

The Propeller Club of the United States Port of Los Angeles/Long Beach

Summer 2011

MEMBER *Spotlight*

Richard D. Steinke **Executive Director, Port of Long Beach**

This quarter, the Propeller Club representative visited with Dick Steinke, Executive Director of the Port of Long Beach, to reflect on his tenure at the Port. Mr. Steinke is retiring from the Port in September 2011.

As a Denver native with an airport background, what was it that lured you to the Port of LB in 1990?

It was a good move personally and professionally. I was at Stapleton Airport and Denver International Airport was due to open soon. My oldest daughter was five and it seemed like the perfect time to make a move. We were both rooted in Denver, but my wife had spent time in Indiana and Pennsylvania during her youth. She was supportive about the opportunity and saw it as a great adventure.

Your first two positions with the Port were Properties Director and Deputy Executive Director. How did those roles prepare you for your eventual role as Executive Director?

Many divisions reported to me when I was Deputy Executive Director (Engineering, Planning, Properties and the Wharfinger's Office). It was a good training ground and provided me with exposure to things I hadn't been involved in with properties.

The typical port director has a far shorter tenure than you've had here in Long Beach. Did you ever imagine being in this role for 14 years, and what do you think contributed to your longevity at the Port?

Since I came up through the staff ranks at the Port, I believe I know how people like to be treated and feel that's a basic leadership principal. I connect well with the staff and feel we have cultivated a service oriented family



Pictured with Dick Steinke are Edward Yau, United Transportation (HK) Ltd. – the Port's overseas representative, Philip Chow, CEO, OOCL Ltd., C. C. Tung, Chairman, OOCL and Nick Sramek, Board of Harbor Commissioners.

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here where relationships, diversity and respect engender good will and trust. We've also had strong Boards that recognize what the Port needs to do to be successful.

You are perceived as a great leader, an approachable, fair man and one who's had phenomenal success in leading one of the nation's busiest ports. What has been your leadership approach and how have you managed to remain so effective (and non-controversial) in such a highly visible role?

I think humility is very important. I have also recognized talent within the organization and we have some incredibly talented people. I've allowed people the professional flexibility to do what they need to in order to get the job done. As for limited controversy, I think I have anticipated needs and paid close attention to public perceptions and realities and have worked hard to put out fires before they grow larger. A good example is the Green Port Policy. You have to admit where you are, engage the stakeholders, gain credibility and get things done.

What are you most proud of that you and your team have accomplished over the past 14 years?

Since we are a landlord port, the Port used to be perceived as a real estate developer only. Now we're a real estate developer AND an environmental steward, facilitator and community partner. We exercised great strategy with the Green Port Policy and this has served as a cornerstone for taking the Port in a new direction. The Clean Trucks program has a direct positive impact on the community and proves that we are trusted as a partner.

Do you have any best memories of your time leading the Port?

Working with international customers has been one of my favorite elements of this job. On any given day, I could have breakfast with representatives from a Chinese shipping line, an afternoon meeting with European customers and dinner with another international partner. This business gets in your blood and when you see our customers winning awards and being recognized, it feels as though we're a part of that success.

Had you done much international travel before you joined the Port?

I came to Long Beach from a mid-size airport with only one international service. I took my first trip to Asia when I joined the Port. I have learned to understand and appreciate various cultures through this role and it's been a huge benefit in joining this organization.

Did it take some time to learn the "maritime language"?

It took a few years. Being immersed in this business helps you realize how truly complex it really is.



Dick Steinke and Captain Wei Jiafu, Group President & CEO of COSCO Group.

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Like many trade organizations, the Propeller Club strives to remain relevant and financially viable and to differentiate itself from other groups. How important are organizations like the Propeller Club on a local, national and global level?

The importance of goods movement has always been understated. Trade groups like the Propeller Club help continue to educate the public and help people realize trade's impact on the economy and jobs. Consumers know that what they need is on the store shelves and don't often think about how it gets there. Trade and advocacy groups help people understand HOW it happens and how important it is.

What advice would you like to give to your successor?

This position can be one of the most rewarding jobs in the world, but you can't weaken! The waterfront is a diverse international community and this positive role is so much more than ships, trucks and trains.

What can you tell us about your personal background – your life outside of the Port?

I was a high school and college baseball player (Chadron State College in Nebraska); a left-handed first baseman. The Yankees are my favorite team, but I like the Angels. I'm an average golfer – good enough to play with most people, but not good enough to brag!

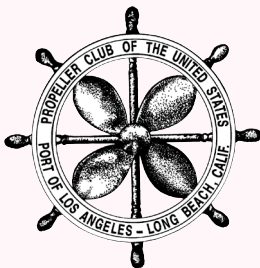
My wife Tamy and I have three daughters ranging from 22-26 years old. My oldest, Sarah, is a teacher in the Bay area. Kyle is a social worker in Denver and Lauren is a dancer. All three graduated from college and have a strong inclination toward service.



The Steinke Family: (front row) Sarah and Lauren, (top row) Kyle, Tamy & Dick.

What's next for you after you leave the Port in September?

I'd like to stay in the industry in some form. I'm not sure in what capacity yet. My preference would be to stay here in Southern California.



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