

Kearns took a break only to serve as deputy secretary of education in the administration of former president George H. W. Bush.

Kearns's travels and speeches built the case for improved public schools to help meet the needs of business and strengthen America's global competitiveness.

He remained an outspoken advocate for innovation, school-based autonomy, competition and choice in education, founding the nonprofit New American Schools to promote reform.

From 1993 to 1995, he was a senior university fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Known for his exuberance and energy, Kearns also took time to reflect and document his ideas as an author or coauthor of *Winning the Brain Race: A Bold Plan to Make Our Schools Competitive* with Dennis P. Doyle (1988); *Prophets in the Dark: How Xerox Reinvented Itself and Beat Back the Japanese* with David A. Nadler (1992); *Legacy of Learning: Your Stake in Standards and New Kinds of Public Schools* with James Harvey (2000); and *Crossing the Bridge: Family, Business, Education, Cancer, and the Lessons Learned* (2005).


After graduation, he became a U.S. Navy seaman, and in 1954 joined IBM, eventually becoming vice president of its data processing division. Years later, Kearns wrote in his memoirs that he left IBM, in part, because he wanted to become president of Xerox—which he did.

Kearns was married for 56 years to Shirley Cox Kearns. Together they raised six children—four daughters and two sons—and Kearns leaves behind 18 grandchildren.

In a statement, the family said:

“Among his prolific accomplishments in business, education, and public service, David found the most success and pleasure in his role as a loving husband, devoted father and grandfather, mentor, and friend.

“David demonstrated inspiring perseverance as he confronted the challenges of his ongoing health problems. One of his greatest legacies to all who came in contact with him was his interminably cheerful spirit and the grace and dignity with which he led his life.

“Despite his daily physical struggles, David was grateful for all the blessings in his life, and often referred to himself as ‘the luckiest man in the world.’” 

*Sharon Dickman is University spokeswoman.*



**SAGE ADVICE:** The spice industry has grown immensely over the past 40 years, says Furth.

## Spice Guy

Peter Furth '76 sees opportunities in a growing spice industry—for his company, your palate, and some of the world's poorest countries.

By Karen McCally '02 (PhD)

THERE'S AN INDUSTRY THAT HAS BURGEONED in the last 40 years that has little to do with computer technology or finance, only a minor impact on health care, and is among the oldest industries in the world. It's the spice industry, and according to **Peter Furth '76**, who has spent his entire adult life in the business, it's in a golden age that's bringing benefits not only to American taste buds, but also to harvesters in poor rural regions around the globe.

Furth was still in high school when he began working summers at Louis Furth Inc., the spice import business founded by his uncle in New York City in 1941. Reflecting backward from his post today as CEO of the business—since renamed FFF Associates—Furth says the turning point was in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when one of the largest markets in the world, the United States, experienced increased immigra-

tion, more eating out, and an expanding prepared foods industry.

“People started using what today seem like everyday spices like oregano, garlic, basil, more pepper, a little bit more chili powder, and absolutely more cinnamon,” says Furth.

Italian sauces, in an ever wider and spicier variety, lined American grocery shelves and kitchen cabinets. Then, by the 1980s, Mexican food became mainstream, spreading across the country from the American Southwest, deepening Americans' taste for spicier cuisine.

According to data compiled by the Department of Agriculture, American consumption of herbs and spices, per capita, has grown from just over a pound in the mid-1960s to more than three-and-a-half pounds today.

But as demand grows in the world's largest spice market, Furth has undertaken an expansion of his own—not necessarily of

volume, but of his corporate mission.

After taking leave of the company in 1991 to become the executive vice president and CEO of the American Spice Trade Association, he returned to the family company in 1994, adding a consulting division. Today, he devotes much of his time working with government and nongovernmental organizations to facilitate the international spice trade in ways that benefit producers—many of them quite small and located in some of the world's poorest countries—as well as consumers.

Many people don't realize, Furth says, how many of our spices are harvested by small farmers around the globe. In Grenada, for example—among the major suppliers of nutmeg—nutmeg trees appear most often in small groves in family backyards. "They're not massive groves like you think

made out well. "A lot of the Albanian sage was taken to Turkey where there were some very sophisticated cleaning operations. And the Albanians were losing any ability to capture the value-added," Furth says.

In working with the organizations, Furth hopes to help Albanians, who are much poorer than their Turkish neighbors, keep as much income in Albania as possible, chiefly by developing their capacity to process spices.

