

# Reese Palley

**Reese Palley**, *Merchant to the Rich*<sup>[1]</sup> (January 26, 1922 – June 3, 2015) was a flamboyant entrepreneur,<sup>[2]</sup> gallerist, inventor, art dealer, businessman, author, adventurer, blogger, record-setting world circumnavigator, polymath,<sup>[1]</sup> environmentalist, art impresario, airline creator, economist and public scold on matters as diverse as nuclear energy, global warming and how to revive Atlantic City.<sup>[3]</sup> An advocate of global warming awareness, Palley published a blog, 2DegreesCentigrade, in which he elucidated the need to hold global warming to 2°C) as an "imperative" to prevent the ruin of our world.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Contents

**Early life**

**Art and business career**

**Circumnavigation of the Earth**

**Further exploits**

**Bibliography**

**Further writing**

**References**

**External links**

## Early life

Palley was born and grew up in Atlantic City, near the inlet on Massachusetts and Drexel Avenue, graduating from Atlantic City High School.<sup>[3]</sup> His father rode horseback from Harbin Russia across China then took a steamer to San Francisco where he set up a watchmaker/jewelry shop on the docks, crossing the country and settling in Atlantic City at an unknown date. Little is known about his mother except she was from Baltimore. He had two brothers, Julian and Norman Palley. After high school Palley studied optometry at the University of Alabama for three years, then was drafted and sent as an optometrist to an army base in the Aleutian Islands.<sup>[3]</sup> Later he worked in his father's jewelry store in Atlantic City.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Art and business career

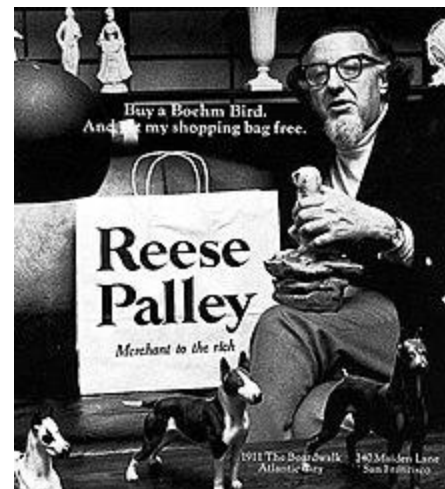
### Reese Palley



Reese Palley in 2010

<b>Born</b>	Reese Palley January 26, 1922 New Jersey, U.S.
<b>Died</b>	June 3, 2015 (aged 93)
<b>Education</b>	<u>The New School for Social Research</u> (1945–1949;) <p><u>The London School of Economics</u> (1949-1952)</p>
<b>Occupation</b>	Art dealer, entrepreneur, inventor, author, sailor
<b>Known for</b>	Longest circumnavigation in a sailboat; three sailing firsts, first sailing yacht into China, 1982, Odessa, 1989, and Romania, 1990; book, "The Answer: Why Only Inherently Safe, Mini Nuclear Power Plants Can Save Our World"
<b>Children</b>	3
<b>Website</b>	<u>reesepalley.com</u> (http://reesepalley.com)

