

In Memoriam:

Joseph Largen, June 13, 1940 – November 22, 2016



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Joseph Largen.

Joe was a man of many hats who was comfortable in the boardroom as CEO as he was captaining his boat. He loved being out in the country and the quiet of a Sunday morning with the New York Times crossword puzzle. His greatest joy came from his friends and family. In particular, he relished his role as a grandfather to his eight grandchildren whom he loved and doted upon. In contrast, Joe's professional career was complex and underscored by simultaneously leading six companies as Chairman, CEO and/or President over thirty-eight years.

Joe was recruited by Arthur Brody, founder and owner of Brodart, to serve as Warehouse Manager for Brodart in 1969. Within three years Joe assumed the mantle of Vice President of Brodart; the youngest Vice President in the history of the company. A mere six years later he became Arthur's business partner and assumed the role of President and COO for Brodart. Joe and Arthur shared a partnership which lasted more than thirty years; together they built Brodart into a highly respected name in the library industry and acquired many other companies that were of mutual interest.

In 1986 Joe was a partner in the purchase of Tura Inc., a Long Island based designer of luxury eyewear. Tura is known today for quality collections from names like Ted Baker, Lulu Guinness and others. Joe functioned as the Chairman and President of Tura until it was sold in 2009 to The Eschenbach Group, a German eyewear company. This merger significantly strengthened the joint sales of all product lines and accelerated growth at Tura.

In the early 1990s Joe was a partner in the purchase of Canopy Road Software (renamed CRS Inc.), an employee absence management solution serving school districts and libraries in the U.S. and Canada. During his involvement the company grew from the original 35 accounts to more than 1,000 school districts. Joe acted as President, COO and/or CEO until CRS was sold to Frontline Data in 2015.

Joe served as Brodart's Chairman, CEO and President from 2004 until he sought out Robert McAndrew to serve as the fourth President and COO in Brodart's more than seventy-five year history. Robert was hand-selected by Joe to assume responsibility for Brodart operations and to fulfill his vision for the company. Brodart will continue to grow and evolve as Robert navigates the company through the 21st century.

For over seventy-five years libraries have turned to Brodart Co. for everything from custom furniture to shelf ready material services to consumable supplies. An astute business executive, Joe guided his companies through several acquisitions, including expanding into the field of retail sales, contemporary furniture, rocking chair manufacturing, supplies and furnishings distribution, eyewear frames and software development. He was particularly proud of successfully leading the Brodart management team through a leveraged buyout. Because of Joe's leadership and foresight, the company continued to grow and evolve throughout the decades. It is due to Joe's commitment to Brodart's customers and employees that Brodart is completely prepared for his departure and will continue to grow long into the future.

We thank Joe Largen for his unwavering commitment, guidance and support to our customers, our employees and Brodart Co. He will be missed....