

Trouble-shooter

Corporate crises keeps area man in business

By **MARJIE MUGNO ACHESON**

Special to the News

Last summer, David Lanners, a 41-year-old crisis management consultant in the Richardson school district, directed a comprehensive turnaround in only 16 weeks of an aluminum diecasting manufacturer in Canada. The company had 325 employees, \$35 million in sales — and numerous problems.

Bringing order out of chaos, along with improved profitability and employee morale, Lanners' greatest legacy was that the company's Q-1 rating rose 27 points.

Only three days after beginning the Canadian project, Lanners' capabilities quickly became apparent, for the holding company selected him to serve as president as well as general manager. Chosen over two candidates more experienced in that particular industry, Lanners successfully wore both hats.

Focused and fast-paced, the executive has compiled an impressive track record of assisting troubled companies.

Saying much of his career has been spent "cleaning up other peo-

ple's messes," he prefers thinking of himself as a crisis "prevention" manager. Most companies, he contends, call him while operational problems can still be corrected — and the company saved.

"It makes me very sad that so many companies today 'solve' their problems by simply going through bankruptcy. That is not a solution. That is a cop out. And it's disgraceful," said Lanners, who has an MBA from Harvard and is a member of Mensa.

Expertise gained during more than 20 years in project management, facility design, quality improvement, and systems implementation has been appropriate preparation for the challenges of developing solutions to crisis situations, said the Minnesota native.

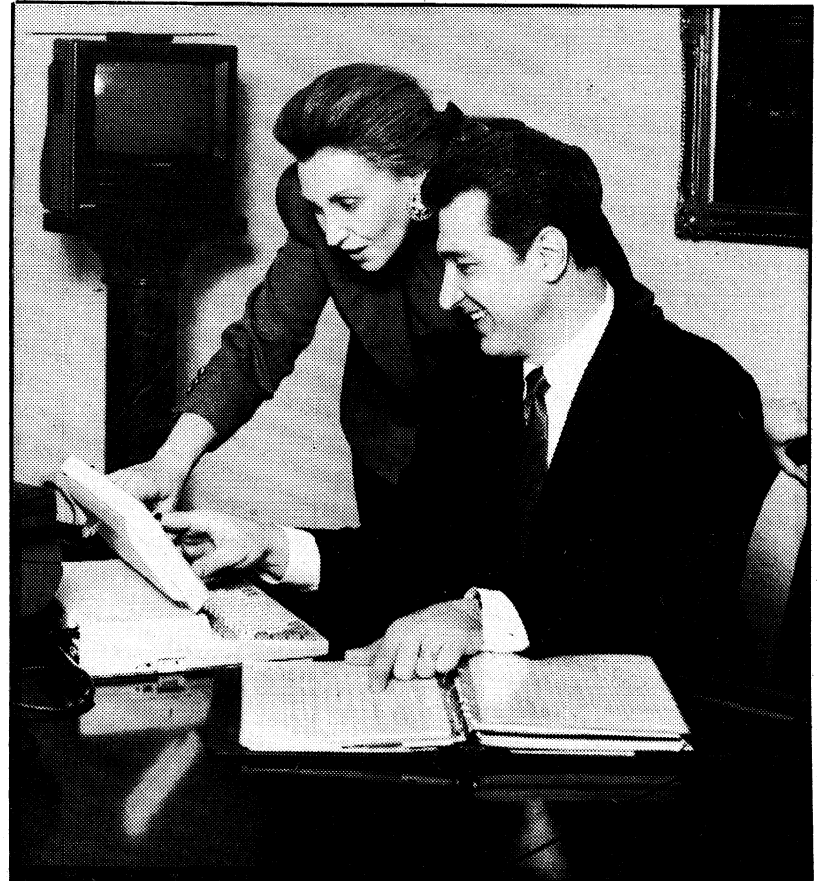
The list of companies that Lanners has been called upon to assist reveals recognizable names among the Fortune 500. Sometimes the challenges he addresses are the result of rapid growth of a company or product line. Among local firms he has worked for is Ericsson Network Systems, a Swedish telecom-

munications firm with U.S. headquarters in Richardson. Lanners directed the development and implementation of material handling and inventory control systems for Ericsson's largest U.S. distribution center.

The versatile executive admits he gets three or four full-time job offers a year, but so far, he hasn't been tempted.

"I'm enjoying the variety of challenges I'm experiencing through my own company, LCSI." He says.

Lanners says his wife, Donna, who also is from Minnesota, "had enough faith in me to agree to sell our home to help finance my graduate work at Harvard." Just as Donna has been supportive of his professional pursuits through the years, he is genuinely proud of her growing success too.



Special to the News

David Lanners tributes his wife Donna with being willing to sell their home to finance his education.