

Guardians of the Dream: The Enduring Legacy of America's Immigrants

Paul Hsu

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An immigrant who has lived the American Dream tells his inspirational story in this finely crafted and well-timed book.

The recent focus on immigration reform in the United States has created a new awareness of immigrants; in some cases, inciting strong anti-immigration feelings. Paul Hsu's inspirational and visionary book, *Guardians of the Dream*, is an important reminder that this country was founded by immigrants.

Hsu, an immigrant who came to the United States from Taiwan, is unapologetic about his belief in the American Dream. He laments the pessimism he sees expressed about America's future: "We have our problems," writes Hsu, "but when I listen to the complaints, especially from the younger generation, I sometimes feel that the real problem is not with America but in their own hearts....Amid this cacophony of dissent, the one group that says it still believes in America is immigrants."

Hsu points to his own experience as proof that the American Dream is alive and well. He came to America with little money and spoke little English, yet he started several successful companies and invented products. Hsu was eventually appointed an associate administrator at the U.S. Small Business Administration and also won a national small-business award.

In one respect, *Guardians of the Dream* is a very personal memoir demonstrating one immigrant's achievement of success through hard work and determination. Interestingly, the author says he was welcomed by Americans who supported and mentored him along the way. But Hsu digs deeper than his own experience. He also traces the positive impact immigrants have had on American history. He names some of the influential immigrants in the country's history, including Alexander Graham Bell, Andrew Carnegie, Felix Frankfurter, and more recently, Indra Nooyi, CEO of PepsiCo, and Sergey Brin, cofounder of Google.

The author has keen insight into two qualities that make America great: innovation and the entrepreneurial spirit. He discusses, for example, how he acquired one company, ActiGraph, and turned it around by building an entrepreneurial attitude toward innovation: "In the past seven years or so, we have reengineered the product four or five times," writes Hsu. "That's how you're always ahead of your competitors...New ideas and breakthroughs are encouraged. No one's crucified for making a mistake. It's all part of the process."

Make no mistake, Hsu is a realist—he writes at length about America's need to drastically improve the quality of education. He discusses, for example, the country's deficiencies in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics): "While the technology sector has grown at four times the rate of other fields, student enrollment is not keeping pace," writes Hsu. "Only about 15 percent of all college graduates have STEM majors or minors."

Guardians of the Dream is well written and concise. It is also well designed, with an attractive cover and pleasing page design. The author includes several black-and-white family photos to personalize to his story even further.

In the last chapter, Hsu makes a passionate closing case by detailing six compelling reasons why he believes

America is stronger than ever. His heartfelt eloquence is reason enough anyone would benefit from reading Paul Hsu's well-timed book.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (June 13, 2014)

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