



Alan Collins Goudy

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Forester and lumberman Alan Collins "Al" Goudy followed in his family's footsteps by becoming president of a leading forest products company that traces its origins back to the mid-19th century. But Al had a strong spirit of independence and a broad range of interests, which compelled him to move forward, beyond the family company to pursue other ventures.

Al was born in 1930 in Portland, Oregon, the only child of Elmer R. Goudy and Grace Collins Goudy. Al's mother was the granddaughter of T.D. Collins, who began the family's lumber operations in Pennsylvania in 1855. The son of a Scottish engineer, Al's father was born in Chicago and graduated from Stanford Law School. In the early 1930s, Elmer Goudy served in the administration of Oregon Governor Julius L. Meier. He later worked for the Collins Pine Company and became president of the business upon the sudden death of Truman W. Collins, Al's uncle, in 1964.

Al grew up in Portland, attending Ainsworth Elementary, Gabel Country Day School, and Hillside Grade School. During a long period when his mother was ill and convalescing, Al lived with his grandmother Mary Laffey Collins and grandfather Everell Stanton "E.S." Collins, a stern man and devout Methodist who had something of a reputation as a curmudgeon.

Under his grandparents' care, Al prospered and developed several interests that he would carry into adulthood. His grandmother provided him with a set of Compton's Encyclopedia, and Al read voraciously. "I recall being very interested in a number of sections that covered the physical sciences, and I can still picture the one on aviation," Al said. And sure enough, he developed a passion for airplanes and flying, and became a licensed pilot as soon as he turned 21.

Al graduated from Portland's Lincoln High School in 1947 and enrolled in Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. He joined the Naval Reserve while at Willamette and became a member of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity as well. While Al enjoyed college life, even serving as his fraternity's house manager, he primarily focused on his studies. Al also spent part of his summers working for the family-owned Collins Pine Company, learning a lot about operations in the woods.

Al began college with a strong focus on the physical sciences, and then historical events dictated his college major. He was called up for active service in the Korean War, and to apply for Officer Candidate School, he needed his college degree. He had the most credits in the sciences, so he loaded up on courses and finished his Bachelor's degree in Physics in just three and a half years.

Though he commenced training as an electronics technician in the enlisted Reserve, after completing Officer Candidate School, he served as an engineering, communications, operations, and anti-submarine warfare officer on destroyers. He was commissioned as an ensign and advanced to lieutenant junior grade during three overseas tours. He was eventually discharged as a lieutenant.

Al didn't care for strict naval hierarchy, which created strong divisions between enlisted sailors and officers. Still, Al's Navy years were instrumental in building his character. "I matured a lot in the Navy," he recalled. By the time Al completed active service in 1954, he had received the Korean Service Medal (3 Stars), the National Defense Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, and the China Service Medal (Ext.).

After his first overseas tour, Al wed Jane Widmer in 1952 in Portland. The two had known each other since their high school days when they met through the Methodist Youth Fellowship program. Al spent the first two years of his marriage largely separated from Jane, and when he returned to civilian life, he immediately took her across the country to begin the next chapter of their shared life.

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 wood technology and utilization at Yale. Summers 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, Paul in 1957, Joyce in 1958, and Ruth in 1961.

When Al graduated from Forestry School in 1956, he was undecided 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 sawmill dayshift, 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 flakeboard (particleboard) plant at Chester. The first of its kind in the western pine region, this operation used newly developed resins and sizing 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 Lakeview (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 vice president, administration, and hired Joe 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 to Chester a few times each year for retirement and service anniversary parties for longtime employees. Following strict Methodist rules left over from years past, these events never included any liquor or beer, which didn't make for much of a party for loggers and sawmill workers. Alan finally agreed that a change was needed, and it made all the difference."

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 offered him the opportunity 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.

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." 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. He is also a Board member of Lumber Pioneers, an organization of industry veterans.

Al also served on the Board of Directors of the Ochoco Lumber Company, headquartered in Prineville, Oregon. Ochoco Managing Director John Shelk 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 surviving 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 53rd wedding anniversary.

In the face of change and adversity, Al has never been one to rest or retreat. When asked whether he has a personal philosophy or motto to live by, Al notes that his last name begins with the word, Go. "I've always been interested in being part of what it takes to make things go," Al says, "whether it's an airplane, a car, a motorcycle, a ship, a project, or a company." Al's willingness to pursue new ideas, new directions, and new challenges has led to an active and meaningful life that has had a positive impact on his family, friends, and the greater community of Oregon and beyond.