



Harry E. Morgan, Jr.

1921-2001

One of the giants of the timber industry, Harry E. Morgan, was a manager at Weyerhaeuser Company for 37 years. When he retired in 1983, Harry had spent 16 years as Senior Vice President of timber and forest products worldwide. He was one of the builders of Weyerhaeuser, industry leader that it is today. He's been called tough, demanding and unrelenting. Some loved him. Others are still making up their minds. As Harry himself put it, "I comforted the irritable, and irritated the comfortable."

Harry was born September 3, 1921, at Mill City, Oregon. He grew up in timber towns where his father managed mills in Oregon and Washington. Harry E. Morgan, Sr. is also the subject of a World Forestry Center Memorial. As a youngster, Harry Jr. spent Saturdays with his father, watching construction of the Longview mills his father would later manage.

Harry attended R.A. Long High School in Longview, where he was Senior Class President. After high school, Harry went to work in the mills and woods near home. His first Weyerhaeuser job was in 1937, punching pickets for fences. During summer breaks from Stanford University, he worked in the planing mill, sawmill, pulp mill, and set chokers.

About those first work experiences, Harry said, "I learned a lot, and maybe it set the tone for

everything else I did. Then, the people you appreciated were the ones who treated you like everybody else. They were demanding, but they were straight with you. You know what they wanted. If you didn't do it, they'd chew you out. If you did, they'd pat you on the back. Fairly basic principle – and it hasn't changed one iota in 45 years.

Harry's oldest friends from high school days were Clyde Kalahan, Oscar Weed, Scott Witt and Merrill Robison. All five of these men became top managers at Weyerhaeuser. When Harry retired they offered fond reminiscences. "They used to call us the Longview Mafia," said Witt, who retired in 1979 as vice president of personnel.

Kalahan, who retired in 1982 as vice president of composite panels, hardwoods and consumer products, remembered, "Harry doesn't show much emotion, yet he cares very deeply. He's a complex guy, intense, no nonsense. Added Weed, "Harry's always been such a tremendous competitor, on the football field, and in work. He expects so much from himself and others. I think that is his greatest strength."

Witt said, "Harry's always been like a sponge. He thrives on detail, the more the better. Harry was always gathering and absorbing information – I don't think he

ever got enough. Harry's had a feeling, I think, of following in his father's footsteps. His dad was considered the top-producing manager in the country. Maybe Harry had a sense of keeping up."

Following graduation from Stanford, Harry served as a bomb disposal officer for the U.S. Navy in the Mediterranean during World War II and was awarded the Bronze Star for heroism. Many years later, at Harry's Memorial Service, Weyerhaeuser executive Steve Hill said of his long time mentor, "His management style reflected his experience as a Naval Bomb disposal officer – he paid great attention to detail, thought through decisions in advance and was cool under any circumstance."

After World War II, Harry's first fulltime job at Weyerhaeuser was in central engineering. He worked in the Southwest Washington woods scaling and buying logs. In 1950, he moved to Oregon to be assistant logging superintendent at Coos Bay. In 1958, he was back in Washington as Snoqualmie Falls branch manager. In 1963, Morgan took on bigger responsibilities as manager of the Cascade branch, then a new combination of Snoqualmie Falls and Enumclaw operations.

He first went to Weyerhaeuser headquarters in 1964 to be manufacturing manager for western wood products. Later that year he was made vice president-manager of the Timberlands Division. As Weyerhaeuser grew through the 1960's and early 1970's, Harry's responsibilities grew as well. "I was lucky to be involved in so many exciting projects," he said.

Harry was the key man of the company's biggest accomplishments during that time. He led, for example, acquisition of timber rights and developed Weyerhaeuser Company's Southeast Asia operations. Don Rush, former forester and group vice president for raw materials and timberlands recalled the situation this way:

"Weyerhaeuser was faced with a tough dilemma. We had to salvage timber damaged by the now-famous Columbus Day storm, and were looking to sell it overseas. But Harry

didn't personally know the people who were going to buy and sell the timber. He's so cautious of people at first – they really have to prove themselves to him. So, until he knew them better, he sent me over there because, to quote Harry, he was afraid they'd "pick the pennies off our eyeballs.' We went over there, made a good deal for our timber, and international trade was started."

