

AGM 2025

2025-07-24

Presentation

Susanne Perram

Good morning, everyone. Let me try that again. Good morning, everyone. That's a lot better. I'm Sue Perram, Vice President, Director of Investor Relations. I'd like to welcome you to Brown-Forman's 2025 Annual Meeting of Stockholders. Thank you to those of you joining us in the room today as well as my fellow Brown-Forman colleagues who are joining us virtually from around the globe. Before handing the meeting over to Campbell, I'd like to remind you of the code of conduct for today's meeting, which is on the slide behind me and can also be found on our meeting website.

I also need to make you aware that portions of today's presentations may contain forward-looking statements and certain non-GAAP financial measures, each as more fully described in the slide behind me and in the appendix to the presentation, which will be posted on our website, brown-forman.com, later today. So with that, we appreciate your interest in and continued support of Brown-Forman. And I would now like to turn the stage over to Campbell Brown, Chair of the Board. Campbell?

Campbell Brown

Thank you, Sue, and good morning, everyone. I am pleased to now call the Brown-Forman 2025 Annual Meeting of Stockholders to order. To start, I'd like to acknowledge certain individuals who are here with us today, our Board of Directors and also – I'm sorry, former members of the Board that are here today. So Dace Brown Stubbs, is here, Sandra Frazier, Martin S. Brown, Laura L. Frazier, G. Garvin Brown, the IV, Augusta Brown Holland and Stuart R. Brown. Members of the executive leadership team, including Mike Carr, who will serve as Secretary of the meeting. Representatives from Ernst & Young are also here.

And then we've got – and the independent inspectors of our election, Karleen Finnegan, Nancy Muffre and Eric Oberland.

Mike, can you please describe the notice given to stockholders?

Michael Carr

Yes. Thanks, Campbell. Good morning, everyone. On June 20, 2025, we began mailing notice of this meeting to our Class A stockholders as of the record date, together with the proxy statement, our integrated annual report, which included our Form 10-K for fiscal 2025 and a proxy card. I can confirm that we have a quorum for today's meeting with approximately 96% of our Class A stockholders either present or represented by proxy.

Campbell Brown

Thank you, Mike. There are two items of business for today's meeting: first, the election of the following 11 director nominees: Elizabeth M. Brown, former President, Dendri-fund Inc; Mark A. Clouse, President, Washington Commanders; Marshall B. Farrer, Executive Vice President, Chief Strategic Growth Officer, Brown-Forman Corporation; W. Austin Musselman Jr., Managing Member, White Oak Investments LLC and Owner and Manager, Ashbourne Farms; Michael J. Roney, retired Chief Executive Officer, Bunzl plc; Jan E. Singer, former Chief Executive, J. Crew; Tracy L. Skeans, Chief Operating Officer and Chief People and Culture Officer, Yum! Brands, Inc; Elizabeth A. Smith, Executive Chair, Revlon Group Holdings LLC; Michael A. Todman, retired Vice Chairman, Whirlpool Corporation; and Lawson E. Whiting, President and Chief Executive Officer of Brown-Forman Corporation. And lastly, I Campbell P. Brown, Chair of the Board, I'm also standing for reelection.

The second order of business is to ratify Ernst & Young as the corporation's independent registered public accounting firm for fiscal 2026.

Mike, would you please describe the voting process?

Michael Carr

Yes. Thank you, Campbell. Class A stockholders as of the close of business on June 9, 2025 are entitled to vote at today's meeting. If you previously voted, you do not need to do anything further at this time. If you have not voted or if you would like to change your vote, the polls are now open, and you may vote online using the instructions behind me, and we'll pause for just a moment.

[Voting]

Michael Carr

Now that everyone has had the opportunity to vote, the polls are closed and the inspectors will tally the vote. So for the election of directors, each of the 11 director nominees has received at least 95% of the Class A votes cast. Therefore, each nominee is duly elected to be a director of the corporation. For the ratification of Ernst & Young as the corporation's independent registered public accounting firm for fiscal 2026, over 99% of the Class A shares present and entitled to vote voted for the proposal. Therefore, the selection of the independent registered public accounting firm for fiscal 2026 has been ratified. We will issue a press release announcing the final voting results later today and file a Form 8-K with the SEC within the next 4 business days.

