes. He was associated as a trustee or board member with Harvard, People for the American Way, Common Cause, the Lincoln Center Theater, the Institute of International Education, the Brookings Institution and the American Academy in Rome. A veteran of many crusades, he was particularly proud of a number of campaigns that have helped change the face of New York.

Civic Activities

In the late 1960's, after the riots in many American cities, he helped to found the Urban Coalition. He obtained money from the Ford Foundation and persuaded John W. Gardner, who had just resigned as secretary of health, education and welfare, to organize and run the nationwide network of community-based councils addressing the problems of urban

blight.

One outgrowth of this effort that greatly impressed Mr. Heiskell was the Enterprise Foundation, whose founder, the builder James W. Rouse, argued that providing decent housing for poor people was the necessary first step for the creation of well-functioning, peaceful, healthy and well-educated communities. As chairman of Enterprise's advisory board in New York, Mr. Heiskell helped advance more than \$600 million worth of housing in the South Bronx, the Brownsville section of Brooklyn and other areas that were dangerous slums.

Another of his pet projects involved the public library. Long in decline when he joined the board in 1978, the library system was facing a real crisis. After considering quitting, Mr. Heiskell threw himself into a full-scale rescue effort. He led the search for a president and quickly found and fought for his candidate, Mr. Gregorian, who remembers that 20 minutes into his first interview, Mr. Heiskell rose and excitedly declared, "You are our man."

Along with Mrs. Astor, the two men started a remarkable public campaign that succeeded in transforming the library. In 1991, the library opened a branch on West 20th Street to serve blind, visually impaired and physically handicapped users and named it for Mr. Heiskell.

Mr. Heiskell's interest in Bryant Park began with consulting William H. Whyte, the writer and urban scholar. He was determined to take back the park behind the main library, essentially by making it safe and attractive for all users. It took 12 years but in the end the project succeeded. Mr. Heiskell liked going there, and when he did he always looked for the stone marker at the southwest corner that is inscribed Andrew Heiskell Plaza.

The family asks that memorial contributions be made to the New York Public Library, the American Academy in Rome, the Enterprise Foundation, the People for the American Way, the Institute of International Education and the Lincoln Center Theater.