

JOURNAL PROFILE

Mike Kennedy

President
Commercial Texas



NICK SIMONITE

Commercial Texas President Mike Kennedy has been known to take newcomers into his company's board room and school them on Austin real estate. There, against a sprawling view of downtown Austin, he directs attention away from the window with a pointer stick that he holds up to a large satellite map of the entire metro area. Then begins Kennedy's lesson in Austin geography, topography and a spirited account of how local urban planning led to the Austin seen from his boardroom window.

Kennedy is a master at explaining a neighborhood's history — how and why it grew where it did — and is one of downtown's biggest proponents. The Rochester, N.Y., native got his first taste of Austin during a college trip from the University of St. Thomas in Houston. He hitchhiked the whole way. "Hey, peace and love was a real thing" in the early 1970s, he said.

And hitchhiking was a great way to get around back then. His longest thumb-driven jaunt: from Houston to Los Angeles, then to San Francisco and back to Houston.

When did you settle in Austin?

In 1985.

How did you earn your first dollar?

Caddying at Brook-Lea Country Club in Rochester, N.Y., where I grew up.

If you could time travel, where in time would you go or who would you want to meet?

I am very happy to be right here, right now.

What motivates you?

To be the best at helping a tenant in recognizing that their space and its use is a valuable asset to their business — then creating the optimal situation in the marketplace that's possible for them.

Dogs or cats?

Dogs.

What's your least favorite thing about Austin?

What's not to like?

Which celebrity would you most like to have as your neighbor?

I really don't think about stuff like that. At the end of the day they are just people who have a skill or talent that they have developed to a high level. So in that respect, I guess we are all sur-

rounded by undiscovered celebrities.

What kind of boss are you?

Certainly more patient — I listen more and am more supportive — than I have been in the past.

What was your first car, and what do you drive now?

My first car was a 1957 MGA. I drive a 2010 Lexus 250H hybrid now. Ironically, both have four cylinders and about the same horsepower — only 40 years apart.

Do you prefer Sunday mornings or Saturday nights?

Actually, Sunday mornings ... but I'm not skipping a Saturday night.

Do you have a guilty pleasure?

A bottle of expensive red wine. Although I don't feel so guilty about it anymore.

Any hobbies?

Golf, and reading about Austin and Galveston history. I also enjoy great plays at the Zach Theatre.

What do you listen to while driving?

Classic rock. My favorite? The Beatles.

■ Interview by Cody Lyon

WHAT OTHERS SAY



Carl Condon
Vice president
Commercial Texas

Mike believes strongly in his desire to see both businesses and individuals succeed. His passion, particularly when combined with his many strengths and abilities, makes him a leader in commercial real estate. He's creative, competitive, inquisitive and always thinking about things from another person's perspective. He loves a challenge and finding the very best solution.

Mike has an exhaustive and nuanced knowledge of the commercial real estate market in Austin, along with understanding its history and staying abreast of possible future developments. But what sets him apart is his ability to impart that knowledge to address the practical concerns of commercial tenants, his attention to detail, his passion for understanding and communicating what is best for his client, and his ability to make it happen. Mike guided us through a complicated process with short deadlines during a time of enormous stress.



David Gilliland
Managing partner
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