Rush added, "Once Harry's sold on a person or a concept, he is an unwavering supporter. He's also a tolerant person—as long as the errors you make are not through inattention or laziness. To Harry, that's totally unacceptable. He's probably had more people work under him in this company than most anyone. But he's demanding. Some of us like it. We get a lot of satisfaction measuring up."

Harry also foresaw the need for forestlands and converting facilities in the Southern U.S. and worked to acquire the DeWeese Lumber Company in Mississippi, enlarging the company's holdings in that area to 345,000 acres, plus a number of mills. He also led the effort to acquire Dierks Forest in Oklahoma and Arkansas and to establish and grow the Weyerhaeuser business in Canada.

Harry also made it a habit to visit "key opportunity units" – shaky operations – to work with managers to turn them around. "Folks at these operations used to say 'Oh God, here comes Harry,' " he recalled. "The problem wasn't the facilities or the raw materials. It was people who rationalized poor performance by saying, 'This is the best we can do.' We solved 95 percent of their problems when we got them to set higher expectations for themselves. That's usually the answer."

Harry was remarkable in his ability to take younger, untested people and give them significant management challenges. Over time he developed dozens of protégées, many of whom rose to senior positions in the company. John Wilkinson, former group vice president, Western Solid Wood

Division, was a student interviewing for a job when he first met Harry Morgan Jr. He worked for him – first as an administrative assistant, then in Klamath Falls, in the Far East, and later as a region vice president – for nearly 20 years.

“Harry always pursued perfection,” said Wilkinson. “I found the only way I could save time working for him was to start late. I tried to prepare materials or speeches with only enough time for one review and edit. He couldn’t leave anything alone as long as there was one more minute possible to make it better.” Harry was famous at the company for hauling home two full briefcases of work on many nights. By morning he had processed them all and sent most out into subordinate’s offices with the ominous-sounding summons, “See me.”

Perhaps his greatest legacy at Weyerhaeuser began when Harry successfully presented to the Weyerhaeuser Board of Directors a program of applying financial modeling and intensive agricultural standards to forest management as a way to assure a never-ending supply of the company’s stock in trade – trees. The concept, High Yield Forestry, was the first such comprehensive management program in the industry and today is an industry standard.

At the time of Harry’s retirement, his boss George Weyerhaeuser said, “Harry Morgan’s been a doer all the way. During his career, he successfully tackled a wide range of tough jobs. His knowledge of this company, from the grass roots to the fifth floor, has been invaluable. You could absolutely count on Harry to give every assignment his best shot – and that bulldog tenacity of his always produced results. After these years of working side by side with Harry, I’ve developed a very strong personal and professional bond with him...and I know he felt the same.”

Despite how hard he worked, Harry made sure he gave back to the community. At various times in his career, Harry served on many boards of First Interstate Bank of Washington, Pacific Medical Center, Telephone Utilities, and Omark Industries. He was on the boards of the Weyerhaeuser Foundation, Tacoma Art Museum, Nelson Trust, and the Lakewold

Foundation. Harry was also a director of the Marrakesh Country Club and Health Care Purchasers Association and served his nation through the boards of the Federal Mortgage Commission and U.S. State Department Commission for Canadian/American Relations.

His interest in education led him to the boards of Charles Wright Academy, Pacific Lutheran University, the Higher Education Facilities Commission, and especially, service to his alma mater, Stanford University. Harry was a staunch supporter of Stanford. He had standing bets with a number of UC Berkeley graduates on the outcome of the annual football contest known as the Big Game. In 1982 Cal won that game on the last play with some clever laterals and help from the Stanford band. Harry paid off one bet that year in Indonesian Rupiahs.

While Harry was intensely committed to his work, he was more committed to his family. He loved his family and was very proud of his boys and grandchildren. His interest in Charles Wright Academy was in direct support of his son’s education. Despite all those “two briefcase nights,” he always had time for the family. After retirement in 1983, Harry concentrated on his golf game and was a gardener of some repute. He also stayed very interested in the company, maintaining personal contact with many former colleagues.

Harry Morgan passed away September 21, 2001 following a courageous battle with brain cancer. Harry is survived by his beloved wife of 57 years, Vivian, by three sons, David and Twila Morgan, Stephen Morgan, and Michael and Colleen Morgan and by his four grandchildren, Kathryn, Scott, Daniel and Christine.