Campbell, this concludes the formal portion of the meeting.

Campbell Brown

Thank you, Mike, and thank you all for the confidence that you continue to place in Brown-Forman and the Board of Directors. Since there is no other formal business to come before the meeting, I declare the formal portion of the 2025 Annual Meeting of Stockholders adjourned. Okay. So today marks the fourth and final time I stand before you as Chair of

the Board. And before I pass the gavel to my cousin and great friend, Marshall Farrer, I wanted to reflect a little bit on a journey, a journey that started about 31 years ago and maybe even a few years before that.

And there were 4 opportunities early in my career that really shaped my perception of the culture of Brown-Forman and how our company pursues growth and success. And so I remember my first day as an intern in the mailroom in the summer of 1986. I didn't know much about Brown-Forman, if I'm being totally honest. But I got to tell you that job, it felt like the firmest handshake with the culture of this company you could imagine. And I spent that entire summer. It's like Chris crossing the campus, every corner of it and watching magic unfold around me. I mean I was struck not just by the iconic brands and the very smart people and the exceptionally cool point of sale that was in all of your offices.

It was really the sense of purpose. You could feel it in every hallway and every office. And the second internship I did in 1989 was assigned to the R&D lab. And I got to tell you, for most of that period of that time, I reported to the incomparable Lucille Allen. And I don't know how many people here know Lucille, but she is truly a pioneer in our industry. She was the Brown-Forman and the U.S. spirits industry's first black female chemist. And I think Lucille might be here today, and I know it's super dark, but if you're here, can you just give me a wave? Yes, there she is. Yes. Well, Lucille, you worked a miracle with me.

I mean, I know it's hard to tell, and those that know me are going to be shocked by this, but I had no skill set whatsoever in lab work. But you kept me moving forward. You taught me how to show up every day. You taught me that details matter and that if I was consistent, I would earn your trust. And I thank you for that. And my whole career has been marked by people at this company that have served as great mentors to me, and it's one of the special, special things about Brown-Forman. But I finally joined officially in 1994, which

was a period marked by a lot of uncertainty and low growth, which sounds familiar. If you recall, the U.S. spirits industry was still reeling from the 1992 federal excise tax increase. American whiskey had been on a 30-year decline and was still kind of coming out of that slumber. Jack Daniel's did over 100,000 cases in exactly 5 global markets.

And Brown-Forman placed a bet and launched the Advancing Markets Group, which was a bold initiative to begin to expand our international footprint. And this group would open markets all over the world. And for me, it delivered a life-changing opportunity. I'd always dreamed of working overseas. And the first place that Brown-Forman decided to send me was India. And I have to admit for your first overseas posting, I kind of these dreams of waking up on a beach sipping anti. And – but there I was, I went anyways and something surprising happened. What started as a reluctant 4-month stint turned into a remarkable year in New Delhi. I found myself building something from the ground up. I was able to hire my first team.

We began to import and bottle American spirits, and we launched Southern Comfort in 6 local Indian markets. And I remember leaving, I was in the cab on the way in the airport, and I was in a buck of tears. I couldn't believe that a job or a time in a market could have such a powerful impact on a human. And I'll tell you that experience taught me that the biggest leaps in growth often come from the things we're the most hesitant to do. A few years later, another unexpected assignment in an unlikely location occurred. Time Turkey was maybe a 20,000 case market, and there was a lot of debate inside Brown-Forman, how much of the 20,000 cases were actually being consumed in Turkey. And they asked me to move to Istanbul and to open an office and begin working with this really dynamic young distributor and flipped Turkey from what was really a duty-free market into a duty-paid market.

