



Boise Cascade Office Products Corporation Annual Meeting

Christopher Milliken Tribute To The Retiring CEO

It is been said that no man is a hero to his valet.

A corollary to this, perhaps, is that no man is a stranger to the person who drives to work with him at 5:45 in the morning.

Pete Danis and I both live in Lake Forest, Illinois, and often share rides. We usually get in the office at 6:30 a.m., which means we have to leave our homes around that unholy hour of 5:45. And at that time of day, believe me, you really get to know a person.

Others of you who've had the good fortune of knowing Pete through the years have known, of course, that he is the voice of Boise Cascade Office Products Corporation—and I mean the voice both literally and figuratively.

P.G. Wodehouse, the British author of the popular Bertie Wooster and Jeeves novels, once wrote that his Aunt Dahlia “has a *carrying* voice. If all other sources of income failed, she could make a good living calling the cattle home.”

There was once a police reporter for a Chicago newspaper named Jimmy Murray, who was known for his distinctive, penetrating tones that could stop a battleship in mid-course. Once, a visitor to police headquarters asked where he could find Murray's desk, and a colleague replied, “Just follow that voice.”

Not to put too fine a point on it, but the same is true of Pete Danis, who can be heard far distances away even when he is talking in his normal, basso voice. I happen to be using a microphone today. If Pete were up here, a mike would be totally superfluous.

But a voice isn't enough to command a \$3 billion business. Behind that voice you will find, truly, a lion of our industry—well known and well liked by vendors, analysts and even competitors in the distribution business. In an interview with Pete this past January in OPI (Office Products International) magazine, he was accurately and fittingly described as “highly popular.”

So what can I say about the man is stepping aside today as Boise's chief executive officer? Maybe that even though he's retiring from the company, he is hardly a *retiring* person. Other than that, it's hard to know where to start. The phrase “larger-than-life” comes quickly to mind—and he is exactly *that* in the world of forest products and office products distribution.

Not only is he a tall, imposing figure, he is an articulate man, quick on his feet. But besides being highly opinionated, Pete can also be extremely charming. And, yes, *funny*. Also, as everyone is aware who has worked for, and *with*, him, Pete is a real taskmaster. He *does* have a temper, and if there's anything you don't want to do, it's to cross Pete Danis.

He is a man who—as the saying goes—doesn't suffer fools gladly. He's extremely impatient with people who waste his time, such as the dreaded telemarketers. One of the favorite pastimes of his employees is hearing him blowing off those folks over the phone as he barks, “Give me your home number and I'll call you back tonight.”



But as radio's Paul Harvey liked to say, there's the rest of the story. Which is: There's also a very human side. It is no exaggeration to say that Pete would do anything to help a friend or in an employee in trouble. Once, he flew to Hawaii and back over a weekend—between European trips—to attend the funeral of a BCOP manager, who had retired three years previously and had suddenly died.