



Neiman-Marcus: The home of Texas chic ...but Stanley Marcus says he was just lucky

By KATHY BAKER
Associated Press Writer

DALLAS (AP) — In a state not noted for demure reticence, it is perhaps not surprising that Stanley Marcus — the 79-year-old head of the family that founded the ritzy Neiman-Marcus chain with the famous Christmas catalog — should take sole credit for the rise of "Texas chic."

Marcus has turned over the management of the chain — founded by his father — to a corporation, but he still retains his role as keeper of the Neiman-Marcus "mystique."

Marcus says he got the idea for promoting the bravado of Texas while going to college. "I think maybe I was responsible in a way," he says. "Having gone to school in the East and having had a great deal of difficulty explaining to people what Dallas was, where Dallas was and where Texas was, I realized this was an opportunity to capture the interest of the rest of the country in the Southwest and the western tradition."

Marcus says he started it all in 1936 when he persuaded his father, Herbert, to give a fashion press in Dallas and invite the New York fashion press. The show featured a fur collection based on the "colors of the Southwest."

"They saw Dallas and the store and they fell in love with it," Marcus says. "And this interest in the West, I don't think it's temporary. I think it's going to continue. It's one of the few real traditions that's based on fact. The tradition of New England — the Pilgrim fathers — is not as gutsy, not as interesting."

In 1967, Herbert Marcus, his sister Carrie and her husband, Al Neiman, returned to Dallas from Atlanta where they had developed a successful public relations business. They passed up a chance to trade the business for the Missouri and Kansas franchises for a new soft drink — Coca-Cola — and instead sold it for \$25,000 cash.

With that stake and borrowed funds, the young entrepreneurs came home to found a retail store to cater to the wealthy with gracious service in elegant surroundings.

Marcus says Dallas did not spawn Neiman-Marcus, but rather Neiman-Marcus pushed Dallas into a society that might not have welcomed it without the hype and calculated "mystique" of the exclusive and unabashedly Texas-oriented enterprise.

"I think we were lucky," Marcus says. "Certainly there was not much indication that Dallas was going to be what it is today. It was a growing city. The oil was there, but it wasn't very important. After all, what did you do with oil? You had horse-drawn streetcars. You used oil for kerosene and auto grease."

"The fact that Dallas has grown into the type of city it is — very cosmopolitan — was helped in

part by Neiman-Marcus. Neiman-Marcus may have contributed some of the legend that made the TV show 'Dallas' instead of 'Houston' or 'San Antonio.'"

Recently, the elderly chairman emeritus of Neiman-Marcus began parlaying his influence and reputation into a "second" career as a consultant. He says he advises a dozen varied clients on marketing, customer service and that elusive quality — "taste."

Marcus expresses impatience with the new-style industrialists who come to him with problems of customer service.

"One of the problems of retailing and in business in general is the state of glamor," he says. "Everything's getting so big, it's difficult for businesses to relate to the individual customer."

But Marcus concedes his own baby is in the midst of growth, under the management of his son, Richard, and Carter-Hawley-Hale Inc. The chain has 15 stores, with five under construction and six more in the planning stages.

Will the problem of glamor sting Neiman-Marcus, too? "I could argue on both sides of the fence," Marcus says. "It poses a great challenge my son and I are very aware of — if they can maintain the mystique."

"Businessmen today are too profit-oriented and merger-oriented," Marcus says.

A chimp with diaper rash? Call the animal dermatologist

By GEORGE W. HACKETT
Associated Press Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Dr. Pat Breen is on the road again, treating patients with problems that often stump others in the profession.

His itinerary reads like an airline travel schedule, and at each stop there's always a waiting list at the clinic.

Breen is an animal dermatologist — one of five in public practice in the United States. "Animals are just like people," said Breen. "They may be allergic to milk, eggs and other foods. They develop rashes, may have a hormone deficiency or lose their hair. It's my job to get them under control."

The demand for his skills takes him to Louisville, Lexington, Indianapolis and Cleveland on a regular basis.

"When the veterinarian gets a tough case, he usually asks me to take a look," said Breen. After he arrives, Breen talks with the pet's owner, examines the dog, cat or horse, and then makes his diagnosis.

"You do your best because pets are important to a lot of folks. Sometimes closer than relatives," said Breen, who also teaches at the University of Cincinnati Medical School

and is a consultant to Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit.

Not long ago he was called to zoos where a baby chimpanzee and a polar bear were on the sick list.

"The chimp's skin was irritated. He resembled a baby with a diaper rash. And that's what it was. He was sensitive to the compound they were using to wash out his diapers."

The bear gave Breen a few anxious moments. "The handlers had placed him in a squeeze cage to keep him from moving around while I took a biopsy. But it was still frightening to hear him snarling at me."

The bear's problem was falling hair. "His diet had been changed and he was suffering from a vitamin A shortage."

Breen, who is 41, was educated at Ohio State University and the University of Pennsylvania. He began practice as a veterinarian in his hometown, Cincinnati, where he still has an office. But he later specialized in dermatology.

Breen still remembers his first patient, Daisy, "a sweet little thing, with a staph infection." She didn't smell like a daisy. It was a stunk on a leash.

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