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Jim Black, Moran Shipping Agencies, Inc. named 2019 Maritime Leader of the Year by the Greater Houston Port Bureau

HOUSTON – The Greater Houston Port Bureau (“Port Bureau”) is pleased to announce that James “Jim” Black, CEO/President of Moran Shipping Agencies, Inc. has been named the 2019 Maritime Leader of the Year and will be honored at the Port Bureau’s Annual Maritime Dinner on August 17, 2019. The Port Bureau Board of Directors named Jim Black as the 2019 honoree because of his long-standing dedication to the Houston maritime industry and community.

Mr. Black moved to Houston, Texas in 1975 to lead the first expansion of the Moran Organization beyond its traditional New England hub. Under his leadership as now owner and CEO, Moran Shipping Agencies has become the largest independent steamship agency in North America.

Mr. Black has served on the Port Bureau Board of Directors since 2002, and he has held board positions and affiliations with many non-profit organizations, including St. Pius X High School Foundation Board of Trustees, West Gulf Maritime Association, Association of Shipbrokers and Agents and many more. In 2014, the St. Pius X Foundation honored Mr. Black and his wife Beth with the Del Sarto Humanitarian Award.

“The Port Bureau is honored to name Jim Black the 2019 Maritime Leader of the Year to recognize his commitment to the Houston maritime industry and his community for over 40 years,” said Vinny Pilegge, chairman of the Greater Houston Port Bureau and president of Manchester Terminal.

Proceeds from the Annual Maritime Dinner support in part the Port Bureau’s regional maritime advocacy efforts. Current Queen of the Fleet table sponsors are XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. Table and sponsorship opportunities are available; more information is available online at www.txgulf.org/annual-dinner.

The Annual Maritime Dinner is attended by over 700 maritime, transportation, and industry professionals and their guests to recognize maritime leaders that have exhibited outstanding leadership and support in the port region. Recent honorees have included Shell Oil Company, Port Houston Commission Chairman Janiece Longoria; Patrick J. Studdert, president & CEO of Buffalo Marine Service, Inc.; and ExxonMobil.

About the Greater Houston Port Bureau

The Greater Houston Port Bureau helps over 200 member companies work together to promote cooperation and efficiency within the maritime community by providing vessel information, port information, networking, and advocacy. For more information visit www.txgulf.org or call 713-678-4300.

Annual Maritime Dinner Inquiries:

Christine Schlenker
Greater Houston Port Bureau
Director, Special Projects and Communications
713-678-4300x405
cschlenker@txgulf.org

Greater Houston Port Bureau

Port Bureau News

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**2019 Maritime Leader
of the Year
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2019 Maritime Leader of the Year

Jim Black

Moran Shipping Agencies, Inc.



The Port Bureau named Jim Black the 2019 Maritime Leader of the Year, recognizing his commitment to the Houston maritime industry and his community for over 40 years. Black moved to Houston in 1975 to lead the first expansion of the Moran Organization from its New England hub. Under his leadership as now owner and CEO, Moran Shipping Agencies has become the largest independent steamship agency in North America. He has served on the Greater Houston Port Bureau Board of Directors since 2002.



What life experiences played a vital role in getting you to where you are today?

I was the youngest of seven children. I had several challenges early on that helped strengthen me. I had a condition known as spastic flat foot, which prevented me from running fast and was very painful. I needed several surgeries to fix those issues. Later in my school life, all six of my siblings left home within a year of each other, so when I began high school it felt like I was an only child. It was difficult for me to deal with, and I became depressed during this time. However, I loved sports and found some solace in playing baseball and basketball. John O'Brien was the coach at my high school at that time, and he noticed my disposition. I will always be grateful to him as he took me under his wing. He kept telling me everything was going to be okay and that someday I would become a leader.



Jim at the age of 14 on crutches after an operation.



Jim and his six siblings growing up.

If you were not in the maritime business, what do you think you would be doing?

Like I mentioned before, I loved sports, especially baseball, growing up! I would be a professional baseball player. Growing up I had such a passion for the game. I would be on crutches after my surgery, but I would still play ball! I would hit the ball while on one crutch while one of my teammates would run the bases for me. I loved baseball so much I would walk miles on my crutches to go to my team's games.



Reggie Smith, Boston Red Sox, with Jim's teammates at Fenway Park.



Jim's CYO baseball team.

My favorite player was Ted Williams. He was arguably the greatest hitter of all time and the last player to hit .400. I went to his baseball camp when I was a Little League All Star. I hit 3 home runs in front of Williams, and when I crossed home plate after my last one, he congratulated me. It was the greatest thrill of my childhood. I was also able to meet Reggie Smith with my family at Fenway Park when I was 18. My favorite team is the Boston Red Sox. After living in Houston all these years, Houston Astros is my number two favorite team with Craig Biggio and Jeff Bagwell being my favorite players. Since I'm not a baseball player my favorite pastime is playing golf!

You've said that you almost became a restaurant manager or owner. Do you ever regret not following that route in your early career?