And I was hesitant, but again, I went anyway. And despite earthquakes, Turkey became

AMG's first 50,000 case market. Today, that market delivers over 400,000 cases of Jack Daniel's. That's the kind of transformation that happens when you bet on potential and you back it with — **indiscernible** — That same spirit guided us as we built an international footprint from [expatriot] launches to empowered local leadership from third-party distribution relationships to fully owned route-to-consumer platforms. We believed in our brands, and we delivered a structure that was built on that belief. And today, Jack Daniel's delivers over 100,000 cases in 17 global markets and 18 if you include Global Travel Retail. So from day 1, I have like this mindset that we invest for tomorrow. We don't just defend for today.

And in recent years together, we've acquired Diplomatico Rum, Gin Mare, Fords Gin. These are all beautiful brands, high margins and growing categories. We've challenged our brand teams to think more globally about their portfolios. Jack Daniel's, for instance, we now enjoy this incredible global relationship with Coca-Cola. I got a lovely reminder last night of this important relationship we've created with a very successful Formula One team in McLaren. And most recently, the Jack Daniel's brand team has reminded all of us what a special place Lynchburg, Tennessee is with the launch of their new campaign, What Makes Jack, Jack. And we've repositioned Woodford to be the next great American whiskey in our portfolio. This remains, I think, our greatest medium- and long-term opportunity. And while we've made strides, Woodford is only over 100,000 cases in a single market. And within the United States, there is only one state that delivers over 100,000 cases. That's what opportunity looks like.

These aren't just smart moves, and these are statements about who we are and where we're going. And yet, the thing I'm most proud of isn't a fancy location or one of our global brands with a ton of market share. It's our founding brand, Old Forester. Remember like the first conversation I had with Lawson and Paul Varga and my brother Garvin, like it was yesterday. After decades of neglect, Brown-Forman was ready to invest in our

founding brand, a brand that had really frankly lost its luster. We had declining volumes and anemic P&L, but we had a growing cohort of crusaders that wanted something special to happen here. And we needed to connect a story, an authentic story between a family and America's first bottled bourbon. We needed to remind people that this company and that brand was founded on a promise that there was nothing better in the market.

And so armed with a really strong capital plan, thank you, a commitment to telling a true story and the collective will of what felt like an entire community of employees, family members and the urban faithful – we made something special happen there, didn't we? Yes. We reimagined everything. We showed up in the market differently. We began to have our production folks interact on the floor of our new home place on Main Street. We mined our archives for authentic stories, and we redesigned the packaging and rolled out an incredible line of innovation that was built on the powerful shoulders of Old Forester's fantastic time line. And so step by step, we built it back from under 100,000 cases to 0.5 million and counting. It's now a profitable proud centerpiece of our portfolio.

I get a lot of pats on the back for Old Forester, but the truth is it wasn't about me. It was a team of people. power of storytelling and the strength of craftsmanship and pride of legacy. And it reminds me, even when a brand seems forgotten, it often becomes one of your most powerful assets. And that lesson applies not just to Bourbon, it's far beyond that because at the end of the day, it's about our people, their belief, their pride, their grit. I see that same spirit everywhere I go all around the world. Just this past year, I was in Poland, in Germany and in Mexico. And we have people that are building businesses there like they run it like they are the owners of those businesses. People who are driving — ***indiscernible*** — Forward across multiple brands, entire portfolios. And what sets us apart isn't just the products we make. It's in our culture, culture that's not inherited, but it's shaped every single day.

Culture shows up in the way we treat each other, the standards that we hold and in the pride that we take in doing things the right way. That's what gives me such confidence as I get ready to pass the gavel. The next chapter of our legacy will be marked by bold action and a clear strategy that's aligned around the things that matter most. And I know Marshall, Lawson and our Board of Directors are ready for that moment, and they always are. And so as I stand here today, I'm grateful beyond words. So let me – I just said something cry there. So let me just say this, thank you. To our shareholders, my family and investors alike for the trust, to our employees, Yes. Good people. They're all good people. And to the executive leadership team, my fellow Board of Directors, your wisdom has guided me and will continue to guide all of us, and thank you. And finally, to Sarah, Mandy and Chandler, love you guys. You're going to see a little bit more of me moving forward.

