

**Remarks by Thomas F. Rosenbaum
At the Caltech Board of Trustees Annual Meeting**

***In Introducing Benjamin M. Rosen
Recipient of the Robert A. Millikan Medal***

October 26, 2018

The philosopher Soren Kierkegaard averred:

“If I were to wish for anything, I should not wish for wealth and power, but for the passionate sense of the potential, for the eye which, ever young and ardent, sees the possible. Pleasure disappoints, possibility never. And what wine is so sparkling, what so fragrant, what so intoxicating, as possibility.”

A 1997 *Los Angeles Times* article asked about Ben and Harold Rosen, “When they’ve already changed the world, what are two brothers supposed to do as retirement looms?”

The answer: “Try to do it again.”

For those of us who have the pleasure of moving in Ben Rosen’s orbit, we soar on the wings of possibility and promise. We marvel at his breadth of interests and his embrace of reinvention, for himself and for society. There are bridges to be built between science and the arts; there are connections to be fortified between business and philanthropy. Kent Presents was both an intellectual endeavor and a statement of support for community, but most of all a labor of love by Ben and Donna, capitalizing on the myriad luminaries in their orbit. Ben’s blog, “Through Rosen-Colored Glasses,” has covered thoroughbred horse-racing, Olympic swimming, memories of Steve Jobs and the early days of Apple, art, literature, theater, criticism, science, technology. He has served on the Boards of Caltech, the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, and the New York Philharmonic.

In characteristically modest terms, Ben describes his work as “the art of applied serendipity.” It has been Caltech’s luck to be in Ben’s orbit. He has elevated Caltech as a Distinguished Alumnus, in his own words the “self-anointed evangelist of personal computers...” In 1992, *Computersworld* magazine included Ben Rosen in its list of the 25 people who had changed the world, crediting him with helping launch the modern computer industry, in part through his support of more than 100 tech startups including Compaq – where he served as Chairman for 18 years – and Lotus. He has helped mold Caltech as a Member of the Board of Trustees, as the Board Chair, as a Life Trustee, as Honorary Co-Chair of the *Break Through Campaign*, and as a thoughtful and generous philanthropist.

It has been an intoxicating journey since Ben started his first business at age 13 with a mail-order photofinishing service and earned his bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering at Caltech in 1954. The Millikan Medal recognizes all that has come since, but most significantly the sense of possibility that comes from knowing Ben.