



**Mike Lalich, NRRI Director,
University of Minnesota-Duluth**

At about the same time, two large agribusiness firms commissioned the company to develop a peat granule capable of absorbing their proprietary bacterial growth-enhancers, which significantly enhanced the growth of root systems in crops such as soybeans. Today, the bulk of Peat Technologies' revenues is generated from the resulting InocuSorb™ products, which are used by farmers throughout the United States, as well as in Canada and South America, to help naturally fertilize crops.

The granules have also proved profitable for water treatments. The company's MultiSorb™ 100 product extracts metal and organic contaminants from wastewater. One company in Austria is using the product to purify that country's drinking water. SeptiSorb™ 100 was developed for treating septic tank water.

Other products include HortiSorb™ 600, which consists of peat granules designed for greenhouses and home gardeners, and OilSorb™ 500, which absorbs small oil spills in refineries, auto shops and automotive garages. Revenues for 2002 are expected to approach \$4 million, a nice boost from the \$2.5 million reported in 2001. A whole host of other potential applications yet to be tapped, ranging from precious metals recovery to oil spill cleanup.

—Phil Bolsta

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

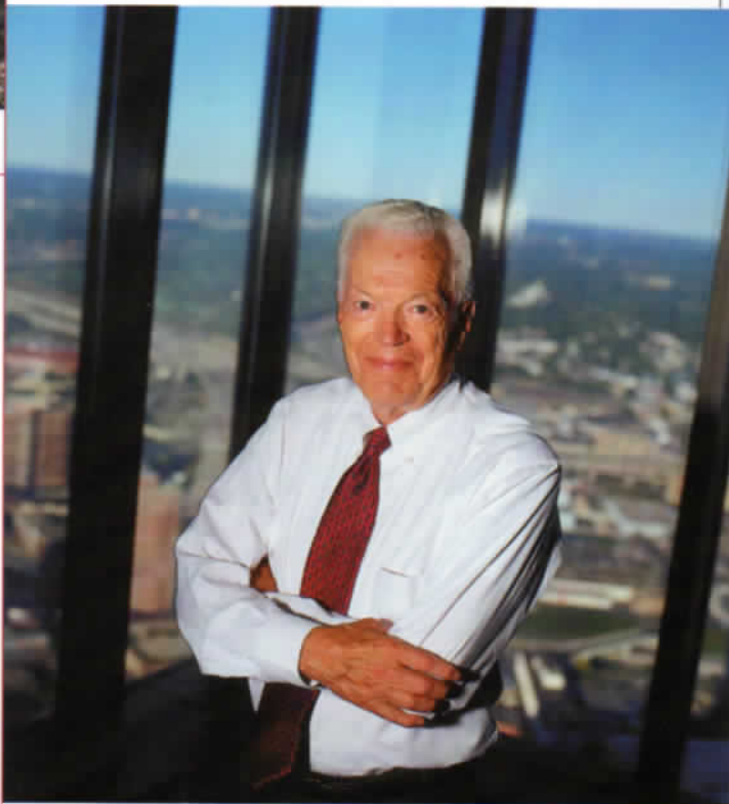
Charles M. Denny, Jr.

On January 1, 2001, the *Star Tribune* ran an opinion piece entitled, "Silent No Longer: a former CEO speaks out against corporate greed, dishonesty and inflated executive pay and severance packages." The author took to task self-centered actions by a "relative handful of executives casting a shadow of corporate incompetence, insensitivity and skullduggery upon the business community, tarnishing the rep-

utations of the majority of executives who are honest, thoughtful and caring individuals."

Strong words, perhaps made stronger because a member of the CEO fraternity wrote them. Few Minnesota business leaders would be surprised by the writer's name: Chuck Denny Jr., former CEO and board chairman of ADC Telecommunications. For Minnesota's business community, it's just one more example of Denny moving to the fore of a challenging leadership issue. In a business career spanning more than four decades, Denny reminds us that mixing fairness with business pragmatism can work, and work well.

Denny's career started at Home Gas Company in the mid-50s and joined Honeywell in 1959. In 1971, he became president of ADC Magnetic Controls, where he set out to build on the company's growing sales of equipment for telephone operating companies. Under his watch, ADC attained solid financial ground by 1974, and became the largest independent supplier of test



Charles M. Denny, Jr.

boards in the U.S. in 1976. In 1983, the company's fortunes took off with telecommunications deregulation. A year later, the company became ADC Telecommunications, a number of successful mergers and acquisitions followed, and ADC emerged as a leading player in the fast-developing telecommunications industry, well positioned to serve Internet-spurred growth in the 90s. In 1991, Denny retired as president to become ADC's chairman of the board, retiring as board chair in 1994.

While at ADC, Denny helped start and/or led the Minnesota High Tech Association, Technology Corridor and Wellspring, an inner-city jobs enterprise. He also worked with Edson Spencer, former Honeywell CEO, to raise funds to endow a University of Minnesota science-policy chair.

