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## Trump working to make dad's Wallflower bloom again

By JASON TURCOTTE

Donald J. Trump, Jr. had a father who made time for his children on his own terms, by exposing them to job sites at some of the world's most luxurious projects at an early age.

He wasn't raised by the conventional type of father who played catch with his son in the backyard, but Trump was, however, groomed for the big leagues of real estate.

As executive vice president of The Trump Organization, Don Jr. works to expand his father's real estate brand through retail, residential, commercial, hospitality and resort projects worldwide. He oversees new project acquisition and development in the U.S. and abroad, while maintaining the company's 70-project portfolio. From construction to design, marketing, project analysis and sales/leasing, Trump has his hands in all aspects of the business.

"Normally it's very difficult to be the proverbial Jack of all trades," Trump said. "But I think that's something we do well."

Trump officially joined his father's company in 2001 after

*"As these markets wax and wane, I don't want to be in a situation where we have one type of tenant."*

— DON TRUMP

taking a year off to live in Colorado after finishing his Bachelor's degree in finance and real estate at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. As early as 13 years of age, he was working for his father's brand on a much smaller scale, landscaping and clearing boats at his Atlantic City casinos.

With his level of childhood exposure to the business, there was never any hesitation in his desire to pursue a career in real estate.

"I always knew," Trump said. "It's like when someone grows up with a parent who's an athlete, they tend to gravitate toward that. They get a natural affinity for it."

Trump's prowess in the commercial arena has certainly been put under the spotlight since he took over leasing at the building his father was credited with turning from an unwanted Wallflower to one of the most "cherished" buildings downtown.

Trump senior famously bought 40 Wall for just over \$1 million in the late 90s and, as brokers remember it, "used his magic touch" to make the building a first class operation.

Working with a team from CB Richard Ellis led by Brad Gerla and Adam Foster, Trump Jr. last month announced some 70,000 s/f feet of leasing deals inked at the 70-story tower this spring and reported plans to create five pre-built offices on the 17th floor as a means to fill more of the roughly 200,000 s/f vacancy at the building.

He expects to make announcements soon regarding the lease of the 25,000 s/f banking mall space that's lain empty for 15 years, as well as a remaining 25,000 s/f of ground floor retail.

In all, Trump has spearheaded approximately 350,000 s/f of

deals at 40 Wall since taking over the project a year ago — a figure he said accounts for 10% of downtown's lease deals over that time period.

Trump said creating a diverse roster of tenants that includes law firms, nonprofits and publishing companies has helped insulate the Trump commercial portfolio through future down cycles.

"As these markets wax and wane I don't want to be in a situation where we have one type of tenant," Trump said.

This multidisciplinary theme is certainly one that runs through Trump's career to date.

After officially joining the Trump Organization, his first project involved the redevelopment of the West Side Yards, which encompassed 17 buildings. Creating a community within a community, the assignment gave him ground-up development experience of condominium and rental towers, as well as retail.

"It was a great way to get a lot of construction experience. It was a great way to rack up a lot of experience in a short period of time," said Trump, who followed up that assignment by leading the luxury condo conversion known as Trump Park Avenue, at age 26.

"The great thing about working here and proving to my father I could do these things at a very early age, is that I get to work with a lot of cool projects."

Those projects include the 90-story Trump International Hotel & Tower, in Chicago; the 64-story Trump International Hotel & Tower in Las Vegas; and the 46-story Trump SoHo. He's also working with his father on the construction, planning, sales, marketing and management of a 1,400-acre golf resort development along Scotland's northeast coastline, a breathtaking property that includes sand dunes 150 feet from the ocean.

Trump said golf course acquisitions have been a major part of the company's post-economic downturn strategy. Since new development makes little sense in today's market, he believes the smart opportunities lie in turning existing projects into high-performing assets through repositioning and re-branding.

And today The Trump Organization is more selective about the level of equity risk it takes on, by partnering with investors on projects that simply use the Trump brand (an example being Trump SoHo) without having their skin in the game, so to speak.

Trump played a role in the design process of the hotel/condominium project that towers above neighboring SoHo properties and added that in choosing a project to lend the Trump name,



Trump is heading up the leasing effort at 40 Wall while keeping his eye on global branding.

location and amenities must be first-rate.

"A major part of my job is to protect that brand at all costs," he said.

By protecting that brand, The Trump Organization has handled the economic recession with aplomb. While no high-end developers went "gangbuster" over the last few years, Trump says the company has outperformed competitors, and now there's evidence that markets are returning to some semblance of normalcy thanks to renewed interest from Asian and Latin American investors.

With much of his experience concentrated in the company's "bread and butter," the development of ultra luxurious condominiums, Trump's market insight also plays out on screen, serving as an active advisor to NBC shows "The Apprentice" and "The Celebrity Apprentice."

What he enjoys most about this role is having the tables turned and being able to dole out criticism with his father in the boardroom rather than being on the receiving end of it. And those heated boardroom moments include much more hilarity and outrageousness than viewers are privy to after edits.

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## Trump Wallflower

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"Some of the boardrooms can go on for two or three hours when someone gets fired. We've seen a lot of funny and outlandish things happen in there that are left on the cutting room floor," Trump said.

Aside from real estate, Trump's active in his brother's nonprofit group the Eric Trump Foundation, which benefits St. Jude's Children's Hospital, but his pet project is Operation Smile.

Active in the organization for nearly a decade and currently serving on its board, Trump supports Smile's mission of providing pro bono medical attention to children suffering from facial deformities. Operation Smile sends a team of doctors and nurses to poverty-stricken nations around the globe to give these children a chance at a normal life. While the photos are moving, nothing has touched him more than a trip to Nicaragua where he witnessed the remarkable results of the surgery first-hand.

Trump, 32, is married with two children. He credits his wife with being an "amazing" mother who helps him balance his professional and family life.

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