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Academics

1908
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Business

Oregon State University

2008

Innovative
Global
Leaders

The Exchange

The Oregon State University College of Business Magazine

A Special Centennial Issue

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The Exchange — A Special Centennial Issue

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On the cover: Centennial banner in front of Bexell Hall (Photo by Karl Maasdam)

Celebrating the Past, Looking Toward the Future

This is a milestone year for the College of Business. On January 16, 2008, we celebrated our 100th anniversary. It always serves an institution to look back and remember our roots—to remember we are standing on the shoulders of giants. But it is even more important that we keep our eyes on the future.

As a professional school, the college is dedicated to turning out profession-ready graduates who enter the workforce with accelerated skills and knowledge. We are building on the successes of the past while transforming to meet the business education, research, and outreach needs of today's and tomorrow's enterprises.

In this special issue of *The Exchange*, you will see how far we have come since our humble beginnings 100 years ago. You will also read about some of our alumni. It would be impossible to provide a comprehensive picture of the impact our alumni have made and are making now in the global economy. Distinguished alumni of the college include local, regional, national, and international leaders in business, nonprofit organizations, politics, academics, and the arts. We chose to highlight these alumni not because they are the “best of,” but because they provide a glimpse of the wide-ranging ways our alumni make a difference in the world.

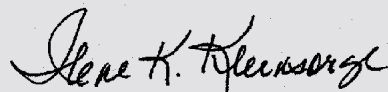
Gertrude Strowbridge, who was our oldest alumna until recently, was a remarkable woman in many ways. She transcended the strictures of her family by seeking and obtaining a college education, and later reaped the benefits when hardship struck. Her belief in education has strongly influenced those who followed her. We will miss her indomitable spirit.

In another example of overcoming adversity, Ken Thrasher's professional life proves the value of mentoring and early career awareness. We have enjoyed having Ken come to the college as a visiting executive several times, and we deeply appreciate his commitment to preparing the next generation of entrepreneurs.

After leading a prominent and successful family-owned business, Frank Morse went to the State Capitol to make a difference in policy. Frank's tireless efforts in working toward a more sustainable state economy, health care reforms, and relevant higher education are making a huge difference for Oregon.

And then there is the newest generation. Trevor Legwinski almost effortlessly stepped into his career immediately after receiving his diploma. It is interesting to note that his new job is in an industry that was inconceivable to anyone living 100 (or even 50) years ago. Trevor embodies what we are proud of in our graduates—strategic thinking and an unflinching entrepreneurial spirit.

With the unpredictable and exponential changes occurring in today's marketplace, we do not really know what types of business challenges our graduates will face in their lifetimes. We do know that our job is to prepare them to stay ahead of the curve no matter what lies ahead. That means we must continually re-evaluate and update our programs and facilities, and we are always looking for your input and support as we adapt to meet the needs of students and the business community. Let's work together to help the College of Business keep its place as a leader in innovative education for the next 100 years.



Ilene K. Kleinsorge, Dean
Sara Hart Kimball Chair

Photo by Karl Maasdam



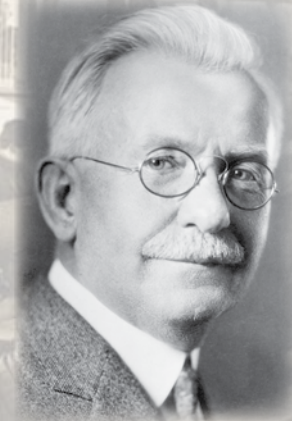
A Tradition of Excellence in Business Education

By Abby P. Metzger

Business education has been an integral part of the educational landscape in Corvallis since the mid-19th century. The institution that would eventually become Oregon State University was incorporated in 1858 and named Corvallis College. It had yet to offer collegiate-level classes, but business training that included political economy, political science, and accounting was fundamental to its early curriculum.

The school began offering a college-level curriculum in 1865, and three years later the institution was officially sanctioned as the Agricultural College of the State of Oregon. The school was later renamed Oregon Agricultural College (OAC).

A two-year collegiate course in commerce was organized in 1898 and grew into a full four-year curriculum in 1900. By 1904, the college had granted its first commerce degrees. However, today's College of Business marks its official beginnings when OAC solidified its commitment to business education in 1908 by establishing the School of Commerce.



John Andrew Bexell, dean of the School of Commerce from 1908 to 1931



School of Commerce comparative government class, early 1900s



School of Commerce staff shortly after Commerce Hall (now Bexell Hall) was erected in 1922



Business laboratory circa 1910

class in Commerce



Commerce Hall under construction, with the two white sections of Alpha Hall shown to the left. Shepard Hall is shown east of Commerce Hall and Sigma Phi Epsilon and Sigma Chi houses are between Shepard Hall and Commerce Hall. The spire of the church on Monroe Street is shown in the background of the photo.



