

PROFILE

KIRK LANTERMAN:

Cruise industry pioneer

By Clark McCann



Although Kirk Lanterman (BA 1955) was to make his business mark on the high seas, he grew up far from the ocean on the dry plains of North Dakota. Raised on a horse ranch near Bismarck, he learned the lessons of hard work and self reliance from an early age. After graduating from high school, he enrolled at the University in North Dakota, majoring in pre-law. His studies were cut short, however, when his National Guard unit was activated during the Korean War.

Trained as a medic, Lanterman was attached to a tank division. "I was definitely not in one of those glamorous helicopter MASH units like the TV show," he recalls. "We did all our transport on the ground. In fact, during my stay in Korea, I think I walked from Pusan (at the south of the Peninsula) to the Yalu River and back."

After his combat tour was over, Lanterman was temporarily assigned to Fort Lewis near Tacoma and fell in love with Seattle. He decided to complete his college education at the University of Washington on the GI Bill. "In those days," Lanterman says, "tuition was only \$65 a quarter, but it still seemed like a lot of money to me."

He was unsure of his major at first, but happened to take an accounting class and was inspired by his professor, Julius Roller. "Roller was an outstanding teacher and a real mentor to me," Lanterman says. "I got hooked on business and decided to major in accounting."

After graduation, Lanterman's first job was with Price Waterhouse, where he worked for nine years, before moving to an executive position at the American Broadcasting Company. He began his career in the travel industry in 1970 as the vice president of finance

for a company then known as Westours, which focused exclusively on the Alaskan cruise market. Lanterman recalls that the global cruise industry was in its infancy, with only about 400,000 passengers annually, compared to almost 13 million today. The business model for passenger ships was still rooted in transportation, or transportation to exotic locales, rather than ships as a floating luxury resort.

At the time, Westours was using converted World War II vintage Canadian Corvettes, mainly used to ferry troops, for its Alaska cruise business. "The ships could carry only

about 100 passengers," Lanterman recalls, "and the accommodations were quite spartan by today's standards, with passengers having to walk down the hall to use the bathroom."

Westours was purchased by Holland America in 1973 and Lanterman quickly advanced through the ranks. He became president of Westours in 1979, and, when Holland America consolidated its Seattle operations in 1983, he became president of the combined company. In 1987 he also joined the board of Windstar Cruises when Holland America entered a financial partnership with the company, and later became chairman of Windstar when the acquisition was complete. Lanterman was named chairman and CEO of Holland America after it was purchased by Carnival Cruise Lines (now Carnival Corporation) in 1987, a position he held until 2004. Today, after more than

three decades with the Holland America Line, Lanterman serves as chairman emeritus in a non-executive role.

During his many years of executive leadership at Holland America, the company grew into one of the industry's premier cruise lines with 13 ships and a capacity of more than 22,000 passengers. Lanterman also took the innovative step of homeporting several Holland America ships in Seattle—which greatly adds to the convenience of customers in the Northwest and benefits the Seattle economy.

Although Holland America is headquartered in Seattle, the company's ships are registered in the Netherlands, which continues to take great pride in the company. In 2003, Lanterman was named an Officer of the Order of Orange Nassau, an honor bestowed by the Queen of the Netherlands. The decoration was presented during inaugural festivities for Holland America's new *Oosterdam*. The Netherlands presents the civilian order of merit to individuals who have contributed to Dutch society through their profession and community service.

Today, at 75, Kirk Lanterman is far from retired. He continues to serve as chairman and CEO of the investment firm he founded in 1989, Kirlan Venture Capital, and is active in directing the efforts of the Lanterman Foundation—which has funded scholarships for undergraduates at the Foster School of Business. He also serves as a member of the School's Advisory Board.

Another of Kirk's passions is keeping up with his four daughters and nine grandchildren, all of whom reside in the Seattle area. All four daughters and two of his grandchildren are graduates of the UW, and two other grandchildren are currently enrolled. "I've got a great family and I had a wonderful career in the cruise industry. It was amazing to witness the change from ferrying passengers in old converted military ships to building today's luxury liners that can cost nearly half-a-billion dollars each." ■

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES



ARTIE BUERK (BA 1958), chairman of the Foster School of Business Advisory Board, has received the 2007 Gates Volunteer Service Award, the highest such honor given by the University of Washington. Buerk is the founding partner and managing director of Seattle private equity firm Buerk Dale Victor. A former director of development at the UW, Buerk also serves as a trustee of the UW Foundation, and as an advisor to the UW Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.



TAMRA CHANDLER (MBA 1990), managing vice president for global solutions and people at Hitachi Consulting, has been named one of the nation's top 25 consultants by the magazine *Consulting*. Chandler was recognized for her leadership and strategic impact on Hitachi's culture and approach to consulting, especially after managing integration of six acquired companies in 2003. At the Foster School, she has served on advisory boards, as a lecturer and mentor to MBA students.



YOSHIHIKO MIYAUCHI (MBA 1960), longstanding member of the Foster School Advisory Board, was the guest speaker at this year's Dawgs On Wall Street reception in New York City. Miyauchi, named the 2005 "CEO of the Year" by *Forbes Japan*, has guided the fortunes of Japanese business for three decades as the chairman and CEO of ORIX, a financial services giant, and as president of the Council for Promoting Regulatory Reform, an advisory board to the nation's prime minister.