

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Marriott CEO dies after cancer battle

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Marriott CEO Arne Sorenson passed away at the age of 62. Image credit: Marriott International

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Arne M. Sorenson, president and CEO of hospitality group Marriott International, passed away on Feb. 15 after a battle with pancreatic cancer.

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Mr. Sorenson became Marriott's third CEO in history in 2012 and was the first individual outside of the founding family to rise to the role. During his tenure at Marriott, he led a multibillion-dollar acquisition of Starwood Hotels & Resorts and spoke out publicly about a range of social issues.

"Arne was an exceptional executive but more than that he was an exceptional human being," said J.W. Marriott, Jr., executive chairman and chairman of the board of Marriott International, in a statement. "Arne loved every aspect of this business and relished time spent touring our hotels and meeting associates around the world.

"He had an uncanny ability to anticipate where the hospitality industry was headed and position Marriott for growth," he said. "But the roles he relished the most were as husband, father, brother and friend."

Hotelier legacy

After serving as chief operating officer at Marriott, Mr. Sorenson became CEO in 2012. He previously practiced law, specializing in mergers and acquisitions litigations, and later worked as an executive at Walmart.

In 2016, Marriott completed its \$12.2 billion acquisition of Starwood Hotels & Resorts to become the world's largest hotelier. The move added several brands, including St. Regis and The Luxury Collection, to Marriott's portfolio ([see story](#)).



Marriott expanded its portfolio and improved its sustainability practices under Mr. Sorenson's tenure. Image credit: Marriott

Mr. Sorenson was also vocal about issues including sustainability and discrimination. He opposed legislation targeted against LGBTQ+ consumers and criticized a United States travel ban on majority-Muslim countries, which was lifted under the new presidential administration.

Marriott revealed Mr. Sorenson's cancer diagnosis in May 2019. Earlier this month, the company announced he would temporarily step back from full-time management to focus on treatments.

At the time, Marriott tapped Stephanie Linnartz, group president of consumer operations, technology and emerging businesses, and Tony Capuano, group president, global development, design and operations services, to oversee the day-to-day operations of business units and corporate functions, in addition to their current roles.

Ms. Linnartz and Mr. Capuano will continue sharing these responsibilities until the board appoints a new CEO, with an announcement expected in the next two weeks.

Mr. Sorenson was 62 years old. He is survived by his wife and four children.

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