



BROMMEL-SCHAACK DETERMINATION AGAINST ALL ODDS SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship has been created to honor a man who never received the encouragement or opportunity to attend college. The odds defeated him. Yet Robert Schaack is one of the brightest, most honest men I have known. He “tells it like it is” without any embellishments. He dropped out of Lane Tech High in his junior year and went to work on a family farm downstate. Next he migrated to Texas and worked in a warehouse. From there he enlisted in the Air Force working with heavy equipment as a civil engineer. After six years of military service, he returned to Chicago and worked in construction for John M. Cohan as a truck driver.

This job led to others in the trucking industry for the next decades. Bob drove an 18 wheeler tanker cross country hauling dangerous chemicals. He got another kind of education on those long hauls from one coast to the other. I wonder if Bob’s introspective nature came from those long days and nights alone on the roads? The man is fearless, yet he struggled with depression and alcohol. He left the road and for a few years he and his wife, Sandy, ran a tavern. Bob admits that this was a mistake! The “Churchill Lounge” failed and Bob went back to working at John M. Cohan as a mechanic on trucks. When that company went out of business, Bob again hit the road trucking. Again he knew the loneliness of the long distance driver.

In 1993 he went to Motorola and started all over at \$9.20 an hour in the shipping room packing boxes. He wanted off the road and took any job they offered. Bob watched for openings at Motorola and advanced into maintenance where his mechanical gifts were recognized. In a few years, he became chief of maintenance and helped build the new Motorola center in Elgin. After 14 years Bob moved on to the Brunswick Corporation where he works today as Manager of Corporate Facilities and Security.

Work has always been Bob's salvation. He never felt he was too good for any job and found meaning in work, especially with his hands. He can fix anything; wire any circuits; trouble shoot mechanical and electrical failures. He has doubted his intellect but it is as strong as his mechanical talents. I wanted to create a scholarship for someone like Bob who if given the chance would also be academically successful. When Bob goes into retirement, I want him to go to college and just study anything just for the joy of knowing. His mind is immensely curious and any professor would find him an asset in their classes. In the meantime, Bob, enjoy riding your Harley Davidson and driving your Corvette!