

# Graduate

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"I was only 13 when my father left me in charge after the local newspaper closed and he had to leave us behind on our 160-acre farm while he went to work for the Minneapolis Star & Tribune — 140 miles away. It was six months before my father was able to bring us to the Minneapolis suburb of Hopkins," he said.

Lanners said that the patterns he developed helping his younger brothers and sisters develop are still part of his management style. "It is not a paternalistic style. I treat subordinates more like siblings than sons or daughters. I treat subordinates with respect and give them creative leeway," he said.

Lanners said he was shy as a youth and in the bottom third of his high school graduating class.

"My grades declined steadily after we moved to Hopkins, not only because I was working part time while going to school, but because I lost the incentive to get good grades. With nine children, my folks couldn't afford to send me to college. In fact, they told me to learn a trade or enter the service," Lanners said.

After graduating from Eisenhower, Lanners spent the summer teaching handicapped children to swim at Camp Courage and then worked as a busboy at the Hopkins House. Early the next year, he enlisted in the Air Force.

Though offered a vice-presidential appointment to the

Air Force Academy in Colorado, Lanners declined the opportunity soon after he met his future wife, Donna Marie (Oczak), while home on leave. She is from St. Paul and was a manager at the Hopkins House restaurant when they met. They married in 1970, and spent three of Lanners' six years in the service stationed in Thailand and Japan.

After his discharge, Lanners went to work for Rosemount Inc. in Eden Prairie. He later joined the Alexander Proudfoot Co., responsible for implementing productivity-improvement programs. Two years later, he became an inventory analyst for the John Deere Co.

While working for John Deere, Lanners took courses at Normandale Community College and then received a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Minnesota.

On Lanners' entrance application to Harvard, one of his university finance professors, J. Peter Paulson, wrote, "David's intellectual capacity is immense. He seems very willing to explore new frontiers of knowledge and to investigate potentially creative, yet untried solutions to problems. He easily comprehends and manipulates diverse and complex quantitative and qualitative concepts and facts. He definitely is capable of a higher purpose in life."

How prophetic.