

Henry

On October 23, 1988, Henry A. Satterwhite died. Henry, a long-time friend and mentor, had served on the USAir Board of Directors for many years and was my predecessor as chairman. He was a newspaper publisher and an investor in many diverse business enterprises.

Henry was a unique person who touched the lives of countless people, including hundreds at USAir. At the memorial service in Bradford, PA, the eulogy was given by his long-time friend and business associate the Reverend Robert B. Bromley.

As a tribute to Henry, I would like to share some excerpts from that eulogy with you:

Several years ago a biography of Henry Ford was published titled *They Never Called Him Henry*. Although people everywhere were awed by his position as an industrial giant, his austere remoteness was a final and solid barrier against any familiarity. Even his closest associates called him "Mr. Ford."

But in the life of Henry Satterwhite, unlike Henry Ford, they always called him "Henry." Almost universally, whether it was a captain of industry of the boy who snow-shoveled the walk, it was never "Mr. Satterwhite," but always "Henry."

This widespread use of his given name has always puzzled me. He was deeply respected by everyone and was looked up to as a great and prominent leader — just the kind of person who would be addressed by the highest appropriate title. Yet almost after the first introduction people called him "Henry." And I have consistently observed this, whether the acquaintance was a busboy or a United States senator, whether it was the president of a Triple A Corporation, or the man who ran the drill press in the factory.

I suppose one of the reasons people got on familiar terms with him quickly was because he was so approachable. He answered his own office phone — no secretary screened his calls first; no preliminary questions as to "Who is calling, please?" or "What is the purpose of your call?" If you wanted to talk with him in person, you could stop him on the street or you could walk into his office unannounced.

Yet in any group of people, Henry Satterwhite was an impressive figure — his strength, his poise, his air of quiet authority. All the elements that might make a person shy or reticent in approaching him. Not so — everyone called him "Henry."

As I said, this phenomenon always puzzled me, and I don't think I can identify exactly why people were drawn to him so quickly. It must have been akin to ESP, or some sub-



Henry A. Satterwhite

conscious psychological realization on the part of people with whom he came into contact — that here was a person who was interested in them and who would help them wherever he could.

People seemed to sense that they need not be on their guard with Henry, that they need not fear that he would ever take advantage of them. This feeling of trust and openness occurred almost by osmosis, usually taking place very early in an acquaintance. Everyone seemed to trust him, and he likewise seemed to give his own trust to everyone.

Henry's friends included many people in high political office — presidents, governors, senators, clear down to the grass-rooted committee members and county chairmen. He was tremendously effective in getting things done through the political process and everyone came to him for help, whether it was getting a grant for a community project, a new building for a university, a child admitted into a military academy, or some specialized medical help from a famous specialist.

I once asked him how he was so successful in obtaining political favors and help. He thought a minute and then said: "I suppose because I have never asked for anything myself." With no personal selfish motive, he could make a stronger request for help for others.

I think Henry Satterwhite was born with an extra portion of kindness and generosity within his nature. Of course as he grew in years and means, these lovely traits also blossomed and further enriched his spirit. If someone was in trouble it was almost a knee-jerk reaction for him to give help....

Henry died full of years, having received many honors and many blessings — a local boy who became a worldclass citizen. Yet at the end, we say: "That best portion of a good man's life, his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love."

Ed Colodny
Chairman and President

This Viewpoint appears in the January issue of USAir Magazine and Piedmont's Pace.