

Sunday, May 21, 2017

[Home](#) / [Business](#)

Kevin Harry Huchingson

Having spent his youth on the tennis court, Kevin Huchingson learned the right time to make a play.

By [Sean Clancy](#)



Photo By [Stephen B. Thornton](#)

Silence.

Kevin Huchingson, president and chief executive officer of the Arkansas branch of Seattle-based commercial real estate giant Colliers International, is searching for an answer, but so far there is just this silence.

Outside his corner office on the fifth floor of 1 Allied Drive, the sky looks ready to drop a spring shower and the Arkansas River flows along.

Huchingson drums his fingers on a table in his spacious, sparsely decorated office and fidgets a bit. His desk is on the other side of the room, but he does most of his work at a treadmill, where his computer is mounted, and that faces a view of the Little Rock skyline just downriver. On the walls are framed photos of his four daughters.

Still no answer to the question "What are your strengths?"

Huchingson's are many. He wouldn't have this office or lead the 100 or so Colliers employees in Little Rock and Rogers if he didn't possess the skills and knowledge to guide the company through the choppy waters of commercial real estate. He has an impressive list of professional accomplishments that includes being in the top 10 percent of Colliers brokers and the third highest-performing U.S. Colliers broker in 2013.

He's a co-founder of the CapRocq Real Estate Fund LP, a group of mostly Arkansas-based real estate investors; a past president of the Arkansas chapter of the Society of Industrial & Office Realtors; and a member of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's College of Business Advisory Board. He's also on the Baptist Health Foundation's board of trustees.

There's more.

But there's also this: Huchingson is the antithesis of the blustery CEO. His voice isn't much above a whisper. He's happy to give credit to others but ask him to tout his attributes and he clams up. Silence.

Here's someone, though, who has plenty to say about Huchingson.

Dickson Flake, 78, is the Flake in Barnes, Quinn, Flake & Anderson, the Little Rock real estate firm founded in 1971 that would eventually become an independent Colliers office in 2004. It was he who hired Huchingson out of graduate school at UALR's College of Business in 1993.

"It was a combination of aggressiveness and humility," says Flake when asked what first struck him about Huchingson. "That's a rare combination. His personality is one of humility, but his responsiveness and business planning is a model for aggressive implementation. I saw so much in him, I made sure he wouldn't want to leave."

MATCH POINT

Huchingson grew up in the Colony West area of Little Rock with his younger sister, Kimberly. Dad Harry, a former banker who became a partner in a company called Business Machine Systems, and mom Jeanelle, a homemaker, were tennis buffs, and both Kevin and Kimberly were swinging rackets at a young age.

"When I was probably 6 or 7, my Mom and I would go down to the park where we lived in Colony West and she'd throw balls at me every day," says Huchingson, a fan of the quiet and intense Swedish legend Bjorn Borg. "I just fell in love with tennis and played a lot."

It was a family pursuit.

"I played for hours every day, and in the summers we traveled to tournaments," Huchingson says. "My dad was entrepreneurial. He owned his own company and could set his own hours and he was always there, watching our matches. My parents really sacrificed so that we could play at a competitive level."

By his sophomore year in high school, the family moved to a house on Foxcroft Road, within walking distance of the Little Rock Racquet Club.

After graduating from Hall High School, Huchingson attended Centenary College of Louisiana in Shreveport, where he played on the tennis team and pursued a degree in business. Over the summers, he returned home and would travel to places like Batesville and Stuttgart, small towns with no local pro, and give tennis lessons to earn a little spending money. It's a nascent version of what he would do in real estate — buying commercial properties in secondary markets, fixing them up and leasing or selling them.

It was during graduate school that he began dating Dianna, a friend of his sister's. They were married in 1994 and have four teenage daughters who are more likely to be found on the soccer pitch or in a deer stand than a tennis court, which is just fine with Dad.

LOCATION, LOCATION,

LOCATION

Commercial real estate wasn't exactly on Huchingson's radar during grad school. He was leaning toward life as a stockbroker, but, at the urging of an instructor, he interviewed at Barnes, Quinn, Flake & Anderson.

It was a good move.

"Once I started, I realized that I loved it and didn't want to do anything else," Huchingson says. "Every day is different. You're out a lot and you see different markets and you're meeting different people."

He spent his early years pretty much following Flake around.

"I didn't know much about real estate when I started, and I was really lucky to come in and work for Dickson. He was an incredible mentor and a great teacher," Huchingson says.

Flake recalls an early sign that his new charge was up for the challenge.

