

***Lofty Pursuits: Repairing the World One Building at a Time***

Mark Richard Schuster

Brown Books Publishing Group (2010)

ISBN 9781934812730

Reviewed by Kathleen Dowdell for Reader Views (12/10)

Remarkable! One of the best autobiographical business books I have ever read. “Lofty Pursuits” is a story about Mark Schuster’s challenges in an entrepreneurial world. It’s a historical memoir that captures the spirit of hard old-fashioned work while practicing good ethical behavior, inspired by the author’s mentor and role model, his grandfather. Blending the old with the new, sustaining our ties with our heritage while planning for the future, and acting with environmental best practices are just a few key themes running through “Lofty Pursuits: Repairing the World One Building at a Time.”

As a preservationist and “green” sustainability advocate I was captivated by the author’s words “repairing the world one building at a time.” In designing and building Mosler Lofts, Seattle’s first LEED certified sustainable, high-rise, condominium building he pays tribute to his grandfather, George Mosler, while fulfilling his own “lofty pursuit” of leaving a positive impact for future generations.

As a self-proclaimed entrepreneur, businessman, and real-estate developer, Schuster’s road to success began as a young man experiencing many opportunities in the business world. Supported by his grandfather, he learned the meaning of perseverance. He never attended college. Instead, he chose action over education by starting his own business as a sophomore in high school. Never tiring of the entrepreneurial spirit he eventually formed The Schuster Group, a Seattle-based real estate investment and development group.

The Schuster Group was formed in 1989 when Schuster was just 22-years-old. The business expanded and diversified over the years to eventually become the group that built Mosler Lofts. All the excruciating details of the three years of planning and two years of construction of Mosler Lofts are captured throughout the book. As in any construction project, the deadlines, setbacks, finances, and budgets are inevitable, but Schuster shares the details of these five years work with painstaking honesty. Additionally, photos are provided of the project, from start to finish.

Schuster’s commitment to build a sustainable, high-rise residential building with spacious airy urban lofts is quite impressive. He has done a wonderful job sorting through years of memories and transforming them into this book. This is his way of providing a background that encompasses his relationship with his grandfather while applying his experience and techniques as a successful businessman. His words are straight-forward and sincere. It’s hard to believe this is his first published work.

This book would make a great addition to a library infused with architect, business, and sustainability books. His personal testimony of his progression in the business world is inspirational. I would recommend anyone starting out in business to read “Lofty Pursuits: Repairing the World One Building at a Time.” The author has a lot of practical advice as well as entrepreneurial experience that anyone can learn from.