



# Allyn C. Ford

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It was 1966. Lyndon B. Johnson was president. The Vietnam War was underway. NASA astronauts completed the second U.S. spacewalk. A patient in Texas received the world's first artificial heart. And Allyn Ford joined Roseburg Forest Products after receiving his master's degree in business administration from Stanford University.

That was the beginning of a career that would span 50 years at the company that Allyn's father, Kenneth Ford, founded in 1936 with a single sawmill patched together with equipment salvaged from junk dealers. Looking back over those five decades, Allyn said his career with Roseburg has been a blessing.

"It's been a great ride," he said. "I've been blessed with so much opportunity, being able to learn the operation from the ground up. There was never any question in my mind of coming back to Roseburg (after my education). It was always in my genes."

Born in 1941, Allyn worked summers at the company as a kid, but his first real role after graduation was with a division of now-defunct Ford Industries that manufactured telephone answering machines for Western Electric in Portland. Two years later, he headed south to Roseburg to become assistant to the president – his father. In those early years, he oversaw the administrative aspects of construction at the company's Riddle and Coquille plywood plants, as well as improvements at the Dillard particleboard plant. He went on to help establish Roseburg's chip exporting business at the company's Coos Bay shipping terminal, and got deeply involved in the forest resources division of the company.

Allyn took over as Roseburg's president and CEO in 1997, after Kenneth Ford died. During his 19 years as leader of the company, Allyn transformed Roseburg from a successful regional business into a dynamic enterprise that employs more than 3,300 people in multiple states and Canada. Roseburg is now one of the largest and most successful privately owned wood products companies in the country.

"When I started, the wood products industry was in a boom period," Allyn said. "Plywood was king – it was about 75% of our business. We were a much smaller company. It was a period of diversification and investment."

Much has changed over the years. The industry has been through plenty of turmoil and transformation. Roseburg has survived it all.

"This business can be rough, and we've been through some tough times," Allyn said. "The industry is getting smaller and the competition more intense. All of a sudden we're competing globally, not just in the U.S. This business is all about our ability to take risks. Roseburg has been able to compete and to excel in this type of environment."

One thing that hasn't changed is Roseburg's commitment to long-term thinking. "Our goal as a company has always been to ride out the cycles and keep operating," Allyn said. Take, for example, the company's approach to managing its timberlands.

With little timberland of its own, Roseburg in its early decades was dependent on government contracts for about 85% of its timber supply. It was an uncomfortable position, as contracts grew more expensive and competition fiercer. In the '50s and '60s, many companies bought timberland and used their manufacturing operations to quickly turn these assets to cash, with little concern for reinvesting in the timberland for the longer term. Not Roseburg.

In the 1960s, Roseburg started acquiring other manufacturing operations and their cut-over timberlands. Once purchased, these lands were cleaned up and replanted as an investment for the future. As laws, regulations and recurring energy crises limited the supply of government logs, Roseburg steadily collected timberland in California and Oregon, and reserved it for a "rainy day." Even when the economy hit the skids, as it did in the 1980s, the acquisitions continued. In 1998, Roseburg took a huge risk and purchased 216,000 acres of Oregon timberland from International Paper, doubling the company's acreage in Oregon and raising Roseburg's overall holdings to around 700,000 acres. By that time, the earlier land purchases had matured, and the company found itself with a steady supply of logs for the foreseeable future.

"That changed our whole outlook as a company – we had a timber supply," Allyn said. "It gave us the ability to plan and to look to the future." When the recession of 2008 hit, that base kept the company moving forward while others foundered.

From the energy crises of the 1970s to the recession of the '80s to the housing crisis of 2008, Allyn has seen it all. He has always had long-term growth aspirations for the company and acted upon them. In September 2016, Allyn stepped away from the day-to-day operations of the company, retiring from the role of president and CEO. He handed the reins to Grady Mulbery, the first leader in the company's history who is not a member of the Ford family. "This transition has been in the works for a long time, and Grady and the executive team are ready and able to take it from here," Allyn said at the time. "It's time for the next generation of leaders to step in."

Allyn remains Chairman of the company's Board of Directors. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in industrial administration from Yale and a master's degree in business administration from Stanford. He and his wife, Cheryl Ramberg Ford, have three grown children, all of whom serve as family advisors to the company.

Throughout his career, Allyn has been an influential advocate through trade associations and a strong political advocate for the industry and company, particularly with issues that affect Roseburg's forestry resources. He served on the Oregon State Board of Forestry from 1975 to 1982 and chaired the Advisory Board for Forestry Intensified Research (FIR) – an organization dedicated to advancing reforestation in Southwestern Oregon. He has served as chairman of the Douglas Timber Operators Steering Committee, the Public Timber Purchasers Group and the National Forestry Association, and as a director for the World

Forestry Center. He is currently serving a one-year term (2018) as the chairman of the American Wood Council. A lifelong supporter of education, Allyn served as a member of the State of Oregon Board of Higher Education from 2009 to 2014. He currently serves as a member of the Board of Trustees for the University of Oregon.

"His knowledge of work force needs, the challenges and strengths of rural Oregon, and the connection between quality higher education and a strong, competitive economy make him a valuable resource to the Board (of Higher Education), to students across the state, and to meeting the post-secondary needs of Oregonians," said Paul Kelly, president of the Oregon Board of Higher Education, upon Allyn's appointment by the governor in 2009.

Throughout it all, Allyn has maintained the Ford family's legacy of giving back to the communities where Roseburg operates. He spent 24 years as director of The Ford Family Foundation, a philanthropic organization established by Kenneth and Hallie Ford in 1957 to serve rural communities in Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif. "We have a real commitment to the communities in which we operate," Allyn told Oregon Business Magazine in 2006. "Our foundation's focus is to help the rural parts of the states because there is a big vacuum here. In rural Oregon and California, education is one of our responsibilities. Rural people need a lot of help, and there's not much money coming in."

Allyn has been recognized as an icon and leader in the wood products industry for many years, and he has done it all while embracing and modeling the company's Core Values – Sawdust in the Veins, Handshake Integrity, and Driven to Win. He continues to demonstrate the community engagement, perseverance, and integrity that reflect both his own values and those of Roseburg. He has the ability not only to survive, but also to grow and expand the business and the scope of that business – balancing a willingness to take risks with a commitment to staying true to who Roseburg is as a family-owned wood products company.

"Allyn Ford is a true statesman of the wood products industry," APA President Dennis Hardman said in 2012 while awarding Allyn the prestigious Bronson J. Lewis Award for leadership and outstanding contribution to the engineered wood products industry. "His example of leadership through commitment to best practices and innovation sets a high standard for the industry and provides a model for others to follow."

After more than eight decades in business, Roseburg continues to evolve and change. The wood products industry is cyclical – "You never know what tomorrow morning is going to bring," Allyn said – but ongoing capital investment in operations, a committed and talented workforce, a unified and skilled management team, a long-term strategic plan for growth and diversification, and a president and CEO with deep roots in the industry bode well for the future. As for what's in store for the next 50 years of Roseburg's future, Allyn said, "Stay tuned."