

MEN OF AGENCY

They took different paths to the top of the medical ad agency mountain, but Dr. H. James Barnum and Francis Gace each left a lasting mark on the business. **Barbara Peck** celebrates their professional legacies

FRANCIS GACE



CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Late 1950s: Joined J. Walter Thompson in London

1962 Returned to South Africa to work at Young Advertising in Johannesburg.

Assigned to the flagship account, Datsun Nissan Motors

1964 Joined the South African affiliate that would become Merrell Dow

1974 Won the South African Society of Marketers' prestigious Industrial Communications Award for non-consumer advertising

1975 Became the advertising director of Merrell's US domestic operation at its Cincinnati headquarters, with global oversight for new brands

1984 Returned to the agency side to be senior vice president, client services at Medicus in New York, where he handled several of Merrell's brands and promoted P&G's Crest

1989 Co-founded the Lewis & Gace Agency with Clive Lewis. Pioneered the use of DTC, with work on Nicorette and Seldane, and placed the first Super Bowl pharma ad in 1992

1995 Lewis & Gace was acquired by Bozell, Jacobs, Kenyon & Eckhart

1998 Retired as co-chairman of Lewis, Gace, Bozell

WHEN ASKED ABOUT ENTERING medical advertising, Francis Gace likes to say, "I caught a bad attack of medicine, which became a chronic condition." Luckily, the affliction was never properly treated.

Born in 1938 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, Gace studied English at the University of Cape Town and then at Pretoria, where he earned his degree. Then he did what most newly graduated South Africans of English heritage did back then: He left for England.

Owing to his drawing skills, he was encouraged to enter the ad business, so he enrolled at St. Martins, a London art school. "By day three it became apparent who was very good and who was ordinary. I could not match the brilliant artists there and lasted a year," Gace recalls. "But I was smart enough to enroll in the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, where I earned a diploma." One day he got stuck on the Underground, met a woman who worked for J. Walter Thompson and landed a job. He learned the ropes in several departments, including media and traffic and marketing research.

"I found the ad business spectacular. It knocked my socks off."

Some five years later Gace returned to South Africa for a job at Young Advertising. The boss warned him he'd have to work on the Burroughs Wellcome account—because, well, nobody else would. But Gace cheerfully took on the challenges of pharmaceutical marketing, with all its restrictions and complexities. It introduced him to Clive Lewis, a British adman who started off as a client, became a rival and wound up a partner.

Gace's next job was as in-house advertising manager with Mer-National, the pharma division of Richardson-Vicks. Many of the campaigns he produced (for Syndol, Tenuate, Bently and Bendectin) were adopted by Merrell affiliates around the globe. He also tied a pharmacy promotion for Cepacol to a "Save the Cheetah" initiative, resulting in some groundbreaking research on cheetah behavior.

In 1975 Merrell airlifted Gace (by then a father of two) to Cincinnati to be advertising director of Merrell's US domestic operation, with global oversight for new brands. "Francis had been an ad director in a pretty small market," Lewis points out. "His promotion to being in charge of a global market was a huge jump."

While working on various domestic brands, including the launch of Nicorette, Gace was given global responsibility for the introduction of Seldane, one of the first non-sedating antihistamines. He continued handling Nicorette and Seldane while working at Medicus in New York and also managed the launch of Crest Tartar Control for Procter & Gamble.

In 1989 he rekindled his working association with his longtime chum Lewis when the two launched Lewis & Gace.

In looking back, Gace is especially proud of two things he brought to the business. He introduced a new sense of discipline when he developed the idea of the "creative contract," a one-page document outlining what the client expected to receive. Before that, a product manager would brief the ad agency staff, the staff would come back with various renditions of what they'd heard and the client would say, "That's not what we wanted." Endless wheel-spinning ensued.

The creative contract changed that. Once the work was presented, the client would have to agree on whether it met the signed brief. If so, the work would go forward.

Maintaining brand consistency was another of Gace's key concepts. Previously, when a product manager was given control over a project, he'd put his stamp on it by changing everything. Then a new product manager would come in and do the same; there was

no continuity. Gace, on the other hand, insisted that “the brand is the hero, not the brand manager. Every dollar you spend should reinforce every dollar you’ve already spent.”

