



*DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI - 2022*

**LARRY BRANDT**

**CLASS 1969**

It's an old bromide that an event's success will be measured when “the rubber meets the road.” That expression sums up the career of Larry Brandt very well. During college Larry had a summer job at the tire warehouse in Albert Lea. Little did he know how important “tires meeting the road” would be in his professional life.

After college Larry worked in the wholesale tire industry. In 1985 the company he worked for merged with Tires Plus, a small retail tire company with 5 stores. Larry oversaw the growth of Tires Plus from the original 5 to 144 stores and eventually he was named president of the company in 1995. In 2000 the company he guided was sold to Firestone. At that point, though, he was not finished with the tire business. He started MSB Tires and grew that entity until it was purchased in 2010 by TBC/Michelin.

In his 25 years developing these companies, Larry was also an avid participant in the professional support group for the entire industry, the Tire Industry Association. Larry held a variety of positions with the organization culminating with his election to its presidency. As an advocate for the tire industry, Larry spearheaded TIA's programs of improving training of employees, of improving relationships with government, and of “Go Green” practices and recycling improvements. Also, based on his years of experience with his companies, he stressed to the TIA members the importance of communication both in and out of the industry. This included asking employees, “What would you change if you owned the business?” Larry recognized early on that both employees and owners liked to talk about the business and it made sense to ask them about it. Knowledge picked up from others' successes and failures helped build better sales and service. That was a big part of Larry's success. After the sale of his second company, Larry stayed connected to the tire industry as a business consultant and entrepreneur looking for new opportunities.

For the last several years he has served on the boards of various companies. At the same time, he ventured into the world of the internet and helped develop PayCargo, a company that offers a payment software system for ocean and air freight operations. As he describes it, the company is the equivalent of PayPal for this segment of the transportation industry. It brought new ideas and streamlined the billing/payment systems for companies in this sector.

When he lived in Prior Lake Larry was also very committed to the charitable goals of the Rotary Club and worked for several years with them in raising money for community needs. Larry is also a strong support of the Wounded Warrior Project. Larry Brandt is an outstanding nominee for the ALEF Distinguished Alumni award. His entire professional life has been a series of successes that continue to carry on through today. When held up to the old bromide, "...where the rubber meets the road," Larry's achievements surpass all expectations of that contact point!