

Merle Knapp Launches Global Seafood Consulting Business

SEATTLE – (October 26, 2022) C.STAR, LLC became the newest global consulting resource for Northwest commercial fisheries when long-time industry expert Merle Knapp retired after 26 years as VP of Sales and Marketing for Glacier Fish Company. Knapp’s new company will serve diverse clients from producers to purchasers, providing support for a wide-ranging list of needs, including seafood marketing assistance, messaging and presentations, product quality crisis management, securing international and domestic seafood sales, and sourcing assistance.

In his first assignment as founder of C.STAR Knapp presented the latest developments for “Global Supply and Markets for Tilapia” on behalf of Grobest Seafood Global at the recent international Groundfish Forum XXIX in Seattle. Knapp has expertise and comprehensive worldwide experience to work with a cross-section of industry categories including pollock, cod, shrimp, salmon, crab and the expanding aquaculture sector.

“Success in the seafood business doesn’t happen in a vacuum,” Knapp says. “C.STAR will accomplish its mission by also providing guidance about seafood documentation, quality assurance, and recruitment of key employees.” Known and respected throughout the global seafood industry, Knapp will help companies understand international resource requirements so they can expand their business relationships and profitability in all facets of the seafood sector.

Looking back over his 50-plus year career in fisheries, Knapp credits observing close up, the pioneers and mentors who include his father, Chuck Knapp (Pan Alaska Fisheries), Erik Breivik (Glacier Fish Company), Wally Pereyra (Arctic Storm), and Chuck Bundrant (Trident Seafoods), all legendary industry leaders who have helped with his comprehensive understanding of the global seafood supply chain from the sea to dinner plates around the world.

Knapp’s career in seafood started in 1965 at the age of 14 as a deckhand on a king crab boat in the Gulf of Alaska fishing out of his home port of Kodiak. He sold his first seafood, live king crab, for 8 cents per pound. From there he moved forward, always looking back in appreciation of his heroes in the industry. His first captain and father, Chuck (Charles R. Knapp) set an example by moving from the fishing vessel deck to the bridge, to plant manager and superintendent of Pan Alaska Fisheries in Kodiak.

As the years passed, Merle Knapp pursued a practical education in skills focused on commercial fishing and seafood production, moving from deckhand to vessel captain at age 18 in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. Then moving to the Gulf of Alaska to fish crab, shrimp, scallops, cod and wild Alaska pollock, again out of his Kodiak home port.

After 16 years as a fisherman, Knapp changed course to pursue challenges as seafood operations purchasing manager, processing ship captain and superintendent, seafood sales team manager and vice-president, seafood trading company president and owner, and most recently, as international Vice-president of Sales and Marketing for Glacier Fish Company, a post he held for 26 years until he retired to start his new company.

Knapp's trajectory in the seafood industry included being named the Northwest Fisheries Association's "Person of The Year," an honor also earned by pioneers Erik Breivik, Wally Pereyra and Chuck Bundrant.

Knapp has given back to the seafood industry by serving with many trade organizations in various capacities. As a founding member and Secretary/Treasurer of the Kodiak Shrimp Trawlers Association he represented Kodiak as one of ten fishermen from five regions on a trade mission to Norway, Denmark, and the Faroe Islands on behalf of the State of Alaska. On that trip he recognized that the Wild Alaska Pollock fishery would best be developed as a factory trawler industry. Subsequent developments in refrigeration at sea enabled shoreside processors to also provide higher quality standards for pollock, cod and salmon.

Knapp has also served on various Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute committees, Northwest Fisheries Board of Directors, National Fisheries Institute Board of Directors and its Executive Board as well as Vice-president of Region V (representing Pacific Northwest States and Alaska). He is a founding board member of the Genuine Alaska Pollock Producers.

Knapp shared, "As I embark on this latest chapter in my fisheries career, my objective is to assist clients in strategically navigating challenges while charting their course through the global seafood supply chain to achieve their goals."

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