

wrote and an article about this honor be printed in the RECORD.

The whole Gartner family represent the best of Vermont and Marcelle and I value their friendship.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

PATRICK LEAHY,
U.S. SENATOR,
October 1, 1998.

RUTLAND REGION CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
North Main Street,
Rutland, VT

DEAR FRIENDS: My mother was wrong. She always told me that if I wanted something done right, I should do it myself.

What I learned a little later in life was that if I REALLY wanted something done right, I needed to ask Allen Gartner to do it.

Allen personifies Rutland—his love of his family, his sense of the broader community, his deep spirituality, and his sense of the broader community of which we are all a part. Most important for his friends in Rutland and all over Vermont is an indomitable sense that if you work hard enough, and if your cause is just, anything is possible.

It is fitting that Allen is honored by a group as respected as the Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce. But Allen, by the life he leads, the work he does and the joy he brings to others, honors all of us every single day.

Sincerely,

PAT.

[From the Rutland Daily Herald, October 5, 1998]

ALLEN GARTNER, BUSINESS LEADER WITH A SENSE OF CHARITY

(By Laurie Lynn Strasser)

"Tzedaka" is the most important word in the Hebrew language, Mintzer Brothers co-owner Allen S. Gartner said last Thursday after receiving the 1998 Business Person of the Year award from the Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce.

It means "charity."

"I was raised that this is the greatest country in the world, by a long shot," said Gartner. "It was our obligation to give back to the community. My parents not only spoke those words, but they lived by those words."

In conferring the honor, Rutland Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice President Tom Donahue rattled off a litany of boards that Gartner has served on. Donahue added that if he listed all the extracurriculars and charities Gartner had helped, "this luncheon might turn into a dinner meeting."

In an interview afterward, Gartner said he felt honored by the award, but that recognition was not the point.

"Whatever I'm doing, I need to do because that's what people should do," he said. "The bottom line of business is not what's important. That's not what we're on this planet for. We're only here a speck anyway. Really, it's just a blip. What's important is the welfare of the community." His father, the late Walter Gartner, used to say that the best form of giving is anonymous. His father made it out of Nazi Germany in the nick of time, but lost the rest of his family to the Holocaust. After World War II, he married and bought Mintzer Bros., a fuel oil and grain business that had been founded in 1926.

Walter Gartner's wife, Margot, gave birth to Edward in 1945 and Allen in 1949.

The younger Gartner still recalls the days when customers bought berry baskets, syrup cans and laying mash. By the early 1960's, the emphasis had switched to building supplies.

Gartner worked at the Strongs Avenue store in the summers between his graduation from Rutland High School in 1967 and Union College in 1971.

He spent his junior year abroad in France. Just last year, he returned to Paris for an emotional reunion with his host family. The people he last saw as teenagers are now in their 40s, he noted.

Gartner earned a bachelor's degree in political science and modern languages.

"I have a passion for politics," he said. "To me, politics is conflict and compromise."

He went on to pursue an advanced degree at New York University Law School, although he never intended to become a practicing attorney.

"I spent the first 20 years of my life trying to be a peace-maker," he said. "The first day of law school, the professor's asking, 'What would your argument be? It was always antithetical to what I believed, but it was good education. I refer to my law school education almost every day of the week.'"

It wound up taking him seven years to finish at NYU because his father had suffered a stroke. Living with relatives on Manhattan's Upper West Side, he would attend graduate school then work for one semester each year.

"I'd go down to the pay phone in the basement of the law school library and make phone calls for the business," he recalled. "I'd do this every day, buying and selling lumber, calling customers."

Gradually, he and his brother, Edward, took the reins from their father. Walter Gartner died in 1983.

The brothers opened another Mintzer branch in Ludlow in the early 1980s. Three years ago they expanded again into the Route 7 south space vacated by Grossman's after it went out of business.

In the coming year, Mintzer Bros. may face its toughest challenge in 70 years. Home Depot, the largest hardware chain in the world, has indicated an interest in opening a large store in Rutland.

"Big orange is a dose of reality," he said referring to Home Depot's theme color. "You've got to fight the good fight, fight it as best as you can. Business today is war. I'm not sure I'm cut out for war."

Gartner was instrumental in recruiting area merchants to form Rutland Region First, a grassroots organization whose goal is to stop Home Depot from locating in the area.

No matter what happens with the business, it is important to keep perspective, said Gartner. He has faced worse hardships, including the loss of his firstborn daughter when she was six days old and chronic back pain for the past 17 years. Financial challenges are not as important as keeping his family intact, Gartner said.

Just like when he was growing up, Gartner still plays the role of peacemaker, but these days he has taken the quest to an international level.

Last week, he met Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who was in Washington, DC, to parley with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"It pains me to see Palestinians mistreated," he said. "I'm a Zionist, but I think we've got to live together."

Committed to the Middle East peace process for the past decade, he shaved off his beard when he learned of the historic 1979 accord between Israel and Egypt. When Yasser Arafat signed a treaty with the late Isaac Rabin in 1993, Gartner was there on the south lawn of the White House.

"It was a most emotional moment for me," he recalled, describing weeping Jewish and Arab Americans throwing their arms around each other.

RECOGNITION OF MARY LOUISE SINCLAIR

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to honor a special member of my staff who is retiring from government service at the end of the 105th Congress.

Mary Louise Sinclair has served with loyalty and with distinction in the United States Senate family for nearly 36 years. During the course of her service in the Senate, Mary Louise has worked for some notable members of this body. She has worked for Senator Everett Dirksen as a secretary from 1962 to 1970. She then joined the staff of Senator Robert Taft as the office manager and secretary, where she stayed for his full term until 1977. My fellow Pennsylvanian, the late Senator John Heinz, was also privileged to have Mary Louise on his staff as a special assistant for a remarkable 13 years from 1978 to 1992, and since 1993, Mary Louise has served with distinction as my Executive Secretary.

Through her dedication and diligence, Mary Louise has enabled me to maximize my efficiency to ensure that I am in the best position to represent Pennsylvania. For that, my staff, my constituents, my family and I are very grateful.

I applaud her service and offer her, on behalf of my Senate colleagues, our goodwill and best wishes upon her retirement.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I would also like today to recognize the efforts of my staff in my personal office and State offices, who help me each day in responding to the needs of 12 million Pennsylvanians and countless other Americans who write, call or visit. I have long said that I believe I have the best staff in the Senate, and I want to convey my appreciation publicly for the work they do on behalf of the taxpayers.

Thus, as the work of the 105th Congress comes to a close, I extend my thanks to David Urban, Gretchen Birkle, Molly Birmingham, Kristin Bodenstedt, Jane Brattain, David Brog, Mark Carmel, Allison Cooper, Juliette Cox, Alli DeKosky, Aura Dunn, Jeff Gabriel, Cathy Gass, David Grindel, Peter Grollman, Patricia Haag, Andrea Haer, Alegra Hassan, Kevin Mathis, Pam Muha, Anthony Pitagno, Dan Renberg, Charlie Robbins, Jill Schugardt, Mary Louise Sinclair, Seema Singh, Erin Streeter, Jim Twaddell, John Ulliot, Ron Williams, and Chris Wilson of my Washington office.

Similarly, I appreciate the efforts of my Pennsylvania-based staff, which includes Ken Braithwaite, Mary Clark, Anthony Cunningham, Patty Doohan, Kenny Evans, Carmen Santiago, Banita Sharma, Gil Stein, Bella Straznik, Corene Ashley, Stan Caldwell, Katharine Risko, Doug Saltzman, Salena