

# Chuck W. Larson, Jr.

510 E Locust Suite 200, Des Moines, IA

dsm Magazine  
“Sages over 70”  
June 24, 2015

RE: Letter of Nomination for Gary Kirke

It is with great pride that I nominate Gary Kirke for the “Sages over 70” recognition by dsm Magazine. I have known Gary for more than 25 years and can attest to his integrity, business ethics, leadership, and generosity within the community over the years.

Gary is a true Iowan—born and raised here in Des Moines. He graduated from DePaul University in Chicago, served as a Lieutenant in the Iowa National Guard, and then chose to return home to Iowa where he has been professionally and civically involved ever since. In 1964, he co-founded Kirke-Van Orsdel, Inc. (KVI) and served as Chairman of the Board and CEO until 1998, at which time the company was sold to Fortune 500 companies Marsh and ADP. Before its sale, KVI had grown into one of the largest third-party benefits and insurance administrators in the nation, with a dozen offices across the country and nearly 2,000 employees.

He is currently Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Kirke Financial Services, L.L.C., a firm he founded in 1999, which specializes in investments, strategic acquisitions, real estate development, insurance, and management consulting. Working with Dr. Richards, Kirke Financial’s first strategic acquisition was MEDTEC, developer and manufacturer of targeting and fixation devices used in radiation therapy. After growing the company’s revenues and profits tenfold in six years, Kirke Financial sold MEDTEC to Roper Industries.

Kirke Financial then launched an investment in Quatro Composites, an advanced composites manufacturer for the aerospace, defense, industrial, and medical industries. Quatro Composites employs close to 250 people in the Orange City, IA area.

Gary also created a new Iowa gaming company in 2005 called Wild Rose Entertainment, which owns casinos in Clinton, Emmetsburg, and Jefferson. In addition, he formed a private equity company that invests in technology and energy companies, among others.

A long-time champion of public service, Mr. Kirke advocates community involvement and civic contributions. Republican and Democratic governors have tapped him to serve on such high-profile boards and committees as the Grow Iowa Values Board and the Iowa Future Growth Committee. Most recently, Gov. Terry Branstad conferred on Mr. Kirke the title of Honorary Colonel in recognition of his strong leadership and respect within the community.

Gary also has been the recipient of several notable awards including Iowa Entrepreneur of the Year Award for the financial services industry, given by Arthur Young Accounting firm and Inc. Magazine, Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year, City of Des Moines "Citizen of the Year Award," and Merit Employer of the Year by the NAACP.

Gary is an outstanding citizen, entrepreneur, and advocate for Iowa business. Not only did he choose to stay in Iowa after he achieved great success, but he chose to continue investing in the state he calls home. I confidently recommend Gary Kirke for the “Sages over 70” distinction.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Chuck Larson Jr. (ret.)