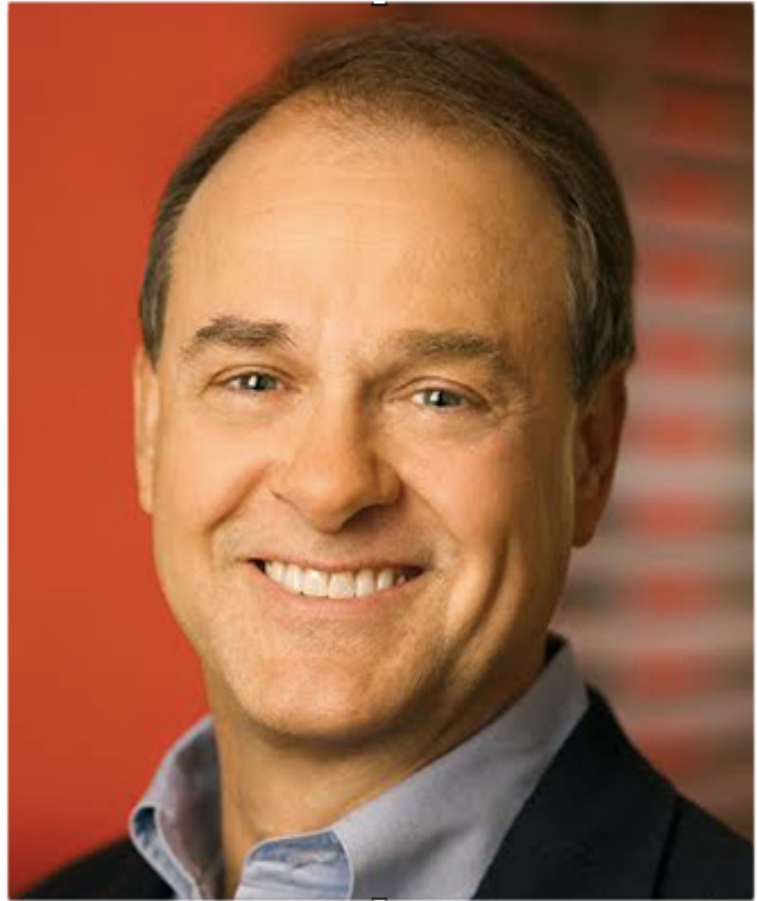


Bellevue
Public
Schools



Alumni
Spotlight



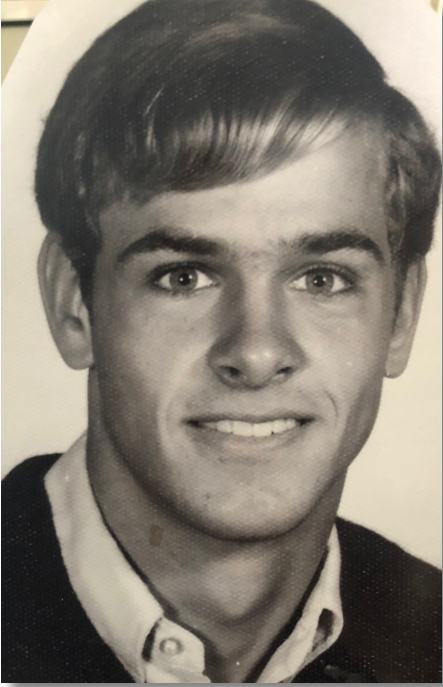
John Ford

Bellevue High, 1970

Welcome to our new Alumni Spotlight column where we shine a light on some of the amazing alumni that have graduated from Bellevue Public Schools!

Since graduating from Bellevue High School in 1970, John Ford has been on quite a journey. There is a large likelihood that you have viewed some of the programs he is responsible for bringing to TV in his roles as

- Executive Vice President and General Manager, TLC
- President, Content Group, Discovery Networks
- President, Discovery.com and Discovery HD Theater



John during his Junior Year

- Executive Vice President, Programming and Production, National Geographic Channel
- President and General Manager, Discovery Channel

However John was having an impact even before he started his work in the unscripted business. All current and former BPS students who have ever worn a mustache to school can thank John for having the right to do so.

John recently took some time to answer a few of our questions.

What schools did you attend in Bellevue?

I only attended Bellevue High School, now called Bellevue East.

Who was one of your favorite teachers and share why they were your favorite?

Mr. Flaming taught English and always spurred lively debate in class. That was notable and I remember those discussions well.

What is a good memory you could share from your time in school?

