

Against the Grain

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The Scholarly Publishing Scene – Board Sketches

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The Scholarly Publishing Scene — Board Sketches

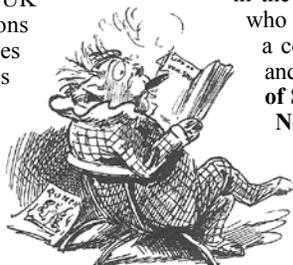
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Recognizing that the actions of a board of directors — or a board of trustees — can affect the fortunes, if not the reputation of an organization (see the **University of Maryland** imbroglio over a compromised football coach), I thought it would be interesting to look over the rosters of non-executive board members of the commercial publishers who control half or more of the scholarly and reference business. Those, as we well know, would be **Taylor & Francis**, **Elsevier**, **Springer Nature**, **Sage**, and **Wiley**. Depending on your perspective, a board action — such as hiring or firing a CEO, approving or rejecting a budget or an acquisition or merger — can be either good or evil. So ... this column isn't intended to be a muckraking exercise, just a rehearsal of biographical details and a bit of commentary about them.

Let's start with two publishing houses in roughly similar circumstances — **Taylor & Francis** and **Elsevier**. Each is a segment of a larger publicly held organization. In **Taylor & Francis's** case, it's part of **Informa**, which has four segments — academic publishing (**T & F** and all the other publishers it has gobbled up in recent years); business intelligence (over 250 subscription products that serve a multiplicity of industries); global intelligence (200 exhibitions); and knowledge and networking (conferences and training events in global finance, life sciences, and telecommunications, media, and technology (TMT).)

In 1936, **Taylor & Francis**, which now dates back more than two centuries, became a private limited company with leading scientists as directors and shareholders. The composition of the board of directors looks much different nowadays. The chairman, **Derek Mapp**, is a businessperson with extensive commercial and governance experience within various sectors, including service industries. He has headed 12 different companies, including **Tom Cobleigh PLC**, a collection of retail pubs, and has been chairman of numerous others. He has been Chairman of the **British Amateur Boxing Association**.

As for other **Informa** board members: **Greg Lock**, the new deputy chairman, has more than 45 years experience in the technology, software and computer services industry, including a 30-year career at **IBM**. **Gareth Bullock** has worked in the banking industry and has extensive risk and special assets management experience. **Cindy Rose** worked as a lawyer in the U.S. and the UK and has held executive positions in the TMT and digital services industries. **Helen Owers** has extensive international senior executive experience within the media sector, particularly in business information. She once worked at **Prentice Hall**. **Stephen Davidson** has extensive executive and



governance experience in media and telecommunications. **David Flaschen**, a former professional soccer player, has executive and governance experience in the information services industry. **John Rishton** has international experience in the automobile, retail, airline and shipping industries. **Mary McDowell** has held governance, executive, and managerial positions in the telecommunications industry. Early in her career, she worked as a systems engineer. **David Wei** has extensive experience in investing and managing companies in China, including **Alibaba.com Limited** and **B&Q China**, China's largest home improvement retailer. He's chairman and founding partner of a private equity fund focused on investments in internet, e-commerce and B2B services in China.

Elsevier is the STM publishing segment of the **RELX group**, which has three other segments — risk and business analytics (offices in the U.S. [Georgia] and in the UK [Surrey], legal [LexisNexis]), and exhibitions [an events business]). The chairman, **Sir Anthony Habgood**, has been called the “City of London's go-to grandee.” He's had a distinguished international executive and governance career in a variety of industries. He holds an economics MA from **Cambridge**, an industrial administration MS from **Carnegie Mellon**, a civil law honorary doctorate from the **University of East Anglia**, and is a visiting fellow at **Oxford**.

