

This monthly article highlights one of our branch members. We hope that you enjoy knowing a little more about your fellow members and the interesting life they have had. If you have someone you would like to nominate or if you would like to help author an article, please email the editor, Ron Nakamoto, at [ron.nakamoto\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:ron.nakamoto@yahoo.com).

JIM HOLMAN



“A most interesting part of my earlier professional life was my representation of a company seeking to bring a major league baseball team to Tempe, Arizona. I represented Baseball Facilities, Inc. who was interested in attracting a professional baseball team to Tempe. Tempe in the 1960’s had a population of about 40,000 but was growing and ambitious to attract more talent and industry. I participated in negotiating land acquisition from the City of Tempe and the county of Maricopa and participated in the search for a baseball team. I recall visiting the Oakland Athletics and sitting across the table from Charlie Finley. The conversation was more like a diatribe with Charlie telling you what he wanted with a ‘take it or leave it’ attitude. It was a short meeting. Subsequently, we

were able to attract a newly formed baseball expansion team, the Seattle Pilots, for spring training. (*Editor’s note: If you are interested in early baseball history you should read about the origins of the Seattle Pilots and the lawsuits, bankruptcy and resurrection under a car salesman named Bud Selig at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seattle_Pilots.*) I prepared the agreements with the Pilots and others for the participation of the team, stadium financing and construction, etc.. A special events committee of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce, known as the Tempe Diablo’s, was formed to help promote the use of the stadium. I was a member of the Diablo’s and later became President. The stadium, which was named the Tempe Diablo Stadium, became the spring training home of the Pilots, then the Milwaukee Brewers, the Seattle Mariners and since 1993, the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim. In addition to baseball, the Diablo’s were active in efforts to bring college football (Fiesta Bowl 1971-2006) to Tempe.”

Jim was born in Minneapolis, MN and lived there through college. He was the only child. His father was a machinist and his mother a secretary. He attended Central High school and lettered in wrestling in his Junior and Senior years. He was Sports Editor for his class yearbook. His weekdays were spent working a paper route, later clerking at a grocery store and working summers at a service station. At fifty cents an hour and thirty dollars a week, Jim felt well off. He was always certain that he would attend college and did enroll at the University of Minnesota and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Law (BSL) and later a Doctor of Jurisprudence (JD). His parents were only able to contribute fifty dollars to his college education so Jim continued to work at various jobs to make ends meet. In 1954 while still in college, he married Joan, his high school girl friend.

Jim enrolled in the Marine Corps Officer Candidate Course while in college; completed his twelve weeks of training at Quantico, VI and after graduation was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He spent four years on active duty; eight months learning to be an infantry officer and the balance as Trial and Defense Counsel for General Court Martials at Camp Lejeune, NC. During his tour of duty he prosecuted or defended in excess of 100 General Courts Martial cases. (Most were for desertion as any Marine apprehended east of the Mississippi River after being absent for more than two years was sent to Camp Lejeune for trial.)

After release from active duty, with the rank of Captain, but having no desire to return to the cold and snow of Minnesota, Jim with his eight month pregnant wife and two kids decided to go to Arizona because "... it seemed like a place we would like to live, even though we knew no one and had no firm prospects for employment." While establishing residency required to take the Arizona Bar Exam, Jim worked as a parts clerk for Sperry Phoenix and then a Trust Officer for Phoenix Title & Trust. After passing the Bar, Jim became the first full-time City Attorney for Tempe, AZ. A long time and well-respected City Attorney for another city offered some advice: "You will be asked in a public meeting for an immediate legal opinion on an issue which you have not had an opportunity to research or study. When this happens to me, I try to think, what should be the answer according to the legal principles I know and how much damage will I do if I am wrong."

"After a little over two years, I resigned as City Attorney to open my own law office in Tempe. In addition to my law practice, I began a campaign to establish Tempe as a Home Rule, Charter City. (*Editor's note: In home rule states, an article or amendment to the state constitution grants cities, municipalities, and/or counties the ability to pass laws to govern themselves as they see fit (so long as they obey the state and federal constitutions).* Within the local sphere, the authority granted falls into four categories; structural, functional, fiscal and personnel e.g. employment rules.) This resulted in an election directing the formation of a Board of Freeholders (of which I became Chairman) to draft a Charter for the government of the City. Largely because of this and my other civic activities, I was voted as the "Outstanding Young Man of Arizona" by the Arizona Jaycees in connection with the national Jaycee program, which resulted in a trip to Washington with recipients of this award from other states. A high point was an audience with President Lyndon Johnson.

"I worked very hard with long hours developing my law practice, taking on partners and even expanding my business to include financial consulting for businesses. Unfortunately, the long hours took a toll on my marriage ending in a divorce. We had three children, my oldest son is deceased from complications resulting from a motorcycle accident, my daughter lives in San Diego and my second son lives in Pleasant Hill and we stay in close contact.

"In 1982, my financial consulting business brought me to California for a fresh start and expanded to full time servicing various construction companies. I met my present wife, Phyllis at a Stanford Bachelor's Club dance. We were both convinced to go by friends

that, in turn, never showed up. We met, left to have a bite to eat, decided to go on a picnic together at Grant Ranch and the rest was history. We have been happily married for over 31+ years. We have often commented that we met at probably the only time and place that we would have even been within sight of each other. Serendipity.

“Along the way I met two other men while working with a construction company that we were trying to help (one of whom is Sir Robert Pittman). Unfortunately, the company owner and CEO was not making sensible business decisions resulting in a number of board members resigning including Robert and me. Over lunch one day, our conversation came around to ‘... now that you are unemployed what are you planning to do?’ We decided to form a General Contracting company. We formed Devel Construction, Inc. to build clean rooms for various high technology companies. Robert’s specialty was in identifying construction needs of these companies, our third partner’s specialty was on-site construction and my specialty was in legal and finance. We began building clean rooms for the semi-conductor industry including Intel, LSI, Lockheed Martin, Apple, VLSI, and Applied Materials to name a few. When that work went overseas, we moved to specializing in Tenant Improvements. We formed an Employee Stock Option Plan so that our employees would be able to buy us out when we retired – which they did. The company is still active and it is nice to know that the current President began work with us as an apprentice carpenter.

“Since retirement, my wife and I have travelled extensively in the U.S. and beyond to include Australia, New Zealand, Holland, the Canal boats in France and England, Africa, the Galapagos and Brazil. I currently bowl and fish and attempt to play golf. I’ve done fairly well in bowling after a short period of dedicated effort but am still poor at golf after many years of trying. I still have a good time and enjoy the fellowship. A heart attack eighteen years ago impressed upon me how fortunate it was to live three minutes away from the Paramedics. After three stents in my heart and regular check-ups, I have gotten along fine. One check-up did send me back to Stanford where they put in a replacement stent as the old one was getting clogged.

“One thing that I believe from having changed direction a few times in my life is that ‘If you think that you can do it, you probably can.’ Don’t hesitate to try something you want just because you can’t be sure how it will come out.”