



No: 50

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Name: John Lauritzen

Chairman of the board of First National Bank of Omaha, Lauritzen in the Face drawing is surrounded by credit cards. He introduced "First Charge Card" in 1953. His pioneer effort produced bank credit cards now known as Visa and Master Card. First National is now one of the top Visa and Master Card issuers in the United States. The artist went for irony when he showed Lauritzen sitting on top of the building, because Lauritzen did not like heights, especially the 22nd floor of the First National Center where most Face ceremonies are held. So his Face unveiling was instead held in his executive offices on the fourth floor. OPC members are seen looking out the window at their landlord as hawks that once lived on the roof fly nearby. At age 29, Lauritzen became the nation's youngest bank president when he purchased the Emerson State Bank in Iowa for \$34,000. He raised the money by selling property, such as his house for \$14,000. This was the start of the Lauritzen Corporation, a large multi-bank holding company and a principal owner of First National Bank of Omaha, a multi-billion dollar organization doing business throughout the United States. As a principal owner, Lauritzen organized many new banks such as First Westside and First Westroads in Omaha, and First National Bank in Elm Creek, Nebraska. Lauritzen also served on many community service boards and was drive chairman for the American Cancer Society and the United Appeal. In 1991 Mr. Lauritzen earned an honorary doctor of laws degree from Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the banking industry, his community service, and his history of philanthropy. He passed away in July 2000. His family continues to run the First National companies.