Reflections

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Fifty years at a single institution is a rarely attained milestone. During the event to commemorate Don's 50 years on the faculty at Columbia Business School, we talked about the things that happened in the year he came to Columbia, 1969. It was a year of great change: the first Moon Landing; the Beatles' famous (and last) performance on the roof of Apple Records, back when Apple did not mean a smartphone company; the Woodstock Music Festival; the Stonewall Riots; and the creation of the Internet. Amidst all this technological and social change, Kris Lehmann dropped Don off at a bus stop on Route 9n in New Jersey, so that the newly hired assistant professor could go to his first day of school, riding a Red and Tan commuter bus to the George Washington Bridge Station.

Fifty years later, we organized a conference at Columbia Business School to mark the occasion. In many ways, this was an easy conference to organize, in other ways challenging. The easy part was that almost everyone who we asked to participate said yes. People flew from all over the world to attend. Even though we limited the event only to people who had had a direct connection to either Don or Columbia during the last 50 years, the event gathered over 150 attendees. The hard part was organizing a lifetime of prolific research output into allegedly coherent themes. A quick glance at Don's curriculum vita reveals that Don's research covers almost the entire field of marketing, in terms of research questions as well as methodologies. The papers in this volume reflect those contributions along six topics that we selected together with Don.

At Don's request, we kept the event primarily academic in nature, and this special issue reflects that wish. What is not reflected are the social festivities that were an essential part of the occasion and in particular the dinner that was a toast and roast of Don. We were joined by Don's family, friends, and fellow coaches, with talks by important luminaries like Dean Glenn Hubbard, Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey who took time out of his presidential campaign to send a moving video greeting, and most importantly, Kris Lehmann. Tables presented joint toasts, and the highlights included a reveal of Don Lehmann's (fake) Twitter account, personal stories from co-authors and doctoral students, and a Don Lehmann trivia contest. Did you know in the 20 years between 1999 and 2019 Don won a best paper or a lifetime award in all but a single year?

From the entire field of marketing, "Thank you Coach!"

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