



4711 Golf Rd.
Ste 705
Skokie, IL 60076
847.679.7889
info@kmgprivatewealth.com
www.kmgprivatewealth.com

Jim Koliatsis, CFP®
Ryan W. McCain, CFP®
Greg Tong
Thomas Muscarella

4711 Golf Rd.
Ste 705
Skokie, IL 60076



CLIENT SPOTLIGHT:
RpV Realty and its owners,
Erik Sachs and Mark Masino.

Our client profile in this issue of the KMG newsletter is Erik Sachs and Mark Masino.

Erik Sachs & Mark Masino

Erik Sachs and Mark Masino formed a bond in eighth grade that has taken them places they never imagined.

The two friends are business partners with Chicago-based RpV Realty, a real estate firm that Erik founded in 2001. One of his first clients was his former classmate Masino, whom he helped buy his first condo. When the business started growing two years later, the two friends started talking and decided to team up as business partners.

"The residential market was different back then," Erik says. "The market was hot. It was a good time to buy. We decided that this worked for both of us, so we decided to partner on a company."

The two met in when they attended middle school in Naperville, Ill. Erik, a New York native, had just moved to the area from St. Louis due to his father's marketing position with General Motors.

Mark could relate to Erik's journey. Due to his father's job in research, Mark, who was born in Canada, had stops in Oklahoma, West Virginia and Wisconsin, before his family settled in Naperville a year before Erik arrived.



The friends moved on to Waubonsie Valley High School in Aurora, Ill., where they maintained their close friendship. They both played on the school's baseball and football teams. "Sports were a big part of our high school experience," Mark says.

After high school, Erik went to college at the University of Illinois, where he studied civil engineering for 2 ½ years, before earning a degree in finance. Mark also attended a Big Ten school, Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind., where he studied communications.

After graduating from their respective schools in 1997, Mark went to work for a public relations agency, working with major clients such as Campbell's Soup, Whirlpool Corp. and even the Got Milk? campaign.

Erik left the area for a sales job, before moving back to Chicago to be closer to family.



"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."

– Yogi Berra



Eric Sachs & Mark Masino (cont.)



He worked fulltime for a construction management firm, while at the same time earning his brokerage license. Soon he started helping friends buy and sell real estate. He worked two jobs before he could make real estate his fulltime vocation in 2001. Two years later, Mark joined Erik as his partner.

"We had talked for years about becoming business partners in some business venture," Erik says. "We talked about everything from opening a sandwich restaurant to a bar. "Thank goodness we didn't open a bar," he adds, laughing.

Erik caught the real estate bug when he started buying and selling two flat buildings. I've always had an interest in real estate and construction," he says. "In my first job, I was selling to an architect. I decided I was on the wrong side of the table. I wanted to be the guy being sold to, and not the guy doing the selling. It's become a passion of mine."

Mark's interest started much earlier. In high school, he worked for the developer who built his family's home in Naperville. "My itch was amplified when I bought my first place," he says. "I was fascinated in the different components of real estate, and decided I wanted to continue down that path."

RpV Realty has changed its focus over the past decade.

"In 2003 we were doing a lot more development," says Erik. "In the 2007 downturn that model didn't work anymore. We were fighting, scratching and clawing. We're resilient guys. You have to be as small business owners."

The business partners sat down to find ways to create revenue. For three years, they acquired foreclosures that they flipped into rental properties. "In hindsight, our timing was really good," Erik says. "We were able to stay in business, instead of going out of business. Now we're on the back end of it. We can get back to what we're good at, which is to help people buy and sell real estate."

Another part of their business is educating investors, renters and first-time buyers. "We can bring our market knowledge and experience to help people make the right decisions and not the wrong ones," Erik says.

One of the biggest changes has taken place within the 20-something buyer. Those people used to be prime prospects for home buying. But with the impact of the economy, many of those people are either renting or moving back home with mom and dad.

"It's changed the way we do business," Mark says. "We used to target that age as first-time buyers. But these days, they aren't 25 years old. They're in their 30s. That may change again at some point."

Erik adds: "Buyers want to get the same deal that their friends got two years ago. Those deals are gone. Many people are on the sidelines because they can't come to grips with the fact that they can't get that deal."



It will be another two years before they get back into the market. There's always a lag when it comes to buyers. Everyone will rent or buy at some point. We just have to get them out of their parents' home."

When they're not working, Erik and Mark enjoy cheering on the Chicago Bears and playing golf. They also root for their alma maters, despite some lean years on the football field. "Illinois and Indiana aren't exactly football powerhouses," Erik says. "There hasn't been much for either of us to brag about lately."

Mostly, they enjoy time with family. Erik is married to his wife, Amy; the couple have three boys - C.J., 4, Sean, 2 1/2, and six-month-old Christian. Mark and his wife, Kelley, have a 4-year-old daughter, Lila.

Meanwhile, they keep plugging away at growing their company. While 90 percent of their business comes from referrals and repeat clients, one of their immediate goals is to increase RpV's marketing efforts.

Carving a career in real estate isn't for everyone, but the two friends say they're in it for the long haul.

Securities and Financial Planning offered through LPL Financial, a Registered Investment Advisor. Member FINRA/SIPC.

"We spend as much time together as we do with our wives," Mark says. "You have to have thick skin to be business partners with a good friend. You hear horror stories of partnerships ending badly. In this business you deal with plenty of ups and downs. We live for the fight."

Erik agrees.

"We're connected," he says. "It's not always easy. There are great days, and there are days when we're yelling at each other, but we hug it out and move on. At the end of the day we're still here, cranking it out."