After study at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan, where he was the valedictorian of the first graduating class, and at the London School of Economics,<sup>[3]</sup> Palley made his fortune in art and real estate in Atlantic City. In 1957 he opened a gallery on the Boardwalk, selling the porcelain figures of animals and birds produced by Edward Marshall Boehm and where he exhibited his "least artistically important artists",<sup>[5]</sup> John Lennon and Yoko Ono. He helped develop the SoHo, Manhattan area of New York into a stronghold for New York-based contemporary artists.<sup>[2]</sup> From 1959 to 1979 he owned and operated *Objet d'Art* Galleries in Atlantic City, NJ, SoHo/NYC, Paris, San Francisco and Palm Beach, FL, specializing in Danish furniture, Boehm porcelains and Fine Art. In San Francisco Palley restored the V.C. Morris Gift Shop at 140 Maiden Lane, the only example of a completed Frank Lloyd Wright building in San Francisco.<sup>[6]</sup> He opened shops in the late Marlborough-Blenheim Hotel in 1957 and carefully cultivated a reputation as his city's "merchant to the rich". Palley was successful in getting the Blenheim part of the hotel placed on the National Register of Historic Buildings, while planning to raze the Marlborough to make way for a new modern hotel. He also converted himself from a tenant at the Marlborough-Blenheim to its owner shortly before it was knocked down – and shortly after casinos were legalized in Atlantic City in 1978. In 1976 Palley and a partner purchased the Marlboro Blenheim at Boardwalk and Park Place with \$100,000 down and a \$16 million dollar mortgage due in nine months. They sold it ten days later to the Bally Corp, one of the first casino deals in Atlantic City.<sup>[2]</sup> In the late 1960's Palley saw the work of Paul Joseph Stankard displayed at a craft exhibit on the boardwalk of Atlantic City, New Jersey. Enamored of the art, Palley sponsored Stankard financially, allowing Stankard to move full-time into making glass art. Reese was an Atlantic City legend who never lost his love for the town – despite the fact that he once was a public advocate of leveling it with "a bulldozer six blocks wide."<sup>[2]</sup>



Merchant to the Rich

## Circumnavigation of the Earth

---

After his successful real estate deal with the Marlboro Blenheim hotel, which made him wealthy, he bought an Oceanic 46 named "Unlikely VII" to sail around the world. Palley claimed it was the "longest circumnavigation on record".<sup>[7]</sup> During his circumnavigation he was promoter of several eccentric business enterprises around the globe, living and setting up businesses in China, Odessa, Russia, and Bucharest, Romania, some more successful than others.<sup>[7]</sup> He claimed three sailing "firsts", the first private sailboat allowed into China, (1982), into Russia's (now Ukraine's) Black Sea port of Odessa (1989) and into Romania (1990).<sup>[7]</sup>

Palley settled in Key West after the circumnavigation with his wife, the artist and sailor Marilyn Arnold Palley, where he continued his writing, completing and publishing ten books.



Reese with de-masting tools-both types

## Further exploits

---

He was once a member of the New Jersey Lottery Commission<sup>[1]</sup> and was a life-long member of the Ocean Cruising Club<sup>[7]</sup> following a passage from Bermuda to the Azores in 1976 aboard his 32 foot sailboat *Unlikely V*, an event listed first on his own long list of accomplishments.<sup>[7]</sup> He considered himself a "peddler of ideas"<sup>[8]</sup> and "a sailor first."<sup>[7]</sup> Palley was known for his generosity, including funding dental work as gifts for friends.<sup>[7]</sup> According to Steven P. Perskie, Palley's friend of fifty years and former state legislator and judge, Palley had "incredible inherent charity and good will and he cared deeply for people who couldn't take care of themselves. He was always looking to take care of the little guy - while he was making money off the big guy. He was on the edge of politics, but in the middle of the economics of it, and he was always a larger than life figure. He brought a unique kind of visibility and style to it.<sup>[1]</sup> Palley was a technology fan who got his first computer when Apple Inc released the Macintosh in the 1980s and was waiting for his first Apple watch when he died.<sup>[1]</sup>



Unlikely VII circumnavigation 1979-1994

Palley was known for wearing leopard print pants and a red beret. His wife, Marilyn Arnold Palley, said he was an "extraordinary iconoclast" who wore his hair long and his beard wild, well before that became a fashion for men. When asked about the red beret, Palley said "My wife, one of the strongest women in the world, is terrified of losing track of me. She bought the red beret and said, "Thou shall wear it," so she can find me in a crowd."<sup>[9]</sup>

At 91 he created the AAUP, The American Association of Unemployed People, a national organization formed to represent the forty million unemployed in this country who have no political voice.<sup>[10]</sup>