"Within his first 18 months, totally on his own, Kevin developed a relationship with an experienced local industrial developer. As a result of his time and a personal interest in that person, he generated business opportunities. That was a demonstration of this low-key confidence that he has, how he endears himself to his clients. Trust is paramount, and he generates that trust."

By 2002, Huchingson was the firm's CEO and president, guiding it through mergers with IBR Real Estate and Lane Real Estate Services and the partnership with Colliers. In 2016, the firm managed

Sunday, May 21, 2017

[Home](#) / [Business](#)

15.2 million square feet of commercial property with \$300 million in total sales and over \$175 million in leases.

It may all seem overwhelming, but not to the unflappable Huchingson.

“Kevin is probably the easiest guy I know to work with,” says client Jason LaFrance.

Huchingson and his team helped broker the real estate side of the LaFrance family’s 2012 sale of their USA Drug pharmacies to Walgreens. “Kevin is very soft spoken, but he’s probably the smartest guy I know when it comes to real estate. He’s also the most trustworthy person I know. I think it’s rare, in business, that you see somebody like Kevin.”

“He’s constantly thinking about and serving others,” says developer Rick Ferguson, a longtime friend, neighbor and client. “He’s a servant-leader. He doesn’t want to be at the front of the room with a microphone, but he’s got a beautiful heart.”

The Arkansas Colliers office has interests beyond the Natural State’s borders, reaching properties across the southeast as well as Nebraska, Texas, Oklahoma and beyond. Thus, Huchingson’s work often has him on the road and away from Dianna and their daughters.

FAMILY MATTERS

“My parents were a great example to what, hopefully, I’ve tried to demonstrate to my kids,” he says. “I try not to be gone too much from them, and when I am gone, when I can, I’ll have them tag along. We probably wear them out in terms of wanting to be with them as much as we can.”

On a recent business trip to Los Angeles, for example, Dianna and 13-year-old Julia went with him, and the trio made a long weekend of it, spying actor Henry Winkler at a Santa Monica restaurant and a filming of the HBO series *Ballers* at their hotel.

He also makes it a point to have lunch once a week with his girls, who attend Little Rock Christian Academy. And with his oldest daughter about to graduate and leave for college, Kevin and Dianna are trying to savor every moment.

“Our window is closing,” he says. “She’ll be leaving and we’re trying to cram in as much as we can. This summer, we’ll be traveling a good bit.”

His daughters may not have followed him onto the tennis court, but they’ve picked up on Huchingson’s hunting hobby, to the point that their father rarely even brings a weapon along anymore.

“The Huchingson girls are known as some of the most deadly hunters in the state,” LaFrance says. “There’s really no point in him bringing a gun.”

He hunts duck, turkey and pheasant, but “my favorite is deer hunting,” says Huchingson.

It's being with family, though, not harvesting whitetails, that makes time in the woods special for him. "You're in a [stand] with your girls and you get that time with them where there are no distractions. You're dealing with nature and not watching Netflix."

LaFrance tells about the annual pheasant hunts for Colliers clients and families where the youth hunts planned by Huchingson are more fun than the grown-up outings.

"It's a way better hunt," LaFrance says with a laugh. "There are a lot more birds, there's more going on. The adults wish they could attend the youth hunt, but that's just how it goes with Kevin. He wants the kids to have so much fun."

Huchingson has also introduced some of Ferguson's seven children to hunting.

"He's so unselfish," says Ferguson, whose family often travels with the Huchingsons on ski trips to Colorado, the California wine country and resorts in Mexico. "He's just a real giving man."

For Ferguson, his friend's devotion to family and faith are paramount. Huchingson attends Fellowship Bible Church.

"Without question, the most important things in his life are his family and his relationship to Christ. In business, he's off-the-chart successful, but what I admire about him most is what a fabulous father he is. Being his next-door neighbor for several years, I've seen that firsthand."

STRENGTH

The work at Colliers continues, of course. The firm has developed 55 acres around Bass Pro Shop and The Outlets of Little Rock, with recognizable retailers and restaurants leasing spaces there and more to come. The company also continues to manage its properties across the state and the United States and grow its Cap-Rocq investment arm.

"We will continue to expand and build on the investment platform while we're still seeing opportunities," Huchingson says. "There are a lot of good things going on."

And now, back to that question.

What are your strengths?

Huchingson is routinely described as humble, a man much more at ease hanging with his family than talking about himself, someone who handles millions of dollars in real estate deals but is perfectly happy away from the limelight.

"I think I have a good heart," he finally says. "I may not always be right, but I'm going to share advice that I think is truly best for the client."