Bexell Hall classroom in the 1920s: The College of Business (originally known as the School of Commerce) has been headquartered in Bexell Hall since 1922, when the building was completed. In the 1923-24 academic year, more than one quarter of all OAC students (917 out of 3199) were enrolled in the School of Commerce. The next largest enrollment was 486 students in the School of Home Economics.

1908: John Andrew Bexell becomes the first dean of the School of Commerce, one of the four major schools of OAC, and one of the first twelve schools of business in the nation. The school grows to three faculty members and 105 students.

1913 & 1914: To address course duplication between OAC and the University of Oregon (U of O), the Oregon State Board of Higher Education allocates "higher commerce" to the U of O. However, the board does not define the term, and OAC takes the position that it refers to graduate business instruction. The U of O contends that the term includes all upper division business courses.

1917: The School of Commerce experiences the largest number of students since its establishment. Classes in typewriting and stenography are most popular.

1922: Dean Bexell plans Commerce Hall. The building is erected at a cost of \$180,000 and occupied for the first time during the 1922-23 school year. Stephen Miller, dean of the School of Business Administration at the University of Washington, comments that the new building is "undoubtedly the finest home for a School of Commerce or School of Business Administration that is to be found anywhere in the United States."



Commerce laboratory in the 1920s



Commerce laboratory in the 1920s



School of Commerce classroom in Bexell Hall in the 1920s

1922: The School of Commerce participates in the Educational Conference, the first conference of its kind on the West Coast. Hosted by OAC, the U of O, the University of Washington, and Washington State College, the event discusses all matters related to a school of commerce.

1925: The Oregon State Board of Higher Education thoroughly examines the amount of program duplication taught by the School of Commerce and the School of Business Administration at the U of O. They conclude that there was very little duplication, possibly because both programs have large enrollments.

1930: The School of Commerce is recognized by several published works as one of the "most complete and adequate of the typical schools of commerce in the land-grant institutions."

1931: Dean Bexell retires, at which time the school has more than 40 faculty members and 1,000 enrolled students.



Women working with office equipment in the 1920s



Despite merging its curriculum with the School of Business Administration at the U of O, the School of Commerce offered a four-year curriculum in secretarial science (1935).

1932: Amidst the Great Depression, the School of Commerce merges with the School of Business Administration at the U of O.

1933: Despite the merger with the School of Business Administration at the U of O, the Oregon State Board of Higher Education authorizes OAC to provide a four-year curriculum in secretarial science. The decision was based on the large number of students who wanted to continue their studies.

1937: Oregon Agricultural College is renamed Oregon State College.

1941: Oregon State College requests that the scope of the commerce department be restored to pre-1932 levels. The college argues that major studies in commerce are a recognized function of a land-grant college.



Women in costume in a School of Commerce classroom in Bexell Hall in the 1930s



Graduates of the Division of Business and Industry in the 1940s, with Dean Maser on the right



In 1942, Clifford Maser gave up a \$15,000/year position at Rockefeller Plaza in New York City to accept a \$3,800/year assistant professorship at Oregon State College. Six months later, he was chosen by President A. L. Strand to head the newly formed Division of Business and Industry.



Graduating class, 1936



Business & Technology entrance in the 1940s



Clifford E. Maser, the youngest person to become dean of a school of business in America



Graduating class, 1946

1942-43: The Oregon State Board of Higher Education restores a degree curriculum in business and industry to prepare students for war and post-war services. President A. L. Strand chooses Clifford Maser to head the newly formed Division of Business and Industry. At age 32, Maser becomes the youngest dean of a school of business in America. He begins the division with two full-time and one part-time faculty and 27 students, most of whom are women.

1947-48: The Division of Business and Industry is renamed the School of Business and Technology.

1950: The School of Business and Technology is the largest school on the Oregon State College campus, with a graduating class of 319 students.

1951: Dean Maser takes a yearlong sabbatical leave to become an administrator of a new refugee resettlement project in western Germany and Austria. He becomes a renowned expert on the refugee situation in Europe and the threat of communism in the world.



Mark Corwin demonstrating a Burroughs adding machine to OSC President A.L. Strand in 1953



Clifford E. Maser, dean of the School of Business and Technology from 1947 to 1966



Office Procedure class in Commerce Hall, 1951

1957: Due to unprecedented enrollment levels, a faculty curriculum committee is steadily at work conducting a comprehensive review of the curriculum in business administration and technology.

1960: The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accredits the School of Business and Technology, which at the time is a designation held by only 95 schools of business in the country.

1961: Oregon State College is renamed Oregon State University.

1963: The School of Business and Technology publishes *Northwest Business Management*, a business magazine released four times a year, with a \$4 annual subscription fee.

1965: Oregon State University is granted authority to offer the master of business administration degree.

1966: Dean Maser retires.



Education Conference, 1950: Seated (from left) are Clifford Maser (Business & Technology), George Gleeson (Engineering), Paul M. Dunn (Forestry) of OSC, and William L. Teutsch (Federal Cooperative Extension).



