

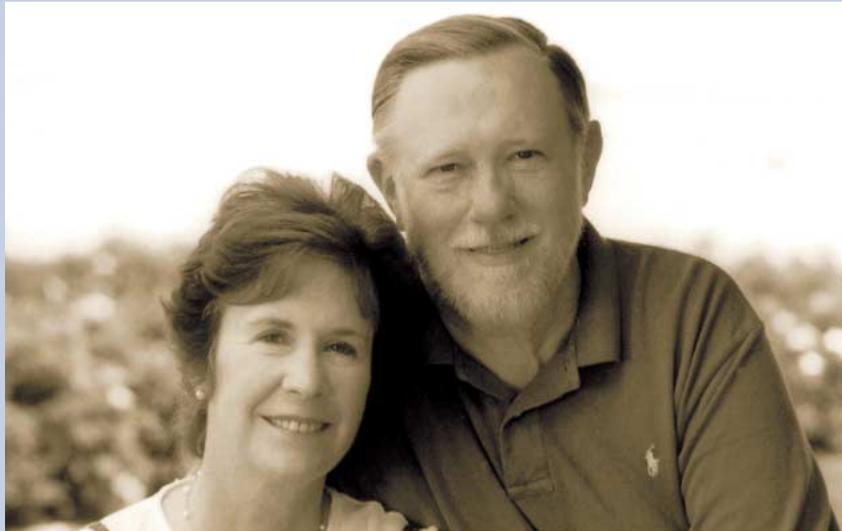
# ADOBE HOLDS ITS BREATH

**A**dobe's period of prosperity and calm was horribly interrupted on May 26, 1992, when cofounder Chuck Geschke was kidnapped from the parking lot of the Charleston Road offices. Spurred by media reports of Adobe's corporate and Geschke's personal financial success, two men who claimed to have ties to terrorist organizations held Geschke bound and blindfolded for five days in exchange for \$650,000.

During his incarceration, few people outside Geschke's family and local and federal authorities knew what had happened. John Warnock was the first person Geschke's wife Nan informed. She feared that Warnock would suffer a similar fate, but it was more than that: The two men and their families are extremely close, and the Warnocks formed a tight circle around the Geschkes for the duration of the ordeal.

After the FBI eliminated the possibility that the kidnapers had come from within Adobe, Warnock informed six members of the executive team, who were sworn to secrecy lest any leaks jeopardize the negotiations with the kidnapers. The company had to appear as if it were business as usual. Adobe general counsel Colleen Pouliot had to remind anyone who knew about the kidnapping that they could not trade stock in case it was perceived as insider information. "That part was very surreal," recalls Pouliot. "It was just a horrible time. You had to act as if everything was fine, but all the time worrying if he was OK."

"John was worried and preoccupied but he knew he couldn't show it, so he kept his calendar but stayed close to the phone," remembers Janice Coley, Geschke's assistant and one of the first to know that something was wrong when Geschke didn't appear at the office.



Nan and Chuck Geschke

*"You can't let people  
take your life away."*

— Chuck Geschke

The FBI rescued Geschke and arrested his kidnapers on Saturday, May 30, but the operation didn't go exactly as planned. "I thought we'd lost him," says Warnock, still critical of the FBI's handling of the recovery. Geschke returned home to find a welcoming committee composed of family, friends, and colleagues. "The first thing he did when he saw me was to apologize," says Coley. "It was typical Chuck. He was apologizing that I'd been inconvenienced by his kidnapping."

Taking care of his immediate family came first, but then only two days after his safe return Geschke appeared before the entire company. "He wanted to tell us what had happened so we wouldn't just

read about it in the newspapers," says Dick Sweet, who has worked with Geschke at Xerox PARC and Adobe. "As far as he was concerned, Adobe employees were his family, too." Adds Coley: "He knew that people needed to see him." It was an emotional gathering. "It was fabulous seeing him," says Pouliot. "We were bawling with a mixture of relief and concern and shock."

"I had to tell people. It's part of the company's history," Geschke says now. After his appearance at Adobe's offices, Geschke retreated to his vacation home for a month to recuperate, although he participated in board meetings by phone. He soon resumed his normal schedule.

While still deeply affected by the events of 1992, Geschke has willed his life to return to normal. He characteristically downplays the events of a decade ago. Friends say he is quieter and more aware of his surroundings than before the kidnapping, but Geschke has vowed to live his life on his terms. "You can't let people take your life away," he says.