

Traub at the opening celebration of the Madame Grès exhibition at the Museum of FIT in New York in 2008.

“Creating something is more satisfying than doing the deal itself. I have much curiosity. But when we execute, that’s really the satisfaction.”

— MARVIN TRAUB

MARVIN TRAUB, RETAILING LEGEND, DEAD AT 87

PHOTO BY SCOTT RUDD

By DAVID MOIN

MARVIN S. TRAUB, one of the 20th century's most visionary retailers, acclaimed for his merchandising and marketing showmanship, died at his home in New York on Wednesday. He was 87 and had been working up until June despite declining health. He had been suffering from bladder cancer.

The former Bloomingdale's chairman and chief executive officer was a tireless champion of theatrical retailing, having energized the store's selling floors with exotic import promotions, glitzy galas and designer shops. He transcended the competition by bringing glamour and sex appeal to Bloomingdale's, making it a magnet for East Side singles, tourists worldwide and high society, shopped by the likes of Jacqueline Kennedy, Lady Bird Johnson, Faye Dunaway and Diana Ross. They all had Bloomingdale's charge cards.

Traub was an avid supporter of designers and launched several, most notably Ralph Lauren. Decades ago, Traub gave Lauren his first big break by getting Bloomingdale's to place an order with him when he was just designing ties. The decision has become industry lore.

"I will miss his hand on my shoulder," Lauren said. "Marvin has been part of my life for over 45 years. His support and loyalty extended way beyond my professional life. When I opened our store on Madison Avenue and 72nd Street, Marvin was my first customer. When he left Bloomingdale's over 20 years ago, our relationship was just as strong. He and his beloved wife, Lee, have always been friends. Marvin was not only an icon in the world of retail, but a great supporter of the culture of this city."

"He was a giant, not just in our industry but in general," said Mortimer Singer, president of Marvin Traub Associates. "What made him so special is that he cared about so many things — people, places and products. He had an amazing level of curiosity, and it was infectious."

"I remember the first time I met him in his office, 10 years ago. He was sitting on a chair opposite me. He liked to put his feet on furniture. So he had one leg up on his coffee table and was wearing these beautiful Kieselstein-Cord cuff links and this impeccable suit. He was incredibly put together. It was an interview, but it didn't feel like one. He was curious about me, my family, my work. He put me at ease."

Traub spent 41 years at Bloomingdale's, starting as a merchandise assistant. He served as ceo for 13 years, until 1991, and was also president of the store for nine years. In recent years he reinvented his career as an impresario of the global deal through his consultancy Marvin Traub Associates, where he became one of the industry's most astute — and peripatetic — analysts of emerging markets, including Russia, China and the Middle East.

As a retailer, he was instrumental in elevating Bloomingdale's reputation from a mainstream department store to a chic emporium with wide brand recognition, building on

the groundwork for the upscaling of the business that had been laid by other executives there since the late Forties, including Jim Schoff Sr., a president, and Jed Davidson, Larry Lachman and Harold Krensky, all chairmen at various times.

Yet it was Traub who really took it to its flashy heights. Like a theatrical producer, he staged extravagant store promotions in the late Seventies through the Eighties revolving around ex-

and off the beaten path in advance of these import promotions. If the team couldn't find enough products, Traub had the merchandise made. The import promotions became a tradition, kicking off the fall fashion season with designers, celebrities and even heads of state visiting Bloomingdale's 59th Street flagship, and burnishing the store's reputation for innovative merchandising and excitement. After each promotion, Traub

Entertainment" and out of the sky appeared 12 helicopters, in fleet formation. "Apocalypse Now" style. They landed by the store and, one by one, designers emerged from the choppers — Calvin Klein, Bill Blass, Donna Karan and Louis Dell'Olio among them. As an encore a year later, Traub brought the Big Apple Circus to the Willow Grove, Pa., branch opening, with jugglers, clowns and designers parading in, led by Diane von

to spend in the U.S., in 1976, to mark the nation's bicentennial, and had a full itinerary, first visiting Washington, D.C., then meeting New York City's Mayor Abraham Beame and lunching at the Waldorf-Astoria. Yet by going through proper channels, Traub managed to escort the Queen on a half-hour tour of the store, and arranged a commemorative exhibit of British and U.S. fashion just for her visit.

