

## **William E. Heinecke**

**Founder & Chairman – Minor International**

William E. Heinecke is the Founder and Chairman of Minor International, the parent company of Minor Hotels. Over nearly six decades, he has built the company from a single entrepreneurial venture into one of the world's most successful hospitality groups.

Mr Heinecke's entrepreneurial journey began at the age of 17, when he founded his first business in Bangkok with US\$1,200 in borrowed funds. As he was still under the legal age, the company was registered under the name "Minor" – a moniker that would go on to become synonymous with innovation and growth in global hospitality.

Mr Heinecke served as Chairman and CEO of Minor International until 2020, combining his passion for experiential hospitality with strong entrepreneurial instinct and commercial acumen to build Minor Hotels into a diversified global hospitality group, with brands including Anantara, The Wolseley Hotels, Avani, Elewana Collection and Tivoli. This growth was accelerated by the acquisition of Spain's NH Hotel Group in 2018, which tripled the group's portfolio and significantly expanded its presence in Europe and the Americas.

Today, as Chairman, Mr Heinecke remains closely involved in shaping Minor's long-term strategic direction, supporting its continued international expansion. He continues to play an active role in major partnerships, brand development and investment decisions, while championing the entrepreneurial culture that underpins the group's success.

Widely regarded as one of Asia's leading entrepreneurs, Mr Heinecke has received numerous international accolades, including HOTELS Magazine's Corporate Hotelier of the World and the HICAP Lifetime Achievement Award. He is also Vice Chair for Governance at the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and author of *The Entrepreneur: 25 Golden Rules for the Global Business Manager*.

Beyond business, Mr Heinecke is deeply committed to philanthropy and conservation, supporting education initiatives through the Heinecke Foundation and wildlife protection through the Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation and Mai Khao Marine Turtle Foundation.

Born in the United States in 1949, Mr Heinecke moved to Bangkok in his early teens and became a Thai citizen in 1991. He has spent the majority of his life in Thailand, where he continues to live and work.

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