Dr. Fred Winger, associate professor of business education and secretarial science, teaching a typing class, 1951



Earl Goddard, dean of the School of Business from 1967-1983



Lynn Spruill, dean of the College of Business from 1984-1990



Future Business Leaders of America, 1954

1967: The School of Business and Technology offers students a master's degree in management science.

1970s: The increasing student-to-teacher ratio leads to what some people term the "None-of-Your-Business" School of Business. As viewed from the rest of the campus, the School of Business becomes a place devoted to teaching its own students first.

1974: The undergraduate office plans to offer studies in hotel, motel, resort, and restaurant management. The office also establishes a new degree program in residential institution management.

1980s: High inflation and interest rates and a collapsed economy cause OSU to trim its budget. As a result, more students enroll in business as a practical measure to battle an uncertain economy. Increasing enrollments cause the student-to-faculty ratio to reach a peak of 55.

1981: A computer lab is established in the school, using largely private funds.

1983: The college changes its name to the College of Business.

1985: The Austin Family Business Program is created. As one of the first programs of its kind in the nation, AFBP offers seminars and workshops throughout the Northwest to address the unique challenges facing family businesses.

1986: An alumni group called the Young Directors Circle is established to maintain close ties with alumni, assist undergraduates in transitioning from an academic to a professional environment, and facilitate idea exchanges.

1987: The Applied Technology Group (now called Business Solutions Group) is created. Students earn wages for testing new products for computer companies.

1988: The college establishes the Excellence in Family Business Awards to honor the accomplishments and contributions of family businesses and to recognize their innovation, entrepreneurship, commitment, and community involvement.

1990s: Despite budget shortfalls caused by Measure 5, the College of Business establishes a business minor to help graduates better compete in private business.

1991: Donald F. Parker becomes dean, and the college begins a significant transformation toward the use of technology for teaching and student use.

1997: First class enrolls in the Professional Management Institute, a program of study designed for mid- and upper-level managers and business owners in the area.

1997: Bernie Newcomb ('65) gives the college the third largest gift it has ever received—\$6.1 million.

1997: The college launches the Business-ONE cooperative distance learning program, which provides an opportunity for students to complete an accredited business degree at a local community college.

2002-2003: Business & Information Technology Extension pilots business and technology education in two Oregon counties. It is the first pilot of its kind in the nation.

2003: Ilene Kleinsorge becomes dean.

2003-2004: The Austin Entrepreneurship Program at Weatherford Residential College is created and becomes one of the nation's first living-learning environments devoted exclusively to entrepreneurship.

2005: The Close to the Customer Project launches, giving students the opportunity to develop professional skills, take on project management roles, and become workforce-ready prior to graduation.

2006: The university formally approves the college's transformation into a professional school. Students are required to undergo a competitive application process before becoming admitted and beginning the professional program in their junior year.

2007: The State Board of Higher Education approves the College of Business' request for a new bachelor of science in accountancy degree.

2008: The College of Business celebrates its centennial.



Donald F. Parker, dean of the College of Business, 1991-2000



Dedication of the Austin Family Business Program. From left: President John Byrne, Dean Donald F. Parker; Joan and Ken Austin; Pat Frishkoff, founding director of the Austin Family Business Program (6th from left); John Ward, Loyola University of Chicago (3rd from right); and members of the Austin Family



OSU President Ed Ray addresses the crowd at the grand opening of Weatherford Hall in 2004.



Ilene K. Kleinsorge, dean of the College of Business, 2003-present



Remembering Our Oldest Alumna

By Abby P. Metzger

In her 105 years, Gertrude Strowbridge did not achieve fame. She did not make the headlines, and her autobiography did not become a best-selling memoir. But within her circle of influence, Gertrude earned substantial respect as a hard-working and independent woman.

Gertrude was a very special student of the College of Business, although her age wasn't the only attribute that won her praise—she was a staunch proponent of education and had a savvy business sense. Until her death in 2007, she demonstrated remarkable resilience when hardship struck.

Born in Detroit, Michigan on November 24, 1901, Gertrude moved to Portland when she was four years old and later attended Jefferson High School.

She proved her independence at an early age. Despite her mother's criticism for pursuing higher education as a woman, Gertrude started saving money for college by managing accounts at a Portland hardware store. In 1923, she enrolled in Oregon Agricultural College (now OSU) and attended for three years without any financial support from her family.

Mike Strowbridge—one of her two grandsons—explained that Gertrude viewed her education as a necessary step to secure independence and livelihood. "She had an interest in learning and wanted to advance her skills," he said. "She also believed in taking charge of her own destiny through hard work."

While enrolled at OAC as a business administration student, Gertrude lived in Waldo Hall and was a member of Gamma Phi sorority. In 1926, during her junior year, she married her long-time sweetheart Ed.

Scholarly pursuits were her main focus as a student, but Gertrude also developed a passion for bridge—and she was an ace player, even into her 100s.

She and Ed had one child, Edwin Jr., born in 1928. Gertrude spent her time as a homemaker and mother during the next few decades, but then had an unexpected brush with tragedy: her husband passed away. At age 50, Gertrude suddenly faced having to rejoin the workforce.