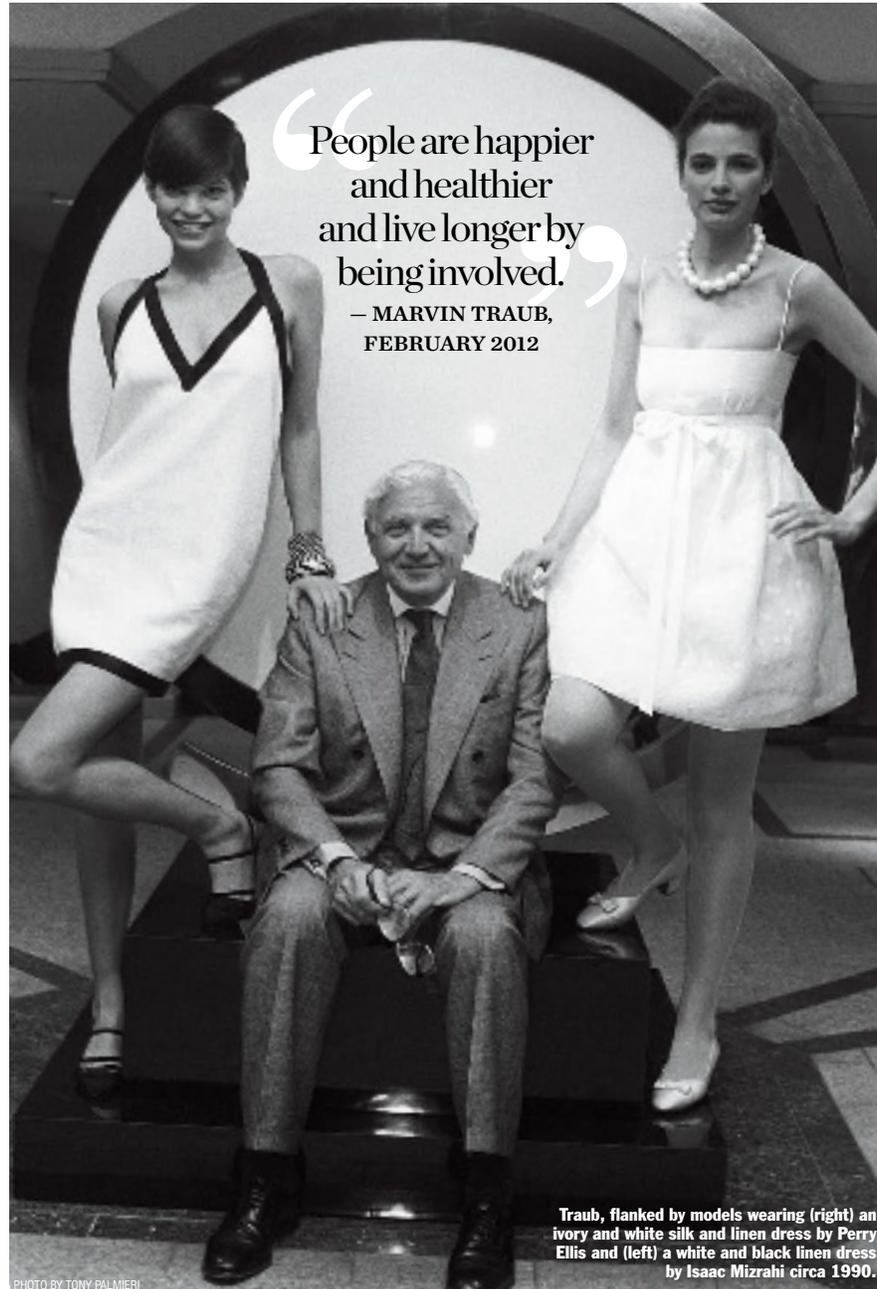
For the way he could romance product, Traub was often compared with the late Stanley Marcus of Neiman Marcus, who pioneered the country promotion strategy, though former Vogue editor in chief Grace Mirabella preferred to call Traub "the Sol Hurok of retailing." According to some retail experts, the term "retailing as theater" was inspired by Traub's work at Bloomingdale's. He received the Gold Medal of the National Retail Federation in 1991, as well as the Légion d'Honneur and Ordre National du Mérite from France and was awarded the Commendatore della Repubblica by Italy.

After leaving Bloomingdale's in 1991, Traub formed Marvin Traub Associates, establishing his second career as a dealmaker and consultant and thriving on a different kind of industry action. With his vast network of contacts from his Bloomingdale's days — store executives, manufacturers, designers, distributors and dignitaries — Traub generated a steady flurry of cross-border licensing and retail projects, embodying the spirit of globalization. Though gone from Bloomingdale's, he still lived and breathed fashion and retail and stayed in the center of it all, even as an octogenarian. "Creating something is more satisfying than doing the deal itself," he once told WWD. "I have much curiosity. But when we execute, that's really the satisfaction. Not when you make a deal."

