

J. Mike Yantis Jr.

Yantis Co.

Position: President and COO

Age: 27

Family: Wife, Adrienne

Education: B.B.A. in management, Texas A&M University

Speaking about J. Mike Yantis, Uncle Tom Yantis has said that he is one of the reasons for much of the success that Yantis Co. enjoys today.

Which makes it all the more ironic that Mike, who was recently named president and COO of the general contractor, almost walked out the door early on in his career with the family business.

Word that best describes you: Driven
As it is in business, so it is in life: My philosophy for both was inherited from the example that both my grandfather and father set for me: Honesty and fairness is the only way to go through business and life. I always want to have the ability to look somebody in the eye and know that what I am saying is the right thing.

Choice read: ... I am an avid news junkie. I probably get every single news/political magazine known to man.

Favorite pastime: I love to play golf when I have the time

While attending Texas A&M, Mike would work summers at the firm that his grandfather John founded back in 1965.

The hard part came when he made the transition from summertime to full-time employee.

"When I first came to work at Yantis full-time out of school, I hated it," says Mike, who adds that when he first started at A&M, his dream was to become a lawyer. "I even signed up to take the LSAT (law school admissions test) and was ready to quit."

But eventually he "settled down and I started to carve out my place at Yantis Co."

Today, Mike is heading up a multimillion-dollar company — the firm reported revenues



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of \$100 million for 2006. Yantis has been named, several times, as one of "America's 500 Fastest Growing Private Companies" by Inc. Magazine.

Closer to home, the firm ranked No. 61 on this year's Aggie 100. The list recognizes the 100 fastest growing companies that are either owned or led by an Aggie/A&M graduate. The recent honor marks the third time that Yantis has made the cut.

Yantis is also well known for the high-profile projects that have kept the firm busy — including Alamo Ranch, a master-planned residential community that spans 3,162 acres of land along Loop 1604 and Culebra Road on the city's far West Side. This past May, Chicago-based General Growth Properties awarded Yantis the infrastructure

contract for the second phase of high-end regional mall The Shops at La Cantera.

"I think the secret to our success is our team and our relationships that we have with developers and engineers," says Mike. "We have built what I think is the strongest team in heavy construction. Eighty percent of our work is for private developers, most of them repeat customers.

"Also, I think I can call some of our clients very close friends," Mike adds. "It's a fun industry."

So no plans to become a lawyer any time soon?

"The construction business is an exciting place to be," Mike says. "To walk out to an undeveloped piece of land and six months later see what we have built is a neat experience.

Also, the construction business is a people business. We deal with hundreds of developers and engineers, and I enjoy the day-to-day dealings with them."

That's not to say that this industry is without its challenges. One of the biggest, according to Mike: A shallow labor pool. "The number one issue facing construction is the shortage of skilled labor," says Mike, who adds that his firm hopes to add some training programs to help develop talent.

Mike says that he also hopes to expand the family business into Austin "and beyond over the next few years."

"I plan to spend a great deal of time to help that vision become a reality," he adds.

— Tricia Lynn Sylva