

Donald E. Petersen

Washington '46

Oxford Cup Roll No. 72

Born in Pipestone, Minnesota on September 4, 1926, Donald Petersen joined the Ford Motor Company in 1949 after receiving a master's degree in Business Administration from Stanford University. He received a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Washington in 1946 where he joined Beta Theta Pi on October 15, 1944, as roll number 651. Petersen served in the U. S. Marine Corp in World War II and the Korean War.

Petersen became Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Ford Motor Company on February 1, 1985. Hailed a "Most Valuable Person" of 1988 by USA Today and "CEO of the Year" by Chief Executive Magazine in 1989, Petersen transformed Ford with his inclusive, team-oriented management style. Prior to his election as Chairman, Petersen had been President and Chief Operating Officer since March 13, 1980. He was a member of the Board of Directors from September 8, 1977 until his retirement in February 1990.

Petersen received the University of Washington's Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1981, and he received the Stanford Business School Alumni Association's Arbuckle Award for outstanding achievement in business management in 1985. He remains active in various capacities at both schools. In 1986, Petersen became the first recipient of the American Achievement Award, presented by Brookgreen Gardens, South Carolina for "significant contributions to the United States through achievement in the areas of industry, business, science, and the arts."

In addition to numerous awards and accolades, Petersen has also received 5 honorary doctorate degrees from schools around the country, and he has served as a director on boards of The Boeing Company, Dow Jones & Co. and Hewlett-Packard Company. He is a Life Member of the University of Washington Foundation Board.

Petersen's father, William L. Petersen, South Dakota '16 was an original founder of Beta's Gamma Alpha Chapter (roll number 56; founded October 5, 1912). His brother, Peter E. Petersen, Oregon State '45, was also a Beta, having been initiated as roll number 362 on February 14, 1943. Petersen and his wife, Jo Anne, reside in Bloomfield Hills, Mich.