Traub loved to travel and explore different cultures, particularly India and France, his favorite two countries outside the U.S. Almost up to the very end, he maintained a schedule as rigorous as anyone half his age, defying the notion that aging means losing touch. Traveling to places like Paris, Dubai and Mumbai was like commuting for Traub. "People are happier and healthier and live longer by being involved," Traub said in a February WWD interview. "I have two partners whose combined age is less than mine. If you get pleasure at what you are doing, and are surrounded by a talented staff of young people, that helps supply the energy. I like to think I push the young people when I travel or anything else." Singer, his business partner, has taken over the reins at MTA, as expected.

Traub often wore Giorgio Armani, Canali and Ralph Lauren suits, and had an understated manner and a nasally voice that belied his strong will and aggressive tactics. Yet he basked in the limelight of his business exploits and wealth of connections and was never shy about celebrating his achievements, his personal milestones or name-dropping his guest for breakfast at the Regency. Whether it was his 80th birthday party held at the Rainbow Room or his 40th wedding anniversary

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clusive and rare products from around the world, introducing to the U.S. centuries-old ceremonial robes from Beijing's Forbidden City for a 1980 China promotion, for example. Or for the "Mediterranean Odyssey" in 1987, he imported a \$15,000 Christian Lacroix Provencal-inspired satin dress even though the store didn't sell couture. Traub sent some of his team to Kennedy Airport to pick up the dress, with security.

It was typical for Traub's buyers to spend weeks scouring ateliers in fashion capitals

would adorn his office and home with posters and products marking the occasion. They were his trophies. While some of the promotions were profitable and others weren't, for Traub, they were all worth it as image builders that made Bloomingdale's fun and successful.

Traub was equally sensational with store openings. One of his most dramatic was for the King of Prussia, Pa., branch opening in the mid-Eighties. A black-tie crowd waited in the parking lot as the Philadelphia Mummers marching band played "That's

Furstenberg riding an elephant. "He made me ride the elephant," said von Furstenberg. "He was such a showman. He loved that, and embraced it. Marvin was so incredibly important to fashion, to promoting fashion, and to retail. He invented the showbiz for retail. It was endless...the things he would do, and everybody always did it for him."

Traub considered his most memorable moment on the job when Queen Elizabeth II of England visited the 59th Street flagship. She had just one day

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at Madame Tussauds in Times Square, the industry would come out in force. Few industry figures were as well known or commanded such attention.

At Bloomingdale's, Traub's philosophy was to "seek and create," give the store a museum character at times, and support designers. In addition to launching Ralph Lauren, he launched Perry Ellis as well as Norma Kamali, with whom he struck an unusual deal in the Eighties to become an in-house Bloomingdale's designer, with Bloomingdale's doing the manufacturing and Kamali designing swimsuits, ready-to-wear and hosiery. Traub also opened in-store boutiques for Yves Saint Laurent and Calvin Klein, among others. He built an extremely aggressive, tough team of buyers and, for years, had some of the best industry talent, including the late Kal Ruttenstein, the legendary fashion director who was instrumental in furthering Traub's splashy promotions, innovative merchandising and designer strategy, as well as Barbara D'Arcy White, the interior designer whose model rooms at the store burnished the store's reputation for fashion and product development.

Bringing sex appeal to the store was part of the Traub doctrine. By catering to young and trendy East Siders, the store became a singles' hangout where supposed customers could be seen exchanging phone numbers for dates. Once he told a newspaper: "On Saturdays, Bloomingdale's is the biggest party in town." He liked that people affectionately called the store "Bloomies" and encouraged his merchants to put the Bloomies logo on more and more products, including panties. It mattered more to him that anything with the mark

Traub's enormous energy some attributed to early-morning workouts with a personal trainer; others said he was driven. But Traub liked to say it was simply good genes.

became popular souvenirs, at least for a time.

Though he focused on building the status and business of the 59th Street flagship, Traub did expand the chain with mixed success. Some of the branches he opened, such as King of Prussia, have endured, but the Valley View, Tex., and Fresh Meadows, N.Y., locations were closed. Traub also closed the Stamford, Conn., store, which opened in the Fifties. He had been involved in planning that store. But the Manhattan flagship always took the lion's share of his attention.

Traub himself received much attention from the media, and was perceived as a one-man show, with executives reporting to him very much in his shadow. However, Traub would make a point of relating how he helped nurture the careers of many who, after spending years at Bloomingdale's, rose to higher posts at other companies. Within fashion and retail circles, many individuals, from designers to ceo's, say they owe much to Traub.

