Darrell was born on May 17, 1923, in Albany, Oregon, the second son of Herbert A. and Mabel E. Schroeder. While he was still a child, his family gave up their homestead claim and relocated to Mill City, Oregon, far from the farm. Herbert Schroeder worked for Hammond Lumber Company, which ceased operations during the Great Depression.

In the early 1930s, economic conditions worsened across the nation. To put to work such skills, and to develop America's natural resources, the federal government launched the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1933. Darrell's father, uncle, and brother all worked in the program, helping operate CCC camps and teaching logging skills. In 1935, Darrell's father and uncle were offered an opportunity to purchase shares in a startup sawmill—Darrell thought of them as tests of a sort—Mr. Miller asked Darrell to consider harvesting timber from this land, though he had initially planned to sell it. Darrell accompanied Mr. Miller on numerous trips to California, where they began to consult with local lumbermen about redwood logging. Eventually, Mr. Miller and Darrell had a great time island-hopping along the route between Oregon and Alaska. In fact, their shared interest in hunting and fishing made Darrell and Mr. Miller close friends. Mr. Miller later served on the company's Board until 1996.

Darrell graduated from Mill City High School in 1941. Though he worked during his high school years, he also had the chance to play in his school's football and basketball teams.

In the fall of 1941, Darrell began his freshman year at Oregon State College (now University) in Corvallis, with the intention of studying Forestry and Logging Engineering. He had been enrolled for just a few months when Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entered World War II. Darrell enlisted in the U.S. Army and was called up after the first term of his freshman year. As a U.S. citizen—had established a homestead in woodlands near Gates, Oregon, in the late 19 th century. When Darrell was born, his father still farmed the family homestead, though a sawmill on the property had closed in the early 1900s. Darrell's father was a skilled mechanic and mechanic. He ran logging "slogging" (the industry term for work) by men often worked on maintaining and repairing logging equipment. Informally, his job title was "donkey doctor"—a mechanic who repaired steam engine "donkeys" "donkeys" worked to winch timber felled.

Darrell's mother moved to Oregon as a child when her mother, sister, and brother moved to Albany, Oregon, from Iowa. She became an elementary school teacher, working as one of just two teachers in a small schoolhouse in Gates, Oregon.

When Darrell was still a young child, his family gave up their homestead claim and relocated to Mill City, Oregon, far from the farm. Herbert Schroeder worked for Hammond Lumber Company, which ceased operations during the Great Depression.

As a freshman in high school, Darrell worked under his brother on cross-building the tracks and logging his homestead claim. The next two summer sea- sons, Darrell worked as a laborer—placing cables on lumber as it was moved from the mill. Darrell was young and relatively inexperienced, but he had an advan- tage; though he was born by birth, he could cut wood left-handed. A head tester needed a lefthanded chopper, and Darrell earned the job. His mother disapproved, but his father consented, so Darrell worked while attending his last two years of high school and before entering college.

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During the 1960s and 1970s, the Schroeder family spent the next 23 years as California residents and raised their children in the communities of Stinson Beach and Mill Valley, California, where they began to consult with local lumbermen about redwood logging. Eventually, Mr. Miller and Darrell had a great time island-hopping along the route between Oregon and Alaska. In fact, their shared interest in hunting and fishing made Darrell and Mr. Miller close friends. Mr. Miller later served on the company's Board until 1996.

In 1988, shortly after returning home from a business trip, Darrell suffered a heart attack, and he soon had bypass surgery. He retired in 1991, though he remained on the company's board until 1996.

Darrell remained highly active in retirement. A hunter and fisher himself, he took his grandchildren and nephews on many fishing and hunting trips. He was a member of the Miller family and often played when they traveled. They have also enjoyed seeing their three grandchildren grow up—and now they have a great grandson as well. When asked what he was most proud of running a successful logging and lumber operations, Darrell modestly said that the “picket good people” to work alongside him. But as his children and colleagues attest, Darrell's generosity of spirit, dedication, and hard-willedness brought out the very best in people that had the privilege to know and work with him throughout his rich career and life.