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 uninitiated 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 Bloser winery’s business manager. Later, he landed a translation project for Jantzen. Marshall then flew to Japan with several wineries’ business managers. Later, he landed a translation project for Jantzen. Marshall then flew to Japan with several wineries’ business managers.

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 as the bureau chief 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 Marshall’s 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 Nexus Group, a 15-year-old Portland integrated digital marketing agency. Its largest accounts include Jenny Craig, Intel, Dolby, and Motora and Hitachi.

“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 who is unfazed by anything, 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 Marshall’s will visit Vicki’s family in Bangkok.”

— Beth Rogers Thompson