

When it comes to getting wealthy, I must be stupid

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I must be stupid.

Well some of my detractors say that and perhaps they are right. You see, I recently went to the Sony Ericsson Tennis Tournament on Key Biscayne. It is a great event and you should go there next year, even if you have no interest in tennis.

A hint: Bring your own coffee.

My daughter-in-law decided she needed a cup there to start the day. One problem: the line waiting for \$5 cups of coffee at a famous (can't mention names) STAR coffee place that gets big BUCKS for coffee was too long. It seems that people even in this economy are willing to actually wait in line to spend five and sometimes more BUCKS for a cup of coffee.

Remember the old expression when someone gave you something of little or no value: "With that and a dime you can get a cup of coffee." Well no more. Now you are talking big bucks. Why am I stupid? Because if someone had told me some years ago that people would pay

that much for coffee I would have thought they were nuts. In other words, why didn't I think of that first?

The same must be said of those people who are willing to spend extra money to get a bottle of water from some company that probably fills these bottles from a public lake or river and gives it a famous sounding name like "Sochin Springs." I actually know someone who does pay all that extra money, but other than the fact that she lives with me, I can't reveal her name. To me, my tap water is just fine and relatively cheap. Again, why didn't I think of that?

Okay, I admit it; I use an iPhone. It is really great and, if ever I figure out how to use all those apps, I might actually begin to enjoy it. Would I have been one of those people who waited in line overnight to buy one when they were first introduced? No way!

I have been in the business of marketing and merchandising most of my life and never had a product to sell that was that profitable or in such demand.

I came close once. Someone sent me a box of samples of the Pet Rock, some years back. They didn't include a return address or any information with the package. I thought it was someone's idea of a

joke and promptly gave away all the samples. Some months later, after the boom was over, I learned that I was to actually begin selling them and that the manufacturer was in such a hurry to get the samples out that he forgot to provide all the details. I missed the boom on that one. Oh well.

Sometimes it is a good thing to be a little slow on the uptake. There was a period a few years ago when everyone seemed to be getting rich buying and flipping condos. I finally decided to join the fray. I increased the credit line with my bank and went out to make a killing. There was a property in Palmetto Bay and of course those huge condos in Kendall. By the time I finished doing all my due diligence, the prices already had gone up and I missed out.

I think my bank and the person I share my house with are quite thankful.

For a while I thought I might try making a fortune as a contemporary artist. Some time back I visited the Guggenheim Museum in New York looking at, for the most part, what seemed like a lot of junk for which people were willing to spend lots of money.

I stopped at one particular piece that was nothing more than a canvas painted

white. Really. The title was *White on White* and the price was somewhere in the high \$20,000 range. I asked one of the curators who happened to be standing nearby what determines the value of such a piece. He stuck his nose up and suggested I go learn something about art before I ask such questions.

Farther down the isle was an even larger canvas painted all white with the exception of an orange circle in the center. This one was called *Morning Sunrise* and cost even more. I decided, being the curmudgeon that I am, to play a game with some of the snobs admiring these things. I stood back, stroked my chin and exclaimed, "tremendous perception of depth." Instantly a crowd gathered around me to hear what I had to say. I did at least get a date out of it, but once she found out what a phony I was it was all over.

I know I could do stuff like that if I really tried, but my conscience just won't let me. I honestly think many of those so-called artists are laughing on the way to the bank, but again, they have the big bucks and I don't.

I guess I will just have to continue through life being stupid, but you must admit I am a fun guy to be with (sometimes).