So buckle up for that. But the trust and the love and support has been first class. Okay. So if there's one thing I hope you take away from today, it's this. Brown-Forman strength doesn't come from a single person or a single brand or a particularly special moment. It comes from a culture of people who show up when it matters most. So if you're part of this story, shareholder, a family member, my ask is simple, keep showing up, keep raising your hand, keep taking the leap, be the person who carries the legacy. That's how we write the next great chapter together. Thank you.

So now Look, it now gives me great pleasure and a ton of confidence to hand the chair role over to my cousin, the 10th Brown family member and third of our fifth generation to serve in the seat. Marshall Farrer, congratulations and good luck.

Marshall Farrer

Thank you, Campbell, and good morning, shareholders, family, employees and partners. Before we look ahead, I want to reflect on the great leadership over the past 4 years and

more than 30 years of service. Campbell, you've left a lasting legacy. You've led with courage and clarity and heart. And you've guided bold acquisitions, global expansion and a pandemic era pivot that put people first. You've shown that conviction can be steady and kind. And on a personal level, I'm extremely appreciative of your mentorship and camaraderie.

You've traversed both a personal and professional path ahead of me, and I am delighted that you will continue to serve alongside me on this Board. as we navigate the next chapter ahead. So thank you. As Campbell mentioned, and I think you all probably already know by now, I'm a fifth-generation family member. And my journey with Brown-Forman has been both deeply personal and professionally formative. And I didn't necessarily always plan to join the business. But towards the end of college, I found myself drawn to Brown-Forman to the purpose, to the people, our brands and the possibility of making a meaningful long-term contribution. I leaned in. I began my career 27 years ago out in California in our then wine division before transitioning to spirits.

And since then, I've had the privilege of growing brands and building global capabilities around the world, from Latin America to Australia, Asia, global travel retail and Europe. These experiences have broadened and shaped my world view and given me a great appreciation for complexity. And throughout all of that complexity, I lived in San Francisco and with my family in Sydney, London, Amsterdam and of course, right here in Louisville. Worked across these markets, built commercial teams and helped steward key partnerships such as Jack and Coke and McLaren Formula One racing. I have worked and will continue to work with governments and policymakers from Capitol Hill to the White House and of course, international policy offices around the world on regulations that so formatively shape our industry and how we operate within it.

And for nearly 10 years, I've also served on the Board. And all of these experiences have

reinforced the same lesson for me. Patients practiced over time becomes endurance. And I'll be candid with you. I am not a patient person. I like momentum. I like progress. But I've come to understand that true endurance, the kind that our company is built on, isn't built on the absence of urgency. It's the result of discipline and long-term commitment. That's what makes Brown-Forman different. That's what gives me confidence in today. Yes, we are navigating very complex times. But guess what, Brown-Forman has always been shaped by challenge.

We've endured world wars, depressions, prohibition, countless shifts in global trade from tariffs, the tax hikes, changing consumer preferences and even digital disruption. But we've met each one of these, not with panic, but with purpose. And we're still here, stronger, smarter and more aligned. And why? Because this company is built on 3 bedrock trues, one, long-term family commitment, now 6 generations strong, two, enduring leadership, rooted in discipline and built for the long haul; and three, a culture of belief, belief in each other, our brands and importantly, doing things the right way. That's what carries us through cycles. That's what powers our adaptability. And that's what sustains our dividend, payable every year since 1944. And that's what makes us uniquely positioned to navigate this near-term turbulence and build for generations. So even amid today's challenges, we see momentum building.

We've reignited Jack Daniel's behind a bold new campaign. We're investing behind critical emerging markets and developed market powerhouses. And we've reshaped our U.S. distribution behind focus and dedication that puts Brown-Forman first. This reflects a company that doesn't just react, it invests forward. And what sets Brown-Forman apart is our ability to master the balance of long-term thinking and short-term action. confidence in who we are, yet the courage to evolve. That's only possible because of our people. And I've seen across the generations and geographies, the same values hold true, integrity, humility, pride and a relentless desire to build something that lasts. That culture, our

culture is our greatest advantage.

