

Bob Simpson

Born September 29, 1945 in Boston, Mass., Bob Simpson grew up in a tough Dorchester neighborhood in the city. His parents, Allan and Julia Simpson, raised three sons in the wake of the Great Depression. Too many kids that grew up with Bob either went to jail or died in Vietnam. He credits Junior Achievement for keeping him off the streets, inspiring an opportunity to contribute to the family's income and providing him with the tools needed for his later success in management. He also credits his mother for teaching him the fine art of negotiation as she bartered for food in Haymarket Square.

Bob trained to become a machinist but decided to join the U.S. Army in 1965. He served two tours in the Vietnam War as a heavy equipment operator and medic. He also served in Korea, where he was involved in the historic Pueblo incident, an assignment that took him over the "Bridge of No Return" into North Korea. In 1968, having finally returned to the U.S., he married his high school sweetheart, Linda, in Savannah, Ga. The couple had orders to Germany in hand, but the night before the wedding, Bob was called back to Vietnam and shipped out alone two weeks later. During his final tour, his daughter Kathy was born. Once he returned home, he ended his Army career, became a truck driver and began taking college classes at night. The family grew with the addition of two more children, Bobby Jr. and Michelle. It took more than seven years, but Bob graduated from Stonehill College with a degree in Healthcare Administration, a career choice inspired by his years as an Army medic. He later achieved Advanced Training in Negotiation from Wharton School of Management and Harvard University. He is a graduate of the Georgetown University Leadership Training Program and a Champion of the Six Sigma Process.



In 1976, Bob joined the American Red Cross as director of operations NE and gained valuable experience as he led the charge during the "perfect storm" blizzard of 1978. In 1982, he opened the first USDA Human Nutrition Research Center at Tufts University in Boston. He built the \$170 million center and traveled the world transporting the best scientists and nutrition labs to downtown Boston to study the effects of nutrition on the aging population. From 1984 to 1994, Bob was at the Neponset Valley Health System where he led the effort to centralize materials management services for the first multi-hospital health care system in the New England area as Vice President of Materials Management. In 1994, Bob joined Healthcare Services of New England, the largest and oldest group purchasing organization in New England and, as their vice president, developed total service contracts for their membership. From 1995 to 2002, Bob held several executive positions at TFX Surgical Group, where he led the development of a National Accounts effort and the development of a Service Division to assist customers in lowering their total operational cost.

During the height of his career, Bob's son, Bobby Jr. was killed by a drunk driver at the age of 18. Heartbroken, the family left Massachusetts. While he was serving as vice president for the surgical instruments supplier Pilling Weck in Raleigh, N.C., Bob was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer and given three months to live. Fortunately, through an 11-hour surgery, the cancer was removed. On March 1, 2002, he moved to Lee County to serve in his current position as president and CEO of LeeSar, the Supply Chain Management Division, and Cooperative Services of Florida, the Group Purchasing Organization for Lee Memorial Health System and Sarasota Memorial Healthcare System. Under his leadership, the company has improved from a 66% fill rate to a 99% fill rate and quadrupled in size.

This impactful leader has received many honors and awards throughout his career and is considered a superstar in the field of health care administration, but his true passion is his charitable work. Bobby Jr.'s tragic death inspired Bob and Linda to found Project Perfect World, a non-profit that has provided surgery to thousands of children in need throughout the world. The couple also volunteers in the community, and Bob has made community outreach a priority at LeeSar. In addition to his volunteer work, Bob enjoys spending time with Linda, his children Kathy and Michelle, and two grandchildren Ben and Fred. He owns an antique car and enjoys sailing and traveling.

An outstanding role model for youth, Bob Simpson is duly recognized by Junior Achievement of Southwest Florida as an outstanding Laureate for the 2013 Business Hall of Fame, Lee County.

