

Cook Lougheed



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His faith and scouting were significant influences in the life of Cook Lougheed. As the Lord led him through his early experiences, Lougheed acquired the fundamental attributes and qualities that inspired and enabled him to become a successful entrepreneur. He learned to creatively solve tough problems with a "can do" attitude. He experienced lessons that taught him one must work hard with steady drive and determination to reach goals. He learned to constantly look for potentially profitable opportunities with the confidence to take a calculated risk. He developed an innate confidence in himself and, most

importantly, a sincere belief in "The Golden Rule."

From the beginning, Lougheed showed unique vision. Being independent and self-reliant, he wanted to have his own spending money. His first job, at the young age of eight, was gathering discarded bottles and selling them to the local veterinarian for five cents. Later he had a paper route. Young Lougheed, with ingenuity, saw an opportunity in buying broken bicycles from other kids, repairing, and then selling them at a nice profit.

In the eighth grade, Lougheed worked part-time as an usher at the Scottish Rite Theater. Exhibiting at an early age his ambition, management, and leadership skills, as a sophomore, Lougheed was hiring and managing all the ushers at the Scottish Rite. In his senior year at North Side High School Cook juggled classes, Boy Scouts, football, plus a part time job in the hardware department at Sears. Cook likens his young work experience to the training that Junior Achievement provides the youth of today. After high school, Lougheed became a tool-maker apprentice at General Electric. However, his two years of apprentice school convinced Lougheed that he wanted more creativity and independence.

In 1942, Lougheed received a football scholarship to Ball State University. He wanted to be a math and science teacher and coach football. *Lougheed says. "I sold my car, a beautiful 1939 Buick Roadmaster, to get the rest of the money I needed."* While at Ball State, with true spirit, Lougheed held part-time jobs in a local factory as a jig-and-fixture maker and in the school bookstore. With these two jobs, attending classes, and football practice, Cook was working a 17 hour day. *"I don't know what kept me going through it all – I just did it because I had to," Lougheed says.*

In 1942, Cook's draft number came up, so he signed for officer's school in the U.S. Marine Corps, staying in the Reserves until ordered to report to Purdue University. The Marines felt that Cook had an aptitude for engineering. Believing that God was in control, Cook decided to pursue a degree in civil engineering. This decision set the course for an entrepreneurial adventure.

While in school, Cook and his sweetheart Jeanne were married. Also, during this time, Cook was a member of the Purdue National Championship football team of 1943, starting a family football legacy that was to include a rare record of three generations of Purdue football players including son Scott, and grandson Peter.

After finishing college, Lougheed took his bride of two years and moved to Fort Wayne. His first engineering job was with May Sand & Stone Corporation where he learned about construction and estimating. After four years at May, Lougheed was responsible for all bidding, field supervision and engineering in the Construction Division. Seeking more stimulation and independence, Lougheed joined Old Fort in the Ready Mix Concrete business.

However, Cook finally realized the only way he'd really ever be happy was to call his own shots – to run his own business. Although initially, he formed Earth Construction and Engineering, Inc. along with Al Bergdall, a crane operator from Mays, Cook soon became sole owner. Lougheed says, *"Our motto was 'We do anything in Earth'."* Lougheed continues, *"We hired good men and it was their hard work that allowed Earth to grow. We returned their hard work and loyalty with genuine concern, providing pension incentive and health plans that were not then typical."* *"The company grew quickly."* Lougheed adds, *"We did the job right, the first time, on schedule, putting the customer first."*

Lougheed was quick to react to changing customer needs. As a non-union business, Earth Construction's opportunities were limited, so Lougheed formed Land and New Development, Inc. as a union company. These companies laid major sewer, water and utility systems in the Tri-States and as far as Arizona. They tunneled under the Saint Mary's River, and U.S. Highway 30 in Whitley County to lay systems. Completely new city sewers and treatment plants were common. As a result of innovative solutions like these, at one time Lougheed was President of 11 different companies, including real estate and lake developments, equipment rental, and leasing of excavating equipment. Lougheed believes, *"We were successful because we worked competitively, with honesty and integrity. We met challenges as they came, becoming experts in one area then branching out in other specialties."*

Greater diversification resulted in creative investments, too. Needing sand for a project, Lougheed bought property that contained a sand hill, utilized the sand for the project, and turned the land into Earth Industrial Park, an 18-acre property on which Earth Construction built its own office. Lougheed remembers, *"We developed the land during the winters when work was slower, thus creating full*

time employment for our men.” Lougheed adds, “We never worked on Sundays, giving all our workers a chance to attend Church. We were and are a strong Christian family.”

