

Jerry Cort



After one quarter at Michigan Tech and three semesters at the University of Michigan, I didn't go back for my junior year. Got married in 1961 to Patti DeLong, Southfield Class of 1960, got drafted, took 3 years in the Army instead of 2 to get a guaranteed assignment and after a short stint controlling Target Acquisition and Tracking Radar for Nike Hercules missiles ended up spending 2 ½ years at the Pentagon as a computer programmer working on the Army War Room Information System. While in D.C., I finally finished my BA at George Washington University.

Got out of the service in 1964 and went through the Dean Witter broker training program in San Francisco (anyone see Pursuit of Happiness?) and ended up in charge of the Computer Based Investment Research department at Goodbody and Co. Then in 1968 I co-founded a company, Klose, Cort & Co., and wrote a computer system to manage securities portfolios. After a year we sold out to Drexel, Harriman, Ripley, of Philadelphia and I ended up President of a subsidiary of Drexel. Patti and I had parted company back in California in 67 (fairly amicably, actually), and in 1969 I married Nancy Arend who was at that time one of my vice presidents at Drexel. That turned out to be a great move. We just celebrated our 38th anniversary this last August.

After Drexel I spent a short time at Brokerage Transaction Services, Inc, a joint venture of Control Data and Ultronics Corp. where I was Technical Director in charge of the Switch and Match for the New York Stock Exchange. Once it was written, I moved to T. Rowe Price in Baltimore as what was then called Manager of Data Processing. I spent four years there before realizing that I really liked a) California, and b) running my own business, so in 1974 Nancy and I packed up and went back to California.

In January 1975 Nancy and I bought a computer service bureau in Indio, California, renamed it Cort Data, converted its IBM 360 computers to HP 3000 minicomputers and spent the next ten years writing business software and running that software on our computers. In 1985, after I saw my first PC, we sold the computer service bureau end of the business, kept the software under the name Cort Development and started a company called Cort Directions to sell Payroll and Human Resources software. Our software was used by about 400 mid-sized organizations, like United Airlines, Harvard University, and the Denver Broncos. We moved that company from California to Bend, Oregon in 1987 and ran it until we sold both companies in 1998. Nancy and I stayed on as consultants until January 1999 and we've been retired ever since.

My one son, Frank, graduated from Mountain View High School in Bend, Oregon, got his BA at Oregon State and his MS in Computer Science from Stanford. He's now a senior engineer at Yahoo and married to a beautiful grade-school teacher.

I've really had a fun go. Had all the toys, including about 10 motorcycles and 3 airplanes, and a spectacular gal to have fun with. We now live in Rancho La Quinta, California. Since retiring I've gotten my MBA (a little late), and I'm currently working on a Masters in Military History at Norwich University. Life is good. Thanks Southfield.