

Lee Business School Sustainability Speaker Series

Dr. Mark Whitacre

Chief Operation Officer/Chief Science Officer

Cypress Systems

Topic: When Good Leaders Lose Their Way!

Thursday, March 9, 2017

Philip J. Cohen Theatre , 2:30 – 3:45 pm



Mark Whitacre is an Ivy League Ph.D. and is considered the highest-ranked executive of any Fortune 500 company to become a whistleblower in U.S. history. In the early 1990s, Whitacre was responsible for uncovering the Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) price-fixing scandal. Since 2006, Whitacre has been an executive with Cypress Systems, Inc, a California biotech company involved with human clinical trials (cancer research), and he was promoted in 2009 to the position of COO and Chief Science Officer of the company.

His undercover work with the FBI during the ADM scandal was the inspiration for the 2009 major motion picture, "*The Informant*," starring [Matt Damon](#) as Mark Whitacre, and the 2010 Discovery Channel documentary "*Undercover*" archived on Mark Whitacre's website, www.markwhitacre.com. The recent book, "*Mark Whitacre Against all Odds*", describes the rest of the story about how faith has molded Whitacre's life since the ADM scandal. Drawing from his unique history, Whitacre provides one-of-a-kind insight into corporate ethics, corporate greed, and the warning signs of a flawed corporate leadership.

After simultaneously completing B.S. and M.S. degrees at Ohio State University, Whitacre then earned his Ph.D. degree at Cornell University in biochemistry in 1983. After he completed his Ph.D., he worked for multiple Fortune 500 companies including Ralston Purina, Degussa (Evonik), and ADM. Whitacre was hired at ADM, the 56th largest

company on the Fortune 500 at the time, when he was 32 years of age. As the president of the BioProducts Division from its launch, he was the youngest divisional president in the history of the company. In just six years, his division's fermentation complex became one of the largest in the world. At age 35, he became a corporate vice president of ADM and was the leading candidate to become the next company president.

Whitacre has extensive international business experience, having lived for almost four years in West Germany working for an international company. He has also been involved with two international companies in the Southeast Asia market and traveled the region dozens of times. Whitacre's more than two decades of top management experience at Fortune 500 and international companies, as well as his experience with the ADM price-fixing scandal and the FBI, give him a unique, seasoned perspective on leadership in the corporate world.

Today, the four FBI agents involved with Whitacre's case tout him publicly as a "national hero" for his substantial assistance with one of the most important white-collar cases in history. And Douglas Burris, chief of U.S. Federal Probation in the Eastern District of Missouri, has stated publicly, "The story about Mark Whitacre's redemption and second chance is one of the most inspirational stories of our time."

Whitacre and his wife, Ginger, live in Florence, Kentucky.



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