Palley received a Federal patent, #500397286, and then made the plans free to anyone who wanted to manufacture it, for an energy-efficient pop-up toaster.<sup>[11]</sup>

He once purchased a painting at Parke Bernet for \$2940 that turned out to be one of the five lost paintings by Raphael, this one of Lorenzo de Medici. Owned briefly by Palley, it was sold later by Christie's in 2007 for \$37.27 million.<sup>[12]</sup>

Palley, during his circumnavigation and in his earlier life, had many adventures and extraordinary business encounters. As recounted in his book *Unlikely Passages* his adventures included starting an airline company, Atoll Air, with the support of the Minister of State of the Republic of the Maldives using Grumman Goose airplanes, starting a mushroom farm in caves, opening a sewing machine needle factory in Russia, smuggling a sought-after Torah out of Odessa on behalf of an impoverished rabbi, escaping Ethiopian gunboats on the Red Sea and discussing ideas to run an island government with Tristan Jones. He lived with an eagerness to meet and interact with all types of people in all kinds of circumstances, believing that "every moment of life is an event".<sup>[7]</sup> Those experiences provided the grist for at least three of his books, while another fifty of his adventures are documented at Reese Palley.com (<http://www.reesepalley.com/>)

Palley with his wife, Marilyn Arnold Palley, created the Palley Index of Danish Furniture, 1900-2000, a compilation of the work of all Danish architect and/or cabinetmaker designed furniture of the 20th century. The Registry is housed at the Danish Royal Museum of Arts and Crafts in Copenhagen. Composed of over 10,000 listings and growing, with text and photos, the Registry is supported by contemporary references using at least two historical sources and in some cases by the architects or their descendants. Available at Danish Furniture Index (<https://designmuseum.dk/bibliotek/furnitureindex/>)

Palley had a life-long interest in concrete as a historical and modern building material, perhaps sparked by his connection with the Marlboro Blenheim. The Blenheim was the first fireproof hotel built in Atlantic City and the first poured concrete hotel in America. At the time it was the largest poured concrete building in the world. Construction was supervised by Thomas Edison, who owned the concrete company.<sup>[13]</sup> The Blenheim was the first hotel built with a private bath for every room. It also provided hot and cold running saltwater.<sup>[14]</sup> Palley's interest lead him to write the book *Concrete: A Seven Thousand Year History*, as well as building a hurricane-proof concrete home in the Florida Keys.

## Bibliography

---

- *Wooden Ships and Iron Men: The Maritime Art of Thomas Hoyne (with Marilyn Arnold Palley)*. Quantuck Lane Press. 2005. ISBN 978-1593720131.
- *The Best of Nautical Quarterly Volume 1: The Lure of Sail (co-editor Anthony Dalton)*. MBI. 2004. ISBN 978-0760318201.
- *The Best of Nautical Quarterly Volume 2: The Lure of Power (co-editor Anthony Dalton)*. MBI. 2004. ISBN 978-0760318218.
- *The Porcelain Art of Edward Marshall Boehm*. Harry Abrahms, NY. 1977. ISBN 978-0810907010.
- *Unlikely Passages*. Norton/Seven Seas Press. 1998. ISBN 978-1574090512.
- *Unlikely People*. Sheridan Press. 1998. ISBN 978-1574090574.
- *There Be No Dragons*. Sheridan Press. 1998. ISBN 978-1574090109.
- *Call of the Ancient Mariner*. McGrawHill. 2003. ISBN 978-0071388818.
- *Concrete: A 7000 Year History*. W.W. Norton Publishing. 2010. ASIN B0052WWKAE (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0052WWKAE>).
- *The Answer: Why only Inherently Safe Mini Nuclear Power Plants Can Save Our World*. Quantuck Lane Press. 2010. ISBN 978-1593720452.