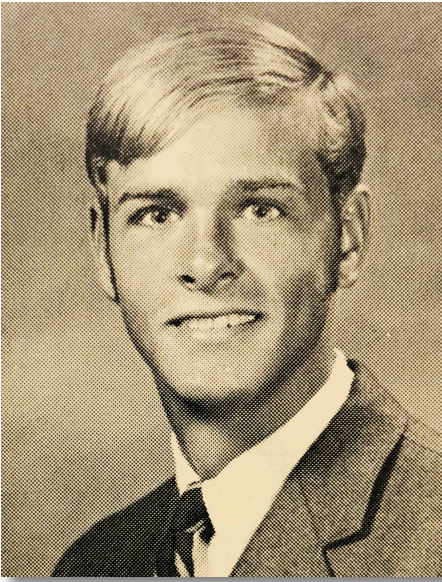
Serving on the student advisory council, when we lobbied for and received the right to wear a mustache in school. Very controversial at the time.

Did you have a favorite place to hang out - either at school or in town?

I loved meeting everyone at Lums after the football games on Friday nights. There was always a crowd of students there, having a great time.



Mr. Paul Flaming - John's English Teacher



John's Senior Picture

Did you have a favorite class?

Social Studies was always a favorite and I ended up majoring in History in college.

As a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A sports writer. I read the sports pages religiously every day and still do today.

Did you have other family that graduated from BPS?

No.

Do you still have family in the area?

No.

Could you share a little bit about how you went from being a student in Bellevue to a network executive?

After college I acted in dinner theater at night and worked as a carpenter by day for a year. When the acting career didn't pan out I went to Washington, DC (my parents lived in Virginia Beach, VA and I went to college at Duke in Durham, NC) and got a job as a political fund-raiser. I got hired by a campaign in Texas, moved there, we lost the election. I got hired to raise funds by the local public TV station, KERA. That, plus my acting background, got me interested in TV.



TLC experienced remarkable growth through the 1990s when you were running things. Could you talk a little about that - how you ended up there, what you saw when you took the position and how you turned things around?

It was a fairly sleepy educational service when I took over in 1991. We added history, science, and lifestyle programming to the mix and positioned it as "TLC" with consumers and advertisers (vs. "The Learning Channel" which it had been previously). That change boosted viewing and the channel grew its reach from 15 million homes in 1991 to 80 million homes by 1999.



Talk about the shift from TLC to being the President of Content for Discovery Networks. How many channels were you overseeing and what steps did you take to improve them?

We had eleven networks at the time -- I implemented plans to coordinate development so as not to overlap much with one another, and pushed for great communication among the networks.



You also served as an Executive VP for the National Geographic Channel. Could you share one of your greatest accomplishments while there?

We grew audience and distribution (the number of homes receiving the network via cable/satellite) dramatically from 2003 to 2007. One of my favorite shows at the time was the documentary series, Inside 9/11, which got a primetime EMMY nomination and retains the honor of the highest Nielsen-rated show in Nat Geo's history.



You are currently the General Manager of NPACT. Could you tell us a little about what NPACT is and your role in the organization?

NPACT is the trade association for North American and other non-fiction TV production companies. We have 96 members in the US, Canada and the UK.

In essence, we are the voice of the producers who make the majority of reality and documentary programs seen on American TV. As GM, I'm responsible for the overall management of the association, its finances and its activities on behalf of our members.

Which of your accomplishments in life are you most proud of?

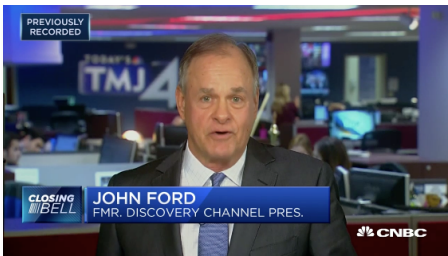
Making TLC a great channel in the 1990's, spurring dramatic growth at Nat Geo, and having a wonderful wife and children.

What is something you haven't done yet that you'd like to?

Write a novel.

What message would you like to give to current students in Bellevue Public Schools?

Learn how to write, and how to think. Take plenty of science and math. Learn software coding. Value your friends. And don't worry too much about the future. You'll be fine. My entire education was Bellevue!



John in a recent interview on CNBC sharing his views on a Disney streaming service going head-to-head against Netflix

Links

Link to NPACT, the Nonfiction Producers Association:

<http://www.npact.org/>

CNBC Interview with John regarding Disney & Netflix:

<https://tinyurl.com/yd3b5a2v>

CNBC Interview about 11.9 Billion Merger with Discovery & Scripps

<https://tinyurl.com/ydzed6qh>

About Us

We hope you enjoyed our Alumni Spotlight! This is a recurring column on the Alumni Association Facebook Page. If you know of a Bellevue graduate that we should shine the spotlight on, reach out to us and they will be considered for a future column. Continue to invite your friends and family to Like and Follow our Alumni Association page: <https://www.facebook.com/BPSAlumni>