

On the Stand: Rodger D. Young

by Douglas J. Levy

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Rodger D. Young

When Rodger D. Young attends Detroit's annual Race for the Cure breast cancer walk/run on May 21, he'll arrive with global appeal.

That's because he's one of 15 "Global Ambassadors" for Susan G. Komen for the Cure. The voluntary appointment takes Young around the nation and world — such as Germany for this fall's Frankfurt Motor Show — promoting the breast-cancer awareness network.

"I'm passionate about finding a way to control and cure any of the cancers, for which there are hundreds," he said. "I've been fortunate to not have anyone in my family die of breast cancer, though my

father died of colon cancer.

"I don't need anyone in my family to die of breast cancer, but to look and say, 'When 1 in 8 women are going to hear, "You have breast cancer,"' is very compelling for me. ... [Participating is] really just a function of the common good."

This isn't the first time Young's had ambassadorial status, as President George W. Bush named him U.S. delegate for the U.N. General Assembly in 2007. When the appointment ended, Komen founder Nancy Brinker, who was U.N. ambassador for Hungary, offered Young the spot.

And Young doesn't mind sporting the group's signature color.

"I wear pink shirts sporadically," he said, "but I did that beforehand. And every time I wear a pink shirt, someone always tells me they like it."

As someone who handles commercial litigation, what's your favorite TV commercial?

There are two. One is the "You only go around once in life" Schlitz beer ads of the '70s, the other is The Travelers Group one airing now, with the dog and the bone.

What word do you always have a problem spelling?

Too many. "Byzantine" was a word I had trouble with recently.

What instrument of technology do you wish never was invented?

Email. It adds nothing to life or to the productivity of business, because everyone's using it. It's like everyone driving 50 mph, then getting an instrument that allows everyone to drive 100 mph.

If you were given the opportunity to open another business, and money were no issue, what would you want it to be?

An antique bookstore.

What was the best meal you ever ate?

Any one of the hundred or so I've had at Daniel in New York.

If you were in witness protection and had to change your name, what would you change it to?

I wouldn't. I love my name. It reminds me of my family.

If they can put a man on the moon, why can't we ...

... Control cancer better?

The worst gift you ever received?

A round, leather watch case, for the purpose of transporting watches. I've never used it, and I can't give it away but tried to. Yet, unlike a bad tie you can throw out, you sense that this watch case has an intrinsic value that precludes you from throwing it out. It's not just a bad gift, but one I *have* to keep around.

Rodger D. Young

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