

Trevor Beattie

My philanthropic journey

Realising value *by Trevor Beattie, Chair, Jack and Ada Beattie Foundation*

“It’s a well-worn cliché that every journey begins with a single short step, and mine was no exception. My philanthropic journey began when A Girl Called Alex stepped into my office and my life 2 years ago this week. At the time, Alexandra Taliadoros was working with the wonderful Doreen Lawrence at the Stephen Lawrence Trust. I had helped out the Trust for years, offering marketing and PR advice to a cause which had always deeply moved me. Doreen’s strength and dignity were nothing short of inspirational.

Until Alex, I’d given freely and widely to any number of random and disconnected causes. My giving had no stated goal, aim or direction: I just felt a need to right wrongs, so stepped in when it felt right. Until Alex, I didn’t know the difference between a foundation and a charity. A ragged trousered philanthropist I may not have been, but until Alex I didn’t know my Association of Charitable Foundations from my elbow.

But the more I explained to Alex what I’d been up to (when I wasn’t being wholly consumed by my career in advertising), the clearer it became. When I told her that I’d bought a bag belonging to Ms Milivina Dean, oldest



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living survivor of The Titanic, it was so that I could return it to her after the auction. Yes, Milvina was raising funds to pay for her care home, but no Lady should ever be separated from her favourite bag: It used to be called chivalry. And at aged 97, I knew she would understand my motives. (Ms Dean later left me the bag in her Will, and now it will remain forever in safe hands.) When I decided to help return ALL the able-bodied Heroes of D-Day to the beaches of Normandy to commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the Landings, it's simply because it was the right thing to do. It also turned out to be the last promise I made to my Mum before she passed away that summer.

And there was the link. My values were and are my parents' values. The Beattie family values. My journey was a journey of discovery and it was Alex who made me realise that. Together, we planned to build something very special in honour of my Mum and Dad. Something which would reflect the values of Jack and Ada, and use them to help others. This felt like nothing short of bringing my parents back to life before my eyes. It was an incredibly moving experience. Alex never met my parents, but I feel she knows them very well.

In Beattie family terms, I am but sprog Number 6 in a bumper pack of 8, so the next giant step was to explain all of this to Kev, Pat, Sheila, Dave, Theresa, Paul and Pete. Luckily for us all, my siblings embraced the idea in a heartbeat. Paul and Pete leapt at the chance to become Trustees and the dream became a reality.

Two years on and I'm utterly staggered by what we've achieved and the generosity of everyone we've encountered along the way. If this is a journey, then at times it seems that we're travelling at Warp Factor speed. The Jack And Ada Beattie Foundation has an identity, a personality. It has a rallying cry: knowing that someone is fighting your corner is half the battle won. It has the themes of Dignity, Sanctuary and Freedom at its heart. We've hosted two huge gala events. We've raised tens of thousands of pounds which has brought real change and good to people's lives. We've set up our 'Fund For The Forgotten' beneath the Jack And Ada banner, and through it we're helping Fight the Corners of the unhelped, the unheard and the overlooked.

And everyone we meet offers the same words of encouragement. *“They'd be very proud”* they say. *“Very proud of what you're doing in their name.”* And that is the single greatest compliment I'll ever receive in my life.

So thanks, Jack and Ada. And thanks, Alex. And on with the journey!”

Trevor Beattie set up BMB in 2005.

In recent years, he has become a campaigner on local issues in and around his home town of Birmingham, including a high-profile campaign to prevent a 107-year old woman being evicted from her care home, and offering a bursary for a student to attend a Media studies course at City of Birmingham University.

For further details on the Jack and Ada Beattie Foundation contact foundation director Alexandra Taliadoros, at alexandra@beattiefoundation.com

► www.beattiefoundation.com