**

*May 2018*

The [**Canada Lifetime Achievement Award**](https://oilandgascouncil.com/event-events/canada-assembly-and-dinner/) celebrates the triumphs and successes of those who have made a true difference to the Canadian oil and gas industry and its economy. These executives are responsible for pioneering new frontiers, pushing boundaries, for inspiring others and for achieving growth in challenging markets as well as giving back to their communities. The Award Winners are those that we should be proud of and that we benchmark industry excellence against.

In 2018, we honor **John Dielwart the Founder of ARC Resources Ltd. and Vice Chairman of ARC Financial.**ARC Financial is the largest Canadian private equity money manager in the energy space and ARC Resources is one of the top 10 oil companies in Canada.

So why have **ARC Resources Ltd.**and **ARC Financial** been so successful?

**Childhood Shapes Us**

We sat down with John to find out more about him and how he helped build ARC Resources from the ground up.

John was born to Dutch immigrant parents. At the age of two, John’s father died leaving his mother, who was not in good health, to raise four young children. “We didn’t have much, but we had everything that we needed” – the family was often the recipients of the generosity of friends and the wider community, something that John will never forget.

After high school and a failed attempt to get into university, due to funding, John got his first job with the help of a family friend. He started working at the Oil and Gas Conservation Board making CDN$1.50/ hour. It was here that he met his future wife. As part of the marriage commitment, John went back to school to get the engineering degree that he always wanted. He earned his degree in Civil Engineering in 1977 from Calgary University.

**From Shell to ARC**

John’s early career saw him working at Shell, where he was employed as a facilities engineer. During his five years there he asked to be exposed to as many facets of the business as possible – he says this is where he learned to become the CEO he was. From there he was approached by a friend who asked him to join him at Gilbert Lausten Jung Associates Ltd. He was with the firm for 12 years, moving up to partner and learning of the successes and challenges of companies and projects on an international scale.

The tipping point came in 1994 when John was asked, by Mac Van Wielingen who he’d met during a business negotiation, to join the fledgling company Power West Financial Corp, now ARC Financial Corp. With his broad base of experience, his role was to try to build up a private production and ownership non-operated interest assets and be the sole arbiter of what the company should and shouldn’t buy.

On July 11 1996, the company went public with $180 million of purely retail dollars. John says that ‘It was not something to take lightly’ – they were looking after people’s retirement money and savings and it ‘meant something to them that we had to look after these investments. Over time we built a company and entity that we are all very proud of and that is ARC Resources’ and John became president.

**“People believe in what we stand for”**

Speaking on building up the company, John talks a lot about culture. ‘Culture was always the focus from day one. We made sure from day one that everyone joining us knew what we represented and that everyone lived by that culture.’ ARC stands for ‘Respect for the people, respect for the environment and respect for the community and treating everyone with dignity, respect and trust. Our model wasn’t unique, what was unique was that we stuck to it.’

Every year both ARC Financial and ARC Resources does a test to measure the strength of the workplace, and they consistently get 88 – 90% rate of actively engaged employees. That is people who come to work enthused to be there, engaged and ready to do a good job – they are actively engaged in taking the company further. How are ARC Resources and ARC Financial able to achieve this year on year?  John says it is because ‘the people believe in what we stand for, they want to be part of it – they want the company to do well.’

The philosophy of ‘All do well if we do well’ has been at the forefront of how ARC has been conducting their business since the very beginning and something that he taught the leaders that he brought in from day one. John says that to create a successful business you have to create a scenario where everyone, on all levels, care about the people that they work with.

You also have to employ people to fit your company culture and live by the philosophy that ‘it doesn’t matter who you are in the organization – what stands for one stands for all. You can’t contravene who we are or what we stand for and work for this company. It is a difficult thing to do, but if you stick to it, it pays off’. To do that you have to know who you are as an organization and tell people. You then have to go out and do what you say you’re going to do. That’s the reason we were so successful in the capital market – we’ve always done what we said we’d do.’

**“If you aren’t contributing, then why are you there?”**

‘You have different abilities at different times and different ways that you can give. I believe that if you are a business you are part of the community in which you operate and if you aren’t contributing, as a business and individually, then why are you there? So we got very deliberate about giving within the organization.’ It started by allowing employees to take time off work to volunteer where they saw fit. And it became part of the company’s culture. This morphed into different departments volunteering how and where they saw fit – giving their time, their talents and their treasure – ‘it became part of what we are. It became part of the job description.’

**On Retirement**

In January 2013, John retired. He says that the ‘retirement decision was a combination of myself and the organization being ready. ARC Financial asked me to come back – which wasn’t part of the retirement plan but it has been a wonderful way to ease myself out of being a CEO of multi-billion $ enterprise. Post-retirement life is busy!’

**Basic Principles of Success – by John Dielwart**

When he set out, John wanted to build a company that lasts and he said that they increased their odds of doing that by following these basic principles –

* long-term thinking,
* long-term planning,
* good leadership and good people on all levels of your business and
* stick to what you are and what you do

And John’s final nugget of wisdom, if you will, is – ‘treat people properly and with dignity and respect and they will give the same back to you.’