

Real Estate Forum

An **ALM** Publication

OCTOBER 2017

THE 2017 CAREER ISSUE

FEATURING

2017'S 50 UNDER 40

MORE THAN MILLENNIALS

ABCS OF CRE: BUILDING YOUR BRAND

THE GIFT OF GUIDANCE

CRE CRACKS THE TECH CODE



REUBEN TWERSKY, 37
Vice President, Development
Pinnacle Cos.
Montclair, NJ

Reuben Twersky currently leads the operations for all of Pinnacle Cos. and manages the construction and development program for a pipeline of 1.5 million square feet of mixed-use developments, ranging from rehabilitation programs to \$100-million ground-

up projects. Over the course of his career, Twersky has been involved in several large notable projects all over the Tri-State area, totaling more than 9.5 million square feet. These include the redevelopment of the former Cherry Hill racetrack into a pedestrian-friendly village, now known as the Towne Place at Garden State Park. Experienced in office, residential, retail and mixed-use developments, Twersky is managing the construction of the MC Hotel in Montclair, NJ and Seymour Street in Montclair; a mixed-use redevelopment anchored by the historic Wellmont Theater.



BRIAN VELKY, 36
Managing Director
Situs RERC
Des Moines

Described as a thoughtful, caring, over-achiever in the best sense of the word, Brian Velky directs Situs RERC's international valuation management services engagements, and leads several of its key engagements. Velky directs fiduciary-related services for institu-

tional investors including three of the top five largest pension funds in the US, three of the top five life insurance companies, ranked by total assets, and three of the largest real estate fund managers in the world. He has been instrumental in helping to win several major valuation management and independent fiduciary bids for RERC, and currently oversees 3,000 properties valued at more than \$200 billion on behalf of clients. In his field, he is viewed as a top professional by many of the world's largest institutional commercial real estate clients.



KEN WELLAR, 36
Managing Partner
Rittenhouse Realty Advisors
Philadelphia

Ken Wellar has already had a successful commercial real estate career, which features close to \$1.5 billion in completed transactions and a stint as a VP with Marcus and Millichap, where he was one of the top 30 Brokers in the country. By the time he is 32,

he and partner Corey Lonberger launched a new commercial real estate brokerage. The venture, focusing on multifamily and student housing transactions, has since grown from four to 19 employees active in five states, and gained regional recognition. As head of the firm's sales activities, Wellar's dedication to building a team of hardworking and talented brokers is paying off with successful financial achievements. Rittenhouse Realty Advisors recently celebrated \$550 million in sold transactions since its opening in 2013. In 2014, Lonberger and Wellar launched a debt and equity component, Rittenhouse Capital Advisors, which has sourced over \$225 million in financing for commercial real estate assets.



BRIAN WHITMER, 38
Executive Director
Cushman & Wakefield
East Rutherford, NJ

During his 13-year tenure with Cushman & Wakefield, Brian Whitmer has completed more than 520 transactions with a cumulative value exceeding \$22.2 billion. This includes 75 investment sales totaling \$3.2 billion in 2016, setting a 26-year team record. As a

result, Whitmer was one of Cushman & Wakefield's top 100 producing brokers in 2016 and was awarded the highest-producing broker title within the firm. Newly promoted to executive director and lead for multifamily, retail and land transactions with the firm's Metropolitan Area Capital Markets Group, he is part of a 16-member team recognized as one of the Tri-State area's most successful real estate investment sales groups. A certified CCIM, Whitmer has served on various committees with ULI, NAIOP and ICSC and NMHC. Outside of the industry, he's involved with Project ALS, Habitat for Humanity, New Jersey Outdoor Alliance, Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Wounded Warrior Project.



JONATHAN WINTNER, 35
President & CEO
Winstar Properties
Los Angeles

Jonathan Wintner is a co-founder, president and chief executive officer of Winstar Properties, a Los Angeles-based real estate investment and management company. He spearheads the sourcing, negotiating and decision making for all the firm's acquisi-

tions and dispositions activity, as well as raising capital and overseeing daily operations. Since 2009, Wintner has led Winstar Properties to acquire more than 85 assets worth \$500 million, including 2,700-plus apartment units, while growing the team to over 40 employees. Wintner began his career at Meridian Capital Group, where he originated and closed in excess of 250 loans worth more than \$1 billion across a variety of product types, particularly multifamily.



SHAHIN YAZDI, 34
Principal & Managing Director
George Smith Partners
Los Angeles

Shahin Yazdi is the youngest principal and managing director in George Smith Partners' 25-year history. In just 10 years with the firm, Yazdi has arranged more than \$1 billion in financing for commercial real estate transactions throughout the US, an exceptional feat

for a young professional. Beyond his impressive transaction volume, Yazdi brings new, innovative ideas to the firm. For instance, soon after joining GSP he initiated the creation of the firm's advisory services arm to assist borrowers and lenders during the height of the recession. He quickly established himself as a leader and mentor to others on the team and, within eight years, he was promoted to Principal. Yazdi also began specializing in Downtown Los Angeles' Koreatown neighborhood prior to its current renaissance. Today, many of the new buildings in the thriving district exist partly thanks to financing that Yazdi has arranged. ♦

REAL ESTATE FORUM'S

FIFTY

under

40

2017

Commercial real estate used to be a niche field in terms of career trajectories. If it wasn't a family business, a young professional typically found him or herself in the industry by accident. Yet thanks to the growth of CRE-specific higher education programs, the discipline has become a leading career choice.

And thank goodness for that, since it's attracted some of the best and brightest talent of the latest generation. This was evidenced in the hundreds of nominations we received for REAL ESTATE FORUM's most recent "50 Under 40" feature. These remarkable, high-achieving and innovative young professionals made their marks in various ways, from closing billions of dollars' worth of transactions to creating products that promise to alter the way we do business.

The finalists also exhibited a unifying commitment to professional growth, be it their own or that of others, through mentoring students and younger colleagues or focusing on clients' individual needs. In addition to earning reputations for intelligence, diligence and client dedication, many of the candidates exhibited an uncommon drive in caring about humanitarian causes. One rode a bicycle cross country to raise money for lung cancer research, another presides over one of the largest NGOs promoting literacy in India and one even rappelled the Omni Building in Nashville for Big Brothers Big Sisters.

The diverse strengths and accomplishments demonstrated by the young women and men who made it into this year's roster provide an encouraging glimpse into the future of the industry. Turn the page to see which rising stars made the list—*Betsy Kim*