

A Case of Value and Versatility

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My 5-year-old daughter and I enjoy watching "The Most Extreme" together on Animal Planet, a countdown of the top 10 creatures that are the fastest, strongest, etc.

If they ever air a list of the "most extreme" NYACS volunteers, Case Marshall, Vice President of Pit Stop Convenience Stores, will be right at the top.

Case chaired the NYACS Board of Directors from 2001 to 2003. Prior to and since that term, he has served as Treasurer.

Throughout, he has been an indispensable volunteer who works quietly and constantly behind the scenes to do whatever is needed to keep NYACS moving forward.

No wonder his peers elected him this year to the New York Convenience Store Hall of Fame. At the induction ceremony May 12, fellow board member Rene Patterson noted that "Case is so actively involved in NYACS that it's almost like having another member of the staff. But he wouldn't dream of asking for a cent of compensation, or an ounce of recognition for that matter. But recognize him we must."

When NYACS relocated from Delmar to downtown Albany two years ago, Case – without being asked – volunteered his big transport truck and drove it three hours in each direction to lug all our furniture and files from the old office to the new one five miles away. He's our go-to guy on office computer issues.

At our recent annual trade show and convention, he was everywhere. He hosted a workshop, introducing the speaker, collecting evaluations and monitoring audio and temperature. On the trade show floor, he rounded up representatives of 35 companies celebrating anniversaries for a NYACS recognition ceremony. He arranged for his brother James to pick up our guest speaker at the airport; Case drove him back two days later. He brought a laptop for NYACS staff to use throughout the event. And Case's wife Mindy – every bit as energetic, versatile and dependable as he is – was on-site throughout as well, performing an endless list of volunteer tasks.

At age 30, Case Marshall was the youngest person ever elected NYACS Chairman. But his elders, like me, knew he possessed maturity beyond his years – and a rock-solid commitment to the welfare of the convenience store industry.

In his Hall of Fame acceptance speech, sans microphone and notes, Case harkened back to family dinners in the Marshall household when he was younger. Everyone took turns telling about his or her day. Mom and Dad sometimes took it a step further, asking the kids how they would have handled a particular situation that had come up at the business. Everybody offered input, and occasionally the family was asked to vote.

When first elected to the NYACS Board of Directors in his mid-20s, Case confessed that he felt unsure of his role. But after awhile, he figured out it was "just like family dinner." With each topic, each person at the table had a chance to offer perspective, and then they'd vote. He thanked his parents, Ted and Nancy, for preparing him for that opportunity.

Case then invoked what he calls the "awkward applause rule." In his early days as a public speaker, his nerves sometimes got the best of him, and he'd lose his place. So he told the audience that if during his speech they noticed any more than five seconds of silence, they should break out in applause to fill the gap, giving him time to recover. Case Marshall no longer needs awkward applause. But for his remarkable record of volunteer service to NYACS, he deserves a standing ovation.