And as your incoming Chairman of the Board, I am committed to preserving that culture and help steer the next chapter of growth. It's a responsibility that I take very seriously. And as a family member, it represents the highest form of service and leadership that I can provide to our shareholders, to our family, into a legacy of leadership that includes my grandfather, George Garvin Brown II, who held the very same role. And though we never had a chance to know each other, I've always been guided by the inspiration of his service and leadership.

And I know that both Campbell and Garvin have as well. So together, Lawson, our executive leadership team, a fabulous one and our great Board of Directors, we will continue to manage through the complexity. We will invest with intention, and we will build a Brown-Forman that not only lasts but leads. So to our shareholders, thank you for your trust. To our employees, thank you for your dedication and care to our extended Brown-Forman family, thank you for your enduring belief. Our legacy is strong, but the future is brighter still. Thank you.

And it is now my pleasure to welcome forward Lawson Whiting, our Chief Executive Officer.

Lawson Whiting

All right. Well, thank you, Marshall. Look, looking forward, I have a new Chairman to work with, but really looking forward to what we can do together over the upcoming months and years. And Campbell, 4 years of leadership, of partnership and a friendship has been awesome. And I love working with you and very happy you're staying on the Board, so we get to continue doing these things together. So what I thought I would start with today is a story, a story that goes back 25 years. So it was December of 2000. And we were looking at buying the Seagram company for anybody that remember that. And it was something

we've been working on for years. It was – for a year. It was a transformative acquisition potential at least. We've all been working really, really hard on it.

And we were up in New York. It was the final days we had put a bid in and we were waiting to see what happened. And we were in – I remember, it was in Midtown in an Italian restaurant up on the second floor. We had a private dining room. And it was me kind of huddled in the corner. I was the young guy. It was 32 years old, and I had the Lotus 1, 2, 3 spreadsheets on a laptop, and I did all the valuation work. So besides me, it was Owsley Brown, it was Bill Street, Michael Crutcher, John Bridendall and Larry Probus. So 6 of us in the room. And we're in there. We're waiting for the phone call to see if we had one or not. And if you remember what cell phones looked like back then, these were not iPhone days. I mean this was like a brick with an antenna coming out of it that I remember so well. And the phone rang and picked John picked it up, and they said, guys, you didn't get the deal. And it was like silence.

And everybody – you've been working on something so hard for so long, you're a bit deflated. And Owsley went to the waiter and he said, please put a glass of ice in front of everyone that is sitting here. And he grabbed a bottle of Jack Daniel's and he started. He opened it up and then he poured a glass and then he'd start talking a little bit and he pour another glass. And he went around the room himself. And that's when he was talking about how, look, we've spent the last year chasing these external brands. The market is tough. growth is really, really hard to come by. Our margins are down, the stock price is down. But there's something about it that we need to realize.

We need to recognize and believe we own the greatest spirits brand in the world. Time to double down. We're going to refocus the organization. We need more and better consumer communications. We need better on-premise ideas. We need better pricing strategies and execution, all of it. It started to run that from that year in 2000 until for the

next 20-plus years, we went on a tear, and we developed the Jack Daniel's brand into the brand it is today. And I'm just reminded that when we settle double down and focus, we can really build something into a great success, and that's what we're going to do going forward.

The external headwinds are tough. market is tough, and we're going to talk through a lot of that this morning. But we're getting through it, and we're going to continue to plow forward. I mean inflation has been brutal on the consumer products world and particularly on beverage alcohol. There's shifting consumer preferences. There's lots of change happening. Many industries are going through change. But I do want you to know this is not business as usual time. And if there's only one thing that you remember or one thing you take away from today, it's that we're not standing still. We see the challenges and the opportunities, and we're moving with speed and focus to capture them.

So look, today, I'm going to focus on the future for the most part, but I thought it makes sense to put a little bit of context around what the environment is today. And this is not a fun chart, but this is U.S. total distilled spirits. So it's the spirits industry in the U.S., although if you took this – and it basically applies to most of Europe and the developed world. You saw pretty steady growth on this chart is 2014 up until the pandemic. And if you went back to probably the 10 years before that, it would stay in that same range. We enjoyed nonstop growth in the spirits industry for a long, long period of time. And then you saw the massive spike during the pandemic, and it has come down drastically over the last couple of years. And even into 2025, to be honest, it's not improved. It's even a little – it's a little worse than down 1.