As for the other non-executive directors, three are American, two British, two Dutch, and one German. **Dr. Wolfgang Hauser**, who has a master's degree in medicine and a medical doctorate from German universities, holds governance positions in a transportation and a food processing and retailing company and has held executive positions in auditing, testing, inspection and risk management businesses. **Adrian Hennah** has held financial positions in businesses involved in health and hygiene products, medical equipment, and pharmaceuticals. **Robert MacLeod** is chief executive of a UK global specialty chemicals and sustainable technologies company. **Carol Mills**, a technology professional who was at **Hewlett-Packard** for 16 years, has also worked in cyber security and ecommerce businesses. She is a director of a social game developer. **Ben van der Veet**, an accounting professional, spent four decades at **KPMG**. He is a board member of a pension, insurance and asset management company and a dairy cooperative, both multinationals based in the Netherlands. **Linda Sanford**, who was at **IBM** for four decades, is a consultant to the **Carlyle Group** and a trustee of the **New York Hall of Science**, the **State University of New York, St John's University**, and **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**. **Marika van Lier Lels** has long been in the transportation industry and has served on Dutch governmental

advisory boards. **Suzanne Wood**, a financial professional, holds a senior management position at a construction materials company and has worked at companies providing equipment rentals, construction materials, and sportswear.

The other three of the scholarly publishing big five are wholly publishing companies. Let's look first at **Springer Nature**, which is organized as a German partnership with shares held by entities controlled by the **Holtzbrink Publishing Group** and funds advised by **BC Partners**. At the top of **Springer Nature** is a supervisory board, which includes members of the company's management team. The chairman is **Dr. Stefan von Holtzbrink**, who was trained in law and literature and holds a PhD in media law. He has had a long career in publishing. He is a member of the boards of **The Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science** and of the **Goethe Institute**.

Other **Springer Nature** supervisory board members: The deputy chairman is **Dr. Ewald Walgenbach**, a managing partner at **BC Partners**. He holds a biology PhD from the **Max Planck Institute**. He has been involved in the chemicals industry and worked in media companies, including **Bertelsmann**. **Simone Menne** holds a degree in business administration from the **University of Kiel**. She has worked in and served on advisory boards of companies in the aviation industry. **Obi Felten**, who has an **Oxford BA** in philosophy and psychology, has worked in the ecommerce sector. She now leads early stage projects at **X**, **Alphabet's** moonshot enterprise. **Dr. Stephan Oschmann**, who holds a veterinary medicine doctorate from a **Munich University**, has worked in the healthcare sector, including pharmaceuticals. He is CEO and chairman of the executive board of **Merck**. **Dr. Bernd Scheifele** studied law in Germany, France and the U.S. and holds a law PhD from the **University of Freiberg**. He worked as an attorney early in his career, then turned to senior executive and governance positions in the pharmaceutical industry. **Jens Schwanewedel**, who has degrees in business administration and management from German and French universities, has held management positions in planning, analysis, and accounting at **Hugo Boss** and at **Holtzbrink**. He also serves on two bank supervisory boards.

Sara Miller McCune founded independent **Sage Publications, Inc.** in 1965 at the age of 24 with a single journal. She was **Sara Miller** back then, a **MacMillan** employee mentored by **George McCune**. The couple married and moved the business from New York City to California. **Sage** now publishes 1,000 journals and 800 books annually. I've considered **Sage** a social and behavioral science publisher. Recently, I was surprised to see that the company is publishing an open access journal in mechanical engineering. A noted philanthropist, **Sara Miller McCune** is executive chairman of

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Sage's board of directors. This board, with its mix of experience in university administration, educational delivery, and business growth management, has an entirely different look than the three boards I've already presented.

The non-executive Sage directors are: **Dr. Gretchen Bataille**, who serves as senior vice president for Academic Affairs of **The University of North Carolina** and served as vice chairman of the board of trustees of **Collegeboard.com, Inc.** **Brian Belchers** was a partner at **Ernst & Young** and a vice president at **Cap Gemini**. He supervised parts of consulting practices that helped companies navigate rapid growth. **Dr. Renu Khator**, a native of India, is Chancellor and President of the **University of Houston**. Previously, she held various positions at the **University of South Florida** for 22 years. She has published five books as well as various chapters and articles on global public administration, environmental issues, and South Asian politics. **Susan Gibbons** is University Librarian and Deputy Provost for Libraries & Scholarly Communication, **Yale University**. She focuses in part on data management and access. **Timo Hannay** is the founder and managing director of **School Dash Limited**, a London-based education technology company. He also founded and managed London-based **Digital Sciences**. **David F. McCune** and **Douglas McCune** are family members. **Dr. Peggy O'Brien** (PhD, **American University**), who early in her career taught high school English in Washington, DC public schools, is Director of Education at the **Folger Shakespeare Library**. She's had a distinguished career, including stints at the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting** and at **Knowledge In, Knowledge Out, Inc.**, an internet educational company. **David Walsh** is the managing partner for growth equity activities at **Kanye Anderson Capital Advisors LLP**, which is an alternative investment firm across energy, real estate, credit and specialty growth capital.

