



JOHN H. GOODISH

2008 STEELMAKER OF THE YEAR

by Joann Cantrell

The Steelmaker of the Year Award is presented annually by AIST to recognize notable leaders in the steel industry and the contributions they have made. John H. Goodish, executive vice president and chief operating officer, United States Steel Corporation, received the honor on May 6 before a crowd of 1,260 at the President's Award Breakfast at AISTech 2008 in Pittsburgh.

The inscription on the award reads: Steelmaker of the Year John H. Goodish, United States Steel Corporation, Recognized for his leadership in workplace safety, his commitment to world-class results, and his diligence in managing the company's successful acquisitions and business integrations. Furthermore, his relentless and untiring work ethic and constant drive to be the best have been instrumental in expanding the global business platform of the United States Steel Corporation.

When John Goodish was a boy growing up in Greensboro, Pa., about 55 miles south of Pittsburgh, he began each day by having breakfast with his grandfather.

Today, high above the city of Pittsburgh on the 61st floor of United States Steel Corporation's headquarters, in his office with a panoramic view, some may think that the 2008 Steelmaker of the Year is far removed from his roots. Yet, in getting to know John Goodish, it is evident that the concept of forgetting where he came from is a fallacy.

"My work ethic is from my grandfather and my dad," Goodish explained, crediting his family for his success in business. "I grew up in the country and because he lived so close, I was always with my grandfather. There wasn't a day that went by when he didn't give me work to do or have some sort of job for me. There was never a specific time to quit — I would be finished when he told me to stop, so I had to be careful not to finish too early or I'd have another job for the day."

Goodish's father ingrained the philosophy in him that your job is number one. He believed that the only way you could take care of your family was by having a job, and the ability to make money was the way to provide for your family. Growing up during the Depression, his father was good at listening to people and knew what was right, and figured out how to use that throughout his life.

As a 38-year veteran, Goodish is the third and last generation of the Goodish men who have worked for U. S. Steel. His grandfather worked at the former H.C. Frick coal mines in Fayette County, Southwestern Pennsylvania, and his father was a mine foreman, then a cost analyst for the U. S. Steel Frick Coal District. Grandfather John Goodish Sr. retired at the age of 65 with nearly 51 years of service. (Yes, the math is correct — he started working when he was barely 15!) Father John Goodish Jr. retired with 43 years of service, so there is a long history with one company.

"My career at U. S. Steel has been good, not just from the perspective that now I'm executive vice president and chief operating officer, but I have had the good fortune to gain vast experience with U. S. Steel across the board. I have worked in accounting, operations, coking operations, maintenance and hot strip mills. I gained a well-rounded background with no real need to leave," said Goodish. "I don't think anyone starts their career by thinking they are going to work for the same company for the next 30 or 40 years, but somehow one year just seems to roll into the next."

Goodish's climb up the corporate ladder at U. S. Steel began after he earned a bachelor of science degree in business administration from Waynesburg College in Pennsylvania. He joined U. S. Steel in 1970 as an accounting manage-

ment trainee and was promoted to junior auditor the following year. It was during those formative years that Goodish learned some of the most important business lessons that he has carried with him throughout his career.

"When I started on the audit staff at U. S. Steel, they assigned an experienced auditor by the name of Cliff Johnson to work with me, and he took me under his wing. Cliff taught me to make sure that you have everything documented and to make sure that you always know what the facts are. More than anything else, my experience with Cliff taught me that the accuracy of information can be the most important aspect of a job.

"I also enjoyed working for Thomas C. Graham, former vice chairman of the steel and diversified group for the USX Corp. I was several layers removed at the time, but Tom was a no-nonsense, here's-what-you-need-to-do type of manager and leader. He didn't tell you how to go about doing something; he told you what the objective was. I think in everyone's career, there are several people who can be an influence, not just one or two. Know that you can learn from everyone, even your worst employee, if you pay attention.

"It comes down to the fact that everybody has something to contribute, and you need to find out what that is. In today's environment, a lot of people are afraid to make decisions, and what they don't realize is that by not making a decision, you've already made one and it is generally the wrong one."

For 38 years, Goodish has split his career between accounting and operations. In 1987, after 17 years of increasingly responsible accounting positions, he was offered the unique opportunity to run the Gary Works' coke operations after completing an in-depth study of the company's coke operations. Taking his analytical and problem-solving skills with him, Goodish spent two and a half years at Gary Coke, overseeing upkeep, renovation and numerous improvements.

Goodish's career in operations has included responsibility for Gary Works' record-setting 84-inch hot strip mill, Mon Valley Works, Gary Works, UEC Engineers and Consultants, the acquisition and operation of U. S. Steel Košice, and his current role as chief operating officer for the corporation.

One of Goodish's proudest achievements with U. S. Steel was the successful acquisition and integration of U. S. Steel Košice. Goodish became the first president of USSK, the corporation's largest plant outside the United States. What started as a tin mill joint venture in 1998 turned into an opportunity to acquire the steelmaking assets of VSZ in 2000.

"VSZ was much like U. S. Steel, but 15 years behind. It was a good asset with great potential, and it has succeeded because we had a vision and the people to support that vision."



