

Rochester Institute of Technology
Saunders College of Business
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SAUNDERS CHALLENGE

Herbert W. Vanden Brul ENTREPRENEURIAL AWARD

2017

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Herbert W. Vanden Brul Entrepreneurial Award Recipient

Giovanni (John) LiDestri

CEO, LiDestri Foods, Beverages, and Spirits



John LiDestri is CEO of LiDestri Foods, Beverages, and Spirits headquartered in Fairport, NY. He was born in Italy and in 1960 at age 14, emigrated to the U.S. with his parents and three siblings to the Rochester area where all his family members found employment. John's brother Santi was working at Ragu Foods and offered John a part-time job washing bottles there when he was 16. During his high school and college years, John worked in various manufacturing and logistics positions at the Ragu plant. He left Ragu in 1976 when Ragu's former owner and president, Ralph Cantisano,

owner and president, Ralph Cantisano, hired him as the General Manager of Cantisano Foods, Inc. In 1991, John became the President, and 6 years later he was named CEO. After the Cantisano family divested themselves of the business in 2002, John became sole owner of the company, and the name was changed to LiDestri Foods, Inc.

Today the company is one of the world's largest manufacturers of tomato-based products including salsas and pasta sauces. In the last several years the company has expanded into aseptic beverages and a line of spirits. Then more recently, LiDestri formed a joint venture with G's Fresh Ltd, one of the largest produce growers and marketers in the U.K. to process beet products for distribution throughout the U.S. There are now five plants located in Fairport, NY; Rochester, NY; Fresno, CA; Pennsauken, NJ; and most recently Lansdale, P.A. where Zeigler's cider and other beverages are produced. LiDestri currently has over 1,000 employees with annual sales in excess of \$500 million.

John is a past board member of the Mary Cariola Children's Center and currently on the board of Rochester's Italian Heritage Foundation. He sits on the board of the Genesee Regional Bank. He is on the Board and has been a longtime supporter and benefactor of the Hole in the Wall Gang, a camp for seriously ill children founded by Paul Newman.

John lives in Rochester, N.Y. with his wife Dr. Cynthia Reddeck-LiDestri. They have three grown children, John C., Stefani, and Dylan. When he is not in the office, you might find John enjoying his boat, riding on his Harley or swinging a golf club.

HERBERT W. VANDEN BRUL



Following his military service and earning a juris doctor degree from St. John's School of Law, Rochester native Herbert W. Vanden Brul returned to his hometown in 1951 to begin his new career practicing law.

An entrepreneurial visionary in Rochester, Mr. Vanden Brul co-founded several business ventures in the region. One of his most successful, RF Communications, Inc., has since become a division of Harris Corporation. Another, the Culver Management Corporation, acquired nearly one million square feet of local industrial space to become the home of many small start-ups companies who have improved the local economic climate.

Until his death in 2003, Mr. Vanden Brul continued to pursue his business interests. He served on the boards of Ormec Systems, Inc., and the Genesee Valley Trust Company, Inc., and was active in the cultural and educational life of the Rochester community. Mr. Vanden Brul and his wife Joan, who passed away in 2007, had a long association with RIT and were active members of the Nathaniel Rochester Society. Their two sons attended RIT.

ABOUT THE AWARD

The Herbert W. Vanden Brul Entrepreneurial Award was created in 1984 through an endowment fund established by Mr. Vanden Brul in conjunction with RIT's Saunders College of Business. The award is presented annually to an individual or business that has improved the economic life of greater Rochester or whose innovative management skills have changed the course of an existing business. The award recipient is selected by a committee of area civic and business leaders and RIT faculty. Saunders College is excited that the Herbert W. Vanden Brul Award symbolizes the links that join RIT and the Rochester Business community.