

# ARTHUR A. DEFEHR

Palliser Furniture - 70 Lexington Park, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2G 4H2

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**Birthdate:** 1942

**Birthplace:** Winnipeg, Manitoba

**Family:** Wife: Leona

Daughters:

- Shanti (husband Dan Nussbaum, sons - Leo and Sachin, daughter -Colette)
- Tara (husband Peter Tielmann and daughter - Mila)

## Education

**MBA from Harvard Business School, 1967**

- Baker Scholar
- Emphasis on strategy, finance and organizational behavior

**BA Economics from Goshen College, Indiana, 1965**

- Active in social movements of the time including civil rights

**Bachelor of Commerce, University of Manitoba, 1964**

- Isbister Scholarship
- President of AIESEC (International Exchange program) including summer in Europe

## Honors

**Mahatma Gandhi Peace Aware – June 2017** (for philanthropy)

**CMU (Canadian Mennonite University) PAX award, April 2016** (for a life of service, leadership and reconciliation)

**Manitoba Business Hall of Fame, June 2015**

**Canadian Home Furnishing Alliance - Lifetime Achievement Award, 2012**

**Order of Manitoba, 2011**

**Goshen College – Alumni Award, 2011**

**Canadian Manufacturers Hall of Fame, 2009**

**Officer of the Order of Canada, 2004**

**Honorary Diploma, Red River College, 2003**

**Spirit of Life Award, City of Hope and The National Home Furnishings Industry Chapter, recognizing contributions to the organization's humanitarian goals, 2003**

**Honorary Doctorate of Laws, University College of Cape Breton, 2002**

**Prairies' Lifetime Achievement Award, Ernst and Young, Entrepreneur of the Year program, 2001**

**Entrepreneur of the Year, Manitoba Business Magazine, 2000**

**Honorary Doctorate of Laws, University of Manitoba, 1998**

## Memberships

**Business Council of Canada (Formerly Canadian Council of Chief Executives) – member from 2000 - 2024**

**Trilateral Commission – member from 2002 - 2025**

**Business Council of Manitoba – former Chair (2003 – 2005) and currently Director Emeritus**

**YPO/WPO – member since 1984**

**CMU (Canadian Mennonite University) – Board of Director from 2010 – 2019**

**Advisory Council to Deputy Minister of Immigration from 2013 – 2018**

**LCC International University – since start of LCC in 1990 – currently Director Emeritus**

**World Economic Forum – member and participant for many years**

## Languages

English

German – Adequate verbal skills. Minimal reading and writing.

## Professional Experience

**Palliser Furniture** – since 1967 and CEO from 1984 to 2014. Currently Executive Chair.

- Palliser is a family-owned business active in the residential furniture market. Palliser has 2000 employees and produces in Canada and Mexico.
- Developer and operator of 220 Elm, a furniture showroom development of 360,000 sf located in High Point, NC.

**Lithuania Christian College** - Founder 1991

- English-speaking University-level institution that is fully accredited and operates today on a new campus. Initial Chairman of the Board and continues to act as Director.

**Landbridge Program** (Cambodia border) - 1980, 1981

- One of the organizers of the emergency “unofficial” cross-border program to provide supplies to Cambodia at the end of the Khmer Rouge period when the International Community could not agree on policy for Cambodia.

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** to Somalia - 1982-1983

**Mennonite Central Committee** – Bangladesh, 1972-1974

- First Director of program immediately after the civil war. Focus on agricultural restoration and innovation plus work with Bihari refugees. This program is still active today.

## International Experience

### Recent Refugee Engagements

- Project based in Tbilisi, Georgia to assist students disrupted by war in Syria and Iraq to access Western Universities.
- GFMD – Global Forum on Migration and Development – an event sponsored by the UN – active regularly as participant and speaker.

**Soviet Union/ Russia**, 1989 to present

- Active in the region in many sectors. This included organizing and leading four Conferences on Business and Ethics (1990-92), starting a high-tech farm equipment plant in Siberia, and initiating several social/ humanitarian programs that are active today.

**South Asia**

- Bangladesh – In addition to MCC assignment, was involved in missions for Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and others.
- India, Nepal and Vietnam – variety of involvement over the years.
- Burma/Myanmar – sponsored and participated in Peace-building event in Yangon in December 2013

**Africa**

- Extensive travel working primarily in Horn of Africa and Sudan.
- In addition to UNHCR assignment, was involved in analysis and supply of food to Ethiopia in the period before the famine became a public event.
- Worked in Sudan on food issues during the period when sharia law was declared.

**Europe**

- Student work exchange during summer of 1963
- Active in business and personal interests in most countries of Western Europe

## Institutional Experience

**Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (PPC)**

- Board Member, 2008 until operations closed November 2013. Canadian-based institution dedicated to making international peace operations more effective through research, education, training and capacity building.

**Asia-Pacific Gateway Corridor Initiative (APGCI)**

- Strategic Advisor, January-May 2007. Federal Government initiative to address the challenges and opportunities in further developing and exploitation of Canada’s role in the Asia-Pacific container trade.

**Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFB)**

- Founding Chairman of Board, 1976-1980. Farmers’ donations and CIDA fund the CFB. It provides food and related assistance in emergencies around the world.

**International Development Enterprises (IDE)**

- President of IDE in Canada in early years. Founded in 1984, IDE provides market-oriented solutions to

development problems. Work is in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Cambodia, Vietnam and recently African countries. Primary program provides low-cost solutions to irrigation, sanitation and drinking water supplies.

#### **Soviet Union Network**

- Founder and Chairman of an organization that operated primarily from 1989-1995 to promote links between church-related entrepreneurs in the Soviet Union and the West.

#### **National Education Initiative**

- Chairman of initiative to bring German-style technical university education to Canada's wood products sector. Resulted in new program at University of British Columbia funded and supported by various governments and broad coalition of industry.

#### **Universities**

- Founder with others of Lithuania Christian College, 1990.
- Active role in merging colleges in Winnipeg to create the new Canadian Mennonite University.

#### **Immigration**

- Leader of Manitoba Business Council initiative to promote a substantial permanent increase of immigrants to Manitoba. Program known as the Provincial Nominee Program.

### **Travel Experience**

Extensive travel for business, international assignments and personal reasons. As of 2015 I have visited 137 countries.

### **Mexico Residence**

Resident in San Miguel de Allende in Mexico during winter months since 2012.

### **Other Activities**

- Active with Habitat for Humanity in various ways since its founding.
- Active in refugee policy and settlement programs in 1980s.
- Lectures to business, university and other audiences about business and social topics.