So while difficult, we are fighting through this environment. And I will say, we said it in the last quarter in our earnings release, we expect at least we're going to be the only company in the entire spirits industry that showed both top line growth and bottom line

growth last year. So we're still taking share. We're still performing well, but it is in an environment that we haven't seen in a long, long time. So – this is the chart I'm going to base the rest of the presentation around really. We call it the strategic framework, and I'm sure many of you have seen this before. Our strategy is anchored in 4 strategic priorities. It's our portfolio, geography, people and investment. And then at the heart of it all is nothing better in the market.

So I'm going to walk through each one of these. I'll try to talk you through each one of these buckets and the things that we're doing right now to improve the state of our business. So I'll start out with portfolio. Now this is not a 1-year thing. This is something we've been doing for 10 years. And for that matter, Brown-Forman has strategically reshaped its portfolio many times over the decades. But these are the new brands that we brought in, in the last 10 or so years. They're excellent brands. These are brands we really believe that has a really long-term future. They're in categories we haven't, for the most part, haven't played in very much, and they're exciting super premium brands. We got rid of some brands like Southern Comfort and Early Times and Canadian Mist and even most recently, Sonoma-Cutrer.

We did that because we believe in these brands and the future for them. Now the reality is when you buy brands like this that are super premium and growing faster, you're going to pay a big multiple to buy them, and you don't get much when you sell brands that are in decline. So you get dilution. But in a family-controlled company, that's okay. I really believe you all can live through a few years of dilution so that we get these and that we have a brighter long-term future. Now innovation. The other important part of portfolio development these days, much more important, say, than it was 20 or 30 years ago. Every brand has to play in the innovation world if you're going to try to keep up. Jack Daniel's BlackBerry here, which I know you're going to be able to try out in the brand fair when we finish this presentation, but it's going to be – my confidence is very high that that's

going to be a rousing success.

Woodford Reserve is one of the best – has the best innovation pipelines of any brand, I think, in our industry, and it's all very, very premium stuff. So that picture there is double, double oat, an extension off of double oat, which we've had in the market for a number of years now, and it has been a great success and continues to be. So we really focus on premium, focusing on flavors and convenience. There's a new mix. And of course, Jack and Coke all fit the convenience consumer movement that's out there that we have to go with, and we think we can be really successful. And then Old Forester's Main Street series, Campbell talked a little bit about that, but that has also been a great success in our tequilas, which need help.

Our tequilas have not performed very well in the last few years. Innovations in the Cristalino space for both El Jimador and Herradura, I think, can be successful, and we're excited to get those out. But then the most important thing within our portfolio, I know you all know, is to keep Jack Daniel's healthy and growing. and it's been challenging. We have developed an entire new campaign. Mark Bacon and his team have developed a fantastic campaign. And I think most of you have probably seen this, but I love it so much that I think it's worth spending 30 seconds taking a look.

[Presentation]

Lawson Whiting

So That's What Makes Jack, Jack. I just – I love the tagline, I love taking what sort of the fundamentals of the Jack Daniel's brand and Lynchburg and some of those cues and making it a little bit more modern and bringing music into it. So I think we've gotten on to a really good path with the brand, and it takes a while. These things – it takes a while to turn around, but I feel confident that we have – we got the thing on the right track. So that's within the portfolio bucket, geography. So we continue to see a tremendous amount of

potential in our geographic expansion in terms of going – controlling our distribution and going direct to the markets, we've opened up both Italy and Japan over the last year or so.

And those are markets that not many people are investing in these days. But we see particularly like in Italy, Gin Mare is a dominant brand in that market. We see real big potential there. And same for Jack Daniel's in Japan, which is a really big American whiskey market, very, very premium. And so there's good things to be had there. We don't often talk about geographic expansion in the U.S. business. But you can see here, and you've heard earlier, we made some very, very significant moves in the U.S. distribution system over the last – really just the last few months. Started with Jeremy Shepherd working on this 9 or 10 months ago. Michael took over the U.S. business with Robinson and between the 2 of them put this thing over the line. And these are big changes. Probably, if you're not in the business, you may not appreciate how big these changes are.

