



Whitman

MARTIN J. WHITMAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

IN THE BUSINESS OF JOBS

Whitman

SCHOOL of MANAGEMENT

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

WHITMAN LEADERSHIP TEAM

DEAN

Kenneth A. Kavajecz

ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR RESEARCH AND PH.D. PROGRAMS

Michel Benaroch

ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR MASTER'S PROGRAMS

Donald Harter

ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

Amanda Nicholson

ASSISTANT DEAN AND CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Kevin Bailey

ASSISTANT DEAN FOR CAREER SERVICES

Angela Petrucco

DIRECTOR OF BUDGET, FINANCE AND ANALYTICS

Kevin Coates

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

Beverly Everding

DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI & CORPORATE RELATIONS

Cindie Adams

ASSISTANT DEAN FOR ADVANCEMENT

John Prizner

WHITMAN MAGAZINE — SPRING 2016

EDITOR: Alison Kessler

DESIGN: Andrea M. Parisi

CONTRIBUTORS: Joanne Gocek, Kerri Howell, Peggy Kanterman and Alexandra Reeves

PHOTOGRAPHY: Cindie Adams, Susan Kahn, Joe Librandi-Cowan, Stephen Sartori, Syracuse University Archives and James Vivenzio

DIRECT CORRESPONDENCE TO: Editor, *Whitman* magazine, Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University, 721 University Avenue, Suite 111, Syracuse, N.Y. 13244-2450, or whitmanalumni@syr.edu.

The *Whitman* magazine is published semi-annually by the Martin J. Whitman School of Management and distributed free to alumni, friends, students, faculty and staff. Third-class postage paid at Syracuse, N.Y. Past issues can be found at whitman.syr.edu/publications. Please share and recycle this magazine.

ON THE COVER:

Career fairs bring hundreds of corporate partners to campus. Whitman is committed to giving students a range of classroom and extracurricular experiences to build an impressive resume and the confidence to present themselves with poise when vying for jobs after graduation.





→ TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURING

30 IN THE BUSINESS OF JOBS

A careful orchestration of people and programs provides the comprehensive education and real-world business experiences Whitman students need for career success.

34 GRADUATION

The Whitman School congratulates its 2016 graduates.

IN EVERY ISSUE

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 7 Consurtio Report | 28 Orange Family Legacies |
| 18 Whitman at Work | 52 Student News |
| 20 Five Under Five | 58 Focus on Faculty |
| 22 Class News and Notes | 60 In the News & Trending |
-

SPOTLIGHTS

STUDENT:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 48 Matthew Foster '17 | 49 Weisi Zhang '16 M.S. Finance |
| 48 Catherine Smith '16 | 49 C.K. Lee '17 Ph.D. |
-

ALUMNI:

- 12 Al Berg '73: Establishes chair in entrepreneurship and shares his experienced business perspective with students
 - 14 Steve Charney '81: Creates career success by merging childhood interests, unwavering focus and a pragmatic eye toward the future
 - 16 Gil Adler '68: Takes an accounting degree and a road less traveled to Hollywood and filmmaking
-

FACULTY:

- 56 Professor of Marketing Scott Fay: A lifelong love of learning and student-first focus

STEVE CHARNEY:

By Alison Kessler

Three Degrees, Two Generations of Orange and One Successful Career



For Steve Charney '81, one college degree didn't cut it. Nor did two. The third, however, was the charm. Actually, it was the combination of the three degrees that helped him succeed throughout his career and in his current post as chairman of Peckar & Abramson, P.C. (P&A), the largest construction law practice in the United States and among the world's most prestigious construction law firms.

A summary of Charney's academic and professional path includes an accounting degree from Whitman (with an atypical concentration of construction courses), a job at a leading construction company, a master's degree in construction management, ladder ascension at the construction company, a law degree, a position as an associate attorney and, ultimately, advancement to head of the firm. While the summary is impressive, the details of Charney's path show how professional success can be achieved through the careful intersection of childhood interests, focus and a pragmatic eye toward the future.

