

Barbara Casino and the Return to Marriage

During trips to my lawyer's office, I met Barbara Casino—a sharp attorney who wanted nothing to do with me at first. She'd heard the stories: the girlfriends, But I was ready to settle down. We had a whirlwind romance, flying around California and Nevada, mixing business with pleasure. By **1983**, we were married. Barbara helped me dissolve seventeen partnerships and launched her own law firm. Barbara's sharp mind and steady hand gave me the confidence to leave behind some of my prior chaotic decisions. I opened a new office in North County San Diego, and together we built something solid.

Radios referrals and reinventions X XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

I opened an office in Oceanside. That's where I met Jane Vanegeren, who started as a telephone solicitor and became the office manager. I was settled, married, and focused. The office grew fast—seven trucks by **1984**. That year, the Olympics were held in Los Angeles. Motorola had developed a new technology: a police radio System that was way bigger than just a local antenna at the police station. These radios were operating from a mountain top 100 miles away and covered most of The Los Angeles basin including Orange County. I called Motorola and ask for my friend that had installed the Telephone in my car the San Francisco Bay Area in 1971 12 years earlier. Terrific as circumstances sometimes are he had moved to San Diego, and I got his local number. He was still working that side of the business for Motorola and told me that the radios that were used at the Olympics were boxed up and that nobody had made an offer on them. I told him I was in so give me a good price and he did. I bought those Olympic used radios for half price had them shipped to San Diego and installed them in my trucks. I had a fully rounded idea on how I would use my phone room with a base station radio dispatch in my office. I would check the trucks in and out of every job and keep track of the charges as they went. I could put emergency services added onto every truck every day and tie my entire operation together. It worked like a dream.

It was more than 15 years later that my competition started putting radios in their trucks, that's how far ahead of everybody I was. I was the first business company in Southern California to have radios in trucks. I hired a new person for my office named Fritz Medor. He had just gotten out of the Marine Corps and was looking for a job. I hired him to type all of our customers into a new database. Texas Instrument had just started selling a new 16 kilobyte computer. I immediately had a dream, putting my customers in a database where I could sort them more easily. I used the databases and my telephone room to build the daily routes. The technicians could call in when they had a problem or a cancelation, and the phone room could immediately give them another job in the same neighborhood. Our big problem at the time was having a truck go out with 12 to 15 jobs and come back with

only 8 of them finished because of dogs in the yard or customers not home or just something coming up. This made our trucks almost 80% more profitable the first week I established a dispatch and put the radios in. No more waiting until night to hear about cancellations. Drivers could call in, and our phone room could sell another job immediately. I built a dispatch system, and profits nearly tripled overnight. The field techs loved them, the office loved them, and the excitement of running a business that way fueled positive energy throughout our whole company. We didn't slow down for years to come. We thought we were a family business before but with that tied together we became a close-knit family business with everybody trying really hard to bring in the most money possible every day. The best upgrade that would ever hit the business. Building, Bonding: The Joys of a Life Well-Lived.

Jane's Bold Move and a New Growth Strategy In **1985** vXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

I noticed a dip in regular service enrollments. I sat down with Jane Vanegeren, my Oceanside office manager, and asked her to help me figure it out. Within weeks, our numbers soared higher than ever. "What did you do?" I asked. "Nothing," she said. "I just assumed our new customers wanted regular service and signed them up automatically." Only a few customers complained, and when they did, she refunded them immediately. Funny thing—many came back, realizing our service was better than they had imagined. I couldn't condone the method, but I couldn't deny the results. So, I added a follow-up call a week after the initial service, congratulating customers and explaining the benefits. It worked. We began offering referral rewards, and soon we broke customer records. Business growth was phenomenal in **1986** XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

We had outgrown the office and started looking for a larger building. With the business growing so fast I became concerned about how to train new technicians. I didn't want my business to get sloppy; I wanted to make sure that we treated our customers with 100% professionalism and that service technicians had the knowledge to perform a perfect service. Included in a perfect service is safety, we were spraying poison insecticide on customers' home landscapes. Handling these poisons requires technicians to have state licenses and be specialists in their applications.

I hired a videographer to tape how to do perfect applications using my own technicians in the tapes. I also had him video how to use every piece of safety equipment required. My timing was impeccable as I was finishing the videos on all of the safety equipment the Department of Agriculture who governs pesticide applications came out with requirements on companies training their technicians properly. I wanted to do the right thing for the industry, so I put those videos up for sale to other pest control companies to help them

Comply with the state regulations. They sold like hotcakes across the United States not only to pest control companies but 35 of the Department of Agriculture's in other states used my videos to train their inspectors. The best part however was, because my company employees were involved in the production of these tapes, my Corky's employees became thought of as among the most professional technicians in the industry. Other companies began head hunting by employees. I had to raise the pay on my employees and change some of the ways that I paid them, so they were also among the highest paid employees in the industry. Still other companies did persist and did cause me some agony hiring someone that I spent a lot of time training.

