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## Alumni Profile

Beth Rogers Thompson

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# Entrepreneur has global career

Steve Marshall '86 was drawn to Linfield for its international opportunities. An exchange program at Kanto Gakuin University left him smitten by Japanese culture and inspired a global career.

Marshall immersed himself in Japanese studies, including a year at Keio University that helped him earn a degree in communications and Japanese studies.

He returned to Japan during a stint as Sokol Blosser winery's business manager. Later, he landed a translation project for Jantzen. Marshall then flew to Japan with 100 copies of his resume and landed a job with Manufacturers Hanover Securities, as a salesman in fixed-income securities. Earning little money, he lived in an apartment measuring six tatami mats. At first, it had no shower, and if he worked late he missed out on public baths. Finally, the landlord installed a small plastic-tube shower.

After three years, a big break came: Barclays Securities wanted to establish a fixed-income trading desk in Tokyo and hired him to head up sales. It was a full ex-patriot program that allowed for trips home and a three-bedroom house in central Tokyo, a significant contrast to his previous lifestyle.

International work offered exciting opportunities. "I put myself in a position to experience business and life at a much faster and dynamic pace than I ever would have back home," Marshall

said. "The world offers so many potential opportunities for our life if we step out and experience it."

He advises today's Linfield students to embrace different cultures: "Life is short; it's crazy-busy 24/7/365. Opportunities to step outside your comfort zone are rare, so live it and learn it while you have the chance."

He also values the relationships he has formed: "People I've met all over the world have defined who I am and the perspective I take on many issues."

He returned home to Portland and opened a restaurant. There he met his future wife, Vicki, of Thai descent, who worked for Delta Airlines. After selling the restaurant, Marshall worked for Exhibit Group, then for The George P. Johnson Co. (GPJ), both global marketing agencies. Hired by GPJ to establish a presence in Asia Pacific, Marshall opened five offices in the region, including its headquarters in Sydney, Australia.

The Marshalls returned to the States in 2002 prior to the birth of their second daughter. "There also comes a point where it becomes apparent that the skills you've achieved abroad are highly marketable back home," Marshall added.

Shortly after that, he was diagnosed with cancer. He lost a kidney in 2004 and is cancer-free but continues to be monitored closely.

Marshall, who describes himself as "a consummate entrepreneur," is now president and co-owner of The New Group, a 15-year-old Portland integrated digital marketing agency. Its largest accounts include Jenny Craig, Intel, Dolby, Motorola and Hitachi.

"In marketing, you're always looking to help companies differentiate themselves," Marshall said. "Personally, my international background does just that – it helps set me apart."

His business partner, Doug New, said the company has benefited from Marshall's international experience.

"Steve is a guy that has a heart as big as McMinnville and a love for his family and friends that is unyielding; and, yet, he seems to find a way to be an outstanding business thought-leader," New said. "It's a real privilege to work with him."

Outside work, Marshall attends South Lake Four-square Church and said, "My faith is the real driver of who I am."

He ran in the 2005 and 2006 Portland Marathon, and his whole family enjoys golf. And international travel, of course: This summer, the Marshalls will visit Vicki's family in Bangkok.

– Beth Rogers Thompson

