

The Major Catalyst

Sumner Redstone

Motivated by EXC

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Some say there are two sides to Sumner Redstone. One is the fierce competitor, the underdog from a working-class family who, through intellect and iron will, triumphed over his foes to build a global media empire. The boy from

a Boston tenement who—through hard work, business acumen, and sheer willpower—became the controlling shareholder and executive chairman of Viacom and CBS Corporation. “I went through my life gradually winning whatever I wanted,” he says. His assets encompass CBS, Paramount Pictures, Comedy Central, and MTV Networks. At 84 years old, Redstone, quite simply, is one of the wealthiest and most influential men in the world.

But then there is the other Sumner Redstone, the philanthropist whose focus is more about giving back than taking over. Surprisingly, he explains that he cares not a fig about money. “I realize that sounds strange coming from someone in a position of wealth, but money is really only the report card on what you accomplish,” he says in his memoir, *A Passion to Win*, written with Peter Knobler. If that is the case, then Sumner’s latest accomplishments deserve top marks.

Last April, Redstone pledged \$35 million to Cedars-Sinai to fund the Sumner Redstone Prostate Cancer Research Program. His gift will support a six-year study focused on understanding the biochemistry of prostate cancer, a disease that will kill almost 30,000 men in the U.S. this year. It will spur the development of a new class of drugs called molecularly targeted therapeutics. These drugs attack cancer cells but not healthy cells. They are less toxic to patients. “The gift from Mr. Redstone really is transformative,” says medical oncologist David Agus, MD, research director of the Louis Warschaw Prostate

Cancer Center at Cedars-Sinai’s Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute, and director of the Spielberg Family Center for Applied Proteomics. “We now have

the opportunity for more shots on goal, more drugs to contain the disease. This, basically overnight, allows us to expand our repertoire, both in the lab and in the clinic, bringing hope and optimism to our patients.”

Driving up to the Redstones’ house, high above Beverly Hills and the hiking trails of Franklin Canyon, a visitor is soon charmed by the tranquil setting. Just on the other side of the guardhouse, two deer, perhaps fawns, graze on manicured lawns without fear as if they were members of this protected community. More gates open to reveal a driveway and then a shock of color: a water garden filled with aquatic marigolds and dozens of koi, their fins of orange, black, red, and white flashing like ornaments in the sun. They dart beneath the water lilies.

Far inside the residence, away from the indoor pool and across from the screening room, sits Sumner Redstone in a soft chair. This is his study where he spends hours on the phone with those who manage his companies and his investments. On his right are aquariums teeming with brightly colored saltwater fish. “I find them mesmerizing,” he says.

There is a serenity to Sumner Redstone. His tone is thoughtful, earnest. “I’ve accomplished many things in my life, but nothing made me feel as good as when I gave away this money,” he says. “The idea of being able to have an effect on the lives of so many human beings, to help with the research and the discovery of drugs for a treatment and cure, is very appealing to me.”

In 2003, during a trip to Boston, Redstone was diagnosed with an aggressive form of prostate cancer,

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the disease his father had battled. He was a newlywed then, married just one year to his second wife, Paula Fortunato. As they returned home to Beverly Hills, Redstone knew he needed facts, and quickly. Michael Milken, a good friend, also a prostate cancer survivor and the head of the largest prostate cancer research foundation in the country, came over to the house. He brought with him Dr. Agus and Stuart Holden, MD, a specialist in urological oncology and medical director of the Louis Warschaw Prostate Cancer Center at Cedars-Sinai. UCLA clinical nutritionist David Heber, MD, PhD, joined them as well.

"It definitely was an emotional evening," recalls Dr. Agus. "But Mr. Redstone does what he always does in his business world: He gathered all the information. He is the captain of the ship. So he went through the data and discussed it in remarkable detail. He had quickly become an expert and asked all of us for our opinions. Together we came up with an approach."

The plan included exhausting daily radiation treatments with Dr. Chris Rose, a radiation therapist. "He intimidates a lot of people, but his wife, Paula, was the one who made sure that every person involved in his care, from the technician to the blood-draw person to the nurse, felt comfortable," says Dr. Agus. She was the one telling the jokes and lightening the spirit of the room."

As Redstone relives those moments, he also speaks of Paula and his expression changes. His eyes soften. "We were always laughing, always optimistic that I would survive," he says. "She helped me undress and dress for radiation every day." He pauses. "These are the things you remember."

Redstone is now cancer free. "What motivated me to give the money was that I have profited so much from the work of the hospital," he says. "I attribute my recovery to Cedars-Sinai and to Dr. Agus and the entire team."

This was not the first time Redstone faced death. In 1979 he was burned in a catastrophic fire at a

Boston hotel. Asleep in his room, he woke up and smelled smoke. Flames shot into his room and up his legs, searing his flesh. He was three floors up with no way to escape except through a window. Somehow he opened it and climbed out. The fire then engulfed his right hand and arm as he hung onto the windowsill. After what seemed like an eternity, firefighters arrived and saved him.