At left: Gertrude and her husband Ed Sr. along the Columbia River Gorge
Photos courtesy of the Strowbridge family

“Her husband passed away at an early age and left her with a son in college, an unfinished house, and no means of support,” said Dana Strowbridge, Mike’s wife.

When she had no other choice but to go to work, Gertrude’s business education came in handy. She got a job as manager of a private medical practice with five doctors. For the next 18 years, she successfully kept the office in order by scheduling appointments, keeping the books, and overseeing office operations.

“Nanny [Gertrude] was proactive because her life experiences demanded it,” said Dana. “Her strengths revolved around knowledge and determination because she didn’t have anyone to fall back on. [She] invested her money, and was able to work for people who respected her business sense, compassion, and no-nonsense approach.”

In addition to her professional career, Gertrude stayed busy with her two grandsons. One of Mike’s favorite memories with his grandmother is when she taught him how to play golf during a family vacation in Seaside. “She was a really solid golfer and had this wonderful golf swing,” he recalled.

Mike also learned how to play bridge, but admitted he was no match for his grandmother. “I couldn’t hold my own,” he said.

Soon Gertrude’s grandchildren grew up and had children of their own. Dana recalled, “Nanny used to invite the great-grandkids over, and she always had them busy and content.” Gertrude had taken an oil painting class and would set up easels for the great-grandchildren so they could learn different art techniques. She had cocoa and cookies for the kids every Halloween and frequently rented a beach house for the entire family.

“I never saw her lose her temper with family, even when there were 13 of us,” said Dana.

Perhaps Gertrude’s most striking attribute was her firm belief in education. Nearly 80 years after attending OAC, she still acknowledged how her training at the College of Business changed her life and empowered her to enter the workforce after losing her husband. At her 105th birthday, she was quoted by the *Corvallis Gazette-Times* as being “crazy” about her education at the College of Business. “It made my whole future,” she said.

Top right: Gertrude with one of her six great-grandchildren
Bottom left: Gertrude celebrates her great-grand-daughter Paulina’s eighth birthday
Bottom right: (from left) Mike, Gertrude, Paulina, and Edwin Jr.

Besides advising her family to do their best and work hard, she preferred to lead by example. As it turns out, much of her family followed Gertrude’s example. Edwin Jr. earned his PhD in education and joined the faculty at the College of Education at OSU, and many of her two grandchildren and six great-grandchildren are in the educational field. Mike earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at OSU and is the curriculum coordinator for the Corvallis School District. Dana is an award-winning educator and serves as the tobacco prevention education coordinator for the Corvallis School District. Gertrude’s other grandson, Ed, works as a behavioral specialist at Corvallis High School. Half of her great-grandchildren have completed their degrees, and all are intent on finishing.

Gertrude may have never moved mountains, but she is an important part of the College of Business’ landscape. Whatever the scenario—losing her husband or attending college when her contemporaries were raising families—Gertrude crafted her life with the necessary wisdom and independence to succeed.





Successful Alumnus Champions Mentoring and Curriculum Changes

By Marie Oliver

How does a self-proclaimed “rudderless” youth who was raised in a broken home end up as chief executive officer of a major corporation? For Ken Thrasher (’71), mentoring by interested adults was a key underpinning to his career success.

Thrasher is the former CEO of Fred Meyer, current CEO of Compli, and recent recipient of the Oregon Business Association’s Statesman of the Year Award—the latest in a list of 15 awards he has received since 1999. He credits several mentors with helping him see the value of a college education and supporting him to find a focus for his life. Today, he champions early childhood learning, mentoring, and early career awareness for children and youth.

As a sophomore in high school, Thrasher got much more than his \$1 per hour wage when he started working for Bill Naito at Import Plaza in his hometown of Portland, Oregon. “Bill was a wonderful mentor to me for many years—actually up until he passed away,” said Thrasher. “He really focused on young people getting a college education. I wasn’t even sure if I was going to college at that time.”

Another influential person in Thrasher’s life was Mrs. Nyland, his accounting teacher at Franklin High School in Portland. “She saw that I had a lot of capabilities in accounting and bookkeeping, and really encouraged me to think about an accounting/finance type of career,” he said. “Between the two—Bill and Mrs. Nyland—I developed a passion. I liked math; I liked accounting; I liked finance. I kind of had an idea of what I wanted to be.”

When Thrasher enrolled at Portland State University for his freshman year, he included accounting classes in his schedule. By his sophomore year, he

had the financial resources to move away from home to attend OSU, where he deepened and broadened his knowledge and skills.

“When I came to Oregon State, I was basically ahead of the game in the accounting area,” he said. As a result, he had more time in his schedule to take business, marketing, finance, and other electives. By 1971 he had earned a bachelor’s degree in business with concentrations in accounting and math.

