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At one time, the year 1969 on the blue and white class mugs at the Yale Co-Op had a futuristic look to it. In 1969, twenty-five years in the future loomed ahead as more than a lifetime, and it was.

Now, where have twenty-five years gone? They have gone to family, work (mostly too hard), learning that learning never stops. They have also gone to prove a point that only time can prove: twenty-five years is not, after all, such a long time.

Family is most important to me, although sometimes family suffers from inattention that work induces.

Andrea Mancuso, whom I dated through most of my Yale College years, married me in December 1969. The next year Andrea and I returned to New Haven for Yale Law School. At the same time, John Heller, the older of my two brothers, came to Yale as a freshman in the class of 1974, in Silliman as I was. The next year, Dan Heller, the youngest brother, came to Yale with the class of 1975, but he went to Calhoun. Andrea became the stand-in mother for John and Dan while we lived in New Haven, and they became sometimes frequent and sometimes infrequent dinner guests. After all, Andrea and I lived in a two-bed- room apartment in the married student housing on Prospect Street, a finer place than where we had lived during the year after college when I made my living as a newspaper reporter.

Finally, in 1979, our daughter Jenny Evelyn Heller was born. She is our only child and Andrea’s best friend. She excels at whatever she does, much more so than I did.

In 1991 my father died, eighty years old. He left drawers full of unassembled papers chronicling the history of our Heller family line from Germany to Indiana in 1834 through the Battle of Atlanta in the Civil War and up to the time he died. Some months after his death, I took what he had assembled, used it to produce a book of family documents and history and gave copies to Jenny, my sister Mary and my brothers. There is established the continuous line, once led by me and my brothers and sister, now led by Jenny and her younger cousins, children of John and Dan.

Work changes like everything else.

After law school I went to work at Kilpatrick & Cody in Atlanta. Atlanta was emerging from the old southern town I had visited as a child from South Carolina into the much larger more cosmopolitan place it is today. Real estate was booming. So I became a real estate lawyer. Then, later in the 1970s, real estate went bust, so I foreclosed on one day more property than Mr. Cody ever foreclosed at one time during the Depression. Next I moved into municipal finance, working as a bond lawyer in a practice that was beginning to flourish and continued to do so until later in the 1980s when changes in the tax law popped that bubble.

Finally, I realized that the world had become a much smaller place, small enough for business in one country to spread easily into another. I started out representing foreign banks and others in the U.S. Then, in the spring of 1992, 1 came to Brussels to open our firm’s office. Here I work mainly on telecommunications ventures across Europe, traveling sometimes too frequently to the major European cities, seeing offices and hotels and occasionally some of the sights.

Andrea and Jenny soak up much more of Europe than I can. French to them is no longer a foreign language, and the European life is now theirs as well.

All of this has taught me over twenty-five years that learning never stops—not a new or earth-shattering thought, but a lesson best learned by experience. Everything changes. Every day is new.

Yale College began teaching me this. I realized there, perhaps later than my classmates, that I would not directly use the history I studied. I realized that if I could use Yale to learn to read and write, and use reading and writing as a framework for thinking, I could learn anything I needed later on. More important, 1 realized that learning is never-ending and perhaps one of the finer things life has to offer.