I developed a little higher tool in my last interview before actually hiring someone. I wore a Corky's hat for the last interview and when I was ready to hire them, I would say. I want you to feel like you're me when you deal with customers. I want the customer to feel like you know your job and are highly competent at it. So, here's my hat for you to wear because you do represent me when you're in front of the customer.

We had meetings once quarterly where we gave out special bonuses on sales and customer services and whatever we could think of to bring out positive feelings in the business. At those meetings we always had someone come in and do a training class on the latest techniques or latest pesticides or latest safety. California requires continuing education, and, in these classes, we give enough points so that all of the licenses can be renewed. We just wanted to have fun. Everything was positive.

The company's expansion was unwavering at around 30% per year. This caused me to write a series of training manuals, 8 of them, some in different states to train technicians on how to do their job and to pass their state examinations. We used our own in-house printing presses to produce and design them. We sold them through the company we bought our chemistry from. They sold for \$65 and we got \$35. We sold about 45,000 copies before we stopped. Some of the books are on corkymizer.com

From University City to Del Mar to Rancho Santa Fe

☞ A Funeral Full of Laughter My father died in **1986** at 81, I was 45

At his funeral, my friends Jerry Clark, Danny Messenger and I stood around his open casket, They started talking about all the pranks that he played on us when we were kids. We started laughing and then bringing up more of them, we couldn't stop laughing about all the pranks. It was the most joyful funeral I've ever attended. He would have loved it.

Barbara and I were living in her house in University City, but I wanted more space—more land, fewer neighbors. We found a beautiful home in Del Mar with an ocean view, but it still wasn't enough. We bought a 2.2-acre lot in Fairbanks Ranch of Rancho Santa Fe and

designed a house. Once the plans were done, we realized it was too big—ten bathrooms and no plans for a family. Three months later, our friends finished another house in Del Mar, across from the polo fields. We fell in love and bought it. We traded the Rancho Santa Fe lot for a 5,000-square-foot building in San Marcos. Problems are solved. It was Christmas **1987**. We organized the moves, handed off the plans, and flew to Hawaii to celebrate. When we returned, we walked into our new home—where I'd live for the next 24 years and our new office building which we sold in 2022 35 years later. She also got me a Christmas present that year, although I think I paid for this one.

XXXXXXXXXXXXphoto of Spartan XX

Valentine, Toro, and the Joy of Golden Retrievers XXlots of dog photos XXXXXXXXXXXXX

Our golden retrievers, Valentine and Toro, were pure joy. We'd take them to the beach, where they'd dive headfirst into the waves and swim underwater. Valentine popped up quickly; Toro stayed down so long I worried I'd have to rescue him.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Loss of Golden Retriever photos plus diving dog

XXXXXXXXXXXX After Toro died of cancer, Valentine became my daily companion. He rode with me to work every day. Over the years, I had three more golden retrievers. All five died of cancer, usually between ages 10 and 12. Valentine lived the longest—15 years.



Blackjack, Travel, and Settling DownXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

I taught Barbara how to play blackjack, and we traveled often—Las Vegas, foreign countries, and everywhere in between. You can read more in my blackjack book at corkymizer.com.

Business never sleeps XX

Business stays in your mind 24 hours a day and there's no getting away from it. I used hobbies to distract my mind on interesting ventures to keep balanced, some expensive, some enlightening. I could take a vacation from business in my mind. I was interested in astronomy for a long time and bought a rather expensive computerized telescope that I set up in my backyard. It was wonderful, I could see down in the canyons on the moon, and I could actually see between the rings on the planet Saturn which was astonishing to bring up and have guests look through it and see it floating through the sky. We took it up the mountain with a group of people and watched Shoemaker- Livi crash into Jupiter live. We traveled around the country from Tucson, Hawaii and the mountaintops around San Diego.

We arranged with universities to let us look through their telescopes. I have a lot of wonderful memories.

I always had large rose gardens which I still do today. Besides looking at the flowers and photographing them I decided to make potpourri. I bought oils, made my own scents and set up a special microwave with silica to take the moisture out of the petals and make them last for months with perfumed scents I put in them. I had much fun. On a trip to Venice, Italy we explored the island of (Blank) where they produce Venetian glass. I bought several items, one of which was a large, beautiful bowl to put my potpourri in. Even though we agreed it was mine in the divorce, she refused to give it to me, along with a coined picture that she had given me for my birthday.

