

Eight Days Later...

As I look back throughout the years I have spent in the Securities and Investment Banking industry, I am often reminded of the many unique and memorable experiences I have encountered along the way. Not too long ago, Michael Macchiaroli from the Securities Exchange Commission was visiting our Los Angeles headquarters. He paused at the landing between floors to look at two framed documents on the wall. He turned to me with laughter, and remarked that “this would never happen today.” He commented on the timeline between letters, one of which was written by me to the SEC and the other the SEC’s response. When I think about the origin of these letters, I am brought back to the firm’s very humble beginnings.

It was the spring of 1955 and I had just graduated from the University of Cincinnati. Although I had earned my degree in Mechanical Engineering, I was fascinated with Financial Services. I saw the Securities Markets as offering endless entrepreneurial possibilities. At a young age, it was a business that would teach me that being agile and opportunistic, while always understanding risk, would often bring me and my clients’ success. With that, I decided that I wanted to start a broker/dealer business, but realized to do so; I had to obtain registration from the SEC. So there I found myself, on May 26, 1955, sitting in my fraternity house, punching away on my typewriter my first formal communication to the SEC.

I had just received a scholarship from Hughes Aircraft to continue my graduate education at UCLA. Without knowing exactly when the SEC would respond to my request for registration, I had to submit two addresses for potential return. Thus, should they have responded later than June 14th, the letter would have to find me at my new home on UCLA’s fraternity row, 535 Gayley Ave in Los Angeles, California. Instead, a letter of acceptance arrived eight days later to me at 520 Howell Ave in Cincinnati, Ohio, and marked the inception of Wedbush and Associates. At the time I didn’t think much of it, seemingly just a customary business practice to respond in a timely manner. Looking back, Mr. Macchiaroli was absolutely right, that would never happen today. Clearly the environment has changed dramatically for our business. It’s more complex, competitive, and capital-intensive than ever. But that doesn’t mean tremendous opportunities still don’t exist for Wedbush and its clients. The opportunities may not unfold as quickly as they did 62 years ago, but being nimble, opportunistic, and acting decisively on behalf of our clients will continue to payoff.