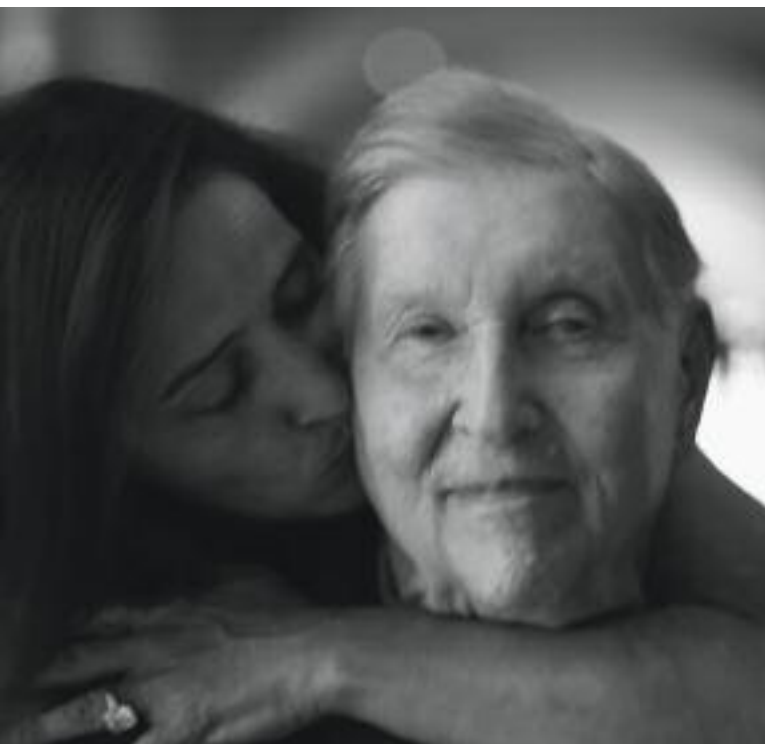
He had suffered third-degree burns over 45 percent of his body. His right hand had been almost severed from his arm. "My family was told I would die that night," says Redstone, recalling the unbearable pain. For months he remained in the Burn Center at Massachusetts General Hospital. He endured five operations, numerous skin grafts, and hours of rehabilitation to learn to walk again. But he survived.

"The hotel had violated every fire law," says Redstone. "I sued them and got a settlement of \$7 million. I gave it all to Massachusetts General Hospital."

When Redstone gave \$35 million to Cedars-Sinai, he also committed another \$35 million to Massachusetts General Hospital. He had previously established the Sumner M. Redstone Burn Center there in the early 1980s. He has given the same amount to FasterCures/The Center for Accelerating Medical Solutions. Michael Milken chairs the organization, which works to quicken the development of treatments for various cancers, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases.

That totals an astounding \$105 million for the three organizations combined. "Generally, I don't talk about what I give," says Redstone. "But this was so big that it was impossible to keep quiet. Also, I hoped that by making these very large gifts and having them publicized, they would encourage other people to do what I did."

Then, Redstone gave a \$500,000 grant to the



Cambodian Children's Fund. The program provides shelter, food, and a range of health and educational services to orphans in Cambodia's capitol city of Phnom Penh. "These kids are abandoned by their parents. They live in dumps, scrounging for food," he says. He also paid for one of the children to have surgery at Cedars-Sinai last June to correct a spinal deformity. "She has been here many times, he says of the 13-year-old. She is the sweetest, nicest little child you ever met." Robert M. Bernstein, MD, director of Pediatric Orthopedics, performed the high-risk procedure. The girl is doing well.

Sumner Redstone is looking for Paula. He passes a credenza near the front door. On display are several personal photos. Many are sweet, candid shots of family and friends laughing or mugging for the camera, the kind you might see in any family album. In the center is a commemorative etched-glass plaque, a gift of appreciation from Cedars-Sinai. It quotes Redstone: "With the right resources in the right hands, we can ... literally change the world."

"There you are," he says. Paula is sitting on the living room sofa, chatting with guests. "Hi Puppy," she says, beaming at him. "Hungry? I could make you some pasta." "Naw," he says. Paula continues her story of how they met and fell in love. Redstone stands there listening and grinning. Then with a wave of the back of his hand, he moves on toward the kitchen down the hall. On the surface, the contrasts are apparent. He is gentlemanly,

reserved, and about 40 years her senior. She is petite and athletic, down-to-earth, and open. He wears slacks and sports jackets. She dashes through the house in tank tops, white eyelet jeans, and sneakers without shoelaces. Yet they are inseparable. Redstone rarely goes anywhere without her. "We're kind of sappy," she says.

Their involvement with Cedars-Sinai is also a joint affair. "We are blessed with more than anybody can imagine. If we don't share what we have, then we're big fat jerks," she says. "I told Sumner, I don't want to be buried with it. I just want to be buried with you."

They met on a blind date. One of Redstone's brokers at Bear Stearns arranged it along with another Bear Stearns executive whose wife was friends with Paula, a third-grade public schoolteacher in New York City's Upper East Side. At first, Paula did not want to go. Still single, she had dated enough losers. She had report cards to grade, and who exactly was this Sumner Redstone? Paula had never heard of him or Viacom. "Why would I?" she asks. "I was not in that business." She went reluctantly, stopping at an ATM on her way to the restaurant in case she got stuck with the check.

Sumner Redstone surprised her. "He was charming and attentive," she says. "Then we started dating and have been together ever since." Redstone would pick her up from school Friday afternoons in his Town Car—she made him park two blocks away. "I told him, you may not park in front of the school. I cannot have my reputation infringed by Big Cheese. And he was always extremely respectful of my job." Paula refused to miss a single day of school, even as they traveled back and forth from New York City to Los Angeles every weekend.

Even now, six years later, Paula Redstone is still devoted to her former students from P.S. 158. They send her cards. "One just got into Princeton, another got into Stuyvesant High School in New York City [well-known for science and math]." She jumps up from the sofa and does a little jig. "Wow!" she says, raising her fist in victory.

Looking for her husband, she finds him in the hallway. They stand in front of her wedding gift to him, an oil painting. It is a rural field scene of Provence, France, a scene that is quiet and peaceful. She painted it from a postcard. They exchange a glance, something unspoken there ... Perhaps it is contentment. ■