For example, after L&G won the Losec account in the US, it learned that the product’s name had to be changed to Prilosec. Luckily, the firm had already established the brand in Sweden, with its distinctive symbol hued in a vivid shade of purple. Those ele-



Francis Gace and his ad agency were the first to place a pharma ad in the Super Bowl when, in 1992, they introduced America to the Nicoderm patch



Gace focused attention on Tenuate when he led the pharma division of Richardson-Vicks. Along with other campaigns—Syndol, Bentyl and Bendectin among them—it went worldwide for Merrell

ments were imprinted in practitioners’ minds, so the name change was barely a blip on the screen.

Lewis & Gace was also the first to place a prescription drug ad in the Super Bowl, for the new Nicoderm patch, in 1992. Under FDA regulations, the ad could state either the brand name or what the product was for (smoking cessation), but not both. L&G elected to go with the name and staged the ad in a no-smoking zone.

In 1995 Bozell, Jacobs, Kenyon & Eckhardt acquired L&G. As a result, Lewis, Gace, Bozell was formed, with Gace and Lewis as co-chairmen. During his time in co-charge, Gace was instrumental in the formation of Bozell Wellness Worldwide.

Retired since 1998, Francis Gace lives with his wife, Claire, on Bainbridge Island, Washington. That chronic case of medicine now appears under control: Instead of working, he paints, sculptures, golfs, sails and watches osprey and bald eagles from his home at the edge of an escarpment.

DR. H. JAMES BARNUM



CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Mid-1950s Created Stripe toothpaste while working on product development at Lever Bros.

1964 Graduated from Columbia Medical School

1965 Hired by J. Walter Thompson Co. to establish the Deltakos Division, specializing in pharmaceutical advertising, and Synapse Continuing Medical

Education (CME). Later named group executive vice president and president of J.W.T. Affiliated Companies

1973 Founded Barnum Communications as an integrated health-care marketing company (advertising, CME and PR divisions)

1981 Established the Barnum Group, an affiliation of ad agencies that also worked on consumer goods

1985 Grew Barnum Communications to a top-ten pharmaceutical ad agency with clients that included Boehringer Ingelheim, Boehringer Mannheim, five divisions of DuPont Health Care and GlaxoSmithKline

“LARGER THAN LIFE” IS A DESCRIPTION attached to many legends in the advertising business, which has long attracted outside personalities. But it’s particularly apt in the case of James Barnum, who fought in the Second World War, invented a toothpaste, helped refine astronaut food, secured a medical degree and fathered three children—and that’s before he found his way into medical advertising.

He was born in Indianapolis and raised in Lakeland, FL, by musician parents who insisted that he receive a classical education, Latin included. After college Barnum trained at the US Naval Academy and soon found himself commanding a crew of about 60 on a gunboat in the South Pacific during World War II. In the process he earned three Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts.

The war over, Barnum returned to Lakeland, where his entrepreneurial streak surfaced. He and some navy buddies built a refrigerated citrus warehouse using leftover war equipment; his interest in science led him to develop low-acid Bib Orange Juice for Babies for Beech-Nut. He went on to invent Stripe toothpaste for Lever Bros. and worked on astronaut food at Salada-Shirriff-Horse, a Toronto manufacturer.

By the late 1950s Barnum was married with two daughters—which, naturally, struck him as the perfect time to pursue a career as a doctor. He started premed prep at Connecticut’s Fairfield University, then enrolled at Columbia Medical School, from which he graduated in 1964. His son, David, was born at the tail end of his residency at Greenwich Hospital in Greenwich, CT, where the family lived.

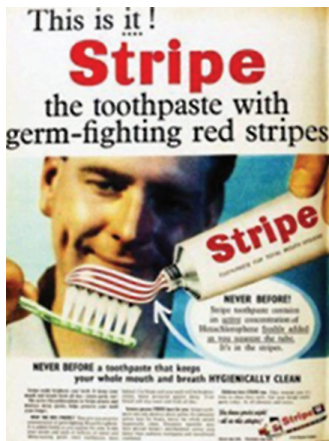
But in 1965 Barnum received a call that would turn his career around again. Henry Schachte of J. Walter Thompson invited him to spearhead the creation of Deltakos, a new subsidiary agency for healthcare advertising. In Schachte’s mind, Barnum was a rare commodity: a medical doctor with a marketing background.

