

# “Man of the Hour”

87 years old, Jack Cook is nobody's fool. As a self-made, successful businessman, his life of struggle to succeed is exemplary - to say the least - as outlined below.

Jack's life began in a \$27 per month rental apartment in a South Bronx tenement with only his mother to support a family that included him, his brother, and two sisters, his father having died when he was only four months old.

She did this by working as a chambermaid to the merchant businessmen that were located in the same neighborhood. At age seven, after school, Jack went to work and was paid 15 cents per day to store shoeboxes for the shoe store that existed under the building in which he lived, as well as watching over the outdoor shoe bins on the sidewalk.

More than that, young Jack also delivered groceries for tips for the grocery store across the street in a little wagon he had built. He proudly brought the money home to his equally hardworking mother. That just about set the tone for the rest of his life, being the only member of the family, and the whole neighborhood for that matter, to attend and graduate from college.

During this time, Jack worked every summer in the Sullivan County Borscht Belt as a bellhop, busboy, waiter, and even headwaiter. His summer earnings enabled him to attend Syracuse University where he also worked as a cook (for room and board) in various fraternities and sororities. Also during this time, he met and courted a children's counselor from one of the hotels that would, one day, become his wife. They raised a son and daughter and have two grand children.

Upon graduation from Syracuse, Jack was fortunate enough to obtain a job



with IBM as a salesman at a time when IBM was restricting personnel acquisitions and was assigned to the Syracuse office. After a year, he was drafted and served two years with the Army's 4th Regimental Combat Team and the 20th Combat Engineers. Upon discharge from the military, he returned to IBM and was assigned to a Manhattan office as a sales rep. After two years on quota, he was promoted to the Advanced System Development Division in Yorktown Heights. He spent almost 8 years working there on a number

of programs in the hospital and medical arena. After IBM, Jack moved on and had a number of important corporate positions in three other companies.

After several years of retirement boredom, Jack came back into the working world and became a banquet chef at a leading Hudson River restaurant and catering establishment in the Peekskill area. He did that for four years!

So, to say that Jack Cook brought himself up by his bootstraps is an understatement, indeed!