Reese Palley by Tony Auth

## Further writing

---

Numerous articles and essays published in: *Nautical Quarterly*, *Cruising World*, *Sail*, *Good Old Boat*, *Showboats International*, *The Enquirer Daily News Philadelphia PA*. "The Answer" translated to Chinese in 2016, "Concrete" translated to Korean in 2017.

## References

---

1. Deangelis, Martin (5 June 2015). "Atlantic-City-born-adventurer-Reese-Palley-dies" ([http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/Atlantic-City-born-adventurer-Reese-Palley-dies/article\\_ad8406c2-0ae6-11e5-a76d-572b0975efa6.html](http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/Atlantic-City-born-adventurer-Reese-Palley-dies/article_ad8406c2-0ae6-11e5-a76d-572b0975efa6.html)). *The Press of Atlantic City*.
2. Morrison, John (15 June 2015). "Reese Palley, 93 flamboyant Atlantic City art dealer". *Philadelphia Daily News*.
3. Naedele, Walter (5 June 2015). "Reese Palley, 93, ran art gallery at shore, sailed around world" (<http://www.Philly.com>). *The Enquirer Daily News*.

4. Palley, Reese. "2DegreesCentigrade" (<https://2degreescentigrade.wordpress.com/>). *2DegreesCentigrade*.
5. Cascone, Sarah. "Reese Palley, Adventurer" (<https://news.artnet.com/market/reese-palley-obituary-305402>). Artnet.com. Retrieved 30 November 2017.
6. Zimbardo, Tanya. "Receipt of Delivery" (<https://openspace.sfmoma.org/2012/09/receipt-of-delivery15/>). *openspace.sfmoma.org*. Retrieved 6 December 2017.
7. Ross, Art (2015). "Flying Fish Journal" (<http://www.oceancruisingclub.org>). *Ocean Cruising Club*: 225–227.
8. "Soho art dealer Reese Palley" (<http://www.happening.media/category/magazine/en/news/1287/soho-art-dealer-reese-palley-has-passed-away-aged-93>). *Happening*. Retrieved 26 November 2017.
9. Rys, Richard. "Q&A: Reese Palley" (<http://www.phillymag.com/news/2011/08/04/qa-reese-palley/>). *phillymag.com*. Retrieved 30 November 2017.
10. Palley, Reese. "Reese Palley.com" (<http://www.reesepalley.com/>). Retrieved 30 November 2017.
11. "Reese Palley toaster patent" (<http://www.reesepalley.com/toaster.html>).
12. "Christies lotfinder Lorenzo de' Medici" (<http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/paintings/raffaello-sanzio-c-alled-raphael-portrait-of-lorenzo-4942823-details.aspx/>). Retrieved 27 November 2017.
13. Janson, Donald. "Marlborough-Blenheim Acquired By Reese Palley to Set up a Casino" (<https://www.nytimes.com/1977/03/15/archives/new-jersey-pages-marlboroughblenheim-acquired-by-reese-palley-to.html>). *nytimes.com*. New York Times archives. Retrieved 30 November 2017.
14. "Early Hotels" ([http://www.monopolycity.com/ac\\_earlyhotels.html](http://www.monopolycity.com/ac_earlyhotels.html)). *monopolycity.com*. Monopoly City. Retrieved 30 November 2017.

## External links

---

- Official website (<http://www.reesepalley.com/>)
  - Reese Palley YouTube discussion of nuclear power plants. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJXgQkE-TGM/>)
  - Reese Palley 2006 Furled Sails Interview (<http://furledsails.com/article.php3?article=697/>)
  - Reese Palley 2DegreesCentigrade Blog (<http://2degreescentigrade.wordpress.com/>)
- 

Retrieved from "[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Reese\\_Palley&oldid=855599242](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Reese_Palley&oldid=855599242)"

---

**This page was last edited on 19 August 2018, at 13:49 (UTC).**

This version of the page has been revised. Besides normal editing, the reason for revision may have been that this version contains factual inaccuracies, vandalism, or material not compatible with the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.