Thrasher readily admits that he was probably more focused than most of his peers during his college years. Although he didn’t have “chief executive officer” on his list of lifetime dreams, he knew he wanted to be a corporate treasurer or chief financial officer. When faced with making choices about his career direction, he clearly wanted a position in the financial department of a business rather than with a public accounting firm.

After graduating, Thrasher went into the Army National Guard for two years, and then accepted a position as accountant/bookkeeper for Mayflower Milk Company in Portland. Within three years, he was promoted to economist. “I got to do a lot of economic modeling, pricing, marketing, and a lot of things that were good to fill out my skill set,” he said. When the CFO/treasurer retired in 1978, Thrasher was offered and accepted the position.

“At the ripe age of 28, I became treasurer/CFO of Mayflower,” he said. In that position, which he held for three years, he executed an economic analysis that revealed benefits to merging the company with Darigold, and he was intimately involved in accomplishing the merger. After declining a position as general manager in the Seattle office because he didn’t want to leave Portland, he resigned in 1982.


Through his connection with Larry Brown at Coopers and Lybrand, Thrasher learned that Fred Meyer was looking for someone with his skills.

“They had a controller, but didn’t really have anyone to deal with cash management and the treasury needs of the organization,” he said. “They were heavily in debt following the company’s acquisition by KKR.”

Two months after leaving Mayflower, he became vice president/treasurer for Fred Meyer. His first task was to generate more cash flow, and he accomplished that goal. In 1986, Fred Meyer’s CFO retired and Thrasher became senior vice president and CFO for the company—a position he held for ten years. By 1997, he had been promoted to executive vice president of administration. In that role he managed three mergers and Y2K simultaneously.

At left: Ken Thrasher talks with student Lars Holmgren at a recent visit to Weatherford. Photo by Thuy Tran





“We grew from being a \$5 billion/35,000-employee company to having about 110,000 employees and \$15 billion in sales in the course of two years,” he said. “I had a pretty big job.”

In 1999, the company merged with Kroger and became a \$55 billion/310,000-employee company. Thrasher was appointed CEO and president of the Fred Meyer division, a position he held until he retired from Kroger in 2001 to spend more time with family and friends. “We had some real tragedy with cancer in our family,” he said.

During that time, he joined nine other investors in backing a start-up called Compli, a company that was developing compliance management software tools. In early 2002, the investors requested that he run the company—so much for retirement.

In addition to the work Thrasher does professionally, he works tirelessly for the community, with a special emphasis on youth and education. Since 1990, he has served on 20 boards of directors for nonprofit organizations or commissions and is currently active in nine of them. He believes that much needs to be done to revamp today’s educational system to better align elementary and secondary curriculums with college curriculums and the needs of business.

“Education is the path to breaking the cycle of poverty and despair that a lot of our young people are in—and to being successful,” he said. “Thirty percent of high school kids who go to college have to go through some form of intervention to survive. They aren’t up to speed on reading, math, science—whatever—and it’s because the college and high school curriculums are not aligned.” He praised OSU for the foundational work it has done to try to integrate curriculums.

“I know what Ed Ray and Sam Stern [dean of the College of Education] are doing and I think it’s wonderful,” he said. “They’ve gone out to Linn-Benton Community College, the Albany School District, Corvallis School District, and Philomath School District, and created a consortium to look at how they can better serve those needs. I think there are some bright spots out there and I think Oregon State University has an opportunity to show how it works.”

Because of his personal experience, Thrasher places a high value on early mentoring as a means to help youth feel supported and find their career direction early in life. For example, he is co-chair of Oregon Mentors, an organiza-

tion that helps mentoring organizations match mentors with at-risk youth. In addition, he chaired a business advisory program in the David Douglas School District in Portland when his sons Jeff and Ryan were attending in 1989. After conducting research to project what the job market would be like in five years, the program established a curriculum for eighth graders called STARS (Students Taking Authentic Routes to Success). The purpose was to provide students with early career awareness and begin the skill-building process.

“Relevance in the classroom made the David Douglas one of the more demanding programs,” he said. For example, students ran a real branch of Wells Fargo Bank and an insurance company from the classroom, and the Multnomah County Sheriff’s office offered a forensics class through the program. He said results show that although students who have been through the STARS program perform on state standardized tests at a normal level, when they go to college, they are ahead of many of their peers. As a result, Thrasher said, “they get higher scores, and they have a higher completion rate. It’s because of the career education and the linkage with college and the workplace.”

Thrasher has been married to his wife Marta for 36 years. Marta attended OSU, where the couple first met, and is a graduate of Portland State University. The couple has strongly supported both PSU and OSU over the years.

“I think the education I got here was first rate and I think it did prepare me for the workplace,” he said. “It provided the skill sets I needed that were relevant to the jobs I’ve had.”

He has been a visiting professional at the Austin Entrepreneurship Program at Weatherford Residential College three times and thoroughly enjoys visiting with the students.

“I have a lot of passion for Oregon State and I love the entrepreneur center,” he said. He and Marta sponsored a classroom at Weatherford Hall.