Commodities, Cameras, and Realizations

I started commodities trading in **1989**. I installed antennas on the building, set up ten TVs, and tracked everything—orange juice, crude oil, currencies, pork bellies, soybeans. I had a direct line to the floor at the Chicago Board of Trade. John Turner was a currency trader, and I traded Japanese yen, Swiss francs and German marks with him. We made a huge amount of money on the German Marks when East Berlin and the Wall fell. I traded with him off and on throughout the years until he left the business for a while. More about him later on in the book. After eight years, I did the math: I was making about 25 cents an hour. I made a lot of money, lost a lot of money, and finally shut it down. I gave away the TVs and disconnected the antennas.

Skiing the world XX

We skied together a lot trying to take three or four ski trips each year. Many times, we'd incorporate ski trips and casino gambling. I was invited to many of the casinos High Roller New Year's Eve parties. The one we mostly went to was Harvey's Lake Tahoe where we skied Heavenly Valley in the daytime and played in the casinos at night. Harvey's gave us the greatest suite with a full dining room overlooking the lake where we could have our ski buddies over for nightly dinners.

Europe is full of gambling casinos, and we took advantage of it between France, Austria and Germany while skiing the wonderful slopes of the Alps. We also skied the slopes of the Rockies in western Canada, Whistler Blackcomb, Lake Louise, Banff, and Nakiska.

Taekwondo and the Master's Belt Photo of

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Taekwondo and the Pacifist Paradox Living as a pacifist isn't easy—especially when people know you're a 4th Dan Black Belt in Taekwondo. Most folks who've met me wouldn't peg me as someone committed to peace, but I've spent 22 years training under Kay Bae Chun, the chief of bodyguards for the President of South Korea and the highest-ranking Taekwondo Grandmaster in the world. Grand Master Chun wasn't just a teacher—he was family. We shared a birthday: February 8th. He was born in 1936, five years before me, and also believed deeply in the philosophy of nonviolence. Despite being able to inflict harm with surgical precision, we both practiced restraint. That's what martial arts teaches you: not just how to defend, but how to disarm a conflict through the presence of heart and clarity of mind.

Photo of trophies

I ran Taekwondo tournaments across San Diego County for Grand Master Chun. Through these events, I met Grandmasters from around the world—men of unimaginable skill and warmth. I remember one in particular: he bowed in front of me, placed a cigarette between my lips, then spun into a kick so fast and controlled that the cigarette was split in two. Half remained dangling from my mouth as if suspended in time. It wasn't clenched in my teeth—it simply hung there, broken in two by the speed of his foot. Master Chun gave me temporary master status to access national tournaments and always introduced me as his best friend. I earned my third Dan belt through sweat and grit, though part of me wonders whether it was granted out of affection. By then I was in my 60s, feeling the wear of time.

These days, if I hit the mat, I'm not sure I'd get back up. NOW! My hands are riddled with arthritis from years of breaking boards and bricks. **I often ask myself: how smart was all of that, really?** My journey into martial arts began with the humble goal of earning a brown belt. Life, it seems, had other plans. 🧘 My last physical fight was in high school. A kid kept pestering me and wouldn't stop, so I finally let him have it. But my friend and fellow athlete, Darrel VanVleet, made sure I paid the price—he took me down, embarrassed me, and taught me I should've walked away. He was right. Even if I could've overpowered that kid, the real strength would've been in restraint. I'm not sure Darrel ever forgave me, but I've always loved his soul. Someday, I hope to tell him that. He's partly responsible for me becoming a pacifist.

 Wanting to understand the roots of Taekwondo, Master Chun found me translated books that traced Taekwondo origin. It began around 3500 BCE, grew into form by 2700 BCE, and by 1700 BCE, Taekwondo became crucial for survival. The core philosophies stemmed from deep China, where Taekwondo was originally known as Takeyon. Back then, Korea's peninsula and parts of China would host gatherings—not just for games and martial contests—but as civic summits where villages exchanged knowledge on sanitation, food preparation, and protection strategies. Martial arts competitions helped towns build police forces and defend themselves against rising bands of outlaws.  Taekwondo was never just about kicks and blocks—it was about community, wisdom, and peace under pressure. That's the legacy Master Chun lived, and one I've tried to carry with me.

I delved deeper into Taekwondo's history; I was invited to present my research at a major martial arts convention in Los Angeles. The hall was packed with practitioners from around the world—many of the very Grandmasters I had admired from afar. It was surreal to stand before them and share what I'd learned. Afterwards, several approached me, shook my hand, and thanked me for honoring the roots of our discipline. That kind of respect meant more than any belt ever could.