"We're helping with their post-harvesting handling—which is from the time it's gathered in the mountains to the time it goes to the exporter. This includes making sure the goods are cleaned, handled, and dried properly, and kept free of contamination."

It's an especially important development

## In the News

### HEATHER HIGGINBOTTOM '94 NAMED TO WHITE HOUSE POST

President Barack Obama has named **Heather Higginbottom '94** the deputy director of the White House Office of Management and Budget. Higginbottom, who served as Obama's national policy advisor during his presidential campaign, was deputy director of the White House Domestic Policy Council from January 2009 until beginning her new post in January. A political science major at Rochester, Higginbottom began her career in national politics and policymaking as a legislative director to Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts.

### ROB BARRETT '88E: 'AMERICA'S NEXT COOKING CELEBRITY'

**Rob Barrett '88E**, host of the YouTube cooking show *Cooking for Dads* and author of a cookbook by the title, won the America's Next Cooking Celebrity contest, sponsored by *Better Homes and Gardens* last October. The contest requires participants to upload a video of themselves preparing an original recipe. Barrett was one of two finalists invited for a cook-off in the magazine's test kitchen in Des Moines, Iowa. He won for his red pepper and sausage pasta.

### ROBERT BRENT '48, '53M (MD), '55M (PHD) WINS NATIONAL HONOR FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

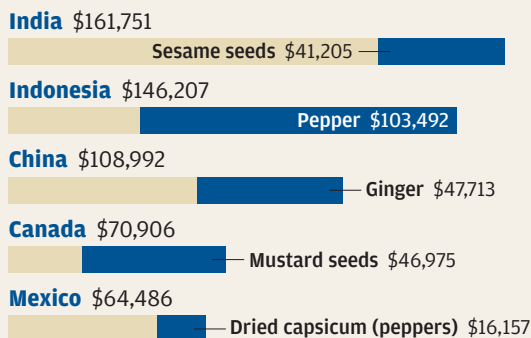
**Robert Brent '48, '53M (MD), '55M (PhD), '88 (Honorary)** has been selected for the National Physician of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award by Castle-Connolly, the publisher of the *America's Top Doctors* series. Brent heads the Clinical and Environmental Teratology Research Lab at the Alfred I. duPoint Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Del., and is the Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics, Radiology, and Pathology at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. A specialist in the environmental causes of birth defects, Brent has conducted research and counseled pregnant women for more than 50 years. Castle-Connolly's physician-led research team received hundreds of nominations for the award from fellow physicians, selecting Brent as one of two winners for 2011.

## The Life of Spice

Imports of spices into the United States have steadily increased in recent years. Here are the top five countries that export spices to the U.S., and the main spice that each exports.

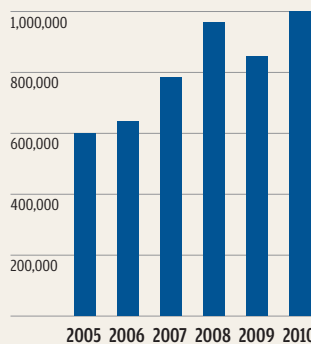
### TOP FIVE EXPORTERS TO THE UNITED STATES

Values for 2010 in thousands of dollars



### TOTAL SPICE IMPORTS

Values in thousands of dollars



Source: Global Agricultural Trade System, U.S. Department of Agriculture

of for tree nuts in California," says Furth. "And this is the case all over the world."

For the past 10 years, Furth has been working with the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Dutch international development organization, SNV, on joint projects in Albania, the source of 75 percent of the world's sage, as well as a main source of medicinal and other herbs.

Sage is rarely cultivated, but instead grows in the wild. The harvesters are primarily villagers. "They get up very early in the morning and they walk up the mountain, often with a donkey," says Furth. They pick the herbs which are then collected by aggregators back in the villages.

In the past, neither the gatherers, who are paid by the sack, nor the aggregators, who sell the raw, dirty sage to processors,

initiative because, says Bernd Fischer, a professor of history at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, "agriculture is one of the only sustainable aspects of the Albanian economy." Fischer, who specializes in the Balkans and advises a number of U.S. government agencies on Albanian affairs, says there are hundreds of projects like the one Furth is working on that contribute to the development of Albania's predominantly rural population.

For consumers, the benefits are no less important. Spices that aren't properly handled can contain dirt, twigs, dead insects, animal feces, salmonella or *E. coli*. Even though spices are used in small quantities and generally cooked at high temperatures, says Furth, when it comes to contamination, "you never want to take a chance." ®