Thrasher doesn’t think he will ever retire in the traditional sense.

“I might retire from a physical job, but I’m not the kind of guy who is going to go down to Palm Springs and spend the winter sitting in the sun or playing golf,” he said. “That’s just not who I am. I’m going to be involved. I love being around young people. I love being around policy and trying to make change. And that’s where you’ll find me when I’m retired—whatever that means.”

Reluctant Politician Makes a Huge Difference for Oregon

By Marie Oliver

Senator Frank Morse ('70), R-Albany, wasn't sure he wanted to get into politics when an entourage of legislators tried to recruit him on the steps of the State Capitol in 2000. He said "no" several times before he got to "yes." Nonetheless, Morse's influence at the State Capitol has had a major impact on Oregon in at least three areas: university venture funding, health care reform, and comprehensive fiscal reform. In addition, he is a strong proponent of tax reform and has garnered bi-partisan support for his ideas about how to create a more sustainable economy for Oregon.

Morse is a native Oregonian who graduated from Lebanon High School in 1961. He attended OSU for two years, and then decided to become a minister. In 1963, he transferred to Northwest Christian College in Eugene, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in theology in 1966. It was there he met and married his wife Linda.

After serving as an associate pastor for a congregation in Forest Grove for two years, he decided the preaching ministry wasn't his calling.

"While I wouldn't trade my theology degree or my experience as a pastor for anything, I concluded that if you're going to be in the preaching ministry, you really have to have fire in your belly to preach—and I just didn't have that," he said.

Instead, Morse came back to OSU to earn a master's in general studies with a major in business and a minor in psychology. After spending two years doing mineral exploration in northeastern Washington, he went to work for Morse Bros., a family owned and operated company his father Joe and uncles Forrest and Bill had founded in 1941. In 1972, the concrete, aggregate and paving company offered him the opportunity to manage a new division it was opening in Albany.

At right: Senator Frank Morse in front of the State Capitol in Salem
Photo courtesy of the Oregon Senate Republican office





Morse quickly became involved in the corporate side of the business. He became vice president of operations in 1976, executive vice president in 1978, and president in 1980. In 1992, the business won the Austin Family Business Program's Excellence in Family Business Award in the large business category.

During his career with Morse Bros., Morse spent time at the Capitol lobbying for issues relevant to the industry, and developed "a fair amount of frustration" with some decisions that were made. Every once in a while he found himself thinking, "I get tired of some of the crazy things that come out of the legislature—maybe I could make a difference from a business perspective in that process." But he was far from setting a goal for public service, and in fact resisted the idea.

In 1998, the company sold its interests, and Morse continued as president for two years before he retired. He then began a very successful start-up called ENVIRON-Metal, Inc., which produces non-toxic ammunition for hunters called Hevi-Shot.

The company got started when an acquaintance came to him with an innovative idea and, working together with investors, they developed a business strategy.

"We had three objectives when we were deciding whether to do this business venture," he said. "One was that hopefully it would be profitable as a start-up. The second would be that we would have fun doing it. And the third would be that if it was unsuccessful, our lifestyles wouldn't change and we would still be friends. We developed a very successful product, and it's now distributed throughout North America and Europe. We've just had a grand time."

Morse had just returned from a trade show in Las Vegas when he received two phone calls from legislators asking him to run for the senate—phone calls that led him to the Capitol steps that fateful day. He left Salem with a strong show of support from the business community, but still remained undecided.

With the filing deadline looming, he spent a sleepless night wrestling with the decision, and was still awake at 4:30 a.m.

"I took a shower and went out to my desk," he said. "The only light in the house was the light on my desk and I just sat there. My appointment book was

At left: Morse catches the big one
Photo courtesy of Frank Morse

sitting in the middle of my desk and I opened it up and started turning page after page after page. There were a lot of pages with nothing on them, and it just dawned on me: I'm retired, I'm financially independent—for whom will I fill those pages—for me or for someone else? The cloud lifted off my head and I said, 'Okay, I'm going to run. I'm going to fill these pages for somebody else.'

Now into his second term, Morse said he is in the most challenging phase of his life.

"I've never done anything more difficult than serving in the legislature," he said. His business experience taught him that creating a culture of collaboration and teamwork is the way to move organizations forward, but he has discovered that partisan politics tends to make that approach much more difficult.

"That's my background and what I found was successful in life," he said, "and then you enter the world of politics and you have these arbitrary lines and boxes that people want to put you in—as either a democrat or a republican."

However, his learned approach seems to be serving him well, as evidenced by several recent successes.

Morse's greatest passion is building a better financial foundation for Oregon, and he is not afraid to tackle the hard issues. As a member of the Ways and Means Committee during his first legislative session, he immediately began working on a "rainy day fund" for Oregon, which meant attempting to reform Oregon's kicker law—a law that requires the state to refund a portion of collected income tax when income exceeds projections. Although his bi-partisan bill passed handily in the Senate, the House of Representatives wouldn't hear it. However, his goal of financial stability for Oregon did not die with the 2003 session, and he was chief architect on a fiscal reform bill that was signed into law in 2007.

