

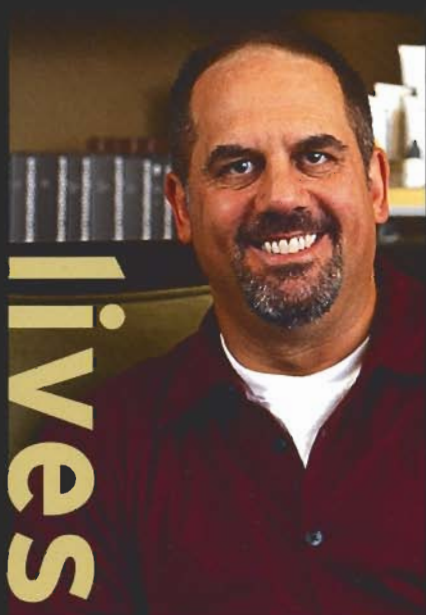
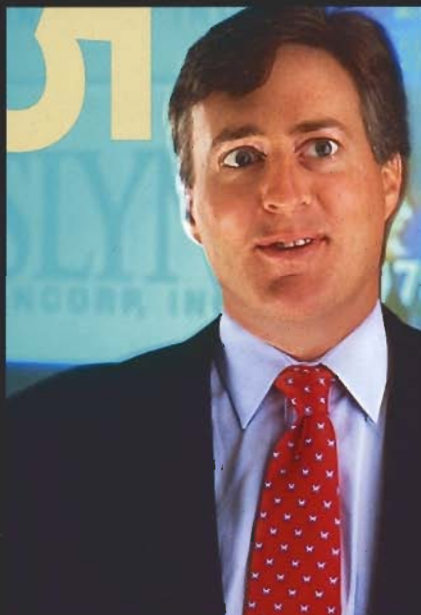
Hofstra Law Report

THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE

FALL 2004



**Doing it
All...**
An Inside Look at
In-House Counsel:
Executive
Entrepreneur
Manager
Visionary
Advisor



centerpiece in legal education, Hofstra has changed since Michael studied Contracts with Professor Resnick. At the time, Hofstra did not yet offer the type of transactional skills courses offered today. There was no course in “Legal Interviewing, Counseling and Negotiation,” no “Real Estate Negotiation Techniques” or “Business Drafting,” no “Complex Corporate Transactions Seminar.”

While it might have been nice to have had those options, Michael has no regrets. Having succeeded in two careers – at Gibbons, Del Deo and now at Reliant – he is grateful. “I wouldn’t trade places with anybody. I look forward to coming to work every day.”

Andrew Nathan '81



*President and CEO
Meritage Properties, LLC.*

When Andrew Nathan entered Hofstra Law School in 1978, he had no intention of actually practicing law: “I wanted the training and perspective that law school

offered, I was interested in the education,” he said.

But then he spent time with a few of Hofstra’s storied professors, among them Malachy Mahon, John Gregory, Aaron Twersky and Mitchell Ganz.

“They lit a fire inside me that frankly had never been lit before, not even as an undergraduate,” he recalls fondly. “It was a real breakthrough for me, from saying I’m going to law school to get an education to saying, hey, I want to be a lawyer.”

Today, Andy states unequivocally, “I became a practicing lawyer because of the professors at Hofstra. That experience changed everything.”

After graduating in 1981, Andy joined the New York law firm of Schulte Roth & Zabel. “When they offered me a position, I jumped at it.” After a brief stint as a tax attorney, Nathan moved into the real estate syndications group, which he called “interdisciplinary training at its best.”

By working on syndication deals, Andy said he learned how to practice in a wide variety of legal fields – including corporate securities, tax and real estate law. “I couldn’t have picked a better area for my interests,” he said. The syndications practice allowed him to hone his business skills and deepen his understanding of various corporate

legal issues. He also found he had a natural ability to connect with business clients. “To survive in that world you have to have a real feel for what your clients are trying to do,” he said. “The legal process, in particular drafting and negotiation of documents, can’t be viewed as an end in itself, but rather as the means by which the business transaction both sides desire is brought to an efficient and mutually beneficial result. I am often surprised when lawyers don’t acknowledge that simple reality.”

Andy’s innate business acumen caught the eye of his chief client, Tishman Speyer Properties. One of the nation’s leading real estate operations, Tishman Speyer offered Andy a job in 1986. “It was a dream,” recalled Nathan. “Joining Tishman Speyer in a combined legal/business role gave me the opportunity to do everything I ever wanted to do.”

Though Nathan was on track to become a partner at Schulte Roth, and had always envisioned spending his career at the firm, he was prepared to change course. “I gave it a great deal of thought, as I really had come to love my role as a counselor. In the end though I realized this was unique position with a best in class organization.”

For the next 16 years, Andy was a key member of Tishman Speyer’s senior management, negotiating deals, overseeing transactions, reviewing contracts and managing litigations. He served at various times as General Counsel, Head of Eastern U.S. Acquisitions, and Chief Legal Officer. “Even as General Counsel and Chief Legal Officer, the role was always quasi-business,” he said. “I was responsible for the whole gamut of real estate activities. We retained outside counsel on every transaction, so my job was to coordinate and supervise the legal function, second seat the senior business person, manage risk from both a legal and business perspective and, ultimately, make certain the deal got done.”

