



Warren C. Jimerson

1931-1989

Born the son of a lumberman in a small Southern Oregon sawmill town, Warren C. Jimerson grew up closely associated with the lumber business. Lumber was as much a part of his past as it would be his future. He spent his childhood around trees, planted them as an adult, and made his livelihood from their products. Warren grew tall and strong in the timber business, and his roots were deep in the belief of wise forest management.

Warren was born May 9, 1931, in the town of Algoma, Oregon, to C.L. and Leah Jimerson. His father, a respected lumberman in his own right, worked as the sales manager at the Algoma Lumber Company. As a youth, Warren held numerous jobs in the forest products industry during school vacations. He went on to study forest products at Oregon State University and graduated from the School of Forestry in 1954 with his Bachelor of Science degree. That same year he married

Lucile Davis, who also graduated from OSU in 1954.

After graduation, Warren and his bride moved to Wisconsin, where he served as an officer in the U.S. Air Force for two years. He did not stay away from forests for long, however. In 1956 Warren and Lucile moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where Warren worked for the Duke City Lumber Company in production management. Two years later, he accepted a position with Georgia-Pacific Corporation, a move that brought him to Portland, Oregon. He and Lucile settled in Portland to raise their family. They found a piece of property in Southwest Portland with a panoramic view of the valley and the coast range and built their home in 1961. They had two sons, Robert and Lee, who both graduated from Oregon State and went on to pursue careers in the forest products industry.

In 1961, Warren was hired by several wood moulding producers to form the Western Wood Moulding and Millwork Producers Association (WMMPA), a trade organization for wood moulding producers in the western states. Warren's affable personality and knowledge of the business were a perfect combination for the job. He served as executive vice president for the association from its inception until 1979.

"One of Warren's real strengths was being able to unify diverse individuals to serve a common purpose. The WMMP Association is a great example (of that)," said Chase Israelson, of Dorris Lumber & Moulding. H got us working together, which is a real tribute to his strength of character. I do not believe anyone else could have accomplished that and made the association so successful."

"Warren built the association," said Sterling Mentink. "He was always generating new ideas, and always stirred up interest...always." He never let things grind to a halt.

In 1979 Warren joined Contact Lumber Company, in Portland, as head of that wood moulding manufacturer's import division, Contact International. He served as president of Contact International until his sudden death at his office on March 15, 1989. He was 57 years old and had been married to Lucile for over 35 years.

One of his colleagues, Richard Newman, president of Plywood Tropics USA, said at the time of Warren's death, "I have met few people who have made such an impact on the wood products industry as Warren Jimerson. He had a great enthusiasm for the industry and consistently tried to improve it. In one instance, he almost single-handedly got a set

of grading rules for mouldings accepted by both the domestic buyers and the foreign producers. He was unique in that he sustained enthusiasm for a project until it was completed."

Robert Donnelly of Contact Lumber Company said, "As a friend, one of the many things I admired in Warren was his keen interest in exploring a city or a country each time he visited to see or experience something new. This same trait held true in his interest in making new friends, developing new sources of supply and new products. He had a vital interest in the world around him."

Warren Jimerson was a dynamic and committed member of the wood products industry, not only in Portland and the Western United States, but throughout the world. During his time with Contact Lumber, he chaired industry committees to establish industry standards and promote lumber products. Warren was most active in the International Hardwood Products Association (IHPA), where he served on the Board of Directors, was chairman of the Lumber Products Committee, and participated in the IHPA Claims, Lumber and Transportation committees.

Warren was also involved in the Malaysian timber industry, particularly the wood moulding sector. As chairman of IHPA's Lumber Products Committee, he provided valuable insight in the formulation of grading rules for tropical hardwood machined lumber products, a joint effort between IHPA, the Malaysian Wood Moulding Council and the Malaysian Timber Industry Board. In addition, he served as industry advisor to the International Tropical Timber Organization,

a semi-governmental body that implemented research projects and established guidelines for properly managing tropical rainforests.

Following his death, messages of sympathy and remembrance were received from Warren's family from around the world.