He's been called "a nonprofit's dream board member," a CEO

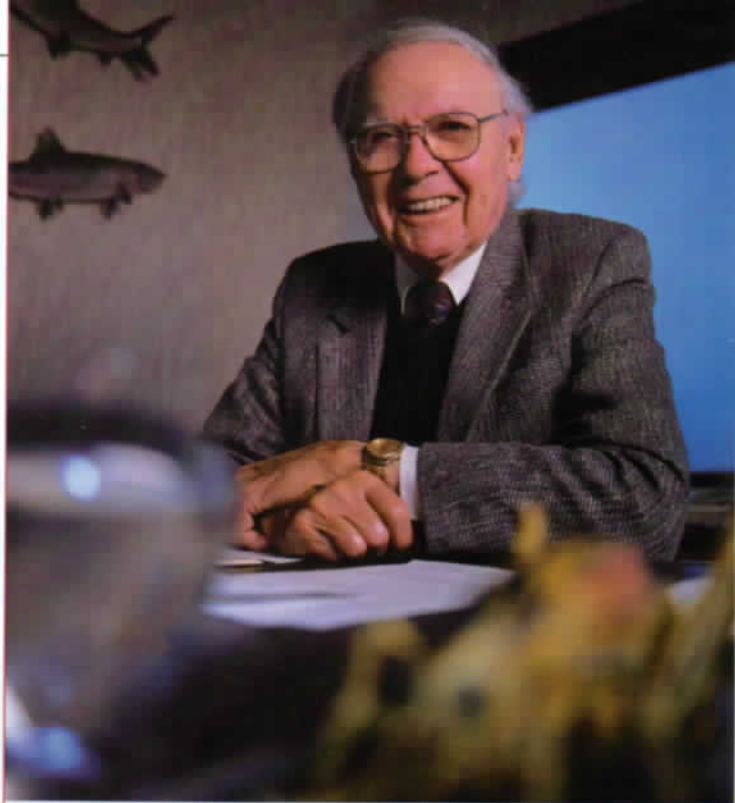
always willing to roll up his sleeves and do the grunt work. He has served as: Interim Director, Minneapolis Community Development Agency; Chairman, Board of Trustees, College of St. Catherine; Chairman, Minnesota High Technology Council; Director, Minnesota Symphony Orchestra; Director, Boys and Girls Club of Minneapolis; Director, Minnesota Center for Corporate Responsibility; Director, Citizens League. The list goes on.

In October 1991, *Business Ethics* quoted Denny on the topic of high CEO compensation. He said, "The only faith I have is that history shows that morality and ethics come in waves, and that some external conditions at times force the nation to look in upon itself and begin to deal with the issues of fairness," he said. "When that wave comes again, it is possible that leadership will arise in the most visible of society's institutions—including the business world—and individuals will begin to take ethical or moral stances."

A decade later, Denny punctuated the concept in his *Star Tribune* opinion piece writing, "I believe our nation desperately needs courageous business leaders who will speak their personal convictions. Chief executive officers who believe in responsible corporate leadership must proclaim their beliefs beyond the borders of their organizations."

It prompted a public response from University of St. Thomas Professor Fred Zimmerman who said, "Chuck Denny's article . . . was a masterpiece and should be republished every month or so to remind us all of our greater responsibilities."

—Greg Irsfeld



William C. Norris

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

William C. Norris

Some time has passed since the days when Control Data Corporation Founder and Chairman Emeritus Bill Norris would arrive at work each morning toting two heavy leather briefcases bulging with notebooks full of his ideas. As described by former Control Data Manager Deanna Nord, in her book, *Never Business as Usual: William C. Norris*, "At home, Norris had notebooks in every single room, so that when he got an idea, he could write it down immediately. He didn't want ideas to get away from him." Time, it seems, doesn't change all things.

Today, 90-year-old Norris is still touting the power of new ideas as he pioneers business and technological development and promotes business opportunity as a solution for social ills. As chairman of the board of directors of the William C. Norris Institute, the former Control Data CEO and chairman is still advancing technological cooperation that's responsive to major societal needs.

The former Nebraska farm boy became an electrical engineer and served as a U.S. Navy code breaking technician in World War II. Post-war, he helped spark the fledgling computer industry and eventually founded the company that became the world's first computer manufacturer. Under his leadership Control Data pioneered large-scale computers and PLATO (programmed language for automated teaching operations) which applied computer technology to education. Norris retired in 1986, the same year that President Ronald Reagan awarded him the National

Medal of Technology in recognition of his contributions to the development of digital computer technology.

In 1988, he began work with the William C. Norris Institute, established by a CDC endowment. Among the Institute's many accomplishments: a multi-million dollar seed-capital fund and the Job Creation Collaborative which facilitates public/private collaboration to support technology-based start-up companies.

Norris is a long-time advocate of large corporations taking initiative, in cooperation with government and other sectors, to address major unmet needs of society by providing profitable business opportunities. He put this concept in practice at CDC, directing plant openings in urban areas of un- and underemployment. In 1983 Norris conceived and initiated the Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corporation. Today, with 56 member and associate member companies, it is a flagship of technological cooperation, working on a number of joint activities with government agencies and universities. Norris also helped organize the Norwest Growth Fund, Minnesota Seed Capital Fund and Minnesota Cooperation Office, which assist small businesses to start up and operate successfully.

Norris focuses primarily on promoting better, more available and less costly education and training, and raising the level and efficiency of technological innovation. He authored *New Frontiers for Business Leadership*, a treatise on how U.S. corporations can address major unmet needs of society as profitable business opportunities. His work prompted Ralph Nader to profile Norris in his 1986 book, *The Big Boys: Power and Influence in American Business*, predicting that Norris may "come to be known as the most revolutionary figure on the modern corporate stage."

To a long list of professional awards and accolades, Norris can now add a Tekne Award, which recognizes him for sticking to his simple philosophy: "Do something meaningful."

—Greg Irsfeld