

Kenneth C. Frazier '75

Kenneth Frazier is senior vice president and general counsel of Merck & Co., Inc., Whitehouse Station, N.J.—a research-driven pharmaceutical products and services company. Highly successful in the globally important business of Merck, Frazier not only volunteers with several educational and advocacy organizations, he also supports Penn State with time and resources. Frazier is responsible for Merck's legal and public affairs functions and the Merck Company Foundation. He is also a member of Merck's Management Committee, a senior management group that makes strategic company decisions.



Frazier graduated from Penn State in 1975 with a B.A. in political science and earned his J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1978. He regards his education as a determining influence in his life: "Penn State represents a period of transformation that influenced the rest of my life. I met people with so many different perspectives, and this helped me develop relationships and trust with diverse clients."

After graduating from Harvard, Frazier pursued a fourteen-year career as a litigation partner with private law practice Drinker Biddle and Reath, Philadelphia, joining pharmaceuticals giant Merck in 1992. He served as Astra Merck's first general counsel and became vice president for public affairs for Merck in 1994, a post he held for five years. He influenced public opinion on behalf of a pharmaceutical company in a climate where health care is always changing and drug companies are not popular. Now, as senior vice president and general counsel, he oversees all legal affairs of Merck, which had 2002 sales of \$51.8 billion and net income of more than \$7 billion.

Active in numerous law-related associations and centers, his involvement includes memberships in the Bar of the Supreme Court of the United States, American Law Institute, American Bar Association, American Corporate Counsel Association, Association of General Counsel, Council on Foreign Relations, and the Pennsylvania Bar Association. He is also a leader in education and ethics organizations, sitting on the board of Legal Services of New Jersey and serving as chairman for the Ethics Resource Center. He is a founding board member of the Cornerstone Christian Academy, a private elementary school in Philadelphia, where many of the students are high-risk children. He is also a member of the corporate advisory boards of the University of Pennsylvania Law and Economics Center, Seton Hall University Health Law & Policy Center, Rand Institute for Civil Justice, National Legal Aid and Defender Association, Metropolitan Corporate Counsel, and CorporateProBono.Org.

Together with his wife, Andréa, he is a longtime supporter of Penn State. In 1999, the couple established a scholarship in the liberal arts for students whose ethnic, cultural, or national background contributes to the diversity of the student body.

Frazier is a superb role model for Penn State students: He participates in career exploration programs, where his eloquent and dynamic style is always well received, addresses large numbers of students, and meets with students for mock interviewing and résumé critique. His message is that education is the key to succeeding in both a career and living a responsible life. A role model for all students, Frazier is especially inspiring to young African-Americans.

A telling example of Frazier's approach to life is his conviction that the most important challenge of his career was representing an innocent man on death row who had received an execution date. Says Frazier, "I had spent most of my career as a corporate lawyer, but he had an execution date set and he is now free, a married steelworker living in Alabama. Only my education, beginning at Penn State, allowed me to make this difference."

Kenneth and Andréa live in Newtown, Pa., and have two children, Lauren and James.

*This career summary is excerpted from the 2003 Distinguished Alumni Awards Ceremony booklet (May 30, 2003, The Pennsylvania State University).