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Smart brain, open mind, hard work and a big heart

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I opened the book **Slovenian American Inventors and Innovators** authored by prof. **Edward Gobetz**, PhD (who, according to himself, at age 90 still works more than eight hours a day). After flipping through pages I said proudly: "That`s us, Slovenes!" Then another thought: "Or is it them, Americans?" In a global world all the listed individuals - Americans with Slovenian roots - invented solutions that benefited the whole world. What struck me most after reading the book is how these innovators and inventors came to their achievements.

They (or their ancestors) emigrated from Slovenia to the States for economic or (unfortunately) political reasons. Many of them talented, smart, but with no means for a decent life, or, at least insufficient means to achieve a decent education. But on the other hand they found themselves in a large country of (literally) endless opportunities. And they started, often working two shifts hard manual work - to earn money for their own - or their children`s education. Many stories in the book are so inspiring with common denominators being: boldness, perseverance, belief. These great minds and big hearts dared - and insisted. Until they succeeded. In a new country that enabled them to achieve their dreams. What`s more! They have been keeping their Slovenian roots deep in their hearts and that is why today we can proudly read about the Slovenian American innovators and inventors.

Forty great names are presented in the book in details, several others (especially younger ones) shortly. Interestingly, my attention turned to people associated with mobility and computers. Most probably because as a kid I wanted to become a bus driver, then a pilot - and ended in IT industry. The book introduces Edward Stokel ("Mr. Bus", designer and manufacturer of buses), Joseph Sutter ("The father of Boeing 747, Jumbo Jet"; Sutter`s parents were born two miles from my home), prominent astronauts (navy captain Sunita Williams, dr. Ronald Sega, dr. Jerry Linenger), inventor of the pocket calculator dr. France Rode, prof. Zvonko Fazarinc (research on GPS) and so on. Among other industries these smart people left their traces in space programs, medicine, environment (Verna Grahek Mize, "The First Lady of Lake Superior") etc. Many of the mentioned people were not only innovators and inventors, they had a very good business sense and entrepreneurial spirit and ended at the "peaks of the giants", on the leading positions of large enterprises. We see these smart people among "50 most powerful women in business" (dr. Carol Kovac), on the list of "American inventors of the year" (dr. Dusan Prevorsek) or in the group of "35 innovators under 35 whose work promises to change the world" (dr. Jernej Barbic) or just being one of the youngest professors at Stanford and one of the first researchers of the social networking (dr. Jure Leskovec).

There are many other famous names in the book and my intention here is not to list them all even though each of them is special and inspiring. I just want to share my excitement and summarize my impressions from the book with a very clear message. **Smart brain, open mind, hard work and a big heart will make you a great person** - especially in a stimulative environment. And I would like to quote the author of the book, prof. Edward Gobetz, who says in the introduction to the book: *"Details in various chapters also show how curiosity, lifelong desire to learn and to contribute something worthwhile, self-denial, family solidarity, hard work and courage to overcome obstacles and view problems as challenges, and the joy of accomplishment, have led to successes, small and mind-boggling, which often benefitted America and the world."* And further: *"All accomplishments, small and mind-boggling, also show that in the proverbial country of opportunity the American Dream is still alive and within reach of members of any determined, hard-working ethnic group, including Slovenian Americans."*



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