

Jerry S. Von Rohr

Jerry Von Rohr, a 1962 graduate, is being recognized as a Distinguished Alumni for his community service to the St. Louis area and his career achievements. Jerry's family moved to Murphy, Missouri in 1954, and he attended High Ridge Elementary along with his brother, Jim and his sister, Janet, before attending Northwest Junior High and Northwest High School. His parents, Oliver and Maxine, were very supportive of their children's education and attended various events at Northwest High over the nine years their children were students.

While at Northwest, Jerry achieved Senior Honors, was Class President, Student Council President, Mr. Northwest and a member of the National Honor Society. He played football and baseball, participated in the Junior and Senior plays, and attended Boys State. He established many good friends, had memorable teachers and many occasions that will never be forgotten. After High School he attended Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, where he obtained an undergraduate degree in Business Administration. He was active in student government all four years and was Student Body President his senior year. He graduated with Departmental Honors (21 hours or more of straight A's) and worked closely with Drury President on student matters while Student Body President. Later he represented Drury on the Missouri Colleges Board and was Chairman of the Board for one year, (only the second non-college president to serve in that capacity at the time). He also served on the Board of Trustees of Drury University for four years and was a member of the finance committee. He and his wife Liz, still support Drury and their alumni activities. In 1969, Jerry obtained a Master's of Science in Commerce degree from Saint Louis University with a Major in Management and a Minor in Finance.

Shortly after graduating from Drury, Jerry married Elizabeth Gay Rosner, his college sweetheart and best friend, whom he met in his freshman year. This June they will celebrate their 57th wedding anniversary. They have two sons, Scott and Jason, two wonderful daughters-in-laws, Dawn and Hilary, and four grandchildren, Michael, Lucy, Wilson and Samantha, all of whom make them very proud. Jerry says his best moments are when he is spending time with his family competing against his sons and grandchildren.

In June of 1966, Jerry started working at McDonnell Aircraft Corporation, as a PERT analyst working on F-4 Trainers that were being used to train pilots for the Vietnam War. He moved to Boatmen's National Bank in February 1968, as a trainee in their credit department analyzing company financial statements that were part of the application for commercial loans. After the training program, he was assigned to the National Accounts division and was assigned the New England territory. Following some successes, he quickly received other territories including Chicago, New Orleans, Houston and Memphis and Louisville where he traveled for three years calling on customers and other bankers. He was then appointed as a special assistant to Donald Brandin, the Chairman and CEO of Boatmen's. There, he gained valuable experience working on bank acquisitions as Boatman's Acquired 7 banks in a two-year period. Following that he was put in charge of the Retail Division and had over 90 people reporting to him. At the time (age 28), he was the youngest person to be elected a Vice President of Boatman's

National Bank. In July of 1977, Jerry joined the Metro Bank Group as Executive Vice President and later became President of Hampton Metro and chairman of Crestwood Metro Bank. He had management responsibilities at all levels and remained with Metro until they sold to Boatman's Bancshares in 1983.

Jerry then set out to create what became known as Mega Bancshares, Inc. He raised initial capital of \$3 million by selling stock to 40 investors and took out a loan of \$6 million to purchase Santa Ana Bancorp., a small, two bank holding company that owned the Bank of St. Ann and Woods Mill Forty Bank. Over the next 10 years, he grew the organization from \$55 million to \$160 million in assets before selling to Magna Group Inc., in 1993. He joined Magna Group, Inc. as Executive Vice President of Magna Bank of Missouri and later became President of the St. Louis Region. This provided him with experience at a much larger banking group as the St. Louis Region had over \$1.5 billion in assets and the total banking group was \$7.2 billion in assets. In the summer of 1998, Jerry left Magna after they were acquired by Union Planters Bank.

In the fall of 1998, he raised \$9 ½ million in capital to form a new bank known as the Reliance Bank. Over the next 10 years, he grew Reliance Bancshares to over \$1.5 billion in assets with 26 locations located in Missouri, Illinois, Florida, Texas and Arizona. During that period, he served as Chairman and CEO of Reliance Bancshares, Inc., the parent company. He left in August 2011, and joined Jefferson Bank & Trust and remained there until they sold to First Mid Bank & Trust in April of 2022. He is currently with First Mid Bank & Trust, but will retire this year after 55 years in the banking industry.

Jerry's community involvement spans many decades. He has been involved with Lutheran Family & Children's Service since 1982, when he joined their Auction Council and he and his wife served as Chairman of the Auction in 1988. He has run the Season of Sharing Program for Jefferson Bank for 12 years that benefits Lutheran Family & Children's and Good Shepherd Home, a Catholic Charity. He was involved in the Youth Mentoring Program at the Brentwood School district as a mentor for "at risk" youth for 8 years. He was on the Drury University Board of Trustees from 1998 until 2002, the Missouri Colleges Fund Board from 1996 until 2003 and District Chairman and Board Member of the Boy Scouts of America from 1992 until 1994. Most recently, he has served on the The Lutheran Elementary School Association Development Committee, which helps raise money for scholarships to attend Lutheran elementary schools. He and his wife have also supported the Bach Society for many years, currently serving as honorary members of their Gala Committee.

Jerry feels blessed to have attended Northwest High School and for the support he received from his teachers and classmates, and is very gratified by being recognized as a Distinguished Alumni.

Go "Nittany Lions!"