MEDICAL ADVERTISING HALL OF FAME 2015

At Deltakos Barnum proved an early champion of women, until then confined to the industry's secretarial ranks. Impressed by the acumen of Dorothy Philips, who interviewed him for her dissertation on promotional trends in the pharma industry, he offered her a job at Deltakos. She rose rapidly to become senior vice president (and, after a sterling career in medical advertising, preceded her former boss into the Medical Advertising Hall of Fame).

"Barnum was enlightened for his time, extremely forward-thinking," Philips recalls.

Early in his ad career, he'd batted around a concept of educating doctors about new medical products by using media other than print ads and samples. In 1972, still at JWT, Barnum followed through by starting Synapse, a subsidiary within Deltakos designed to provide educational and training programs for clients like Eli Lilly and Johnson & Johnson. A 1972 article about Synapse in the British publication *New Scientist* quotes Barnum as saying, "There is plenty of hardware around and the problem is going to be the software. We propose to take the leadership in providing it." That proved—



Barnum was a rarity among advertising men of the day—he was both a doctor and a certified adman. He invented Stripe in the mid-1950s while working at Lever Bros.

in hindsight—to have been the birth of education marketing.

Barnum thrived at JWT, ascending to executive VP of the Affiliated Companies, which involved not just consumer advertising but also PR and event planning. His son, David, who would follow him into the business, grew up hanging around the JWT art department in the Graybar Building on Lexington Avenue. His memories of those *Mad Men* days include his dad's three-martini lunches (though Jim's drink was a sweet Manhattan on the rocks) and lots of cigarettes.

But when Schachte retired as chairman from JWT, in 1974, a succession battle loomed. Barnum, third in line, decided to strike out on his own by starting Barnum Communications. The new company, based at 500 Fifth Avenue, soon became a top-ten healthcare advertising agency.

In those days, pharma ads typically ran only in medical journals aimed at doctors and pharmacists. But Barnum realized that promoting new products through PR and the media would allow manufacturers to reach out directly to consumers. When patients heard about a new drug on the market, they could "ask their physician" to prescribe it.

Barnum also introduced the use of illustrations to marketing materials. When asked which campaigns made his father especially proud, David (now chief creative officer at digital agency Wasabi Rabbit)

Barnum spearheaded the advertising of pharma products in consumer magazines, reaching out directly to consumers who might otherwise have had no way of learning about—or asking their doctor for—a product or service

suggests Catapres, a hypertension product with lavishly illustrated ads. He also cites the Medaenas series of coffee-table books created for Boehringer Ingelheim, in which licensed work by artists like Rodin, Whistler and Monet were interspersed with doctor-targeted advertising.

Philips joined Barnum Communications in 1979, where she eventually became president/account supervisor. She recalls with pride the inclusive marketing campaign developed to introduce Bio-Dynamics' Chemstrip bG, the first home-monitoring device for diabetics to test their own blood sugar levels.

"Our market research showed that doctors were reluctant to let patients test themselves," Philips recalls. So in addition to advertising and sales and promotional materials, she and Barnum devised an extensive PR program that included minisymposia to educate doctors, allowing them to sample the product so they could see that patients could handle the tests themselves. "That was an exciting introduction," says Philips. "It was the beginning of education programs for diabetics."

Chemstrip bG was also the first pharma product to be advertised in a consumer magazine, Philips says. "In the 1980s, we were doing lots of things that later became very common. We were a good combo: I had a strong background in market research and Jim was the super salesman of the world."

To answer the next logical question: Yes, Barnum was indeed a descendant of P. T. Barnum, of Barnum & Bailey fame. "Pop was a showman," says David. "He enjoyed public speaking very much. He had no problem taking the stage." As one family story goes, the Barnums were attending a society wedding where the ceremony was unaccountably delayed. "Finally, Pop walked up to the altar and announced, 'You're probably wondering why I called you all here today.'" He proceeded to entertain the crowd until the hitch was resolved (apparently, the priest was drunk).

Barnum retired from the Naval Reserves with the rank of rear admiral. He was a longtime supporter of the Wilton Playshop, a nonprofit musical theater in Connecticut. Through it all, he didn't neglect his medical license: As on-call physician at JWT, he once saved a woman who was shot in an attempted payroll robbery. He also did pro bono work at Greenwich Hospital and at Columbia, where he was an adjunct professor of internal medicine.

Sadly, Barnum met an untimely death from cancer at age 68, in 1989. He is remembered by his wife, Barbara, daughters Elizabeth and Shauna, son David, and four grandchildren. ■

