Lt. Cmdr. Edward J. Derst, III, ‘74
President, Captain John Derst Baking Co., Savannah, Ga.
Charlie Company, Business Administration major
This business administration alumnus from Charlie Company graduated from The Citadel in 1974. In 1971, while still a cadet, he enlisted in the U. S. Coast Guard Reserve and worked his way through the ranks as a mustang officer. He retired as lieutenant commander after 20 years of service and began the second phase of his career in the family-owned Captain John Derst Baking Co. based in Savannah, Ga. Starting out as a trainee in production in 1974, he worked his way through every job to eventually become president of the company, which continues to flourish in its 139th year. In 2006, Derst Baking Co. merged with Flowers Foods, giving this beloved Southern bread more exposure around the country. When he is not busy tending his dough, Derst is an active volunteer. He has served in the past as a Citadel Foundation class chairman and Citadel Alumni Association president and currently enjoys spending several weeks each summer camping with Boy Scout troops at Philmont Ranch in Cimarron, N.M. He believes that sharing his time and talents generously with his college and community is, well, the yeast he can do!

Jack Katz, ’63
Founder/Owner of Panama Jack, Orlando, Fla.
November Company, Political Science major
In college, this former Citadel lineman knew how to put up a good defense against his opponent, but now Jack Katz spends his days blocking the sun. He is founder and CEO of Panama Jack, Inc, a familiar face for anyone bound for the beach. Katz never imagined that his summer job in 1974 would one day turn into an international lifestyle brand. He says when he started the company, he didn’t have a business plan; he just knew he wanted to “escape the everyday.” It’s his willingness to allow a beach mindset to pervade his hard work in the office that has led to the success of Panama Jack, Inc. When he started the company, Katz’s focus was on sun care products. Since that time, the company has expanded into beach wear, jewelry, eye wear, and head gear. Even though Panama Jack will outfit you for your next trip to the beach, don’t expect to find Katz there—unless you’re looking at a bottle of his sunscreen. Though his company markets “a lifestyle at half throttle,” there is very little that is laid back about Katz’s path to success.