



108 John Pappajohn Business Building, Suite W160
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1000
319-335-1039 Fax 319-335-3422
800-MBA-IOWA
iowamba@uiowa.edu
www.biz.uiowa.edu/mba

June 23, 2015

Sages Over 70 Selection Committee
Des Moines Magazine
100 4th Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Selection Committee Members:

It is my great honor to nominate John Pappajohn to receive the Sages Over 70 Award from your publication. As is evident in the letters supporting this nomination, John Pappajohn is an extraordinary man—a treasure to the state of Iowa, higher educational organizations, and the fine arts. An internationally respected and influential captain of industry, his dedication to the community and his capacity for spearheading entrepreneurship and achievement have set the highest standards for social and entrepreneurial commitment.

John Pappajohn defined and perfected the role of social and private sector entrepreneur, helping people in Iowa, the region, nation, and around the world help themselves. Keeping civic and educational needs at the forefront of his many business endeavors, he spearheaded the foundational efforts that resulted in the groundbreaking and nationally acclaimed entrepreneurship centers at the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, the University of Northern Iowa, Drake University, and North Iowa Area Community College. Through these innovative centers, literally thousands of young people from Iowa and beyond have been able to pursue and realize their life-long dreams of starting their own businesses and giving back to their communities in meaningful ways. Scores of these enterprises are rapidly becoming a part of the core of Iowa's private sector economy. They will undoubtedly provide tremendous employment opportunities for future generations of Iowans and will constitute the economic engine that will fuel the growth and development of the Iowa economy.

John Pappajohn's story is an amazing one. He was nine months old when he immigrated with his mother to the United States, where they joined his father in Mason City, Iowa. A natural entrepreneur, John began working at an early age. When he was eight, he was a rag merchant. He also collected castoff bronze, copper, and lead. Later, he worked in his father's small neighborhood grocery store. When he was 16, his father died, leaving him as head of the household with two younger brothers and a mother who spoke no English. While it was a traumatic time for the family, John says it helped him develop the traits that have made him successful in business, forcing him to mature quickly and make decisions. "I believe a little adversity is a great stimulus to success," he was quoted as saying.

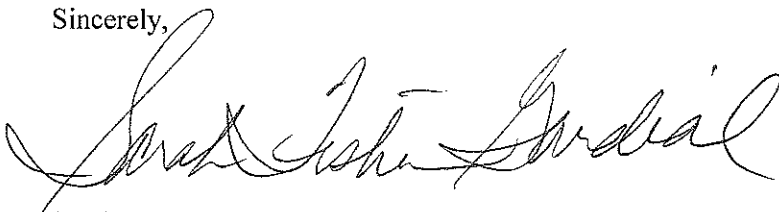
John and his brothers took turns putting each other through college and all three earned degrees from the University of Iowa. After earning his degree in business, he began selling insurance. In 1962, he founded Guardsman Life Insurance Company. Seven years later, he sold the company and founded Equity Dynamics, Inc., a venture capital business. In this business he took special interest in making medical related businesses profitable. John Pappajohn has founded more than 100 start-up companies, most of which have been successful. "I'm in the unusual position that I can finance dreams for people with ideas," he says. "That's what it's all about—helping other people succeed."

John Pappajohn has defined and perfected the role of social entrepreneur, helping people around the world help themselves. Even today, he continues to help innovative entrepreneurs pursue creative solutions to the most pressing social problems—be they in the fields of medicine, economic development, human rights, or environmental sustainability, among others. Through his active board involvements and gifts for buildings, outreach, and research programs he has had a tremendous impact on those he has touched. He has inspired others to give and support a number of disciplines and programs that have launched our graduates into careers of service in the region and elsewhere.

This proclivity for helping others help themselves extends to the University of Iowa and the Tippie College of Business, and the City of Des Moines, among others. He continues to provide valuable guidance and counsel to the University and the College through his service on the University of Iowa Foundation Board and Tippie College of Business Advisory Board. In Des Moines, he has transformed the arts community, bringing world class works of art to the masses. Under his influence, the Des Moines Arts Center has grown in scope, accessibility and influence, a model in illuminating the history and power of human creativity. He is, in the broadest sense of the word, a curator of the arts, fostering outreach and arts education for young people—he sees museums not as places where art is confined, but as places where art engages, enlightens and inspires, helping us to picture our past, and begin to sculpt our future. This desire to have all Iowans and others experience the world's greatest works of art, inspired John Pappajohn to open the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park—a totally open air and unsecured sculpture park containing several pieces of the world's most important sculptures—in downtown Des Moines where school children and working professionals alike can enjoy and be inspired by these great works.

Unlike many successful individuals who focus on simply leaving a legacy, John Pappajohn has a clear vision of how he wants to make a difference—by focusing his energies on entrepreneurship and new business development—helping others help themselves. Living a life characterized by the philosophy of “if you are fortunate enough to gain resources in this world, you have the responsibility to give back to society,” John Pappajohn is most deserving of the Sages Over 70 Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sarah Fisher Gardial". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sarah" being the most prominent.

Sarah Fisher Gardial
Henry B. Tippie Dean