Andy played an integral role in the firm’s acquisition of Rockefeller Center and the Chrysler Building, and he was deeply involved in the firm’s European expansion, including the development of the tallest building in continental Europe. In his last six years at Tishman Speyer, Andy participated in the development of over \$2 billion of international private equity real estate funds. Andy sat on the executive committee, the management committee and the investment committees of Tishman Speyer.

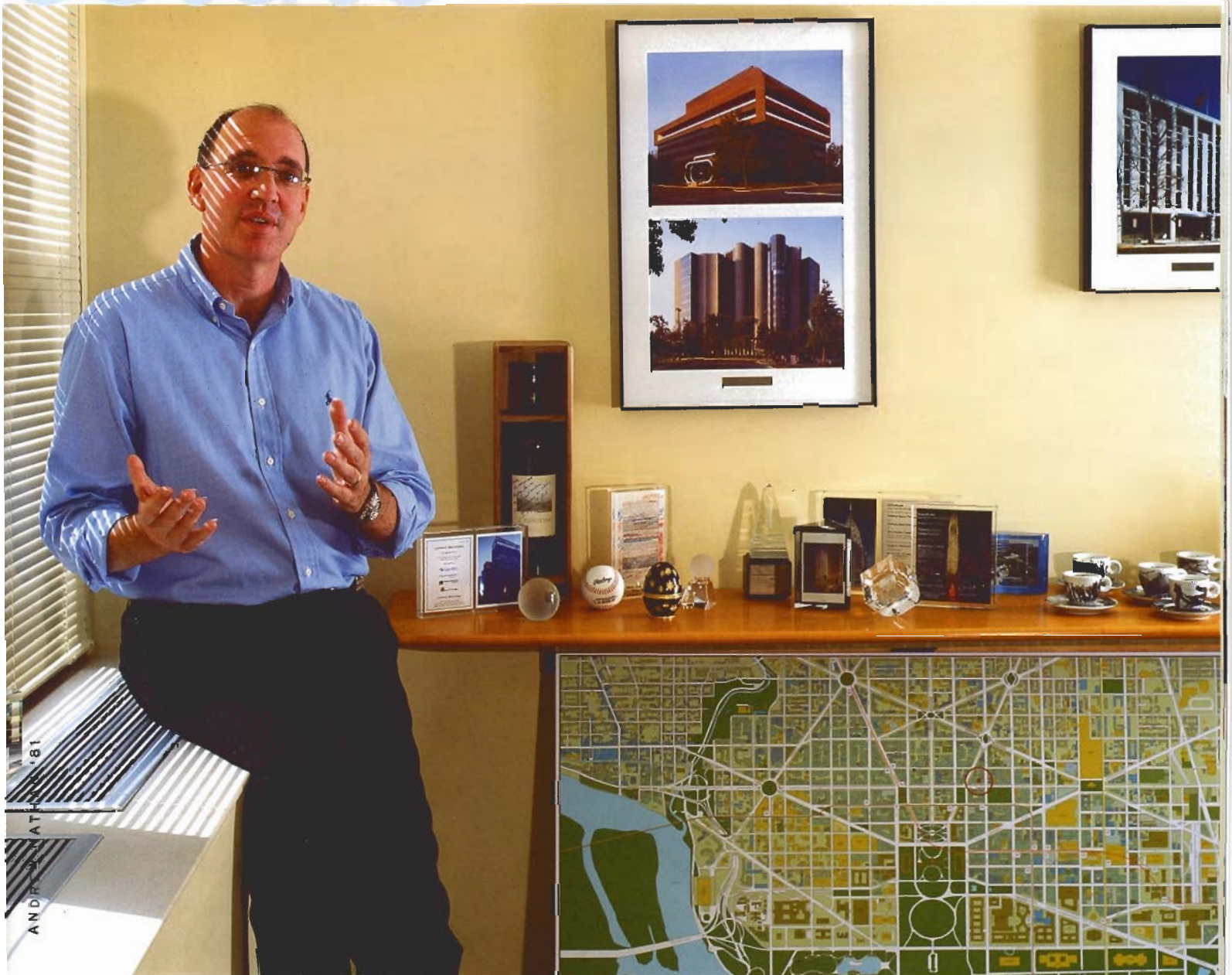
And though he still refers to his work at Tishman Speyer as a “dream job” Andy eventually found even that role a

bit too confining. "In the summer of 2002 I started to think about what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. And the choice was to continue in a wonderful job with an outstanding company, with absolutely no downside risk, or follow what I knew had always been my dream: to work for myself and have my own company."

In March 2003, Andy founded Meritage Properties, which now owns five properties along the east coast valued at more than \$100 million. "It's been a very rewarding and successful beginning," he said proudly. "I am profoundly appreciative for the support I have received from so many in the real estate business, including my colleagues at

Tishman Speyer." These days, he spends most of his time aggressively managing Meritage Properties' growing portfolio, and looking for new acquisitions. He also spends considerable time fundraising and speaking with his investors. And though his role is a bit different from his days at Tishman Speyer, his philosophy hasn't changed.

"To be successful in business or in law, you have to be able to manage relationships," he said. "That's really what it comes down to... I think I am most proud of my ability to build and maintain relationships, to be a person people turn to, someone people seem to genuinely enjoy working with."



ANDY MERITAGE '81