

My Story: Michael Dardick

Growing up in St. Louis in an **entrepreneurial**, middle-class family, Granite Properties CEO **Michael Dardick** picked up a dedicated work ethic at an early age. His first job: **mowing lawns** when he was about 11 or 12 (also known as a "landscape artist").



As the **fifth of five children**, he learned that **when you get knocked down, you get right back up**. (He probably also learned to grab a roll early or get stuck with just the green beans.) Education was a high priority in the family, too, he tells us. His dad missed out on college because he had to work during the Depression and then went to war. Michael was a jack of all trades early on: cutting lawns, babysitting, **black-topping driveways** (not at the same time, we hope), lifeguarding, and making lunches for the kids at summer camp. In high school, he worked at **UPS loading 18-wheelers** in temperatures reaching 135 degrees inside the trucks. "I enjoy work and find satisfaction in doing things," he tells us.



Michael (at the TREC Giving Gala in October with RBC Real Estate Capital Partners' **Brian Collyer** and Archon's **Will Munding**) tells us he didn't quite grasp what business truly meant, and his father encouraged him to **go into banking** to figure it all out. He landed in **Dallas** in the early '80s and found his calling when he rotated through the real estate division. After three years, a developer client hired him to be the finance guy and set up a regional office for one of the largest real estate **auction-marketing firms** in the country. That was great until the world changed in 1987, he says. Perfect timing: He landed a gig creating a **workout foreclosure group** and spent the next four years building up and closing down that division.



In '91, he partnered with a high net-worth, out-of-state family to form Granite. Since then, it's acquired or developed more than **20M SF** in CRE. The firm recently started the **12-story, 300k SF Class-A Granite Park IV** office tower and the **299-key Hilton Granite Park** hotel at the southeast corner of SH 121 and the Dallas North Tollway. But Michael isn't all work and no play: He's a big believer in **supporting the community** (another lesson learned from his parents) and has put 10 years of support into **Children's Medical Center**. Above, he's kneeling far right at Granite's first annual **trampoline dodgeball tournament** to raise funds for the center.



Michael's **oldest son** just graduated from high school on Monday and will be heading to the University of Colorado at Boulder this fall. His younger son is about to finish his freshman year of high school. When there's some downtime, the family escapes to a lake house. Michael says he's learned that the harder you work, the luckier you get. Advice: "You've gotta be in the game. **You're going to make some mistakes**, but don't let them beat you down."