

William S. Woodside Biography

William S. Woodside was born on January 31, 1922 in Columbus, Ohio during the Depression. His father, who built refrigerated warehouses, relocated the family numerous times in order to find work. They finally settled in Baltimore, Maryland where Mr. Woodside attended public school. Upon graduation, he entered Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA and planned to become a chemical engineer. However, in 1943 he was drafted into military service and spent his twentieth birthday on a troop ship off the coast of Scotland. He was stationed at Peterboro Air Force base in England but decided that he wanted to make a larger contribution to the war effort and volunteered to be transferred to London to defuse unexploded bombs. Eventually, the army assumed that his brief study as a chemical engineer made him qualified, and parachuted him behind German lines in France where he blew up bridges and roads before being captured. With the help of French resistance, he escaped and returned to England where he was hospitalized. In 1945, he was demobilized and returned to his studies at Lehigh. Upon completion of his undergraduate BA degree in Chemical Engineering in 1947, Mr. Woodside attended Harvard University's College of Arts and Sciences and received his MA in Economics in 1950.

In 1950, Mr. Woodside was hired by the American Can Company as its first economist. Recognizing the fact that he needed line experience in order to compete for a top management position, he ran the Dixie Cup operation in Easton, PA from 1962-1964. Later, he returned to the company's headquarters to become the Senior Vice President and Group Executive of the Packaging Division. In 1975, the Board of Directors elected Mr. Woodside as President and Chief Operating Officer. Then from 1980-1986, he was Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. Following his retirement, he became Chairman of LSG Sky Chefs, Inc., the largest airline catering firm in the world.

One of the most significant accomplishments under Mr. Woodside's leadership was the restructuring of the American Can Company from an old line traditional manufacturing corporation to a financial services and specialty retailing firm. By 1982, due to high interest rates and the lingering effects of inflation in the 1970's, he foresaw that the future of the United States was a service economy. Anticipating this change in economic structure, he transformed the company from a manufacturing to a service company. He sold the highly profitable forest products and paper business to the James River Corporation. This in turn yielded the necessary cash to make acquisitions in financial services and the mail order catalogue and record business. Subsequently, due to difficulties for farmers to obtain financing and market saturation in the can business, he sold off the can operation. At that point, the company was renamed Primerica, Inc.

Likewise, in 1982, Mr. Woodside undertook the restructuring of the American Can Company Foundation. Until that time, the Foundation had carried out a traditional donation program in local municipalities where employees and plants were located. American Can also provided scholarships to employees' children. However, to achieve a greater impact, outcome and effectiveness, he moved the Foundation to an issue-focused approach. To do this, the Foundation selected three areas of importance to the company. They were hunger in America, the corporate role in pre-collegiate public education and economic transition in the workforce. At its peak, the Foundation had a budget of only 3.7 million dollars but due to Mr. Woodside's passion, commitment and willingness to take a leadership position, the Foundation became known as an outstanding force in the non-profit world. He was undaunted when it came to expressing his principles and values. Mr. Woodside's leadership gave the Foundation's mission credibility and its activities visibility throughout the country. His conviction gave the Foundation impetus and fire.

Mr. Woodside's additional corporate involvements included being a Director on the Board of the James River Corporation, Van Kampen American Capital Family of Funds, Mellon Bank, Nabisco and Nabisco Standard Brands, Primerica Corporation and Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

His non-profit affiliations included: *President*, Whitney Museum of American Art; *Chairman* of the Regional Plan of NY, NJ and CT, Institute for Educational Leadership, Northeast-Midwest Leadership Council, Academy of Political Science; *Vice Chairman*, Board of Trustees, Committee for Economic Development, National Forum on the Future of Children and Their Families; *Board of Visitors*, The Graduate Center of the City University of New York; *Director*, Public Education Fund, Fund for NYC Public Education, Manpower Research and Demonstration Research Corporation, New York City Partnership, Business Community for the Arts, Phoenix House, New Visions for Public Schools; *Trustee*, Barnard College, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; *Member*, Board of Overseers Harvard School of Public Health, Dean's Council, Harvard Scholar of Public Health. He also served on the Advisory Council of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy and was a member of the Business Roundtable and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Mr. Woodside received Honorary Degrees from Lafayette College, College of New Rochelle and State University of New York at Purchase. He was awarded the Cleveland E. Dodge Medal for Distinguished Service from Teachers College at Columbia University.

In 1995, for health reasons, William S. Woodside relocated to Scottsdale, AZ during the winter months and resided also in Litchfield, CT and New York City. New York is where he passed away on November 15, 2000.