

Tami Longaberger to Present First Cutco Lecture at Alfred University

3/30/00

Alfred, NY -- If there were a model for entrepreneurial success stories, The Longaberger Company would certainly qualify. The company's history spans generations, and has grown from humble beginnings to become one of the largest privately-held firms in the United States. Tami Longaberger, president and CEO of The Longaberger Company, will visit Alfred University Wednesday, April 12, when she will deliver the First Annual Cutco Foundation Lecture on Entrepreneurial Leadership. The lecture, scheduled for 1:30 p.m. at Nevins Theatre, is sponsored by The Cutco Foundation and Alfred University. It is the first in a series of on-campus lectures made possible by a gift from Erick and Marianne Laine and the Cutco Foundation. Erick Laine is CEO and chairman of Alcas Corp. of Olean, chairman of Cutco Cutlery Corp. and an Alfred University trustee. The lecture is open to the public and there is no charge. Laine said that he and his wife established the Cutco Foundation Lecture series as a way to bring "high profile, highly respected leaders in entrepreneurship" to the Alfred University campus. "To bring Tami on campus is wonderful," he said. "We're honored that she's the first lecturer in what we feel will be a tremendous lecture series." The Longaberger Company, headquartered in Newark, Ohio, has its roots in a family tradition. In 1919, Tami Longaberger's grandfather, J.W. Longaberger, joined his father as a full-time basketmaker in Dresden, Ohio. Over the next decade, J.W. Longaberger taught each of his 12 children, including son Dave, the family's basketmaking tradition. In 1973, Dave Longaberger revived his father's basket business and founded The Longaberger Company. In the mid-1980s, Dave Longaberger's daughters, Tami and Rachel, joined the company. Tami Longaberger is a 1984 graduate of Ohio State University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration. She was named president of The Longaberger Company in 1994 and has since steered the business through unprecedented sales growth, product diversification, new technology and the addition of thousands of employees and sales associates. Today, the company is one of the top 30 direct selling companies in the country, with more than 7,600 employees and 60,000 independent sales associates. In 1999, The Longaberger Company had \$850 million in sales up 18 percent from 1998 with 38.6 million products sold that year, including almost 10 million baskets. Since 1996, the business has been recognized as one of the Top 500 Largest Privately Held Companies by Forbes Magazine. The company is also civic-minded, as evidenced by its being named one of the Top Ten Most Generous Companies in America by George Magazine. Rachel Longaberger serves as president of The Longaberger Foundation. Tami Longaberger is past chairman of the board of the Direct Selling Association and is a member of the Ohio State University Board of Trustees. In 1995, she was inducted into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame. Laine knows Longaberger through their involvement in the Direct Selling Association. Like Longaberger products, Cutco cutlery is sold through direct sales. He said her "intense energy and excellent leadership and analytical skills make her an ideal presenter of the Cutco Foundation Lecture on Entrepreneurial Leadership." Cutco is the largest manufacturer and marketer of high-quality kitchen cutlery and accessories in the United States and Canada. The Cutco corporate "family" consists of Alcas Corp., the parent company; Cutco Cutlery Corp., manufacturer of Cutco since 1949; Vector Marketing Corp., marketer of Cutco products directly to consumers via sales representatives, and Cutco International Inc., responsible for international marketing of Cutco products.