"When I think about starting in 1974 on the Bloomingdale's training squad right out of college, it truly was like no other store in the world," said Robin Burns-McNeill, chairman of Battalure Beauty. "Marvin was the leader and the visionary. He put into place the culture and mode of operation. You were taught not to just imagine the impossible, but to go after it and deliver it. The lessons I learned from Marvin are some of the most valuable I took with me for the rest of my career. One was making the product and customer experience extraordinary. I remember going to the market and walking into a showroom. I wasn't concerned about a competitive store beating us to the punch, I was concerned about another buyer from Bloomingdale's getting there first. I also learned how to optimize a winner. Take Giorgio of Beverly Hills. We had no idea the demand would be so high. I remember Marvin and Lester Gribetz saying, 'What have we got here and how big

can it be?' When I was the men's fragrance buyer, Marvin wanted to position men with spritzers near the doors and escalators for a Calvin Klein launch. I looked in restaurants for handsome men because that's where you find unemployed actors. There were all these gorgeous men.

"And Marvin's energy — you had to run behind him."

"He's been a wonderful mentor to me throughout my career, beginning at Bloomingdale's, as well as a mentor to many designers and generations of executives in the fashion business," said Denise Seegal, executive director of M Magtague Holdings Ltd., Magaschoni Inc. "As a very young person — 26 years old — I was brought into this incredibly exciting world of designers. Marvin took us to Europe to the shows. I was going to Yves Saint Laurent, Valentino and Sonia Rykiel as a buyer at such an early age, and having meetings at the Meurice hotel with Marvin, Kal Ruttenstein, with all the buyers, divisionals and [general merchandise managers]. Marvin wanted insight from all his team. What did you see? What was exciting? He helped shape a lot of designer businesses and introduced them to the U.S."

"I first met Marvin when I joined Bloomingdale's training program in 1986," recalled Jim Gold, president of specialty retailing at Neiman Marcus Group. "I was immediately struck by his passion for the business. It was a thrill to see him on the selling floor and talk to him about product in my area of responsibility. Marvin cared about everyone's opinion, even those of us who were just out of college. When I decided to apply to Harvard Business School, Marvin was incredibly supportive. Even though I had only been with

Bloomingdale's for three years at that point, he agreed to write a letter of recommendation on my behalf. Typical of Marvin, he did so with tremendous purpose and professionalism, even taking the time to interview me before writing the letter."

Traub's career in the late Eighties took a more difficult turn. In 1988, Bloomingdale's and its then parent company, Federated Department Stores Inc., were taken over by Canadian developer Robert Campeau. In the months ahead, Campeau and his retail concerns began to sink under the weight of heavy debt from the Federated acquisition and the 1986 purchase of Allied Stores Corp., so he desperately put Bloomingdale's up for sale to try to save the company. Traub made a valiant effort to buy Bloomingdale's, but couldn't arrange financing after being rebuffed by U.S. and Japanese bankers and retailers. It was a big disappointment for him.

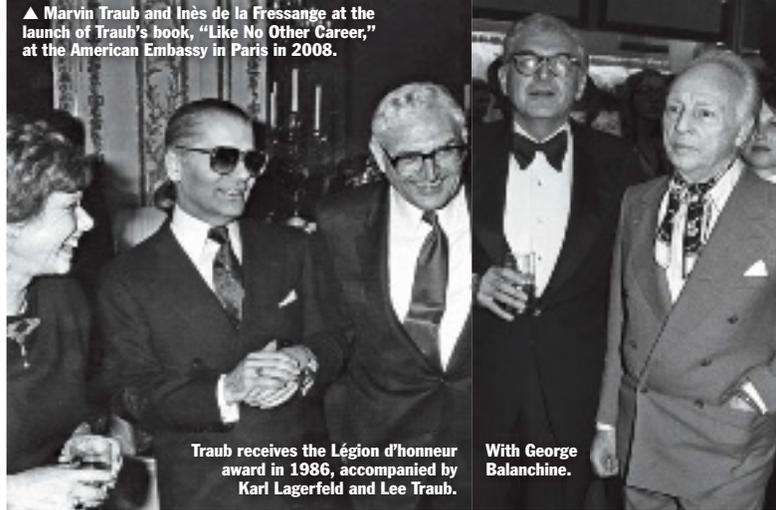
In 1990, Federated filed for Chapter 11 reorganization, and the next year, Traub would be disappointed again. With Campeau out and new management running Federated, Traub was asked to retire from the store, which he did reluctantly. Federated felt the chain needed new leadership and direction.

Initially, Traub wasn't pleased with the choice of his successor at Bloomingdale's, Michael Gould, who took the business on a more profitable path of expansion with less of the glitz and glam, greater emphasis on branches, and by honing Bloomingdale's in a niche priced below Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue, and above Macy's. Two years earlier, Gould, then ceo of Giorgio Inc., accused Bloomingdale's of diverting the Giorgio fragrance, putting the two on uneasy footing.

After a strained, three-and-a-half month transition, Traub's final day had come, in a manner he was used to. Pom-pom girls and a marching band bid him farewell as he exited the first floor with the staff bidding him farewell. Meanwhile, the new chairman



▲ Marvin Traub and Inès de la Fressange at the launch of Traub's book, "Like No Other Career," at the American Embassy in Paris in 2008.