“I had the pleasure of working with John Goodish as he planned, negotiated, executed and nurtured U. S. Steel’s investments in Slovakia and Serbia. As a U.S. Ambassador, I know firsthand that John set the ethical and performance standards of excellence in this region for investors of all nationalities. John had the foresight to spot opportunities in Slovakia and Serbia early, the courage to stick with his decisions when things got tough (the Prime Minister of Serbia was assassinated), and the wisdom to understand that good corporate citizenship was crucial to overcoming Slovak and Serbian suspicions of foreign investors.

A man who never sleeps (just ask U. S. Steel’s plant managers throughout the world), John and his charming wife, Kitty, nevertheless found time to show U. S. Steel’s local employees and their families, as well as countless disadvantaged young people throughout Slovakia and Serbia, how responsible corporate leaders support their communities. Speaking for those of us, including my wife, a U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel and Gulf War veteran, who have the privilege to represent the United States abroad, I can say that it is an honor to know John and that he has made us proud.”

*Ambassador Ralph R. Johnson (retired)
U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia 1996–1999*



John H. Goodish receives the 2008 Steelmaker of the Year Award from AIST past president, Charlie Messina.

U. S. Steel Chairman and Chief Executive Officer John Surma recognized that Goodish was in the forefront as the leader of the successful acquisition and integration of USSK and U. S. Steel Serbia when U. S. Steel became international again. “As a key member of our executive management team, John Goodish has an extraordinary work ethic, strong leadership skills, high energy, and a detailed knowledge of the financial and operational aspects of our business — all of which he is using to ensure that our company is sustainable over the long term and can perform well across a range of market conditions.”

Today, as executive vice president and chief operating officer of U. S. Steel, the core of Goodish’s business strategy goes back to his father’s belief in accountability and holding people to high standards. With all the managers he has supervised, Goodish has instilled in them a sense of responsibility.

“When you have a serious problem, you have a responsibility to quickly solve that on your own. If you can’t resolve the problem, you need to ask for help. Others in management will re-allocate the problem and get the necessary resources to help. In the end, no one will remember who came in to help, they will just remember that you had a problem and fixed it.”

With a humble approach, Goodish discussed the Steelmaker of the Year Award. “There were 50,000 who helped me become Steelmaker of the Year. In my 38 years, I’ve come across a lot of good people. Many were good thinkers and could teach others to evaluate facts to learn how to make good decisions. None of us are successful because we alone are so good. We have 50,000 employees who work for U. S. Steel. If one individual thinks they are the reason for our company’s success, that just can’t be — it takes a team effort and everyone deserves credit for that.”

When asked how often he gets to interact with new employees, especially young recruits right out of school, Goodish explained how U. S. Steel brings in new management in groups. The executive management addresses each of those classes, and Goodish is usually the Sunday night speaker at the kickoff event for the group, as well as for U. S. Steel’s management academy. For the specialized training for blast furnace technology or steel academy technology, Goodish visits the classes or is present for the graduation. As a member of the executive management team, he is involved in Town Hall meetings and Q&A sessions at various U. S. Steel plants where the team meets with 100–150 key managers.

“Our executives are in tune with new employees coming into the company, and we have the opportunity to interact with those on the shop floor as well. We have a strong diversity program within the corporation also, and there are many opportunities for interaction.”

Goodish believes that the key to creating a sustainable company is implementing best practices.

“Adapting to the requirements of a rapidly consolidating and globalizing industry has been extremely challenging. We want our managers to excel at their key disciplines, but to be successful, we need them to be good business people first, and good operators, engineers and technical people second. The name of the game is making money and staying competitive.”

In giving sound advice to those who wish to climb the corporate ladder, Goodish listed three keys to success: Work hard. Have passion for what you do. Be dedicated and loyal.

“As an executive, my job is to create opportunities for people who work for me. They have to decide whether or not they are going to take advantage of those opportunities. Those who have dedication and passion, and those who take advantage of opportunity, will be the ones who are going to get ahead. It’s their job to harvest the opportunity.” ♦

A SPECIAL BREED

To parallel the loyalty and passion that John Goodish has dedicated to his career during his 38 years at U. S. Steel, he has also been a devoted husband, father of three, and now grandfather of four.

Since returning from his stint in Košice, John and his wife, Kitty, have been raising Limousin cattle, a breed of beef cattle originally bred in the Limousin and Marche regions of France. The Goodishes have 500 acres north of Ligonier, Pa., and lease another 300 acres in Ohio for their 368 registered beef cows. Limousins are a genetic source of larger weaning weights and muscle mass and are known for their muscular build, producing the leaner cuts of beef that have become a staple of the modern market.



John Goodish isn't just the COO of U. S. Steel...



he's also

a strategic thinker

a team player

an international steelmaker

a cattleman

an innovator...

and now he's AIST's Steelmaker of the Year.

Congratulations, John.



United States Steel
Our Strength. Our People.

*Congratulations
to the Best in the
Business*

**AIST's
Steelmaker
of the Year**

John Goodish



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