Andy Grove and I were just a year apart in college, but we didn’t get to know each other until many years later, when I was the editor-in-chief of Business Week magazine and he was the CEO of Intel Corporation, the Silicon Valley colossus he had built. Of course, I knew his story. A penniless refugee from Communist Hungary who had survived the Nazi occupation as a child, Andy came to the U.S. in 1957, enrolling as a chemical engineering student at the City College of New York, which was tuition-free at the time.

He graduated at the top of his class, earned a PhD from Berkeley, and helped launch Intel. In 1997 he was named Time’s Man of the Year — surely one of the great rags-to-riches stories in recent American history.

Perhaps because we both were engineering graduates of City College, we hit it off. He was tough and confrontational, but also witty. He was opinionated but respected good journalism. And he always ran scared. A later book he wrote was aptly called Only The Paranoid Survive, which stemmed from one of his favorite aphorisms: “Success breeds complacency. Complacency breeds failure. Only the paranoid survive.” Andy told the story of his own survival in his poignant 2001 memoir, Swimming Across.

Over the years, I always went to see him when I was in California, and we shared lunches and dinners in New York. We talked about technology, journalism, education, and healthcare issues, including his treatment for prostate cancer, which he had written about.

He admired Business Week’s technology coverage and often incorporated material from our stories into his speeches. That, of course, didn’t stop him from complaining when he didn’t like something we wrote.

In one of our chats, around the year 2000, I casually suggested that he ought to make a major donation to City College to name the engineering school in his honor. After all, I said, the College played a major role in his success. Besides, it was the right thing to do. I knew immediately I had crossed the line. I was always careful to keep my distance from people we wrote about, and I never had asked anyone for anything. Andy didn’t much like the idea anyway, waving me off in his gruff style with a comment about not wanting to put his name on some damn building. Still, I decided to recuse myself from editing any major stories thereafter on Intel.

In 2004, when I was ready to announce that I was leaving Business Week to start a new graduate school of journalism at the City University of New York and Andy was about to retire as Chairman of Intel, I broached the subject again. He still said no, but he seemed more receptive, adding that Greg Williams, then president of City College, had sent him a copy of his book, a memoir about his boyhood growing up thinking he was white, only to find out he had an African-American father. Greg and I knew each other, and I mentioned that Andy had liked his book and that the two of us had conversations about the engineering school.
I didn’t think much more about it, until about a year later, when I ran into Greg Williams.

He told me that Andy had just met the young man who had won the Intel Science Prize, which was given annually to a high school student who had undertaken a major science project. The prestigious prize came with a generous college scholarship, and it was obvious that the winner, David Bauer, could have gone to any college in the country. But largely because his mentor on the project was a City College professor, David decided to attend CCNY. Andy was so moved by David’s story, rekindling his own experience 45 years earlier, that he told Greg he would donate $25 million to City College, which would name the engineering school in his honor: the Grove School of Engineering. I was stunned.

I e-mailed Andy my congratulations, and a day later, October 26, 2005, came an e-mail reply, which said in part: “…you were an important factor in strengthening the bridge between me and CCNY, and specifically getting me to pay attention to Greg. So you should take personal pleasure from the outcome.” The gift was officially announced the next day.

And so, months later, I sat in the Great Hall at City College for the naming ceremony.

Reluctant mensch that he was, Andy had quietly concluded that, yes, it was the right thing to do. Three years later, David Bauer graduated from CCNY with honors in chemical engineering and won a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford.

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Originally published by The Huffington Post
Andy Grove's Philanthropy Is Personal, and Urgent

Michael Gentilucci - see Steve Shepard's comment, bottom

Back in March, we counted down 12 of the Most Generous Tech Philanthropists. At the time, we readily admitted there were probably some folks we overlooked simply because so many have made fortunes in the tech industry, and not all of them are as high profile as Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg.

One of those who should have made the list, but didn’t is the former president, CEO, and chairman of Intel, Andrew Grove—whose philanthropy is marked not just by his level of generosity, but his urgency to solve problems he takes personally. Grove, who was legendary for his hard drive at Intel, has also pushed aggressively with his philanthropy.

Born in 1936 to a Jewish family in Hungary, at the age of 8, Grove and his mother were forced to take on false identities and hide with friends in order to escape Nazi persecution.

Fleeing to the U.S. during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Grove earned degrees from the City University of New York and Cal Berkeley before going to work at Fairchild Semiconductor. Within four years he had become the assistant director of development. When invited by Robert Noyce and Gordon Moore to leave Fairchild and help start Intel, Grove jumped at the chance. Though he joined the company the day of Intel’s incorporation, he was not considered a cofounder, which may explain why Moore has a net worth of nearly $7 billion, while the last known record of Grove’s net worth put him around $400 million in 2008. And not only can he be described as the “other guy” from Intel, he could also be considered the “other” American-Hungarian philanthropist, along with George Soros.

While Grove may not have the resources to give away billions like Moore or Soros, when it comes to relative generosity, the three are nearly on par. Through his foundation, Grove has given away more than $115 million over the last 20 years, and has recently been averaging between $9 million and $14 million a year in grants. And his foundation held $100 million in assets, as of its last tax filing.

Most of this money has gone toward causes to which Grove has a deep personal connection. In 1995, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer, so some funding has gone that direction. It was his 2000 diagnosis with Parkinson's Disease, however, that really motivated his giving. Though he was frustrated with the pace of research for cancer, it was nothing compared to his frustration with what was being done for Parkinson's Disease—neurodegenerative diseases received much less funding, and little advancement had been made over the past several decades.

This prompted Grove to put at least $26 million towards the cause, quite possibly doing more for the disease than anyone short of Michael J. Fox. His funding may have implications beyond Parkinson's, and has helped bring about advancements in embryonic stem cell research and research on more effective methods to deliver drugs to the brain, as well as at-home tests to measure the progression of the Parkinson's.

Research institutes generally see most of the funding, and at least $5 million of has gone to the Michael J. Fox Foundation, where Grove is an advisor, and where he has bequeathed another $40
million upon his death, bringing the total amount he has dedicated to charity so far to over $250 million.

Other major causes Grove supports include reproductive rights, where he has given to organizations both locally and nationally, making significant contributions to Planned Parenthood, the Center for Reproductive Rights, Advocates for Youth, and numerous others.

Grove has also been a long-time supporter of immigrant and refugee issues, giving over $3 million to the International Rescue Committee and $1 million to the Immigrant Legal Resource Center in San Francisco. More recently, he’s also made the news as a funder of immigration reform advocacy groups such as the New Americans Campaign, and CitizenshipWorks.

Though Parkinson's might be starting to slow Grove down, it’s certainly not slowing down his giving. As immigration continues to be at the forefront of our national debate, we will likely see Grove continue to increase his giving in this area.


See full IP's full profile of Grove

Comment: Stephen Shepard • 4 days ago “You forgot to mention that Andy Grove gave $25 million to the engineering school at the City College of New York, his alma mater. It is now called the Grove school of Engineering.”