Traub receives the Légion d'honneur award in 1986, accompanied by Karl Lagerfeld and Lee Traub.

With George Balanchine.



With Queen Elizabeth II during her historic visit to the store.

Traub with Bill Blass and Oscar de la Renta after a helicopter landing for a Bloomingdale's store opening.



Imelda Marcos shops at Bloomingdale's with Traub and Lester Gribetz.

PHOTOS BY STEVE EICHNER, SONIA MOSKOWITZ, MURRAY FEIERBERG, GUY DE LORT, HARRY MORRISON, DOMINIQUE MAITRE AND FAIRCHILD ARCHIVE



Traub in 1981 with Martha Graham, Halston and Shirley MacLaine at a benefit for the Martha Graham Co.



Marvin and Lee Traub with Ralph and Ricky Lauren in 1990.



Marvin and Lee Traub at their wedding.



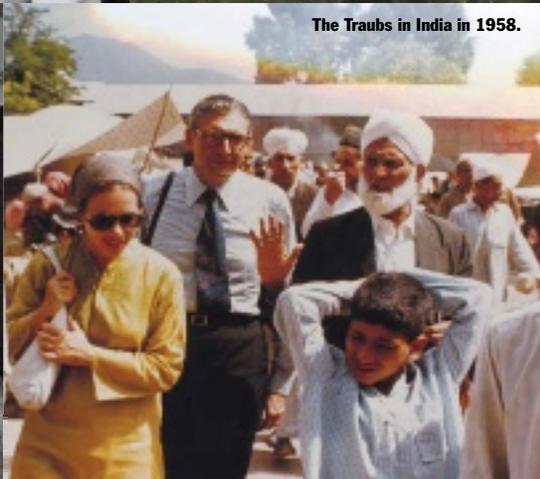
With the Missonis during the Missoni Party in 1974.



The Traubs in India in 1958.



With Estée Lauder in 1974.



and ceo was quietly escorting Calvin Klein through the bridge floor discussing changes in the Calvin Klein boutique. It was a sign that Bloomingdale's was about to head in a different, more subdued direction.

Traub had let go of the reins, yet it seemed hard for him to let go emotionally. In 1996, he was insistent on touring a Bloomingdale's store in Century City, Los Angeles, before it opened. He was so eager that he arrived a day before ceo Gould would arrive for the last-minute tweaking. Store officials asked Traub to return later and informed him that Gould hadn't yet seen the store in its final state, but Traub persisted and was granted access.

Right after leaving Bloomingdale's, Traub became a vice chairman of Federated for a short time and then formed Marvin Traub Associates, his marketing and consulting firm. At MTA, he became involved in the expansion of Harvey Nichols in the Middle East, mall projects in Panama City and Athens, and the Time Warner Center at New York's Columbus Circle. He helped reshape Moscow's largest department store, Tsum, into a designer emporium, with Giorgio Armani, Bottega Veneta, Gucci and Yves Saint Laurent, among others. And he was most gratified when, in a consulting capacity, he helped Bloomingdale's open its first international store in Dubai. It was like coming home for him.

Most of Traub's efforts post-Bloomingdale's bore fruit, if not always. In late 1992, he led an investment group that acquired Conran's from London-based Storehouse plc, and tried to build up the business in the U.S., but the venture failed. He once launched a strategy of introducing

business school, he married Lee Laufer, a dancer who studied under Martha Graham in the Forties and was typically at his side at store parties and accompanying him on overseas buying trips.

Some attributed Traub's enormous energy to early-morning workouts with a personal trainer; others said he was driven. But Traub liked to say it was simply good genes. His mother had the same kind of energy, and his great-great-grandfather took his fifth wife at the age of 78. Marv did have a pacemaker installed when he was in his 80s, and needed to use a cane, but he loved work too much to retire. When he had an operation to get a tumor removed from an intestine, Traub conducted conference calls from his hospital bed.

Edward Meyer, chairman, president and ceo of the Grey Global Group, once said he and Traub started working at Bloomingdale's around the same time. But after three years, Meyer departed. "I thought, 'What am I hanging around here for? This guy is going to be chairman.'" And he was right.

"He crams more meetings in a hour than anyone does in a day," Andy Traub, one of Marvin's three children, said at his father's 75th birthday party held at Bloomingdale's.

"I don't know what I can say about Marvin that he hasn't already said about himself," joked Lauren at the same party. "I started out younger than Marvin. Now I'm older than him." Turning serious, Lauren, whose Polo empire got off the ground when he sold Traub neckties some 30 years ago, added, "More than anybody else, Marvin is responsible for developing my career."

