



Arnold Cohn

September 17, 1940 - June 1, 2016

At night, he'd work the phone. If you were somewhere, anywhere in the world, near a telephone and you knew Arnold Cohn - either your whole life, as a family member or friend, or even just casually acquainted enough to have once traded numbers - there was a mathematical probability that you might, one summer night, be on the receiving end of one of his calls.

Sometimes, the calls would last 15 seconds. "Hey, it's Arnold. I just wanted to check to see how you were doing. How's your dad? Tell him hi for me. Well, bye." And then his fingers would flit across the keypad randomly dialing up the next person.

Some got the call almost every night. His brother Irving, who was also his best friend. The two men revered one another, likely from the moment they met when Arnold was a boy of 6, and Irving was born along with his twin sister Helen, who also grew up idolizing her big brother.

His son, Chuck, and daughter, Cheryl, both likely somewhere else across the country or globe. Children he cajoled and prepared to leave his home and strike out on their own, while always openly wishing they'd have rejected his training and stayed close by.

Those calls to brother, son, and daughter often took longer as he'd quiz them about some moment in their lives that interested him or as he'd listen to their latest travails and offer helpful perspective.

His son-in-law and daughter-in-law, the legion of friends, occasionally even his six young grandchildren got a call.

Sometimes the calls would go in unexpected directions. For example, to the random person he'd met through his work as an attorney, or in his neighborhood, whose hardship he decided to resolve because it moved his heart and he knew they couldn't do it on their own. He'd call to offer assistance, or find out if the assistance he'd previously offered had done its magic. Usually, it had.

It was that helpfulness and desire to give that marked the height of his character. A trait his sister Susie recalls came early in life. She recalls the night he decided to bring home a live goose from the fruit stand where he worked. When he put it in the basement, she thought he was bringing home a family pet. She was horrified the next day when it showed up on the dinner table but, later, realized it was still his way of doing his part for the family.

This is not to say that Arnold was self-made. He'd be the first to admit he was not. He didn't ask for anything in return for his giving but once he gave, you were forever part of his network. A network that, in his adulthood, had his wife Charlotte at the hub. She, who kept him fed. She, who kept him in line when his instincts were to cross it. She, who came along on the adventures he, seemingly randomly, decided were the momentary obsession of a lifetime. No one knew him better or supported him more intensely.

Arnold Sigmund Cohn was born on September 17, 1940 in Binghamton, New York. He moved to Houston as a young man, married Charlotte, went to law school, built a business and thrived for 47 years but decided to retire in Oklahoma City a year and a half ago to be close to his brother. He died on June 1st after struggling with a long series of debilitating illnesses.

If you knew Arnold you know that the next time your phone rings, it won't be a call from him. That voice is gone. But the impact of his words, and the things he's done for you will never be.