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## Getting to know people

Arthur William Koelbel

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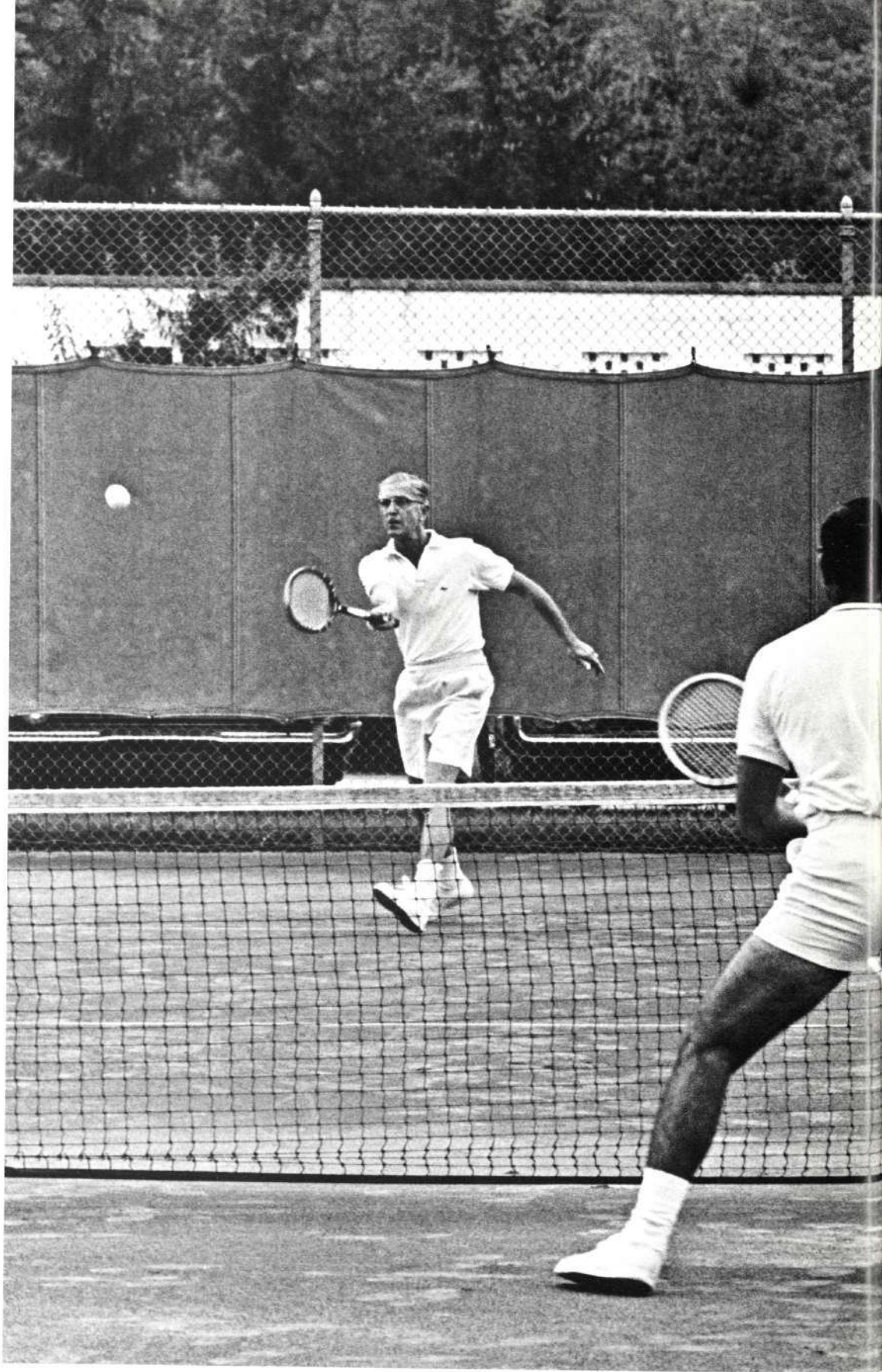
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Arthur W. Koelbel, Partner-in-Charge of the Boston Office, returns a volley.

## Getting To Know People

A great satisfaction in life is having a very close friend—someone you can confide in, who gives genuine sympathy in misfortune, who shares your aspirations, your interests, and your pleasures, who accepts your shortcomings and praises your virtues. Someone also who helps broaden your ideas, your judgments, your opinions, and who willingly gives you advice and counsel.

Some people seem only to want close friends. Others, among whom I include myself, look also for a wide circle of more casual friends and acquaintances who help us day after day to feel a sense of well-being and confidence.

My road to filling this need has been through activity in organizations: professional, athletic, fraternal, charitable, and civic. As treasurer of a local men's club, I have become acquainted with many of the 400 members. Working with the fine and dedicated people of the Salvation Army, presently as Vice Chairman of the Greater Boston Advisory Board, I have met another segment of the community. Our profession, of course, offers great opportunities for friendships. I feel grateful for the strength and energy that has helped me to serve as president of two state societies, first in Michigan and then in Massachusetts, and as a member of the Council and various committees of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. But particularly, I am happy for the attachments I formed with my associates in those endeavors. I believe that it was the development and enjoyment of these friendships that prompted Mrs. Koelbel to seek a small group of wives to organize a CPA wives club in Massachusetts, a group that now numbers more than 250.

The indispensable ingredient in finding friends is a desire to know people, to have a sincere interest in their affairs, their families, their hobbies. This attribute is not always easy to come by. For one thing it demands the ability, inborn or acquired, to adjust to differences in personalities, ambitions, likes and dislikes—a sort of

natural analysis and appraisal and adjustment. One really must *want* to know the person. This can have its frustrations, even with those closest to us: Some parents frankly say they do not really understand their children, and certainly many children reciprocate in these sentiments. The point is, nevertheless, we must have the urge, the desire, the interest.

Some men seem to attract friends simply through their natural personalities; they are indeed blessed. Many of us, however, need to make an effort in this direction. Some, like myself, have followed the path of actively seeking friends, although at first with some reluctance; however, I have found that repeated efforts have developed a facility for meeting people. The possibilities, once you start working at it, are limitless.

The saying that "practice makes perfect" was probably not conceived in the context of getting to know people, but I think it is entirely appropriate. Practice in such little things as remembering names, inquiring for a person's health or the progress of a special interest he has, or discussing current events that affect him will soon develop the art of meeting people. Of course, there must always be a genuine interest in getting to know the other person.

Certainly, all the opportunities are at hand for us in public accounting to practice the art of meeting and knowing people. The people are there—people in many stations in life, with varying personalities—people in clients' offices, in law firms, in banks, in government agencies, in trade associations. Of course, we get to know best the people in clients' offices because of our frequent associations with them. As they become aware of our competence and our concern about the successful operation of their business, they will seek our advice and counsel. When special problems arise, they may very well decide to ask H&S to help and most likely will request the services of the accountant they *know* best. Isn't that a desirable relationship to have with the client?

ARTHUR W. KOELBEL