"The bill is the most comprehensive review of Oregon's tax structure—state and local—that has ever been done," he said. "It's something I've had great passion for, and I think it has arisen out of my business background."

Another area close to Morse's heart is health care reform. As former chair of the board of trustees for Samaritan Health Services, he is keenly interested in creating a sustainable health care delivery system. That interest led to his

appointment to a senate commission on health care access and affordability in 2005 and then to the 2007 senate committee that sponsored the Healthy Oregon Act.

He is also chair of a senate subcommittee on health care reform that is working to implement a memorandum of understanding among Oregon Health & Science University, OSU, and Samaritan Health Services that will increase the number of medical doctors graduating from OHSU by 33 percent. OSU will play a significant role in educating first-year medical students.

Finally, Morse's passion for creating a sustainable economy for Oregon helped to create the statewide University Venture Development Fund. The fund was made possible through two senate bills, one of which creates a 60 percent tax credit for donations to university foundations to provide early stage venture capital for commercializing innovations that arise from university research. The legislature authorized the \$14 million in tax credit-eligible gifts, with \$5.2 million available to OSU, based on its annual income from research grants and contracts.

"I'm really excited about this idea—it's never been done before in the United States," he said. "It's gotten some attention nationally as a funding mechanism."

The goal of the fund is to stimulate entrepreneurship by supporting Oregon's research, entrepreneurial education, and technology transfer initiatives. It will support OSU's mission to provide profession-ready graduates while transforming university research and development activities into commercial ventures.

Depending on which tax bracket they are in, Morse said, donors may eventually be able to recoup up to 100 percent of their donation—up to a certain percentage of the gift—when combined with their federal charitable tax deduction.

The second bill, which amended the first, enabled the creation of an "evergreen" endowment, which means that universities will repay the state for claimed tax credits with income from royalties and licensing fees. As those tax credits are returned to the treasury, the university foundations will issue additional credits, creating a cycle of reinvestment that will foster more innovation.

"We worked with the universities on the details of how this would work so we didn't provide disincentives for departments and professors," said Morse. Funds are awarded through a grant application process, and a portion of the funds will go to support the Austin Entrepreneurship Program at Weatherford Residential College.

Morse says this provides a slam-dunk for university fundraisers. "If you offer somebody who has great interest and passion for their alma mater the opportunity to make a contribution and receive back nearly 100 percent of their contribution, even I could go out and raise that money," he said, laughing. "Long after I'm out of the legislature, I'll be interested in tracking this and seeing what impact it has on our state and our universities."

Morse's combined experience in the business world and politics has convinced him of the need for businesses to be engaged in the political process.

"They've got to provide leadership, and if we want good outcomes out of our educational system, business has got to support it," he said. "The funding for higher ed is not where it should be, and the business community has got to come to the forefront in a very strong way to achieve the changes that we need to have adequate funding."

Morse's decision to enter politics was not an easy one, and it is a decision he rethinks on occasion. He said with a smile, "I resigned three times this last session, and my wife pulled me back from the brink. I really love serving, but I abhor partisan politics."



MBA Graduate Helps Take MyStrands to the Next Level

By Abby P. Metzger

Transitioning from school to career can be a stressful time for graduates, and the College of Business works hard to prepare students to step into a profession. Trevor Legwinski is a great success story. Legwinski completed OSU's nine-month MBA program in June 2006 and, a day after graduating, landed a job with an Oregon-based music recommendation company called MyStrands.

MyStrands was founded in Corvallis in 2003 by Francisco Martin, a Spanish software developer who was in a postdoctoral program at Oregon State University. The company started as a service to help users connect with each other, receive music recommendations, and discover new and interesting things through desktop and mobile applications. The technology discerns patterns in musical tastes to find related songs users might never have discovered on their own.

Now, less than two years after graduating, Legwinski is using his entrepreneurial smarts to help shape MyStrands and grow its global presence.

"We're creating a social community around music, and we can do this by documenting the collaborative tastes of our audience and making

recommendations based on those tastes," said Legwinski. "It builds a virtual persona of who you are in real life."

This year, MyStrands is expanding its focus to help people discover more than just music, although Legwinski said users will have to wait and listen before he would elaborate on any upcoming features.

Beginning strands

Prior to joining MyStrands, Legwinski moved from Wisconsin to enroll in OSU's MBA program. His MBA team, Sideways Solutions, took first place in the program's business plan competition. Through the Close to the Customer (C2C) Project, he worked on an Oregon Coast Community College research project.

"My education at OSU gave me the leveraging ability to think strategically as a business person, and how to advance in my career," he said. "OSU's MBA program is so diverse that you get a wide background of information on everything from start-ups, to fundraising, to marketing plans, to management—and all of those things together give you the experience you need."

