

The Philip Morris Program
in

Business + Society

at
Baruch College

The Business Self

THE RECOVERY OF PUBLIC ESTEEM

Benjamin DeMott

Series Foreword

FROM its inception, I have been deeply honored by this lecture series exploring the relationships between business and society in a democracy. Baruch College has been a perfect place for such a series. Baruch has never kept either society or business at a distance. It has welcomed students from all parts of this city—and now from around the world; it insists that they master the liberal arts as well as technical and professional skills; and it has successfully fostered strong programs that build bridges between the academic disciplines. In this tradition the lecture series was a college-wide venture: it belonged to no single department and its distinguished speakers represented a broad spectrum of knowledge, experience and background.

The goal of this lecture program was to create knowledge about business and society that might be truly helpful for all of us. Our distinguished guests were challenged to raise the most difficult questions and subject them to the most skull cracking analysis.

These lectures were established to supplant nostrums with knowledge, the kind of disciplined knowledge that is more useful (even if it isn't always comforting) than the platitudes and superficialities that assault our minds and our imagination.

A number of these lectures took account of the major and rapid transformations to which American business has been subject. I have personally witnessed a good deal of this ferment since I entered the business world just after World War II. And change continues unabated. Structural changes in the economy affect, reflect

and are interwoven with large scale changes in the community. There is no such thing as a one-sided coin.

In broad terms, the link between business and society falls under the general category of corporate responsibility. Our need to better understand the broadening agenda implied by this concept lies behind this series. Corporate social responsibility has proven to be an imaginative response by our democratic capitalist system to community problems. The growth of this concept (and it must continue to grow) is a key to generating ever new energies and new approaches to our concerns as they unfold. Our capitalist democratic system will survive because of its enormous ability to adapt to change and move ahead.

The Philip Morris Lecture Series on Business and Society, as is evident in these published lectures, has lived up to its promise to probe into our economic premises and offer us new perspectives. It has without a doubt contributed to Baruch's mission to educate young people to be good citizens, and in doing so, it has educated us all.

GEORGE WEISSMAN

*Retired Chairman
Philip Morris Companies Inc.
and Chairman, Lincoln Center for
the Performing Arts*