



— THE — ANN ARBOR NEWS

25-year-old makes mark, no apologies

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Maybe it's his distinguished-sounding name.

Or his perfectly coifed hair.

Or the fact that he seems to pop up everywhere - from community fundraisers to Main Street Area Association events to city council meetings - with an opinion and plan of action.

Whatever it is, Newcombe Clark has made his mark on Ann Arbor - and he's only 25.

Recently named junior partner in Bluestone Realty Advisors and to Crain's Detroit Business' "20 in their 20s" list, Clark has become a small tornado in the world of Washtenaw County commercial real estate and Ann Arbor area business circles.

"This job allows me the opportunity to have a hand in a lot of different aspects of the community," said Clark, who's helped bring businesses like American Apparel and the new Cafe Japon - which will take the place of Blimpie's on East Liberty Street - to town.

"I meet people who I'd never get a chance to know otherwise at this age."

Clark is most interesting not because of the real estate deals he's done - admittedly, his portfolio of large transactions is limited - but because of things like his engineering background, his Japanese skills, his extensive world travel and his love of sailing and writing plays and cartoons.

And most of all, because of how he's used networking, persistence and community involvement to establish a name for himself at such an early age. That's one lesson business people of all ages could use.

Like a couple of the young Realtors I wrote about in Sunday's Ann Arbor News, real estate was essentially Clark's first and only career. He's among a small group of commercial real estate agents and brokers under 30 that also includes people like Kathleen Baran and Jason Costello at Amvest Property Management and developer Stewart Beal.

A native of Ann Arbor who was raised by his mother, Clark worked at Red Hawk Bar & Grill beginning at the age of 13 all the way through college.

At 19, between his freshman and sophomore year at the University of Michigan, Clark got into real estate by working for his former karate instructor Jeff Hauptman at Swisher Commercial. At the time, he had spiked blond hair, which had to go in favor of a more sophisticated style.

Job options ranging from a position with a Japanese TV station to an engineering job with General Motors Corp. appeared after Clark finished his bachelor's degrees in mechanical engineering and Japanese language and culture in 2003.

Instead, he stayed with real estate, following Hauptman when he left Swisher to create Oxford Commercial.

"I was so young and had this opportunity to help build a company from the ground up," Clark said. "The money was better than the starting salary for an (engineering) job would be ... I decided that I never want to work for anyone but myself."

Clark admits he may have ruffled some feathers along the way with his driven, goal-focused work style. His Bluestone boss, real estate veteran Neal Warling, said Clark "has done just a phenomenal job getting himself established. He is a target, if you will, because he is so hard-working and puts himself out there."

Clark makes no apologies for being aggressive, for trumpeting his achievements or for mistakes made because of his youth. He likes his job, enjoys people and cares about Ann Arbor.

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