

Ethikos Volume 36, Number 1. January 01, 2022 Pioneers in business ethics: R. Edward Freeman

Ed Freeman (freemane@arden.virginia.edu), PhD, is Professor of Business Administration and an academic director of the Institute for Business in Society at the University of Virginia Darden School of Business in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA. Freeman was interviewed by Patricia Werhane, PhD.

A note on this series: In the last 40 years or so, an entirely new academic and occupational niche for practicing ethics in business has emerged. Many of the original academic business ethicists came to the field through philosophy, then brought their thinking and research into business schools. Many of the original practitioners came to the field through the law and remain close to the practice of law.

In an effort to preserve and share this knowledge and practical experience, the Center for Professional Responsibility in Business and Society at the University of Illinois Gies College of Business has filmed and transcribed the oral histories of these pioneers and early adopters. To date, almost 50 academics and practitioners have been interviewed, each with 25 years or more of experience in the field of business ethics. This series aims to provide a better understanding of how the business ethics field and profession have evolved over the decades, through the interviewees' own experiences. For more details on the series, contact Gretchen Winter (gwinter@illinois.edu), JD, the Center's Executive Director. This interview was condensed for clarity and brevity.

PW: What brought you to the field of business ethics?

EF: I first started teaching at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, when I was hired to teach management and business strategy. I didn't know anything about business ethics. But because I thought business and ethics ought to go together, I didn't know that most of the people who did business separated them into two distinct constructs. So, I was pretty ignorant.

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