



FOUNDER

A Vision for Leadership and Action

The Bold Thinkers of the Steve Menzies Global Foundation Founder, Steve Menzies

Born of a vision for assembling and applying the sharpest analytical resources to solving grand scale problems, international corporate and philanthropic leader Steve Menzies has created the Steve Menzies Global Foundation, unique among foundations in design and purpose. Martialing scientific, mathematical, and engineering disciplines together with cultivated diplomatic and business acumen, he has forged an instrument that will prove revolutionary in thought leadership... and will be bold.

For Steve, as our principal thought leader, the commerce between the global corporate world and philanthropic leadership in the worlds of culture, intellectual discourse, the arts, and humanitarian aid has provided a veritable laboratory of opportunities for the analysis of critical initiatives and the redirecting of their impact. Identifying the service of "human ecology" in its many, diverse manifestations, Steve has aimed squarely at setting an agenda for bold action where "flat lining" approaches to social need have too often fostered a passive, routinely accepted inertia. The Foundation reflects his guiding principles for meaningful, results driven action.

It will be of no surprise to many that Steve Menzies has undertaken addressing serious matters in varying areas of concentration across several continents, in light of the decisiveness that has marked his leadership of a leading financial institution, Applied Underwriters, its many related companies and corporate allies; Steve has worked consistently with a veritable faculty, a "think tank" of the best and brightest rather than staid corporate C-suite careerists who typically squander the larger advances of which billion dollar enterprises are uniquely capable. The Menzies think tank group aims, as he does, to act upon intelligence and analytical indicators.

In the media, Steve has been called "a bold intellectual in the CEO's chair," "one of the most generous and giving people in the Corporate world" and simply "the wizard" by Bloomberg to describe his driven, serial entrepreneurship, and his creation of Critical Missions, that is, strategic alliances, resource orchestration, fresh formulae, and the funding to solve permanently what may seem insuperable to those taking traditional approaches and bureaucratic operational pathways.

A look at his life's narrative is illustrative. A New York native, graduate of Columbia University, he set out for Silicon Valley in the 90's to apply his engineering abilities and creativity to emerging technologies, and soon developed an opportunity that combined these strengths with his native business and negotiating skills: he founded Applied Underwriters in 1994 to introduce a new, highly efficient, financially beneficial platform of a hybrid of tech driven business services and casualty underwriting. The result was meteoric growth, such that a consolidated back office was quickly needed, carefully researched, and sited in Omaha, Nebraska in 1999.

It was not long before business legend, Warren Buffett, took notice of his new “neighbor’s” success and invited Steve to see where a collaboration might take them. In 2006, Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway invested in the Company beginning a direct relationship – in fact, uniquely among Berkshire Hathaway affiliated companies, Applied remained autonomous under Steve’s leadership. On October 10, 2019, whereupon Steve bought back all of the shares in one of the first buyouts ever from Berkshire Hathaway and one of the largest among recent insurance transactions.

The once visionary start up, is, today, a complex A Rated multi-national powerhouse, known and revered beyond its revenues and performance for its security, stability, innovation, and intelligence. Distinguished, as well, for its uniquely organic growth and its continuing product acceptability in a world where growth through acquisition and merger is too often the only available tool for building enterprises, Applied Underwriters holds fast to its Chairman’s focus; a dedication to positive social outcomes and serious corporate responsibility.

As an example of Steve’s and Applied’s approach to its mission and its regard for human ecology, the Company is regularly acknowledged for its extraordinary care for injured workers, for setting safety standards in the workplace, and for giving business owners and operators a financial benefit for their observance of best practices in safety and employment standards. Accepting plaudits in the name of the Company, Steve has been presented a host of accords, ranging from the Presidential Medal of John Cabot University of Rome to the St. Vincent de Paul Medal, the highest award of the College of Mount St. Vincent in New York, founded by the Sisters of Charity who are themselves dedicated to service to the injured, the infirm and the poor. Noting that Steve was the first such insurance leader to create a national pharmacy and pharmacy network to allow careful M.D. monitoring of the prescription, provision, and use of opioids for injured claimants, and, citing the fact that he is the revolutionary in insurance who provides inner city homeowners with sound insurance for their properties in places generally ignored by others, the President of the Sisters of Charity described his standards of service as “simply exemplary.”

Concretely, he has applied his care for his neighbors, employees, and colleagues by factoring meaningfully into the quality of life and environment in Omaha, where he is creating Heartwood Preserve, one of the largest developments of its type in the United States. Heartwood is characterized singularly among multi-use developments for its offering to residents, corporate and commercial tenants, and visitors an ecologically responsible, well-conceived destination built with naturally inspired architecture. Many problems were solved by this choice, from the development of an underutilized 500 acre site into a landmark, anchor property in Western Omaha to the creation of an ideal working and living seat for up to 2,000 of the Applied staff.

In the arts, Steve has made a substantial difference in the financial stewardship of the San Francisco Opera – as its Vice Chairman and Chairman of its Endowment Campaign. Most recently, when the vitality and economic viability of the entire worldwide performing arts community was threatened by the COVID -19 pandemic, it was Steve who created a groundbreaking plan for sustaining and engaging artists uncertain of their future.

Acknowledged for his expansive world view and his successes in complex problem solving on a multi-continental stage through the strategic use of sophisticated international risk finance, merchant banking, insurance, reinsurance, international commerce and trade in countries around the globe, he is most often cited for his work in critical areas of international importance from participating in hostage rescue, to the planning and execution of healthcare delivery in stressed areas.

In sum, our founder has connected a high standard of corporate citizenship, financial probity, intellectual acumen, and leading edge business logic to the worlds of diplomacy, culture, education, and the arts. Steve’s list of Critical Missions to be fulfilled through his foundation and through its leaders’ bold thinking are set for real impact. Our shared understanding and respect for “human ecology” will be advanced most meaningfully.