

Blake Nordstrom
1960-2019

We're deeply saddened by the loss of Blake Nordstrom who passed unexpectedly on the morning of January 2, 2019. He was 58.

Son of Bruce and Fran Nordstrom, Blake was born in Seattle, Washington on October 4, 1960. He grew up on Mercer Island, attended Mercer Island High School and the University of Washington. Like his father and grandfather before him, Blake rowed crew for the Huskies and endowed scholarships in their honor at the university.

Everyone who knew Blake knew how much he loved Nordstrom. He would go to great lengths to make personal connections and had an instinctive way of making people feel supported, included and important. In the early 1970s Blake began his career sweeping floors in the stockroom and by 1976, was selling in the downtown Seattle store. He went on to hold various positions in buying and regional management and became president of Nordstrom in 2000 and served as co-president with his brothers Pete and Erik from 2015 to 2019.

For Blake, work was family and family was work. And though serving as co-president with his brothers Pete and Erik was an unconventional corporate structure, it worked well. They divided responsibilities, made big decisions together and pushed the company to adapt and compete in the age of e-commerce.

As their dad Bruce wrote in his 2007 memoir, *Leave It Better Than You Found It*, "they are as complete and effective a threesome as you could possibly ask for. They are reminded every day that there is a legacy, a standard, a level of performance that was created by the people who preceded them."

Even given those expectations, Blake's commitment to upholding that standard of excellence was extraordinary. Today Nordstrom is widely recognized as a leader in the retail industry and the gold standard in customer service.

In addition to his role as co-president and serving on Nordstrom's Board of Directors, He served as a member of the Board of Directors for the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco from 2007 to 2012; and on Board of Directors for The Jim Pattison Group, Canada's third-largest private company, from 2012 until his passing.

Blake's kindness and generosity were reflected in his enduring commitment to a thriving Seattle. Long before the recent boom, he was a champion of revitalizing downtown and served on the board of the Downtown Seattle Association. For Blake, Seattle's homeless crisis was real and immediate, and he was determined to help people in need. As active civic leaders, Blake and his wife Molly chaired the major gifts campaign of the United Way of King County for six

years and he was deeply engaged as a University of Washington Rowing Steward. Modest by nature, Blake gave directly to many charities, often quietly or anonymously.

When he wasn't working, fundraising, or cheering on the Huskies, Blake loved spending time with Molly and his children, Andy and Alex, especially out on the water. Like his father before him, Blake encouraged his children to follow their own interests and pursue their own dreams. Because for him, the Nordstrom name wasn't ultimately about retailing, it was about being your best self and contributing to the greater good.

"Blake was the best big brother, friend and mentor anyone could ever ask for," Pete and Erik Nordstrom said in a note to employees. "One of the things that brings us some comfort is that Blake's values, character and passion can still be reflected in what this company does – how we treat each other, our customers and our communities. Building on that is the best way we can think of to honor his legacy."

In addition to his wife Molly Nordstrom, father Bruce Nordstrom (wife Jeannie) his brothers, Pete (Brandy) and Erik (Julie), Blake is survived by his children, Andy and Alex. The Nordstrom family asks that people wishing to make donations in Blake's memory consider the University of Washington Rowing or United Way of King County.

Blake was a tremendous leader who personified the heart and soul of Nordstrom and our values. He was passionate about the people in this company and had a deep connection with those who directly served our customers. The overwhelming outpouring of support and condolences received about Blake is a real testament to who he was, and has been incredibly uplifting and comforting. He will be greatly missed by all of us at Nordstrom.

[A community celebration](#) in honor of Blake Nordstrom will be held at Alaska Airlines Arena (Hec Ed Pavilion) on Saturday, January 12. Doors open at 1 p.m. and program starts at 2 p.m.