

The '71 Profile: Glenn Britt 1949-2014

A Cable Industry Pioneer, Generous Alumnus, Here Remembered

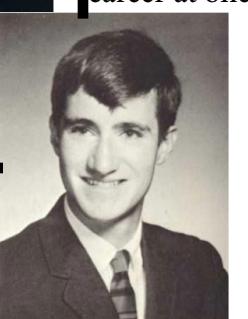
Glenn Britt, Dartmouth class of '71, Tuck '72, died in June 2014 after a battle with cancer. He was an economics major at the College, joined Time Inc. upon finishing his MBA at Tuck, and spent his entire career at the same company, and mostly at Time Warner Cable, where he rose to become CEO in 2001 and retired in that position shortly before his death. He was a visionary, a believer in diversity, a loyal Dartmouth man who gave generously to the College, a golfer and a family man, survived by his wife Barbara. Below are some comments from people who knew him at various stages of his life and career:

Tryg Myhren, '58, Tuck '59, former CEO of American Television and Communications Corp, acquired by Time Inc., thus planting the roots for what is today's Time Warner Cable.

I was Chairman and CEO back in the 1980s. Glenn was my chief financial officer. I was always interested to meet a Dartmouth person but I hadn't known him previously. Glenn was smart and calm and thoughtful. He had a really good strategic mind. Although he was a very good financial person, and believed in quarterly results, he had a longer-term vision of what was going to happen in the industry.

He became CEO as the industry became more complicated. There were a lot of difficult vectors he had to deal with. When Glenn got into it, it was primarily video programming. Then it evolved into broadband, and you had video, voice and data. Then you had consolidation in the industry, so the power centers began to shift. Rather than highly charged and motivated entrepreneurs, you had large corporations. I had 10,000 people. (In 2013 the Time Warner Cable employee count was 51,000.)

You had tripartite regulatory -- federal, state and local, with enormous political demands that were growing all the time. In addition, you had the whole ownership



and financial structure, as it was spun off from Time Warner in a very complicated transaction that loaded it up with debt. Glenn was saddled with that. He was calm. That played well for him. You have to be politically savvy to get to that position in a major company. But he had integrity and was viewed as honest, essentially a nice guy.

What happened to him physically and with his passing away was just tragic. It makes a lot of us very sad. He liked to play golf. He and Barbara loved to travel (they had no children) when he had the time. I used to see him in the Hawaiian Islands. The Four Seasons resort, north of Kona on the Big Island, had some really good residences. They had bought a place there. He was hoping to spend a lot of his final years there.

I would say that Glenn was as calm as you could ever expect to see him.

About Dartmouth: we both loved the school, both were really devoted to it, and thought we had a remarkable educational experience.

Mike Lajoie, recently retired Executive Vice President, TimeWarner Cable:

He came right out of Tuck and went right to work at Time Inc. He worked his entire career at one company. It's pretty rare, and it speaks to what a rare guy he was.

His real genius was to look out several years and to see how things were going to change. And to take a risk.

(Their first big collaboration was with the Full Service Network, launched in Florida in

1994, where Britt asked Lajoie to lead an applications strategy -- Lajoie found a way -- to deliver two-way communication over a cable network.) He was president of Time Warner Cable Ventures. Cable had been one-way transmission. How could you do interactive television, have a program guide, rich graphics, data over the cable plant? It is the first place we did "on demand." Everything you can do today, Glenn was at the forefront of that. Glenn figured out, "hey, there's a

data service here." At the time, the first cable modems cost us \$2000 each. Today they cost \$20. To have that vision and be able to take that risk, that was really his genius, the vision. To look out several years. Be able to see how things were going to change, where you could take a risk and who you could take a risk on.

We worked together for 26 years. It was great. Always willing to forgive the missteps. Along the way there were many missteps.

The Florida experiments paved the path to a big success, the Road Runner Internet service, since renamed Time Warner Cable Internet. I was his technology partner, Carl Rossetti his business partner. They went and raised the money independently to fund the initial developments and deployment -- from Toshiba and Itochu, and Microsoft and Compaq. They took the risk to get the funding to get it done.

It wasn't just about numbers, dollars and cents. He was passionate about doing good not just making money. Providing service to community. One of his cause célèbres was diversity and inclusion.

At Tuck, he and I spoke there in 2011, the first year of a continuing education program, to help people who were technologists but needed more, to learn about the nuts and bolts of business. Part of the executive MBA program. Glenn and I started it in his honor. (Mr. Lajoie retired from Time Warner Cable at the end of 2014.) To be honest doing it without Glenn isn't the same. He was my mentor. He definitely was a huge supporter of mine. He took a lot of risks on me and I took a lot of risks on him. I am very grateful to have known him. He was quite a man.

Donald Conway, M.D., MBA, a fellow '72 at Tuck, today a professor at co-director of the MD/MBA program at Tuck:

I remember Glenn as a fellow student. We entered in the fall of 1970. For the sake of the alphabet, we were in the same sections. At the time, the curriculum called for exams every Saturday morning, until noon. Glenn was unflappable. Very, very bright, quiet, but he would extend himself to other students. He was always approachable, very kind to everyone he met. We didn't know each other's grades, but he excelled in the classroom. Very buttoned up and prepared. He was very durable.

In recent years, I would see him when he came back for (Tuck Board of) Overseers meetings. He wanted to push the boundaries of Tuck. He wanted execu-

tives to come to Hanover and to mingle with students, have dinner with them. He backed up his ideas with financial grants. Through the Britt Technology Series, he brought in some high-powered people, and really helped in persuading these people to show up. He was a quiet force. He was very forceful but in a pleasant and non confrontational way.

- Dartmouth '71, economics major, magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa. Tuck MBA 1972.
- Joined Time Inc. in 1972, held various executive jobs
- CEO, Time Warner Cable 2001-2013
- Board member Xerox, Cardinal Health, nonprofits
- Sponsored Britt Technology Impact Series at Tuck

Hans Brechbuhl, Director of the Center for Digital Strategies at Tuck:

When you had a meeting with Glenn, you were the center of his attention for that meeting. You never had the feeling that he needed to get onto something else. At every meeting, I came away with three things. One was wise counsel. Another, I learned something new, something I didn't know, and the conversation always went to some place I didn't expect. It never took a completely predictable path.

I first met Glenn was in 2002, where I asked him to come up and speak as a part of Tech at Tuck. This was a one-day event that we still do but it became part of the Britt Series later. He was always really interested in new technologies, new horizons, but he was realistic. Those two things had to intersect in a business model -- the visionary and the practical -- or he would think, this is a waste of time. That was Glenn to me.

Near the end, I went up to see him and Barbara at his Manhattan apartment. I remembered as we were saying goodbye, Glenn had a board call to get on. He was typically busy and fully committed to the end. I just felt the urge that I needed to give Glenn a hug. A week later, we heard the news, his secretary told me that it was terminal, that it was matter of weeks. I was really thankful I had done that. It meant something to me.

I was at his memorial service in New York. It was striking how many people were there, hundreds of people. Afterwards, there was a luncheon. It was so interesting to hear from people who knew him in quite different ways. But they were unanimous in the characterization of Glenn as an incredibly smart, visionary guy, and also as what might be called a *mensch* -- a solid, warm, wonderful human being.