



## Steel Partners Holdings Releases Letter From Executive Chairman Warren Lichtenstein on Passing of Tommy Lasorda

January 22, 2021

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jan. 22, 2021-- Steel Connect Inc. (NASDAQ: STCN) ("Steel Connect" or the "Company") today released a letter from Executive Chairman Warren Lichtenstein on the passing of Tommy Lasorda.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210122005435/en/>



January 19, 2021

Yesterday was Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Tomorrow is the Presidential Inauguration. Today we celebrate the life of Thomas Charles Lasorda.

When the late Tony Bergamo said he was bringing "Uncle Tommy" to dinner 12 years ago, it changed the course of my life. He became a best friend, a brother, a second father. As he did for so many others, he helped me become a better person, a better father, and a better leader.

Believe it or not, I was not the biggest sports fan and did not know anything about Tommy Lasorda when we first met.

I did not know he had won two World Series, was in the Baseball Hall of Fame and a total of 17 Hall of Fames; that he signed his first contract when he was just 16 years old, had nine honorary degrees, three paintings in the Smithsonian, or that he had an asteroid named after him. What I did learn that night is that he was a giver with a growth mindset who always said yes, if he could. He was all heart, a gritty, larger-than-life Italian who loved his family fiercely and angel hair pasta with a lot of hot, crushed red peppers.

Tommy grew up in Norristown, Pennsylvania, in a Catholic, Italian family with his four brothers, mom, and dad. Tommy remained forever committed to his own family, especially Jo, who was the yin to his yang, Laura, Tommy Jr., who I never did have the chance to meet, and Emily.

Shortly after we first met and started spending time together, Tommy asked if he could come to my son's little league game so that he could meet him. As we arrived at the field, all the parents were going nuts and began to shout Tommy's name. It was then and there that I started to realize that Tommy was so much more than my new best friend. The parents and kids all wanted autographs and photos, which Tommy was happy to sign, but he would always say, "Can you say please and thank you?" He

certainly was right, and he wanted to make sure the kids understood the value of respect. My son, Stefan, distinctly remembers looking at the ground as he introduced himself and shook Tommy's hand. Tommy was clearly unimpressed and said, "Hey, look at me when I shake your hand, and squeeze it! Squeeze my hand like you mean it, with intention!" Tommy definitely got his attention, and he said that if Tommy had told him to run around the field 100 times, he would've run like his life depended on it.

As the game unfolded, I told Tommy that there was a child on the team who had not had a hit all season. When that child came up to bat, Tommy stopped the game, which you can do if you are Tommy Lasorda at a little league baseball game, especially in Los Angeles. He walked to the plate, got down eye to eye with the batter, and spoke to him. I have no idea what Tommy said to him, and at the time, I was a bit nervous because you never knew what Tommy was going to say. Tommy winked at me on his way back to the dugout. The pitcher threw the pitch, and lo and behold; the kid hit the ball. It was right then and there that I witnessed Tommy's gift and the power of positive coaching. We know that we can never replicate Tommy, but the impetus for creating Steel Sports is the hope that by instilling his values, we create like-minded young adults who will follow in his path.

After that game, I asked Tommy what he had said to the batter. Of course, it was his mantra, "you gotta believe!" He told the batter that he could be anything he wanted to be, and if he wanted to hit the ball, he could hit the ball. He just needed to believe in himself. Tommy always believed, and he always encouraged players and kids to believe in themselves and work hard to succeed. He said that there were three kinds of people in the world, those who make it happen, those who watch it happen, and those who wonder what happened. Be the person to make it happen, but to do so, "you gotta believe!"

As Tommy and I continued to spend time together, we went to New York. I met a few of Tommy's friends, and we had the first of many dinners at Bamonte's in Brooklyn, where I started to realize Tommy should be in the Guinness Book of World Records for the most free meals ever received and

for attending the most baseball games in a lifetime. That trip, he was also able to spend the Jewish holidays with my family, and he told me how he met his wife, Jo, when he spotted her in the stands at a baseball game he was pitching at in Greenville, South Carolina, and their beautiful family. Afterward, I came home to a letter of gratitude from Tommy, and he wanted me to meet Jo.

It was shortly thereafter that I had the pleasure of meeting Jo. Luckily, Jo decided she liked me and gave Tommy the green light for us to spend more time together, including accompanying me on most of the dates I had. We were catching up for lost time.

Tommy also shared the letter he had written to God, thanking him for the blessing of his wife, Jo, which I want to share with you today.

Tommy was a key figure in creating Steel Sports to help kids thrive, build character, teach life lessons, and inspire self-confidence. He was generous with his wisdom, and he always made time to talk to the kids to offer encouragement and help them believe in themselves. As Tommy said, "The difference between the impossible and possible lies in a man's determination." He was always there to teach the kids not just how to play baseball but how to be part of a team. He taught that we should play for the name on the front of the jersey, not the name on the back of the jersey.