At his 80th birthday party, another retail powerhouse, Allen Questrom, said,

“More than anybody else, Marvin is responsible for developing my career.”

— RALPH LAUREN

American and European brands and designers to India, in partnership with Mohan Murjani, but that venture also failed after some disagreements. He also advised Kira Plastinina, the teenage Russian designer, on expanding into the U.S. After a dozen U.S. openings, financial difficulties forced the designer to close the stores.

Traub always forged ahead, forming new partnerships and business deals. In 1994, he joined Financo Inc., an investment banking firm, as senior adviser, while operating his consulting firm. Traub and Financo chairman Gilbert Harrison were inseparable at industry functions and were able to bring each other clients, though ultimately the partnership dissolved.

In 2008, Traub helped establish a fund for investing, called TSM Capital, which took stakes in Ellen Tracy, Rachel Roy and Matthew Williamson. In May 2009, Windsong Brands LLC, the Westport, Conn.-based private equity firm, teamed up with Marvin Traub Associates to form Falchi Holdings LLC, which acquired Carlos Falchi, the accessories brand.

Traub was born April 14, 1925, in the Bronx, and lived for several years on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. He was the son of Sam Traub, an executive at Lily of France lingerie, and Bea, a personal shopper at Bonwit Teller. They were a stylish couple, driven by their careers and high society. They spent most of their evenings on the town at business-related dinners, rather than at home. Their flair for product and showmanship, however, was passed down to their son.

In World War II, Traub participated in the Normandy Invasion, landing at Utah Beach in 1944, and was shot in the leg at Metz by a German sniper. The mayor of Metz discovered some years ago that he'd been shot in the town and invited Traub to visit and then decorated him for his valor. Over the years, the pain from the wound would flare on occasion. Before the war, he attended Harvard University, from which he graduated in 1947. After the war, he attended Harvard Business School, from which he graduated in 1949. While at

"The best part about Marvin is that he is always going somewhere. Every time I sit down with him for breakfast he says he has to catch a plane to Russia, China or some place I have never heard of."

Harrison recalled a 48-hour trip to Europe with Traub and a 20-year-old business associate last year: "After 24 hours, I was exhausted, the 20-year-old was beyond exhausted, and Marvin just kept on going."

Traub cowrote two books, the first titled "Like No Other Store," chronicled his upbringing, his early retail days and his career at Bloomingdale's. The second, "Like No Other Career," summarized his life after Bloomingdale's — highlights and low lights. The first section of the book has 30 sketches from designers and accompanying testimonials from Traub's farewell to Bloomingdale's party in Paris in 1991. For the book launch, Gould hosted a cocktail party at the store and said he was "bedazzled" by what Traub accomplished post Bloomingdale's. "To strike out and say I am going to start over — I am really blown away by his boundless energy...He sees things differently. He sees the youth in something." It was apparent then that Traub and Gould had resolved their differences.

Traub is immediately survived by his wife Lee: his daughter, Margaret, who founded and runs the lighting company Adesso; sons Andrew, a retail consultant and a former executive at Macy's, and James, a journalist, and four grandchildren.

Services will be held at the Central Synagogue, 652 Lexington Avenue and 55th Street, on Sunday, 10 a.m. Donations may be made to the Marvin and Lee Traub Flexible Financial Aid Fund, c/o Mary Preston, Harvard University, 124 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, Mass., 02138, and Pin Down Bladder Cancer, c/o Marvin Traub Associates, 410 Park Avenue, Suite 910, New York, N.Y., 10022, or pindownbladder.org.

FOR INDUSTRY REACTION,
SEE PAGE 8

Remembering Marvin

Recollections of the merchant and the man from around the industry and around the world.

Ralph Lauren: "Marvin Traub has been part of my life for over 45 years. His support and loyalty extended way beyond my professional life. When I opened our store on Madison Avenue and 72nd, Marvin was my first customer. When he left Bloomingdale's over 20 years ago, our relationship was just as strong. He and his beloved wife, Lee, have always been our friends, sharing so much, watching each other's children grow up. Marvin was not only an icon in the world of retail, but a great supporter of the culture of this city. He was a rare person and a rare friend. I will miss his hand on my shoulder."

Karl Lagerfeld: "I'm really sad. He and his wife were the nicest couple in the business. He was great, so cheerful, so friendly. He is somebody I will always remember. He was a key figure in retail when it was a fairy tale. His innovation was to make a store that was not so noteworthy into the trendiest shop in town."

