





# Alan F. Horn

MBA 1971

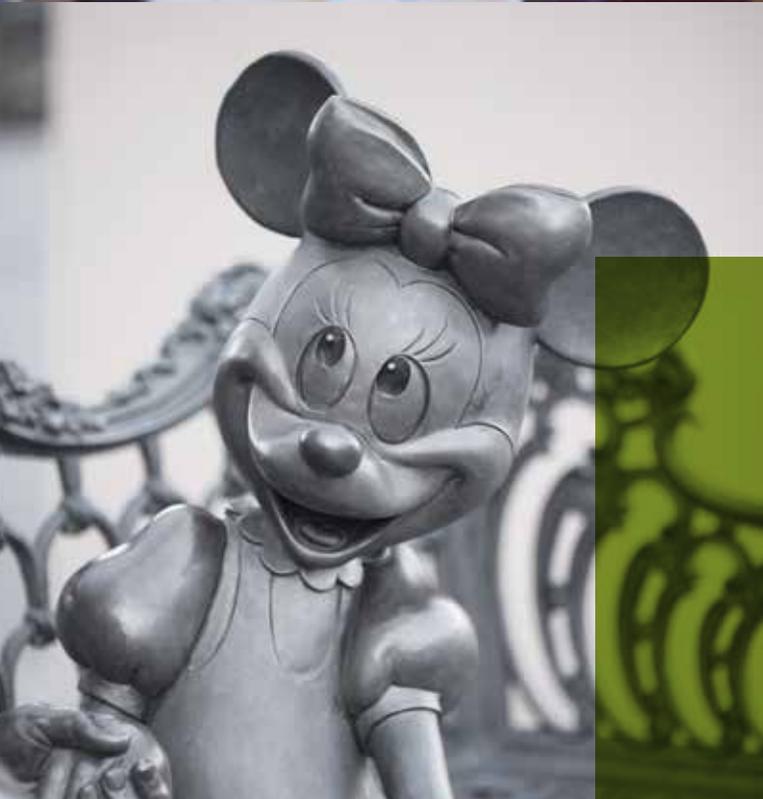
Chairman  
The Walt Disney Studios

After two years working on the Ivory Soap account at Procter & Gamble, Alan Horn was approached by Hollywood legend Jerry Perenchio, a partner of Norman Lear, the renowned creator of *All in the Family*. “I had no experience in the entertainment business, I had never been to Hollywood, and I didn’t know anyone there,” says Horn. “He said, ‘You’re perfect,’ and hired me. He wanted a blank slate.”



*From top:*

Horn in his Burbank office; one of Disney's iconic characters; on the Marvel set of *Captain America*.



## TIMELINE

- 1943 Born, New York, New York
- 1964 Earns BA, Economics, Union College
- 1971 Earns MBA with Distinction
- 1971 Joins Procter & Gamble
- 1973 Joins Tandem Productions, later Embassy Communications; named CEO
- 1985 Named President and COO, 20th Century Fox
- 1987 Cofounds Castle Rock Entertainment; named Chairman and CEO
- 1989 Castle Rock produces *When Harry Met Sally* and *Seinfeld*
- 1999 Named President and COO, Warner Bros.
- 2004 Awarded Pioneer of the Year, Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation
- 2010 Receives Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from Union College
- 2012 Named Chairman, The Walt Disney Studios

Perenchio was not the first—or the last—to see a talent in Horn that had not yet been fully developed. “He took a chance on me,” says Horn, who moved from Cincinnati to Los Angeles, where he launched a career in entertainment that included cofounding (with Rob Reiner) Castle Rock Entertainment and running Warner Bros. before taking over Disney’s studio division.

Horn’s gentle manner is fueled by respect for others and a natural confidence. When he arrived at Disney, hired by CEO Bob Iger to help heal a troubled group, he employed his tried-and-true method of watching, listening, and insisting on collaboration. “One of the few things that is good about aging,” says the wry Horn from his perch amid Hollywood’s youth-obsessed culture, “is the experience that comes with time.”

Alan Horn was born in New York City, the second of three children, and raised on Long Island by working-class parents. His mother worked with a firm that booked trial dates and his father tended bar and later ran a liquor store. By the time Horn was in the ninth grade, they had moved eight times. While their finances weren’t stable, the family was built on a solid foundation of love. After graduating from Union College, Horn fulfilled his ROTC scholarship by serving in the Air Force in Korea and then came to HBS, where he graduated with distinction.

Horn thrived as Perenchio’s business associate and eventually was asked—by producer Lear—to oversee the creative side of the business. Initially met with skepticism by the writers, within a few months Horn had won them over. He went on to lead Tandem Productions—later called Embassy Communications—for more than a decade.

In 1987, Horn partnered with Reiner and three others to launch Castle Rock Entertainment. After the success of their first movie—*When Harry Met Sally*—they produced numerous box-office hits as well as *Seinfeld*, one of the

“If one just puts his head down and works and treats the people around him with respect, I think all good things flow from that.”

most popular television shows ever. He then joined Warner Bros., greenlighting film projects that included three *Batman* films, *Happy Feet*, and one of Hollywood’s biggest sensations, the *Harry Potter* series.

That success has continued at Disney. “Getting Alan to work for us is one of the big achievements of my career,” says Bob Iger. Under Horn’s leadership, Disney has produced *Frozen*, *The Avengers*, *Inside Out*, and the 2015 *Star Wars* film, which set box-office records and was well received by critics.

Horn couldn’t be happier at Disney, where he is known for his sentimental reactions to films: If he isn’t moved at a screening, filmmakers know they have a problem. Emotion comes easily to him—at the mention of his deceased parents as well as when he talks about his wife of 33 years, Cindy, and their two daughters. “The girls are our biggest accomplishment,” he says. It is concern for future generations, in fact, that inspired the Horns to cofound the Environmental Media Association. He also serves as a vice chair of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Hollywood can be a cutthroat world, and many successful people leave a wake of damage, but Alan Horn is not one of them. Former and current colleagues are in awe of his talent, his demeanor, and his thoughtful approach to people and problems. “Alan is a real rarity in our business,” says Rob Reiner. “He’s a nice guy who finishes first.”