And while it's 14 states, it's California, it's New York and it's Texas. So 3 really, really big states for us. We're making the changes. It's all happening right now. But we feel really good about our new partners. And some exciting stuff to go. So we expect to get an acceleration in our U.S. business very shortly from all these very important changes. But we are controlling the controllables, making the changes that we can. Now people. Obviously, this has been a tough year for some of the employees of Brown-Forman. So – but we recognize the environment is so competitive. We need to evolve. We need to evolve how we think.

We need to evolve how we work and how we lead. So in January, we announced a global initiative where we had a workforce reduction of about 12% of our – 12% of the global workforce. Not an easy thing to do and is much larger than anything Brown-Forman has ever done in the past. but we need the flexibility. Honestly, we needed to take some costs

out of the system, but we also need the ability to reallocate resources to better growing markets. And so we're going to do that. A tough decision overall, but I think is the right – I know it is the right thing going forward. So the other big change within that initiative was finally getting – exiting out of the wood business or the barrel making business. So we got out of the sawmill business or we had been getting out slowly over the previous few years.

We sold the Jack Daniel's cooperage, which was down in Alabama about a year ago. And then most recently, we closed the cooperage here out by the airport just towards the end of the fiscal year. So once again, decisions, I would call those bold decisions. A lot of people thought owning our own barrels or making our own barrels was just absolutely core to who we are. I mean there would have been a period of time, probably more like 30, 40, 50 years ago, but when there wasn't – we didn't – there was no one that could have made the barrels to the scale that we needed. So we got into the business because we needed to. The reality is we found a partner who's much bigger, much more cost efficient and will help us improve our margins. Again, we are very focused on improving our gross margin.

The biggest reason it had a decline in the last few years has been wood, has been barrels. And so we made some tough decisions there. They were not made lightly, but they were grounded in our long-term commitment to a stronger, more sustainable future. Now core values, and this is something we get kind of sensitive as somebody starts to challenge has all these changes changed the core values of Brown-Forman. And I can tell you right now, the core of Brown-Forman has not changed. Our core values, care for our people and our commitment to doing the right thing. And I can tell you right now, as long as I am standing here on this stage, our core values are not going to change.

Now investment. That's the other big bucket or the fourth bucket on our strategic frame-

work. Look, these really haven't changed honestly in a very long time. So the first priority is always to invest in our business, and we always do that through capital expenditures, through building our inventories and things like that. We advanced our portfolio ambitions. We've done 2 fairly large acquisitions in the last few years. We're taking a little bit of a break on that now, but we believe that, that was the right thing to do once again for the long-term benefit of the company. With share repurchases and returning – or once we finish with those, we're going to continue to return the balance to shareholders, whether it be through share buybacks, whether we do special dividends or the continuing growth of our regular dividend really reflects the confidence that we have in this business going forward.

And we are a proud dividend aristocrat. And once again, as long as I'm standing on this stage, I can promise you, we continue to work to ensure that we will remain a dividend aristocrat far into the future. So look, we're not just investing or managing for a quarter. We're managing for generations. We know that. We're going to continue to take bold actions and use this framework as our guide to continue to grow the business. As I said several times today, the market is very difficult right now, more difficult than it's been at any time in my career, but I believe we have the right people and the right teams and the right brands.

So Back to New York City. When times are tough and the external world continues to throw challenges your way, you've got to react. You've got to control the controllables. We must continue to believe that the best chapters for Brown-Forman are yet to come. We're clear about the challenges. We're confident in our path. I am very, very confident in our people, and we're committed to delivering value to shareholders who place their trust in us. So Owsley, the lessons learned from 25 years ago, his challenge was to remain laser-focused on the controllables, make sure that you are fixing and driving everything that's under your control, deliver on your commitment to nothing better in the market

and never forget that we still own the greatest spirits brand in the world. Thank you.

Copyright © 2025, S&P Global Market Intelligence. All rights reserved