
Leisure Worlder of the Month

Victor Z. Brink

Combining academia, professional accounting, and corporate management has been the career pattern of Victor Z. Brink. Since coming to Leisure World in 1980 these experiences have been the basis for a similar range of service.

To recognize his contribution, Brink has been named "Leisure Worlder of the Month."

Brink was born in 1906 in Matlock, Iowa, a small town in the northwest corner of the State, where his father ran a bank. Later he went to grade school in Granville and then to high school in Paulina. The next move was to Lincoln, Nebraska, where he earned his Bachelors and Masters degrees and then taught accounting, beginning a lifetime involvement with academia.

But says Brink, "there has always been a feeling that I should demonstrate work experience to back up my teaching role."

The first phase of this validation was to join Arthur Andersen, a large public accounting firm in Chicago, and then to be an internal auditor with The Pure Oil Co (now part of Union Oil).

The academic career core soon surfaced and Brink went to Columbia University to do his graduate work in economics and accounting, with a doctoral dissertation in 1941 that became the basis for his first book on internal auditing.

At that time also he joined with two others to found a new professional group, The Institute of Internal Auditors, an organization that has now grown to over thirty thousand members, with more than one hundred chapters around the world.

As Brink puts it, "internal auditing has been a thread which has woven its way through my life for over fifty years."

Brink's book on internal auditing has now gone through five editions, the latest one in 1986. He has also published two books on management and better than thirty articles in professional journals.

Brink's teaching career at Dartmouth College and Columbia University was interrupted by World War II. Called to active service as a Captain, he was assigned to the Pentagon and reviewed war contract auditing for five years, retiring with the rank of Lt. Colonel.

His next call was back to public accounting as a partner in a New York firm that later merged with Haskins and Sells. About 1948 the Ford Motor Co. was turned itself around under the leadership of Henry Ford II, Ernest Breech, and Robert McNamara, and their search for special skills included internal auditing.

Brink resigned his partnership and went to Ford to head up its internal auditing department. Says Brink "I thought I was going to have an important internal auditing experience but soon McNamara had more urgent needs. However, I did have the satisfaction of helping Ford accounting free itself from its public accountant."

Five years later McNamara had another need that took Brink to the Aircraft Division at Chicago where he was able to help solve serious cost and production problems. Brink then headed up the overseas distributor and export supply operations.

But now in 1963, after 15 years with Ford, the word came from Columbia for a last chance to resume full time teaching and Brink returned to his first love, academia. There he was first Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Business, and then Professor of Management. He was also a visiting Professor at the American University in Lebanon, at Bella Horizonte in Brazil, and at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

Eleven years later, in 1974, he retired from Columbia and moved to Heritage Village in Connecticut, where he continued his research, writing, and consulting.

Brink has two sons and both are involved in historical restoration activities. Peter, the elder, is head of the Galveston Historical Foundation, and last year was named Man of the Year. David, the younger, has always been interested in historical ships, taking the Elissa to New York for the 200th Centennial, and now heading a new Tall Ship project in Portland, Maine.

In 1979 Brink married his present wife Dorothy. According to Brink, "our sons had been best friends at Dartmouth, and later when Dorothy was Director of Public Ceremonies at Columbia, it was a natural reunion. Dorothy moved to Leisure World in 1977, and I followed her two years later."

The Brinks spent half of their first three years in New York with continuing professional activities. There was also a world tour together for the Institute of Internal Auditors, involving visitations at ten international chapters. In 1982 the Brinks gave up their New York apartment for greater attention to Leisure World activities.

Over the past five years Brink has become increasingly involved here in Leisure World. His first leadership role was as President of the Ballroom Dance Club. A second undertaking was to head up the Laguna Hills Academians. Turning then to Leisure World governance, he ran for the Golden Rain board, but was unsuccessful. But friends urged him to try again, and this time he was elected.

During Brink's last year on the board he was Secretary. He was active on the Capital Improvements, Finance, and Long Range Planning committees. Presently he is serving as Advisor to the latter two committees and is Chairman of the GRF Nominating Committee.

Brink's other Leisure World interests center on music and dancing. This year he is President of Opera 100, President-Elect of the California Club, (Dorothy earlier had lived in California), and is on the Board of the Community Concerts Association. Together with Dorothy, who is currently the President of Ebell, he has worked to help research the sources of talent and to plan programs for their respective clubs.

In Brink's words, "it is great to be here in Southern California and in beautiful Leisure World. It is a way of life to which we are both committed to protect and perpetuate."