



Charles G. Armstrong

President and COO
Seattle Mariners Baseball Club
BSIE '64

For his outstanding record in the management of a major league baseball team

League of His In a League of His Own

“Baseball has everything to do with engineering,” says Chuck Armstrong. “It’s physics. It’s mathematics. It’s logic. It’s statistics. It’s game theory. I feel that I use my engineering every day.”

Armstrong, president of the Seattle Mariners Baseball Club, chose Purdue from four schools. He grew up in Louisville, played sports, and had a chance to sign a professional baseball contract out of high school. But his parents thought he should get an education, and his math and science scores pointed toward engineering. He entered Purdue in 1960 and played baseball for the Boilermakers his freshman year.

“It was tough,” Armstrong says. “I realized right away that I needed to be serious, but it was a great experience. Purdue provided personal guidance and opportunities in just about any endeavor.”

Armstrong liked the management orientation of industrial engineering. He also was on Class Council for three years, worked as sports editor for the *Debris* and served as president of Phi Gamma Delta. He was selected for Tau Beta Pi and Iron Key and was the overall national chairman for the 1964 Purdue Mock Political Convention. And he was chosen both as Outstanding Senior Man of the 1964

Purdue graduating class and as Outstanding Industrial Engineering Graduate.

“My greatest concern as a student,” Armstrong says, “was getting a job with a good, strong company, preferably in manufacturing. My career certainly ended up differently.”

Career Surprises

Armstrong spent his undergraduate summers working as an engineer, but in his senior year, he decided to take the law boards and received a scholarship to Stanford Law School. Then the week he took the bar exam, the U.S. government called. “The second day of the bar exam I got my induction notice; the day after that, I joined the Navy; and two days after that, I got married.” Thanks in part to having an engineering degree, he qualified as an officer of the deck on an attack aircraft carrier.

Returning from duty, Armstrong joined a Los Angeles law firm, specializing in business and corporate law. After being selected to be a junior partner, he took a leave of absence to become president of a national furniture manufacturer. After three years, the travel took its toll. “I came home from a trip one day and my neighbor was teaching my daughter how to ride her bike. I was missing too much.” Through a

former client at the law firm, Armstrong met and joined George Argyros, an Orange County real estate developer.

Argyros, currently the U.S. Ambassador to Spain, installed Armstrong as CEO of his real estate company, while he made other investments, including the purchase of the Seattle Mariners Baseball Team. After three years of producing impressive results with the real estate company, Armstrong was asked to take over running the Mariners following the 1983 baseball season. Argyros sold the Mariners after the 1989 season, and Armstrong went off and did other things, including being interim Athletic Director at the University of Washington in 1991. Faced with the threat of losing baseball in Seattle, a new ownership group came together in 1992, purchased the team, and reinstalled Armstrong as president and COO.

Looking Ahead

Since 1992 the Mariners have gone from being one of baseball’s weakest franchises to becoming one of its strongest and most successful, setting a major league record of 116 wins in the 2001 season, and playing in beautiful new SAFECO Field.

“My career has been surprising to me because it has been so serendipitous,” says

Armstrong. “Only my mother felt it was logical, and she saw that in hindsight.” He credits his wife of 35 years, Susan, with being the greatest influence on his career, always providing unconditional support.

“One of the things I’ve learned in retrospect is how practical a Purdue degree is,” says Armstrong. “Immediately upon graduation you are equipped to make a contribution. I like that about Purdue. In engineering, the only constant is change. You have to remain flexible and adaptable and maintain a sense of humor. You have to be prepared for opportunities when they come along and not be afraid to take prudent risks.”



- 2003– Washington State Convention and Trade Center Board of Directors (appointed by Governor)
 - 2001– Stanford Athletic Department, Advisory Board (also 1993–96)
 - 1998– Director, Seattle Space Needle Corp.
Director, Vans Inc.
 - 1994–97 School of Industrial Engineering Advisory Committee, Purdue
Outstanding Industrial Engineer, Purdue (1997)
 - 1992– President and COO, Seattle Mariners Baseball Club. Major League Baseball Enterprises/ Properties–Board of Directors, International Committee, Revenue Sharing Definitions Committee, Minor League Study Committee
 - 1991 Interim Athletic Director, University of Washington
 - 1987–90 University of Washington School of Business Advisory Board
 - 1984 Old Masters, Purdue
 - 1984–87 Stanford University Law School Board of Visitors
 - 1983–97 Managing Director, TicketMaster Northwest
 - 1983–89 President and COO, Seattle Mariners Baseball Club
 - 1980–83 The Arnel Companies: President and CEO of Arnel Management Co. and Vice President, General Counsel and Executive Committee Member for Arnel Financial, parent holding company
 - 1977–79 President and COO, Design Institute America
 - 1971–77 Private law practice, Hill, Farrer & Burrill
 - 1968 American Bar Association; State Bar of California
 - 1967–71 Lieutenant (JG), U.S. Navy
- BSIE '64, Purdue; JD '67, Stanford