

Meet Mark Gantar

Introduction by David Woodward

I would like to welcome Washingtonian Mark Gantar, Honorary Consul of Ethiopia in Seattle and Managing Director at National Standard Finance.

Unlike diplomats who come to the Seattle area from elsewhere, Mark grew up in Western Washington and went global as a result of his career in tech consulting. Mark's grandfather, Mark M. Gantar, was the first commander of the USS Sacramento in 1964 and was in charge of the Naval Shipyard in Bremerton in the 1960s, so Mark's local roots go deep.



Mark went to college in Eastern Washington where he played baseball at shortstop and 2nd base, and one year in college ball led the Western U.S. in hitting with a .393 average. Wow! Graduating from WSU in Management Information Systems, Mark had a serious shot at playing professional baseball, but grabbed the brass ring when offered a great job at Electronic Data Systems (Ross Perrot's company) as a systems engineer, and he still wonders what might have been if he'd given pro ball a shot. The Mariners may soon be calling you as well as Brandon.

Since 1995, Mark has been consulting in the tech sector with several groups including most recently his own company, ArcSoft, and global powerhouse National Standard Finance LLC which he joined in 2014 as an Africa specialist. A major turning point in Mark's career came in 2009 when he met a key HR professional from Ethiopia, Able Ghirmai. Together Mark and Able began to develop services for the country of Ethiopia securing a variety of government contracts for IT tech training and human resource development.

The government of Ethiopia began to take note of Mark's passion and effectiveness in working with the people of Ethiopia, and they soon asked Mark if he would consider becoming the honorary consul of Ethiopia in Seattle. This he gladly agreed to do. In his role as honorary consul, Mark's responsibilities focus on spurring increased foreign direct investment into Ethiopia; from all indications Ethiopia is an extremely strategic country for current and future economic development and opportunity.

Now a globalist through and through, Mark has traveled to many parts of Africa including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Tunisia, and South Africa, and has also spent time in Europe and China. Mark has a vision for global engagement and development through large scale financial reform and human resource development. No doubt the International Service Committee will come calling soon.

Mark is married and he and his wife have two kids, Mark (the 4th) age 14 and Melissa age 12. This past year Melissa's Select Gold soccer team almost won Washington State's Founder's Cup, so we'll need to keep an eye on her soccer career. Mark loves racquetball and his family is big on collectible cars.

We're excited to have you join Rotary, Mark, as you look to give back to your community and engage with your Rotary colleagues.