From Malaysia, "With his wealth of knowledge of the tropical hardwood lumber and mouldings, his death is a great loss to the industry."

From the Philippines, "He was not only a fair business associate but a good friend as well who unselfishly helped us improve our operations. It was a pleasure dealing with him or simply being with him."

From Mobile, Alabama, "Warren was one whale of a fine lumberman and everyone knew this. Warren saw things in a clear, broad, wise manner."

From Portland, Oregon, "His greatest excitement was whatever he was going to do in the very next second, minute or hour. A unique man and a long-time friend that we will all miss."

His son, Bob, remembers one of the lessons taught by his father's example – the precious gift of time. "He extracted the full value of each day. By his actions he showed the importance of carefully selecting, and diligently striving toward worthwhile goals."

Warren's son, Lee, said, "He believed in the whole tree concept. When you use a tree, use all of it that you possibly can." Warren directed Contact International to be a proponent of developing products and markets using low-grade wood that would otherwise be thrown away. Warren was instrumental in

setting up a pre-finished moulding program at Clear Pine Moulding that finger-jointed short, low-grade blocks of wood (cutstock) from the Philippines that normally would be burned as waste overseas.

His work was always foremost in his mind, but in his free time, he had many interests and talents. His hobbies included gardening, raising Bonsai trees, photography, playing the piano and cooking (Scandinavian and Oriental were his favorites). He also enjoyed farming, horseback riding and woodworking projects.

His main hobby even centered around trees. He and his sons planted about 20,000 Douglas fir trees on the family farm, set on 57 acres along the Nehalem River, in the Oregon Coast Range. Whenever he traveled, he collected seeds and brought them back to plant. He enjoyed nature, especially horses and dogs. He received a tremendous amount of satisfaction and enjoyment working on the farm. There were always tasks at hand, whether chopping fire wood, mending a fence, replanting trees, or pruning the apple trees. It was a place Warren could get away from it all, without having to slow his pace for a moment.

Warren and Lee remodeled the farm house with various woods from around the world, including China, Chile, the Philippines, Ecuador and Brazil. When Merlo Hall was being built in 1987, Warren donated some of these same woods to the World Forestry Center. The woods can be found as paneling on the office walls of Merlo Hall.

Traveling the globe was not just for business. Warren enjoyed traveling to Denmark to locate relatives and participate in all aspects of Danish life. One

memorable year the family spent Christmas in Copenhagen. Warren was proud of his Danish heritage, so back home in Portland he was a member of the Brothers of Denmark. Warren and Lucile also spent time in Ireland looking up relatives on Lucile's side of the family and exploring bed and breakfast inns. It is interesting to note that the family name of Lucile's relatives in Ireland was also "Warren."

He had a great interest in art work of all kinds and was a good artist himself. In his travels he collected paintings, sculptures, woodcarvings, Oriental porcelain, weaving, furniture and metal sculptures. He also enjoyed buying unusual foreign household items for cooking, serving, etc.

Warren lived life to the fullest. He had a vibrant personality and energetic character, and he always seemed to be full of ideas. His sense of humor was ever-present and he was known for his quick wit. His friendly and outgoing personality attracted others easily, and he earned their respect with his knowledge of lumber and knack for seeking solutions. His integrity and determination were unquestioned; his strength of purpose and endurance were legendary.

When his warm personality attracted friends and business acquaintances to Oregon from overseas, Warren made sure they saw the beauties of Oregon. He was proud to show off the state and the country he called home.

Warren made his place in the lumber business as surely as a tree makes its place in the forest. Although his tree was felled before its time, his memory and accomplishments will live on in the Wood Moulding & Millwork Producer Association's "Warren C. Jimerson Award of Excellence." It was established in his name to

recognize those attributes that Warren himself displayed: commitment to excellence, contribution to the industry, and to the larger community as well. Winners have tremendous shoes to fill.

All that remains of Algoma, Oregon today are the remains of a few buildings; the ice shed where the ice was stored that was cut from Klamath Lake in the winter; the foundation of the dry kilns; the log pond; and many memories of a wonderful past. Warren has now joined these memories to become a meaningful part of the timber industry's fascinating history.