Initially, Legwinski moved around at MyStrands, doing design, marketing, and product management. He later flew to Barcelona, Spain, to manage a Web site for the company's latest brainchild, partyStrands.

PartyStrands is an interactive entertainment service that lets club hoppers send text messages and pictures, vote on songs, and influence the music through their mobile devices at a bar or party. These messages and photos are projected onto a screen so everyone can participate in the conversation. Users can be virtual participants of a party by requesting songs, sending messages, and voting from home at www.partystrands.com. They also can use partyStrands as a personal DJ at a social gathering. As the director of partyStrands, Legwinski is helping to revolutionize the way people communicate and the way companies advertise. He explains that conversations between partyStrands participants are no longer a two-way channel, but a social web that fosters commonality through virtual sharing.

Trevor Legwinski
Photo by Karl Maasdam

Photo courtesy of MyStrands





Photo courtesy of MyStrands

“PartyStrands is an interactive communication system where people can request songs and share musical tastes,” he said. “It’s one thing to talk to your friend in a bar, but it’s an entirely different thing to create your own music scene—your own music culture.”

Similarly, partyStrands now provides advertisers a way to target consumers on their mobile phones wherever they are via interactive screens, and online. The partyStrands screen projects everything from drink specials to advertisements. Bars can text customers to keep them informed of upcoming events, much like sending a newsletter to subscribers.

Composing a music culture

Legwinski’s product management efforts have paid off. Eighty venues in Spain and several in the United States have agreed to pay the \$600 set-up fee to host partyStrands. In these venues, partygoers average hundreds of texts per night. The software application officially launched in the United States on New Year’s Eve 2007.

Looking ahead, he sees the program moving into concerts, theatres, and shopping malls. His goal is to have the program in ten countries and 10,000 venues within a year or two. To help achieve his vision, he is initiating partnerships with various OSU departments, including the College of Business. Within the last year alone, he has hired three OSU students.

“OSU is a great school with a lot of talent that we want to tap into. We want to bring in ambitious people, so we’re starting to recruit and provide internships for students,” he explained.

What some might call luck, Legwinski calls healthy risk taking, which is why the 24-year-old wholly promotes his personal mantra: “Risk is the price you pay for opportunity.” He has used this advice to become a world-wide party purveyor, weaving a music culture one strand at a time. The young entrepreneur advises would-be graduates to keep an open mind, take some risks, and most importantly, have fun.

For more information, visit www.partystrands.com.

College of Business Hosts Centennial Open House

By Abby P. Metzger

On January 16, 2008—a Wednesday afternoon—Bexell Hall teemed with local educators, entrepreneurs, and business owners. Enjoying food and drink, attendees mingled with the future workforce and explored the diverse exhibits on display.

Yes, it was the middle of a work day. But it was a very special day: 100 years prior, the Oregon State Board of Regents approved President William J. Kerr's request to establish a school of commerce. In honor of that day in 1908, the College of Business hosted an open house to celebrate 100 years of providing cutting-edge academics and educating innovative global leaders.



Photo by Karl Maasdram



Austin Entrepreneurship Program Director Chris Klemm mingles with students during the open house.



“The open house was an opportunity to recognize the students, faculty, and business community members who have helped us build an educational legacy,” said Dean Ilene Kleinsorge.

In addition to celebrating a century of academic achievement, the event exhibited ways the college serves the present and future needs of the business community. Attendees explored the Austin Family Business Program and learned about a variety of workshops for family enterprises. Students gave tours of Weatherford Hall, home of the Austin Entrepreneurship Program and the largest living-learning center of its kind in the country.

Information was also available about the college’s MBA program, which is tailored to working professionals.

Student Richard Surroz displayed a computer he built for his MBA project that operates inside a casing shaped like a human body. In the next display, the Sustainable Business Initiative discussed distinctive educational and research programs focused on sustainability.

Several exhibits highlighted hands-on learning programs that prepare students for a career and offer businesses important services. One such program is the Business Solutions Group. During the open house, Business Solutions Group representatives demonstrated how more than 50 student interns learn the newest advances in systems development, IT testing, and business analysis services each year.

Participants in the Close to the Customer Project discussed how they foster valuable exchanges between students and businesses. Mentored by faculty, students provide professional market research and consulting services to help business enterprises improve decision-making and reduce risks.

“Our partnership with the business community is an intrinsic part of providing an excellent, real-world learning experience for our students, and the open house showcased the result of that partnership,” said Kleinsorge.

Left: MBA student Richard Surroz describes the components of his computer case modification to Professor Tom Dowling.

Top right: Dean Ilene Kleinsorge listens as Ron Loe, Wood Castle Furniture’s president and OSU graduate, describes the heritage of the family business.

Bottom right: Austin Family Business Program Assistant Director Sherri Noxel encourages a student to attend an upcoming conference to connect with other students from family-owned businesses.

Photos by Karl Maasdam





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100th Birthday!

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Your gift to the College of Business will foster new opportunities for students and prepare profession-ready graduates who can excel in an innovative knowledge-based economy.

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