

Always Moving Forward: A Memoir of Friends, Family and Building Humana

David A. Jones

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Always Moving Forward is the compelling memoir of a man whose company transformed health care in the United States.

Friendship and family values are emphasized in entrepreneur David A. Jones's memoir *Always Moving Forward*, about efforts to change the United States' health-care system.

Jones grew up in Louisville, Kentucky. In 1961, he and another lawyer borrowed \$1,000 each to build a nursing home. Later, the company they founded and led became Humana, the largest nursing-home company in the United States, as well as one of its largest health-insurance companies, valued in the billions. This empire, Jones says, was built on values of trust and leadership. The book celebrates Humana-led advances such as the implantation of an artificial heart into a human being and efforts to rebuild the Romanian health-care system at the behest of President George H. W. Bush after the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

Personalized and vivified by its historical grounding, the book includes Jones's recollections of being in New York City on September 11, 2001: he and other Humana executives were at Ground Zero when the terrorist attack happened, and he shares his memories and those of some of his colleagues. When the planes hit, he says, some of them were walking to the shops to get a bagel; some were giving interviews to media outlets. These various perspectives are compelling.

Jones also addresses the controversies around for-profit medicine with particular strength, explaining why Humana is "proudly not non-profit." An argument that the moral high ground cannot be obtained "by assertion" but only by performance is used to contest outsiders' criticisms over Humana hospitals making profits—as are references to Humana hiring "ordinary people" who "learn fast and get things done" and to accepting the necessity of paying taxes.

In addition to its fascinating insider's story of Humana's formation and evolution, the book also dispenses advice for others on how to become a successful entrepreneur. It deviates from its more involving memories to share notions such as that "there is nothing being done that can't be done better" and that entrepreneurs should have brief, clear business concepts in mind to succeed—so short that they can be written on the back of a business card. A concise list of thirteen leadership lessons is included; these are aphoristic, though. They include putting one's family first, being honest, making fast decisions, and thanking one's colleagues. Still, their succinctness makes them memorable.

Filled with advice for fellow entrepreneurs, *Always Moving Forward* is the compelling memoir of a man whose company transformed health care in the United States.

ANNA MARIA COLIVICCHI (April 19, 2023)

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