

“40 Under Forty” Article — *The Business Journal*, April 6, 2001

Call Christopher Ruditys the anti-Agassi. Ruditys has prospered swinging against the mantra of tennis star Andre Agassi's oft-quoted Canon camera commercial line “Image is everything.”

Ruditys, 31, maneuvers mostly in the background, while stepping to the foreground when necessary, as the administrator of an organization that represents some of Wisconsin's biggest movers and shakers — the Commercial Association of Realtors Wisconsin. He has built the 7-year-old group's membership from 175 to 525 and has kept members on task to promote their common good both within their profession and in public policy.

“Image to me is secondary,” Ruditys says. “My priority is to do what is in the best interest of the members. That's A-1.”

Navigating the “many types of personalities” in an industry that is often ego-driven requires the “sense of duty” that Ruditys possesses, says William Bonifas, past president of the association and executive vice president of The Polachek Co. Inc., Milwaukee.

“He's an unsung hero,” says Bonifas. “He's quiet and diligent. He strives to make the president look good.”

Ruditys credits his father, former Milwaukee firefighters union president Joseph Ruditys, with providing a strong example of giving priority to the needs of an organization's members.

When the powerful group needs a local lobbyist, Ruditys gets directly involved, pushing for develop-

ment of the Menomonee Valley, protecting downtown freeway exits during Marquette Interchange reconstruction planning, and supporting the westward extension of Canal Street.

Ruditys has expanded his influence the past two years beyond real estate brokers, winning contracts to administer several other associations, including the Building Owners & Managers Association and the Institute of Real Estate Management.

Meanwhile, Ruditys has built his own real estate investment portfolio of nearly \$3 million. He started in 1992 buying duplexes in Milwaukee's Riverwest neighborhood and, initially using “creative financing,” graduated to fourplexes, then apartments and now commercial properties.

Ruditys was an alderman at age 19 in the city of Whitewater while attending the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. After college, he joined the staff of Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist,

but Ruditys says he has no further political ambitions.

“I don't know if I'd want to put myself through any of that,” Ruditys says.

After all, in politics, image can be everything.

— Rich Kirchen

BIRTHPLACE: Milwaukee
MARITAL STATUS: Single
FIRST JOB: Milwaukee Journal carrier, age 12
PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Keeping the Commercial Association of Realtors “under one roof” with other associations he administers, including the Building Owners & Managers Association and the Institute of Real Estate Management
PERSONAL HERO: His father, Joseph Ruditys