More than three decades ago, **Wiley** split its shares into two classes, voting (B shares) and non-voting (A shares). It's easy to buy A shares; B shares, on the other hand, are closely, and mainly family, held. As a result, such major issues as, for example, whether the company will be sold, are the **Wiley** family's call. With all that in mind, let's take a look at the board of directors.

Until October 2015, the board chairman was **Peter Booth Wiley**, who's lived in California, has written many American history books, and is one of the two sons of the legendary **Brad Wiley**, one of the founders of the **Association of American Publishers**. He joined the board in 1984 and became chairman in 2002. The current chairman is **Matthew S. Kissner**, who joined the board as a director in 2003. He has deep business experience at such companies as **Pitney Bowes**, **Bankers Trust Company**, **Citibank**, **Morgan Stanley** and **Westvaco Corporation**. He has been active in the private equity and government spheres. During the latter half of 2017, he served as **Wiley's** interim president and CEO.

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Other directors: **William Pesce**, who holds an MBA in Finance from **NYU's Stern School of Business**, was **Wiley's** president and CEO from May 1, 1998 until April 30, 2011. Previously he ran **Wiley's** college publishing division, and prior to that was president of the medical publisher **W/B. Saunders**. He has been a trustee at **William Paterson University** since 2002 and serves as vice chairman. **Laurie A. Leshin** (PhD in geochemistry from **California Institute of Technology**) is president of **Worcester Polytechnic Institute**. Previously, she was dean of the school of science at **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**, a distinguished professor of geological sciences at **Arizona State University**, and director of science and exploration at **NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center**. She received appointments from **Presidents Bush and Obama**. She has published approximately 50 scientific papers. **David Dobson** is CEO of **Digital River**, which supplies global online commerce solutions for its customers. He's a veteran of **IBM**, **Pitney Bowes** (as is **Matthew Kissner**), and software developer **CA Technologies**. **Beth A. Birnbaum** has held executive positions at **PlayFab** (a live game backend platform, sold to **Microsoft** this year), **GrubHub**, and **Expedia**. **William Pence**, who has an electrical engineering PhD from **Cornell**, has held executive positions at **AOL**, **WebMD**, **Napster**, and **Universal Music**. He spent more than a decade at **IBM**. **Raymond W. McDaniel, Jr.**, a lawyer by training, has been the CEO since April 2005 and president since April 2012, at **Moody's Corporation**. He first joined the

company in 1987. **Mari Jean Baker** is a veteran of numerous technology companies, including **Quicken**, as an executive and a director. She also worked in venture capital. She has been a trustee of **Stanford University**, her alma mater. **George D. Bell** is another veteran of numerous technology companies with high-level positions. He was also the founder of **The Outdoor Life Network/The Outdoor Life Channel** (now **NBC Sports Network**) and served as senior vice president at **Times Mirror Magazines**. He won four Emmys as producer and writer of adventure, wildlife and vanishing culture documentaries for **ABC**, **Discovery Channel** and **National Geographic**. **William Plummer**, who has a **Stanford** MBA and **MIT** BA and MS degrees in aeronautics and astronautics and is a Chartered Financial Analyst, has worked at **United Rentals**, **Dow Jones**, **Alcoa**, **Mead**, **GE Capital**, and **Goldman Sachs**. **Jesse Wiley** is a manager of business development at **Wiley**.

While each of these boards has its own flavor, there is a strain of technology experience that runs through them all, which should come as no surprise given the intense interest in technology among publishing houses. **IBM** and **Pitney Bowes** are breeding grounds for future directors. So are consumer Internet companies. General business experience in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, and transportation is also favored. I note that very few directors on these boards have written their own journal papers or published their own books. Nowadays, I suppose, no one who is interested in publishing company governance thinks that matters. 🐼