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🌐 Grandmasters, Rolls Royce's, and the Discipline of Thought.XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

One San Diego tournament stands out among the rest. Held on a platform in the center of a football field, it attracted top-tier athletes from across the globe. The President of the Olympic Taekwondo Association—also Korea’s ambassador to Great Britain—was in town,

reunited with his childhood friend, Grandmaster Chun. I had my Rolls Royce Phantom parked beside the stands and brought Master Chun directly into the event in true style. ❏ The Russian champions and their families spotted the car and crowded around it, awestruck. For many, it was the first time they'd ever seen a Phantom up close. I opened the doors, let them sit inside, and watched their eyes light up. Some told me it was one of the greatest experiences of their lives. That moment—small and spontaneous—felt like a cross-cultural celebration as much as the tournament itself. Later that day,

I drove the Grandmaster and the ambassador to the airport. It was a quiet, reflective ride. Grandmaster Chun had started Taekwondo when he was just eight years old, in the very first class after Korea regained its independence following WWII and the Korean War. Because of the seniority system, he eventually became the highest-ranking Taekwondo Grandmaster in the world. He wasn't jovial—his humor was dry and subtle—but when he shared stories, they came wrapped in wisdom. 🕯

❏ Near the end of his life, when he fell ill, he asked me not to visit again. He didn't want me to see him in that state. A few weeks later, he passed. On the day of his funeral, my body revolted—I was physically overwhelmed with grief and couldn't leave the house. I spilled out liquids from all parts of my body. I regret not being there, but I never stopped loving him. He was more than a mentor; at that time, he was my closest friend. I still keep in touch with a few classmates, though I'm older than most of them now. Simon Lee, with the cleanest form in class, He now lives in Hong Kong. I visited him once and had dinner with his wife. Another standout was Dusko Panovich, who dreamed of Olympic glory—but life has its costs, and dreams often need sponsors. He was a star, through and through. Morgan Hege, another dear friend, founded an insurance company. I bought health coverage for my business from him for a decade. He helped me earn my third Dan, often taking hits so I could practice throws and techniques. When Grandmaster was away, Morgan became our teacher. His patience and skill made him a pillar in our class. Taekwondo isn't just movement—it's mental clarity. It's a discipline of thought. Quick decisions are important, but so is lasting discernment. One of the deepest lessons I've learned is that this art should never be used unless it is truly necessary. To this day, I've never had to. Yet I still train—Bob, my punching dummy, gets regular attention. I review my forms not for mastery, but for movement. I know Master Chun would've smiled knowing I've kept the fire alive. There were many great martial artists that came out of grad master's classes. I couldn't possibly keep track of many of them now, but I've included a bunch of pictures for you to see. Morgan and I spoke last week—we're planning breakfast or lunch soon. These friendships, forged on mats and built over decades, are among the great treasures of my life.

Golf, Friendship, and the Simple Joys

Grandmaster Chun and I became close friends. We had lunch daily at the “Fish Market” in San Marcos—salmon, coleslaw, vegetables, and a cup of red chowder. We played golf twice a week, joined by my chemical supplier friend Art Guzman most of the time, and Barbara on Sundays. Many times, after I golf on Sundays we would go to, guess where, the Fish Market for dinner, we would add steamed mussels as hors d'oeuvre and then the same dinner choice, lots of salmon oil to keep me healthy. Art and Grandmaster Chun were solid golfers. They let me tee up in the fairway until I could hit the ground. I loved being outside but never cared about my score. I never learned to manage my game, and I never got angry when I missed a shot. I luckily shot in the 80s once or twice over a long period of time; my normal score was 95 or above but, in the end, rarely over 100. We played everywhere—Hawaii, Carmel-by-the-Sea, Torrey Pines, and every course in San Diego County. At one point, I belonged to four country clubs. Eventually, I narrowed it down to Fairbanks and Twin Oaks. I still keep in touch with Art Guzman who lives in the Las Vegas area. Except for Dale Stevens and Kent McCulloch Art and his wife Jackie are my oldest friends. I don't get together with them often enough, but we do keep in touch with the phone. By then, I was earning a couple million dollars a year from Corky's Pest Control. My blackjack vacation didn't cost me a dime. I had more money than I could spend. The parties at Corky and Barbara's house

The Art of Living and Listening to music. I love classical piano music and listen to it constantly on my computer's in my car and just play it as background music in the house From the television. Though I'd taken piano lessons as a child, I never advanced. Barbara, however, was a talented amateur pianist, especially fond of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. Because I loved piano music, I bought a Yamaha baby grand that could play itself—\$26,000, and worth every penny.

