

## **ABOUT CHARITY IN BUSINESS**

In late 1964, a man named Jim Gaines approached Sam Jorrie, then Chairman of the Board of the Jorrie Furniture Company and asked him to permit the Company to Underwrite the credit of the HemisFair in the same manner that other prominent San Antonio businesses were being asked to support the project.

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Jorrie Furniture Company in the Cavalier Room of the Menger Hotel, Sam spent 45 minutes explaining to the Board, that if they would authorize that underwriting,

and if most of the other businesses in San Antonio did the same, that then the HemisFair would actually be built,

and that all the San Antonio blue collar workers involved in its construction would have income

some of which would become “disposable income” that would result in additional business for the furniture store,

and that then, many tourists would come from all over the World to the HemisFair and would spend money in local businesses,

which also would turn into “disposable income” that would increase the Jorrie Furniture Company’s business.

My Grandmother, Gertrude Jorrie had a raspy, gravely voice,

and in spite of her 3rd grade education, she had an amazing ability to take a complex thought and reduce it to a short sentence of very simple words that truly communicated her thoughts to others.

I saw her get more and more frustrated as my Dad went through this long “Song and Dance,” and finally she rasped at my dad in her heavy Lithuanian accent:

“Tsammy, are you ‘tru yet ?”

my Dad said:

“Yes, Mama.”

“Sit down, Tsammy !” she snapped.

And my Father meekly sat down. (It was the only time I ever saw my Father follow the orders of another.)

My Grandmother then stood up,

leaned over the table and supported herself on the knuckles of her fists and said:

“Tsammy, I only got one ‘ting to say:

First, We Make Money, then Later We Give It Away.”

What This Means to Me:

It is Fundamentally Wrong

for a Business to do Charity Until it makes a Profit,

and then and only then,

should it consider making gifts to Charity.

© Robert Jorrie,  
1989