

## IN MEMORIAM: Helen Beaver, 1916-2010

She was the grand lady of the Western Decision Sciences Institute! Helen Beaver personified WDSI. WDSI was her family and she was its heart and soul! The Decision Sciences Institute lost a great champion when Helen departed on January 9, 2010, after a brief illness at the age of 94. Each member of WDSI lost a precious friend. Her husband, Andy Beaver, had preceded her.

Helen was an indispensable resource for four different deans of the College of Business at San Diego State University. She was recruited there by Dean Charles W. Lamden in May 1960, and retired from there in May 1983 after 23 years of service. A new academician, whether joining SDSU or WDSI, could not do better than to go to Helen for guidance. She was a person who got things done. Gretchen Vik, Professor of Information and Decision Systems at SDSU tells a story, "One time I came into my office early in the morning, threw my purse in my file cabinet, and locked the drawer—then realized I had no key. When I called Helen and asked what to do, she told me to call the Key Department. When I called, the man there said "We don't take care of that." I said, "I'm sorry, Helen Beaver told me you were the one to call." He was in my office in five minutes unlocking the drawer!" The words, "Helen Beaver told me . . ." were magical! They opened doors!

Helen had already done fascinating things before the Decision Sciences Institute was established. In 1943, she was driving a variety of vehicles for the American Red Cross Motor Corps in Westwood and San Francisco, California. It is easy to imagine how impressive she must have looked in that handsome Red Cross Motor Corp uniform. In those days the American Red Cross Motor Corps fleet included over 100 'woodie' station wagons. They were used to transport military dependents and provide canteen service at the San Francisco docks as ships carrying US troops arrived and departed. Even

then, Helen was very much the people-person we came to know at the Decision Sciences Institute. She transported war brides, and returning prisoners of war. She met patients at the airport and delivered them to the VA hospital. But this was only one phase of her career.

In 1949, Helen became an early pioneer in television! She was a program coordinator at the CBS affiliate, KPIX. Its studio was at the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco. A year later, Helen moved to the Los Angeles area to join KTTV, which was an independent station, then owned by the *Los Angeles Times*. Helen was their public service director, representing the station at various public forums. Helen met a number of celebrities-to-be, including Johnny Carson, Billie Burke, Bishop Sheen, Ernie Kovacs and others. This was an exciting period in television history. *Colgate Comedy Hour*, *Ernie Kovacs Show*, *Victor Borge Show*, *Amos 'n' Andy*, *Dragnet*, and *The Jack Benny Show*, all premiered in 1950. Television was all live. Bloopers went on air, with no opportunity for editing.

In 1960, Helen's husband, Andy, accepted a position at Convair in San Diego, prompting Helen to join San Diego State University. When the WDSI was first founded in 1971, Helen was at hand to assist the fledgling organization get off the ground. Retirement from San Diego State University did not mark the end of her relationship with WDSI. She stayed with us throughout the decades, took great interest in our progress, and became the keeper of our history and culture. In 1998, Helen became the first recipient of the Jimmy D. Barnes Distinguished Service Award, an honor WDSI has granted to less than a handful of individuals. Helen attended her last WDSI meeting in Manzanillo, Mexico, in April 2004, when I was fortunate to be the president of WDSI. We shall miss our dear friend, Helen!

—*Krishna Dhir, Berry College*



### Helen Beaver—A Remembrance

I first met Helen Beaver in 1972 on my first day as an assistant professor of accountancy at San Diego State University. I went to the College of Business Administration and was introduced to Helen who guided me through the necessary process involved in signing in. Upon getting the keys to my office, I went to inspect it and found that it was without a filing cabinet. I returned to Helen and was told by her that there were absolutely no filing cabinets to be had anywhere on campus. I was pleasantly surprised the next morning when I entered my office and discovered, to my astonishment, that somehow a new filing cabinet (which was still in its factory-wrapped plastic) had appeared. This was the first of many demonstrations that life was made much easier to be in the good graces of Helen. I am happy to say that I remained in her good graces for the next 38 years.

I was invited to my first American Institute of Decision Sciences (with the unfortunate acronym, AIDS) meeting at the Hilton Hotel in San Diego by Pieter Vandenburg and Bill Sherrard. A few years later I was selected to be the successor to Wally Lowry (who I had known in the masters program at Berkeley) as treasurer, a position I held for many years with the exception of one year when I was president. I always felt that this was just to make it easier to get the second signature on the checks that had to be written. After all, Helen ran all of the financial affairs of the Western Region and she taught me all that was required to manage and run a regional meeting. In this relationship we both discovered that we had many common interests including reading,

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**Post-Disaster Relief Activities.** After the urgency of the initial disaster response and the creation of conditions in which the affected population is safe, the focus turns to restoration of the country(s) infrastructure. For instance, the press and President Préval of Haiti are already talking about the reconstruction of Haiti. It may not be possible to return to the conditions that existed before the disaster, but moving towards normalcy is important for the victims. The implication of this is that the restoration phase needs to be explicitly considered during pre-planning and execution of the response to the disaster. Explicitly taking into account the restoration phase during early planning could avoid some of the problems that arise after a disaster. As an example, using chemicals to extinguish the recent forest fires in California instead of water might have reduced the damage from the mudslides that occurred afterwards. Commercial supply chains do consider how to accommodate customer returns and have reverse logistics systems for end-of-life products (especially in Europe) but this is a fairly new initiative.