Donna Karan: "He was a man of fashion. He really understood the soul of it and the spirit. For me, the most memorable thing is how he'd take a country, such as India, and go on a journey. There was nothing he couldn't handle. He had such passion and set standards for what retail was all about. He had amazing relationships with designers.... You couldn't say no to Marvin. When I met the Queen of England, I was with Marvin. Only Marvin could have the Queen of England at Bloomingdale's with Calvin, Ralph and myself. Only Marvin could turn Lexington Avenue instead of running downtown to uptown."

Diane von Furstenberg: "It's very sad. Marvin was so incredibly important to fashion, to promoting fashion, and to retail. He invented the showbiz for retail. He was such a showman. He loved that, and embraced it. He invented the Indian promotion and the Chinese promotion. He was so ahead of his time. For the opening of Bloomingdale's at King of Prussia, he made me ride on an elephant."

Leonard A. Lauder: "The world may never see a broadbased merchant like Marvin Traub again. He almost singlehandedly led the conversion of Bloomingdale's from a local department store to a national brand. He created the concept of Saturday's Generation during the Sixties and Seventies. The opening of Bloomingdale's decorator rooms became the social event of the season."

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg: "I am saddened by the passing of Marvin Traub, a proud New Yorker and a true symbol of what one can accomplish in New York City through hard work and creativity. Under Marvin's leadership, Bloomingdale's became much more than a local department store, and thanks to his vision, today it stands as an iconic piece of New York."

Hubert de Givenchy: "I liked Marvin very much. He was...an absolutely charming man. He always supported the Givenchy label and gave us the possibilities to do a lot of things together at Bloomingdale's. I had a lot of admiration for his work, for him, and he was a great friend."

Rosita Missoni: "He was one of the



Marvin and Lee Traub being honored by the Martha Graham Dance Company in March.

PHOTO BY STEVE EICHNER

FOR MORE REACTION, SEE WWD.com/fashion-news.

first to believe in us and we jokingly called him 'the godfather' because he opened the doors to America for us and paved the way for our international success. He helped so many other designers, too — he believed in young people and in talent. And he had an incredible charisma. Whenever we met, it was a feast, full of memories."

Terry J. Lundgren, chairman, president and chief executive officer, Macy's Inc.: "I was close to Marvin for many years, and his guidance and advice were invaluable to me as well as to other members of our company's management team. Marvin was a visionary and innovator. He was a true master of fashion retailing, and we all learned so much from him. I continued to meet with Marvin for regular updates over the years. In fact, we had a meeting planned for yesterday that he was unable to attend. Marvin meant so much to me. I will miss him. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Marvin's family."

Allen Questrom, former chairman of J.C. Penney, Macy's and Barneys New York: "Marvin certainly led more than a complete life. He was quite a character, a total optimist. He was the most enthusiastic guy on any subject, with the energy of a person 25 years younger. I would run into him at the Regency, where he always ate breakfast, and he was always either on his way or just coming back from India or China. He was a real merchant. When I was a home furnishings buyer at Abraham & Straus, I visited Bloomingdale's, and I remember seeing Marvin walking the floors. He was always there talking to people. He focused on the theater of the business. He will be missed."

Tommy Hilfiger: "I remember when I met him with Joel Horowitz. We were showing at the Holiday Inn in downtown L.A. because we couldn't afford to show at MAGIC. We set up in a run-down conference room. He came in and sat on a broken couch and loved the line. He put us in Bloomingdale's and really launched us and stood behind us. When he walked into the room, it was like God was arriving. We remained friends ever since. He understood the value of theater in the stores and launching and standing behind designers."

Michael Gould, chairman and ceo of Bloomingdale's: "I remember a year ago flying to Dubai with Marvin and his associate Kelsey [Scroggins] to visit Bloomingdale's in Dubai, which was doing a New York event. Marvin played an important role introducing us to the Al Tayer Group [which is licensed to operate the store]...and planning the store and this event. Imagine at 85, he was telling them he didn't think they were buying enough. So at dinner, I recall asking him of all the projects he's done since leaving Bloomingdale's, which is the one... and before I even had a chance to finish the question, Marvin's comment was 'Bloomingdale's.' There was just something that he felt was so special to be working with Bloomingdale's again."

Ron Johnson, chairman and ceo, J.C. Penney Co. Inc.: "Marvin's had an extraordinarily positive impact on our industry for the past 50 years and was one of the most innovative merchants in the world. He shared his wisdom with others. Earlier this year, when I asked him about our transformation at J.C. Penney, he told me, 'Don't blink. Stay the course.' Those were his exact words. He encouraged me. He said we were on the right track."

Elie Tahari: "There are not too many people in this industry I was as close to as Marvin. He started my career. He invited me to lunch in the conference room at Bloomingdale's. In the middle of the lunch, I got upset and walked out and said, 'I'd never sell Bloomingdale's.' We were fighting over a location. He wanted to put me in contemporary and I wanted to be in designer. But he had no ego at all. He called me the next day and wanted to have breakfast since lunch didn't work out. He said, 'Let's start from the beginning,' and he walked me through the store. It became the biggest success I ever had in one store."