Lougheed’s wife, Jeanne, says *“Cook was always doing so many different things. He was successful and kept forging ahead. Yet, he balanced it all with time at home in the evening with our children and myself.”*

Lougheed recognizes that the support of his family contributed to his success, when he says, *“I would not have been as successful without my wonderful wife Jeanne who has been a vital and vivacious partner.”* As a fisherman, Cook wisely says *“She’s a keeper.”* Jeanne’s contribution was invaluable toward Lougheed’s company philosophy of treating the Earth employees as family. She networked extensively and hosted many employee recognition events in her home, as well as, hosting the numerous trips on which they took employees and contractors as part of Cook’s business philosophy. The Lougheeds will be celebrating their 61st anniversary this year.

“When I decided to sell Earth Construction in 1985, I offered the company to my son Scott, but he, being a chip off the old block, wanted to strike off and start his own company,” Lougheed explains. Jeanne says that while she hated to see him sell the company, *“I knew he had accomplished what he set out to do. I could see he was ready to challenge himself in other opportunities.”*

Lougheed’s entrepreneur legacy is evidenced in succeeding generations. His three children head their own successful endeavors. Scott is a Professional Engineer and owns a very busy Environmental Engineering company. Nancee has a Doctorate in Counseling with her own private practice. April, with an MBA in Finance & Marketing, owns an International Internet Consulting firm. In addition, all three of his grandsons exhibit drive. Matthew has a MBA in Finance. Jason’s Masters is in Environmental Engineering, and Peter plans to complete his Graduate Engineering degree after football.

Lougheed soon moved toward aggressively capitalizing on his property development insights and talents. *“When I bought the former Fort Wayne Sanatorium, which was located on the largest property closest to downtown that was still available at that time, I put a gas station on the corner, sold the remaining land and remodeled the Sanatorium into what is now the Landmark Building.”*

Lougheed thrives on the process of hunting for a good property and figuring out how to make it turn a profit. His passion for creating these successful business ventures covers a broad spectrum. Lougheed developed several large residential communities, most featuring innovative man-made lakes, walking trails, and other unique trend-setting landscaping. These include Sunnybrook

Acres, The Loch Nest Addition, Bittersweet Moors, Woods and Glens, and Dells of Bittersweet and the exclusive Lake Trail Estates.

He also found opportunities in commercial building ownership including the Metro Building enhanced by the acquisition of the Brateman Brothers store and the Elks Lodge properties. Lougheed also owned the oldest building in downtown Fort Wayne at 818 S. Lafayette which he donated to A.R.C.H. Believing the building was used as a stop on the Underground Railroad, the organization is turning it into a museum.

Through all of his business efforts and developments, Lougheed has never forgotten his roots of hard work, Boy Scout training, and Church, incorporating the "Scout Oath" into a personal philosophy. A Boy Scout since 1933, Lougheed says, *"I think I learned more through Boy Scouting than all the other training I had and all the college courses I took."* At age 16, Lougheed earned his Eagle Scout and has since served the organization in numerous capacities, including local, regional, and national director positions. He was also Anthony Wayne Boy Scout Council's vice-president and president. He was honored with the Silver Beaver in 1969, Silver Antelope in 1977, Distinguished Eagle Scout in 1977, and the Cross Flame & Sword from the Methodist Church for his Boy Scout work.

Generous with his time and talents, Lougheed has volunteered to numerous local organizations. His service to the Parkview Memorial Hospital for 30 years, as board president for 2 years, and Parkview Foundation for 6 years, as board president for 3 years, included development of the Hospital Chapel. The Old Francis Slocomb School has been renamed the Lougheed Center in honor of his service on the Parkview Board.

He served the Fort Wayne Zoological Society for 34 years, two years as board president, and was instrumental in developing the African Safari Veldt. His efforts also included membership and board service to the Association of Building Contractors, Chamber of Commerce, Civic Theatre, Fort Wayne Rotary Club, Masons, Kiwanis, Purdue Alumnae, the United Fund, and his local church to name just a few of the many organizations he has supported.

"Today," Lougheed says, "I give back because I owe this community a lot. It has done so much for me. The Bible verse that says 'to whom much has been given, much will be required' holds significant meaning for me."

Cook Lougheed is a shining example of an entrepreneur whose faith, family, focus and fortitude have blended together creating outstanding contributions to his industry and his community. His accomplishments, impeccable reputation, and role-modeling have made a lasting impact on business and society.