I worked as a short order cook and tended bar while attending the University of Massachusetts/Dartmouth. At that time, I was majoring in Business Administration with a focus in Management. I knew the restaurant owner was going to open a new restaurant, and I thought I could manage it.



Oldest brother Bob Black with Jim.

After five years, I graduated. Luckily, my oldest brother, Bob Black, introduced me to the shipping agency at the Moran Organization in 1974 and I was hooked in a month! I did agency work in New England ports, mostly in the Providence area where I provided service to both the vessel and crew members. Shortly after, Bob sent me to the J.F. Moran office at the Logan Airport in Boston where I became the Export Manager and worked my way up to Custom House Broker.

Six months later, Bob was going to open a Houston office, but no one from the office wanted to move to Houston. I packed up my car and drove to Texas in June of 1975 to open the first Houston office. It would be the key to opening new offices in key ports along the Southeast over the next 15 years. Bob eventually purchased the company and took over in 1970.

In 1986, Bob handed over the company to me and my brother, Mike, and it has continued to operate as a closely-held family corporation, maintaining the highest quality standards. When my brother Michael retired in 2005, I became CEO and president.



Jim with his brother Mike Black.

How has your company grown?



Oldest brother Bob and Jim.

Our company was founded in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1937 by James F. Moran. By 1959, he had already expanded and established additional offices in Boston, Massachusetts, and Portland, Maine. My brother, Bob, acquired the ownership in 1970, and in 1975 he opened Moran-Thibodeaux office in Houston, shortly followed by offices in Port Arthur and Corpus Christi. In 1976, a partnership of Kurz-Moran in New York was formed. In 1974, I joined the company, and by June of 1975, I was on my way to open our first office in Houston.

In the '80s, we expanded Moran Shipping offices in the Gulf of Mexico and Florida which was crucial for our growth. The '90s marked significant growth as Moran acquired ownership of Boston-based Patterson & Wilde

Steamship Agency and full ownership of Kurz-Moran Agencies in New York/New Jersey and Philadelphia. Moran has continued to open offices in strategic markets with additional locations in Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. With the establishment of Moran-Pacific on the West Coast, the company now has 20 full-service offices directly serving over 100 ports in North America. And we have international offices London, U.K., and Piraeus, Greece.



Jim with the Moran Shippings Lake Charles office staff.



Jim receiving the Tsakos award from Tsako-Columbia Company.

"I had the pleasure of working for Jim at the Moran Shipping New Jersey office from 2002-2005. Being new in the industry, he was the first owner and CEO of any company I had ever met. I always appreciated how much time he spent talking with me and the other boarding agents. He made you a part of his team and a part of the Moran Family from day one."

Greg Haronitis
Business Development Manager
Radio Holland USA Inc.

How do you think business has changed since you began in 1974?

Technology and communication have evolved tremendously since I started in the business. We communicated by pay phones, VHF radios, walkie talkies, telex machines, etc. Now, we don't even have to leave the office. We can do everything right from our cell phones. I can take photos, fax, even bank whenever I need to on any day. However, with that there are some downfalls. Now I'm available to anyone at any given moment, 24/7. I do like to be hands-on and appreciate when our customers call me with their

problems and concerns that allow Moran Shipping Agencies to provide excellent customer care. That is just part of my passion for this industry. I want to help find simple solutions for what customers may believe is a complex problem. It's one of the major reasons we have become the largest independent steamship agency in North America over the last 80 years!



What do you think is the biggest challenge today for the maritime community and shipping agents?

It comes down to two things: supply and demand. There are many agents in the maritime market, which drives prices down. The larger agents have hubs worldwide that make accessibility easy for customers. They can service their customers from any port, which makes it very tough for a small company like us to compete. However, we are including value-added service offerings for our customers to compete with the larger agents. We provide our customers with new innovative services that include hub agency, PSA (pollution safety advisors), maritime security, cyber awareness/security, and offshore logistics services.



"Jim Black is always the first to volunteer and donate his time and talents when needed while never wanting any credit. It would be hard to find someone more dedicated, involved and humble in our maritime industry."

John Taylor
Vice President
Houston Mooring Co., Inc.

What is your favorite aspect of the port community?

The people. One memorable person is Jim Lovell, who I had an opportunity to meet back in the 1970s. Lovell was an Apollo 13 astronaut and one of the first people to see the far side of the moon. After he retired from the Navy and space program, he worked at Bay-Houston Towing Company. He later became the CEO at Bay-Houston in 1975.



St. Pius X High School Foundation.

Through the years I have met many people as customers but also by holding board positions and affiliations with many non-profit organizations, such as St. Pius X High School Foundation Board of Trustees, West Gulf Maritime Association, Association of Shipbrokers and Agents, Houston Chamber of Commerce, Sabine Users Coalition, Houston chapter of PORTS, the Greater Houston Port Bureau, and more. I think it is very important to be involved in your community by taking an active role in local maritime and community organizations.



John Taylor/Houston Mooring, Jim, and Brad Maxcey/Danner's Inc.



Jim and team at the Greater Houston Port Bureau Captain's Cup Golf Tournament.



Son Andrew Black, Jim, late wife Beth Black, and son Adam Black.