2018 Distinguished Alumnus

Paul A. Koch, BSBA ’61, JD ’64, MBA ’68
Entrepreneur and Real Estate Developer

Paul Koch became an attorney not exclusively to practice law, but to pursue his true passion to be an entrepreneur. He began his legal career in the U.S. Air Force, serving for three years as a judge advocate and trial attorney trying courts martial.

Following his service in the Air Force, he returned to St. Louis to earn his MBA at Washington University. While pursuing his degree, he followed his entrepreneurial passion, hiring a construction crew and building speculative houses on scattered lots. With his homebuilding experience and new organization, he then bought and developed raw ground for several subdivisions, and began building and selling the homes. In 1970, he and his brother, Roger, BSBA ’64, MBA ’66, combined their resources to form Koch Development Company. Together they built, bought and managed apartments, accumulating a portfolio of over 1,500 units.

In the 1990s, they sold their units and redeployed their capital into commercial real estate. Ultimately, Paul and Roger developed and invested in more than 1,000,000 square feet of office, industrial, retail and warehouse properties. In 2011, they took another entrepreneurial leap by developing the first modern 20-story (200 feet high) Ferris wheel in the United States in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Today, Koch Development Company is the largest Ferris wheel developer/owner in the country, with existing wheels and/or wheels under development in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; Panama Beach, Florida; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Paul is active in establishing the Koch Center for Family Business in the Olin Graduate School of Business, where he is a distinguished alumnus. He is also a Law Placement Volunteer and served on the Alumni/Parent Admission Program. He resides in St. Louis with his wife, Elke, and has two married children and three grandchildren.