"He was the most gentlemanly and generous man, and very professional. I think he was the Prince of Retail."

Arnold Aronson, managing director of retail strategies, Kurt Salmon: "It is hard to imagine the retail world without the daily presence of Marvin...but he leaves a legacy of iconic proportions....He invented the

concept of the 'store as theater' with international fairs, exciting merchandise from all over the world, unparalleled displays and presentation. He introduced and nurtured new designers, like Ralph Lauren, the Missonis, Sonia Rykiel and many more, and he made the 59th Street flagship store mantra — 'Like no other store in the world' — a fact, not just a claim."

Burt Tansky: "The most important thing I can say is that it's been a privilege to have known Marvin over these many, many years and to admire the work he'd done at Bloomingdale's. He created a role model for retailers in this country and all over the world. I send my sympathy to his wife, Lee, and his family. We were always competitors but very friendly competitors. I was a great admirer of Marvin as a retailer and then in his consulting business. He was a terrific guy. He will be missed."

Guy Peyrelongue, retired ceo of L'Oréal's Cosmair Division: "For me, I was so touched by his great love for France and its art and craftsmanship. That came from when he served in the American army in Europe."

"[He was] a very great merchant and a great talent. The man had great style, great heart and a youthful attitude. When he retired, Traub did not stop working. He pursued projects and new ventures. He was a most wonderful family man [and] a great example."

Norma Kamali: "Marvin inaugurated the idea of a designer having a license with a store. I had a license with Bloomingdale's in the Eighties and we did so well. This was when stores used to be stores, and the buyers were on the floor interacting with the customers, and you could see the energy. Nobody's come near to what he did. Bloomingdale's was the center of the universe. He was an incredible man and lived an incredible life."

Robert Chavez, president and ceo, Hermès of Paris: "I spent almost 10 years working for Marvin at Bloomingdale's in its heyday. He not only set the standard, he always raised the bar to a new level, and always made it more dynamic and more exciting than anybody else had ever made it. He made it so exciting that you wanted to do it with him. I learned in those days how, at

Bloomingdale's, it was always a given that you were never to walk into a showroom or a factory and just take and buy what was there. You had to make it different and better."

Glen Senk, ceo, David Yurman: "A one in a million human being — kind and nurturing. He had higher standards both for himself and everyone working for him. He taught me so much. He just has so much energy, passion, curiosity and drive. He had such a profound impact on so many people. He taught everybody to be the very best. He would take risks on people. He made me head of Bloomingdale's By Mail when I was 29. He'd be very clear with what the expectations were and then he just let you do it. In the early days, he walked the floor and he knew the sales staff by name and they called him Mr. Traub."

Gilbert Harrison, chairman, Financo Inc.: "[Marvin] was truly one of the great merchant princes. He truly loved every minute of his life and was at home with any retailer or apparel company you can imagine. He was a senior advisor to Financo for 10 years...[and] he taught me more than you'd ever know."

"Marvin left to build his own consulting firm in 2004. He reinvented the way people shopped. He never abandoned being a hands-on merchant. He wore out our vice presidents and young associates in their 20s. He'd get off the plane, take a shower and run to a meeting."

Laurence C. Leeds Jr., chairman, Buckingham Capital Management: "He was a best friend and a marvelous human being. He was a professional and brilliant retailer who took Bloomingdale's from a mediocre, run-of-the-mill store and made it into the most dynamic and most exciting retailer in America. And he was a magnificent husband and father, and had many great friends and a personal life that was warm and intense. He and Lee had a great romance that lasted all their lives. I'll never forget when his chauffeur was dying of AIDS. He used to drive up to the Bronx to bring him food."

Andrew Rosen, president, Theory: "I go so far back with Marvin. I was a young boy, and I remember sitting in Marvin's dining room at Bloomingdale's with my father and Marvin. He was a giant and a real innovator. He really made Bloomingdale's an exciting shopping experience and a cool place."

Law Frankfort, ceo, Coach Inc.: "I went to a meeting with him and my team at Bloomingdale's in 1981 to discuss our wholesale business. He had learned that I was opening our first retail store on Madison Avenue and 65th Street. Marvin stopped me outside the conference room and said, 'Lou, I'm going to scream at you in front of your staff and my team. What I'm going to say is that you're being a very bad partner for opening your own retail store. But off the record, I want you to know it's one of the smartest things you could ever do.' We went into the conference room and he said, 'Before we talk about our business at Bloomingdale's, I can't believe you're opening your own store....' He had great vision. He wanted me to know I had a lot of courage."