In September 1954, Al enrolled at Yale University’s School of Forestry. Though he became a fourth generation lumberman, he was the first in his extended family to receive a Master’s degree in Forestry. Al combined his interests in forestry and mechanics by focusing on used wood technology and utilization at Yale. Summer also took him into the woods, where he sharpened his ability to survey and cruise timber.

In 1954, Al took on an additional responsibility as well. He and Jane welcomed their first child, Susan, into the world. Three other children followed, Fred in 1957, Joyce in 1958, and Beth in 1961. When Al graduated from Forestry School in 1956, he was undecided as to what direction to follow. He considered working in Alaska, but his mother suggested that he join the family business instead. Al’s uncle, Truman, then the head of the Collins Pine Company, extended an offer to Al, so he and his family moved to Chester, California, the location of the company’s principal operations.

In Chester, Al immersed himself in every part of the company’s operations. He wanted to learn the business from the bottom up and experience firsthand the workday of the rank-and-file employees. In the woods, Al marked timber, set chokers, drove trucks, supervised a salvage logging side, and more. In the plant, he filed saws, operated dry kilns, pulled on lumber chains, supervised the sawmillél dispatch, and so on. Al had just one Achilles’ heel: “I never had much success learning how to grade lumber,” he joked.

In 1959, Al finally began to put his advanced knowledge in wood technology to work when he oversaw the construction and supervised the start-up of a Rakeboard (particleboard) plant at Chester. The first of its kind in the western pine region, this operation used newly developed resins and sizings that were compatible with the species. His experience from this project came in handy later in 1973 when he led the effort to build a new hardwood mill at the company’s Kane, Pennsylvania, location.

In 1964, Al’s uncle, Truman W. Collins, died of a heart attack at the age of 61. Al’s father, Elmer Goudy, who had been looking forward to retirement, took over as head of the company. In 1966, Al moved his family to Portland, and he joined his father at the company’s corporate headquarters in the city’s Terminal Sales Building. As vice president, Al oversaw operations in Chester, Kane, and Lakewood (Oregon). When Elmer finally retired in 1974, Al became president of the company.

To take some administrative burden off his shoulders, Al created the position of president, vice president, administration, and hired John Connolly for the job. Connolly became Al’s right-hand man, and the two worked closely together for the next eight years. “Alan’s real strength was forestry and timber holdings, and he became president when there was less timber to go around,” Connolly recalled, noting in passing that his boss was called “Alan” in the office and at the plants. Al guided the company through a period of change in the industry and the culture at large. “He was very employee-oriented and amenable to change,” Connolly said.

Connolly remembered one small, but meaningful, policy change that exemplified Al’s leadership and independence: “We traveled out of town three times each year for retirement and service anniversary parties for long-term employees. Following strict Methodist rules, we fought being excommunicated in the woods by coming to church on Sunday.”

Though Al was certain that the time had come for a change, he was unsure what path to follow. He had no intention simply to retire from public life, and he recognized that he could bring his business, leadership, financial, and technical strengths to a wide range of activities. He also wanted the opportunity to serve institutions and organizations that had made a meaningful contribution in his life.

After his heart attack, Al had recuperated with the help of the cardiac rehabilitation program at the Portland YMCA. Now he wanted to help out the Y’s. “He served first on the Board and as president of the downtown Portland Y and then on the Board of the greater Portland area YMCA organization.

Willamette University, the U.S. Navy, and the world of forestry had also been central to Al’s life. He became a member of the Board of Trustees of Willamette, sat on the Endowment Committee, and served as chair of the Financial Affairs Committee for a number of years. Today he is a Life Member of the Board. With his debt to the U.S. Navy in mind, Al became a member of the Board of Trustees of the Columbia River Maritime Museum. He also became involved with Oregon State University’s Hatfield Marine Science Center and serves on the Board of a corporation that owns three research vessels leased to the OSU College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences. Al even joined notable marine biologist Bruce Mate, Ph.D., on a number of whale research expeditions.

Throughout his career at the Collins Pine Company, Al was an active member of a number of industry associations. During his time with the company and after he left, he maintained his commitment to the woods and the environment as a member of the Society of American Foresters, a director and president of the Keep Oregon Green Association, and a member of the Board of Directors of the World Forestry Center. Al is also a Board member of Lumber Pioneers, an organization of industry veterans.

Al also served on the Board of Directors of the Oregon Lumber Company, headquartered in Pinetree, Oregon. Ollie Managing Director John Shelp recalled that Al could be blunt and pointed in advising the company. “He would ask the tough, hard questions.” Outside of business—on World Forestry Center trips and at other events—John saw Al’s more affable side as well. “Al can be quite engaging. We formed a warm friendship over the years.”

Al’s departure from the Collins Pine Company also enabled him to spend more time with his family. To this day, he continues to enjoy ski trips with his children and grandchildren. Sadly, Al and Jane’s middle daughter Joyce passed away in 1999 after suffering Hodgkin’s disease for 20 years. Jane was also a cancer survivor, who extended her life for nine years after intensive treatment. She died in 2005, shortly after her and Al’s 60th wedding anniversary.

In the face of change and adversity, Al has never been one to rest on his laurels. Though Al was uncertain what path to follow, he had no intention simply to retire from public life, and he recognized that he could bring his business, leadership, financial, and technical strengths to a wide range of activities. He also wanted the opportunity to serve institutions and organizations that had made a meaningful contribution in his life.

A few years later, Al decided that he needed a change himself. In April 1982, he had a mild heart attack. A week in the hospital triggered Al to reflect on his life and career, and he came to the conclusion that he was not enjoying his work. He officially resigned as president of Collins Pine on January 31, 1983.

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