I dreamed of hosting dinner parties with live music. I contacted the San Diego Symphony and hired their pianist to perform Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue at our first event. She agreed to play selections from his early and late career, narrating his story as she performed. We invited ten classical music-loving friends, dressed in tuxedos. Barbara cooked an exquisite meal. I served Mumm's Extra Dry champagne, chilled to perfection. The evening was unforgettable—and we hosted three more like it: Beethoven, Bach, and Chopin. After two years, our pianist bowed out—still performing full-time with the Symphony; she was simply worn out.

New Year's Eve and the Orangutan Bartender XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Barbara pivoted to planning a New Year's Eve Partys. We invited 150 guests. She still insisted on cooking, so we bought heated serving platters and hired servers, bartenders,

The Limo Life In 2001

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Barbara and I had season tickets to the Padres baseball games for many many years at Qualcomm Stadium. We continued when they built Petco Park and moved in 2004. I threw out the first pitch to the game on three different occasions after I threw two of them in the dirt the future Hall of Famer Trevor Hoffman told me Corky, do you think this time you could throw the ball and not put it in the dirt. Randy Jones, the Hall of Famer, is a friend of mine, and Scott Kaplan drove me over to his house where they both coached me on throwing the ball. I know when I was young, I was a catcher and could throw to second base from my knees but when you're older it doesn't work that way. Well, I threw it in the dirt a third and last time. Trevor just shook his head. In 2004, I hired Glenn Erath to write a jingle for Corky's Pest Control. It was twangy, and everyone said it wouldn't work. I disagreed—and ran it anyway. It became iconic. People all over town sang it. The phones rang off the hook. We had 20 people answering calls and still couldn't keep up. That year, our business volume jumped to 35%. We had fallen to a steady 20% a year, and I wanted to try to do something to boost it back to 30%.

We advertised at Padres games, on radio talk shows, where I met Scott Kaplan and on TV—surrounding the team with Corky’s branding. We’d been season ticket holders for 20 years, watching Tony Gwynn’s career from the start. I believed in the Padres, and I believed in our brand. The years that followed dropped back down to around 20% growth a year, but that was a lot with the size of business that I had developed. I can't say enough good things about General Motors and the time that I worked there. It's not just that they sent me to GMI for training, but They taught me how to fit everything together in production. That also works in any kind of business that you organize. One thing I did was to take all of the middle supervision out of my business. With the computers that I put in during 1984. I didn't need middle supervision as the computers took their place and pumped out reports for me that I could look at in five minutes every day. So, my business grew up with the idea that each person was responsible for their own work and that report landed on my desk every morning for each person working for me. That included the office staff. The computer kept track of how many people they called every day, how long they were on the phone, and how many jobs they sold. We had one supervisor sitting in the middle of the office, doing many things to help each other out throughout the day, some with organized hand signals, believe it. It was a well-oiled operating machine dedicated to servicing customers.

The Power of Great People Over the years

I have had incredible assistants. Sue Gum was my first, and she showed me how transformative a great assistant could be. Everyone loved her. When she left, Francesca Bautista stepped in. Francesca was organized, professional, and quietly brilliant. Within two years, she was running the whole place. Our general manager, Nancy Scheibel, had been hired externally. Smart, composed, and a natural leader, she had a bumper sticker that read, “Don’t piss off the redhead.” The truth was that you couldn’t. Nancy gracefully stepped back as Francesca took the reins. No drama—just mutual respect. Nancy’s husband retired, and they spent more time at their mountain cabin in Julian. I still consider her one of the most levelheaded women I’ve ever met, and we keep in touch.

The End of another Marriage, the Start of a New Chapter

Barbara and I separated on December 5, 2009, after 26 years of marriage. We accused each other of things—both wrong. The relationship had simply worn out. She told me she hated my guts. I had no answer. She later accused me of having an affair, which was ridiculous. Though separated, Barbara and I didn’t divorce for another 13 years. We argued constantly. Even now, we’re waiting for \$322,000 in income—neither of us fighting over it,

just waiting. We will probably soon give in and forget about it as it is just hectic to fight over. After 16 years of battle, I'm not sure what it'll feel like to have nothing left to argue about.

End of Life 4

I moved in with a widowed friend Kelly Mikules and lived there for seven years, until he passed away from Parkinson's. Kelly was a builder of specialty homes on rivers in southern United States. He also owned racehorses which he ran at Del Mar Racetrack.



