This brief list of management challenges is not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it is constructed to point out some of the areas where management challenges exist in disaster relief supply chains and to invite academics and scholars to explore these areas, where opportunities exist for additional management research.

### Emerging Opportunities

It now should be clear that disaster relief supply chains operate in a different environment from the types of supply chains that are more widely known and researched. These differences are important and offer opportunities to conduct potentially useful research. One obvious reason why studying disaster relief supply chains is important is because of the potential to save lives and reduce suffering for those people affected by a disaster. Another, less obvious, reason is that there are lessons to be learned for the private sector. The study of such highly responsive supply chains could help inform other contexts in which a growing importance is placed on customer responsiveness and product innovation, contrasted with

cost and efficiency (see Melnyk, Davis, Spekman, & Sandor, 2010,<sup>5</sup> for a more detailed discussion). Moreover, increasing the breadth of supply chain research will help in developing classifications, identifying drivers of attributes and uncovering transferable practices than can benefit other sectors.

Although there has not been a great amount of management research on humanitarian and other “non-traditional” supply chains, interest is increasing and more is being published.<sup>6</sup> There are requests for a special issue of the *International Journal of Production Research*<sup>7</sup> and a new journal in Europe<sup>8</sup> is devoted to the topic. Sessions have been held at the Decision Sciences Institute annual meeting<sup>9</sup> and more are planned. In addition to the intrinsic value of studying disaster relief supply chains, such studies can add to supply chain management knowledge in general. The more that can be learned about effective practices in supply chain responses to different needs, the better the designs of future supply chains can be. Hopefully, this note will motivate some of you to seriously consider studying the problems and challenges facing humanitarian supply chains, submitting papers for publication, and attending sessions at the annual meeting. ■

### Endnotes

1. Michel-Kerjan, Erwann, and Slovic, Paul. 2010. “A More Dangerous World: Why We Misunderstand Risk.” *Newsweek*. March 1, 2010.
2. [http://www2.weforum.org/en/media/Latest%20Press%20Releases/PR\\_Davos\\_Humanitarian.html](http://www2.weforum.org/en/media/Latest%20Press%20Releases/PR_Davos_Humanitarian.html)
3. Day, JM, Junglas, I, and Silva L, 2009. “Information Flow Impediments in Disaster Relief Supply Chains,” *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 10(8), 637-660, Aug 2009.
4. Whybark, D. C. (2007). “Issues in managing disaster relief inventories.” *International Journal of Production Economics*, 108(1), 228-235, July.
5. Melnyk, S.A., Davis, E.W., Spekman, R.E., and Sandor, J. 2010. “Outcome-Driven Supply Chains.” *Sloan Management Review*, 51(2), 33-38.
6. Boin A., P. Kelle, and D.C. Whybark, “Resilient Supply Chains for Extreme Situations: Outlining a New Field of Study” Special Issue of *International Journal of Production Economics*, forthcoming.
7. *Supply Chain Design: Issues, Challenges, Frameworks and Solutions*.
8. *Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management*.
9. See, for example, *Humanitarian Supply Chain Management*, Sessions SC-7 and SC-9, DSI Annual Meeting Proceedings, 2009.

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travel, dining out, theater, musical comedy, and the symphony. My wife, Leslie, and I spent many years going with Helen to local theater groups and the San Diego Symphony. Helen never said no when I suggested an event to attend. When her knees finally gave out we just modified the seating arrangements and choice of restaurants so that access was easy for her. Helen was always a real trooper. We continued enjoying theater, dining out, and the symphony up to just a few months before she passed. In her 94 years, Helen truly experienced a full life with experiences in the early days of radio and television in San Francisco and Los Angeles, in the Red Cross in World War II, and at San Diego State. She came to San Diego State when she was insulted by the salary that one of the local TV stations offered.

At many of the regional meetings Helen always amazed me with her uncanny memory. She could always remind me that someone had forgotten to sign the check that they had mailed to us, or had sent two checks long after these incidents escaped my memory. I truly believe that there was nothing related to her tenure as executive secretary of DSI (and the earlier AIDS) which she ever forgot. She always cherished her memories and friends which she made through DSI and San Diego State University. Her many friends will miss her, as do I.

—Howard Toole, Emeritus Professor of Accountancy, San Diego State University