

president, executive vice president, and member of the board of directors. From 1967 until 1974 he was a director of McKinsey & Company. And from 1974 until 1993, Mr. Harlan was with McKesson Corporation serving as chairman, president and chief executive officer, director, and finally interim chairman and CEO.

During his tenure at McKesson, Neil Harlan led McKesson on a transition to focus on health care and divest unrelated businesses. He also focused McKesson's resources on automation and services within health care. Throughout the 20 years he served as McKesson's leader, the company steadily increased its focus on the wholesale distribution of pharmaceutical drugs as the cornerstone of its health care services portfolio.

Working in tandem with Neil Harlan was Alan Seelenfreund. Alan Seelenfreund stated with McKesson in 1975. He became chief financial officer in 1984 and joined the McKesson board in 1988. In 1989, he was elected chairman and chief executive officer, the latter a position he held until April 1997. Investors often point to the Harlan/Seelenfreund years as the formative years for McKesson, focusing on health care and growing, by acquisitions and securing large customers such as Walmart in 1989.

John McKesson founded McKesson and Company and led it for its first 60 years. Neil Harlan led McKesson for 20+ years with Alan Seelenfreund, and sharpened the focus of the company on the very services that anchor the company today. Without these three individuals, McKesson would probably not be the largest and most profitable wholesale distribution company in the pharmaceutical drug industry.³

HERB SHEER: GENCO—THIRD GENERATION

When I started doing investigative research for this book, I visited numerous pharmacy retailers. What I discovered was that one company, GENCO, seemed to hold the largest market share in the pharmaceutical drug returns industry. In addition, I heard comments such as “innovators” and “value-added providers” when GENCO's name came up. This was intriguing, since my son and coauthor, Karl, worked for Inmar and the industry is known for being obsessive with cost cutting. What I discovered is that the passion for reverse logistics and the strong culture could be traced to the Sheer family, specifically Herb Sheer (Figure 10.7).