Tommy gave one of his many speeches at Chadwick, my son's school. Before he agreed, I asked him if he loved his country, and he said he did. I asked him if he believed in the Constitution and the right to free speech, and he said he did. I said great, how about giving a free speech at Chadwick. It was his joke, and it was fun to turn it on him. Tommy never missed an opportunity for a teachable moment, and he brought his message of teamwork, respect, integrity, and commitment. Tommy taught the kids about love and respect. He always said, "two things that you always give your family are love and respect. Without them, nobody will respect you, and nobody will care for you." He taught the kids the value of actively engaging to learn and improve, using his COP method, Conversation, Observation, and Participation. He also taught them the value of love and respect. And, when he finished his speech, he asked his very energized audience of 900 kids, "What do you owe your parents?" There was a resounding answer of "love and respect."

Throughout his life, Tommy always stood up to do the right thing. In 1945, he was drafted into the US Army. His love of his country never waned. He visited thousands of soldiers at over 40 bases. He was always proud to don the red, white, and blue to represent the freedoms and ideals for which our country stands. Tommy counted Presidents Ronald Regan and George H.W. Bush as his friends, as well as Carter, Ford, and Nixon. He was a true American patriot.

One of his proudest moments was being the manager for Team USA when they won the gold medal in baseball at the 2004 Sydney Olympics. In 2016, Tommy accompanied one of Steel Sport's teams, LA Steel Elite, when we went to Cuba. He had not been back to Cuba since 1959. Tommy was in Cuba when Castro came to power, and Castro had not forgotten Tommy's words during the 2004 Olympics when Team USA had beaten the Cubans for the gold medal. Needless to say, Castro canceled the celebrations and honorary stops during our visit, but the people of Cuba had not stopped loving Tommy Lasorda. He was legendary – singing, dancing, laughing. I will always remember my amazing friend basking in the sun. Everywhere we went, the people in Cuba were excited to see him, shake his hand, and reminisce.

Tommy was more than a celebrity. His good friends included Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Don Rickles. He was an icon, an American treasure, the ultimate ambassador of baseball. Through the years, Tommy received more accolades and awards than we could even begin to list. Tommy was an in-person influencer; imagine how many likes and follows he would have had if he had used social media. He could always be counted on to show up. He made more appearances than we could ever count, where he gave speeches, shook hands, posed for pictures, and signed autographs. We went to Cooperstown together and attended a Hall of Fame induction ceremony. We went to factory openings, including the Aerojet Rocketdyne state of the art facility in Huntsville, Alabama, and executive meetings, such as our Steel Partners CEO Summits. He was with me when we rang the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange on March 27, 2017. We were excited to host Tommy at Baseball Heaven when we dedicated the Tommy Lasorda Museum to highlight his life, including his personal collection of memorabilia, such as autographed bats, baseballs, and photos. He embodied the American Dream, and he did it the Lasorda way.

Despite his lack of formal higher education, he was fiscally responsible, and he found success in his many business ventures since they involved the things he loved – food, wine, and baseball. We will never forget him as the face of Slim-Fast, helping people to lose weight and get healthy. And, I was proud to send my senior staff bottles of Lasorda wine just this past year as a thank you for all their hard work and dedication. I know they are raising their glasses and toasting to our great friend, Tommy.

Ultimately, it was the way Tommy connected with people that made him so successful. He preached the 3P's – passion, purpose, and perseverance. He was compassionate and respectful with everyone and really fostered relationships. All told, it would be impossible to count how much Tommy gave to so many kids and fans, players he scouted and trained, coaches he helped to place in jobs, schools, and universities. We will miss his leadership, mentorship, and passion for baseball and life.

It was one of the highlights of my life to be with Tommy in Arlington, Texas, when the Dodgers won the 2020 World Series in game six just a few months ago. He always said that he wanted to see the Dodgers win another championship before the Big Dodger in the Sky called him home. As he stood to cheer the team to victory, I was honored to stand next to him.

Just ten days after the 2020 World Series win, Tommy was admitted to the hospital. All he talked about was his wish to get home to be with his beautiful bride, Jo, which he did.

I will miss our dinners of angel hair pasta and our Chinese lunches at Paul's Kitchen. I will never forget our travels around the world. He is family and always will be. He helped me raise my son, his friends, and his Steel Elite teammates over this past decade. Tommy is more than a shooting-star; he is a supernova whose light continues to expand and burn bright in all those he inspired. Through us all, his core values will survive and thrive. We've just gotta believe.

Respectfully,

Warren Lichtenstein  
Executive Chairman

#### **About Steel Connect Inc.**

Steel Connect, Inc. is a diversified holding company with two wholly-owned subsidiaries, IWCO Direct Holdings, Inc. and ModusLink Corporation, that have market-leading positions in direct marketing and supply chain management, respectively.

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