

FROM NERD TO NABOB

HARVEY ENGLANDER W'68

Harvey Englander was not your typical carefree Hami student in the 1960s. Talking about his life at one of the many speeches he gives, Harvey says, "If there had been an award for 'Least Likely to Succeed,' I would have won it unanimously."

Harvey knows a lot about votes. He vaulted from a self-described mediocre high school student to one of California's best-known and most successful political consultants and lobbyists.

Harvey often credits Hami teachers Wayne Johnson and Bob Unruhe for stoking his interest in politics and public affairs but gives the lion's share of the credit for his success to his Los Angeles City College professor Phil Schlesinger whose Political Science 1 class project turned Englander's life around. The assignment was to get involved in a political campaign and write a paper about the experience. Englander was so enamored of what he saw that he became a student body officer at LACC, started working for a leading political consulting firm, attended CSUN for one semester, and then transferred to UCLA where he earned his B.A. Degree in Political Science.

Harvey traveled with Senator Hubert Humphrey in his presidential primary campaigns in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania "I was the schedule director for the California primary," Englander said.

Running political campaigns is a natural progression into lobbying and public affairs and Englander built successful companies that he sold -- twice -- once to a Washington DC firm and the second time to a public company. His earn-out from the last company ended in March 2005 and his plan was to semi-retire. To that end he opened a one-person consulting firm in a friend's office on the second floor of the Palm Restaurant in downtown LA. Within ninety days five clients became fourteen and potential clients kept calling.

In one weekend at his Monarch Beach weekend home, he created a unique business model for service firms. His concept worked and the firm, now known as Englander Knabe & Allen, is ranked by the Los Angeles Business Journal as the largest Los Angeles-headquartered public relations agency. Their specialty is public affairs, government relations, advocacy, crisis and litigation communications and political campaigns.

Throughout his office, one finds pictures of his family, comprised of his wife, Donna Black (a well-known environmental and land-use attorney), two sons, two stepsons and his 18-month-old grandson, Nathan, named after Harvey's father. There is also lots of golf "stuff," as he calls it. Harvey is an avid, (and he says average) golfer who is a member of nearby Hillcrest Country Club as well as two country clubs in La Quinta where he has another home. He is also very proud of his nephew, Mitchell Englander, who lived with him after Harvey's sister died and worked for him for 10 years. Mitchell was elected to the Los Angeles City Council last year.

Harvey has also become very involved in the community and serves on the Board of Directors of several educational and charitable institutions.

Harvey has come a long way since Hami High, overcoming adversity to become a Los Angeles business and community leader – and a longtime supporter of the Hami High Alumni Association.