Charney grew up in Livingston, New Jersey, where he developed a passion for architecture. He enrolled in SU's architecture program, and things were going according to plan until his first summer back home. An internship at an architectural firm—specifically, a lunchtime conversation with one of the architects on his last day—made him rethink things.

"The lead architect on one of New Jersey's most prominent buildings was complimentary of my work that summer," says Charney, "yet he warned me to leave architecture. His description of salary ceilings

and inconsistent employment caught my attention."

That conversation was a springboard to a new direction. Charney decided that "architecture would make a better hobby," so he decided to change majors and, like his father, chose accounting.

"It was an emotionally difficult transition," Charney recalls.

"Architecture had become part of my identity, but SU provided a smooth transfer and allowed me to create a unique academic program. I completed my accounting coursework while continuing to take construction courses in the architectural school."

Charney decided he could combine business and building to create a career in construction management. To learn more about the industry, he contacted the nation's largest construction manager, Turner Construction Company, during his sophomore year.

"Turner was enormously accommodating to me as a student and welcomed the discussion of construction management as a career," Charney adds. Two years later, he was offered a full-time job at the company upon graduation.

"I met with Turner every year, but I wasn't sure the company would hire me out of college," adds Charney. "I sent out many resumes and had some interviews, but no one else was interested. Ironically, most of those companies are clients of our firm today."

Charney's time at Turner would factor heavily into his career success. He started out working on construction sites and soon earned a spot in the company's leadership development program. During his first two years on the job, Charney took night courses and completed a master's degree in construction management at the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Shortly after starting the master's program, Charney contemplated another piece of the puzzle. Serving as a lawyer for contractors and builders became his ultimate goal, so he enrolled in an evening law program at Seton Hall University when he completed the master's

degree. "Getting two graduate degrees at night while working full time for Turner in Manhattan was challenging," says Charney, "but what better experience could there be for a construction lawyer?"

Turner remained supportive and even created a position for Charney while he worked on his law degree. He oversaw legal matters and had an opportunity most law students would envy—to work on real and complicated legal cases while still in law school. A career path for a lawyer within a construction company was rare in the 1980s, but Charney was grateful and loyal, so he stayed with Turner for two more years until an irresistible opportunity arose.

Years earlier, Bob Peckar, a founding partner at New Jersey-based Peckar & Abramson, spoke during one of Charney's first graduate school classes. Charney was impressed and suggested that Turner engage Peckar on a matter. Seven years after they met, Peckar posed the possibility of Charney joining P&A as the firm opened its second office in New York City.

"I began as an associate in 1990," says Charney. "Four years later, I was offered partnership when the firm had around 20 lawyers and two offices. Now, we have 110 lawyers in 11 offices across the country, and we handle matters around the globe."

Charney is known internationally as a leader in construction law and, despite the responsibilities of being chairman of the firm, his workday still includes practicing law. The part he enjoys most, however, is working with clients and the talented lawyers in his firm.

"Many law firms create a presence that revolves around the practice's chairperson, but there is a more appropriate path for P&A," says Charney. "We have developed so much talent that it doesn't make sense to be seen as having one—or even a few—legal stars. It is genuinely exciting to work with dozens of talented lawyers who can masterfully deliver top-tier legal counsel to our clients."

With a client list that includes many of the industry's most successful general contractors, construction managers, developers, corporations and associations, P&A regularly receives the highest accolades by leading publications and rating organizations.

Though Charney has been deliberate in merging education, experiences and professions to achieve significant career success, he

acknowledges the element of chance. "I am often reminded of the quote, 'Luck is when opportunity meets preparation,'" says Charney. "Though some intersections happened by chance, the setting for most was the product of planning, and the dominos fell from there... Bob's speech to my grad school class ultimately led me to P&A...a partner at P&A later introduced me to my wife...and now our son is choosing SU."

Charney and his wife, Cindy, have two sons, Ross and Cole. Cole will be a freshman at Whitman this fall.


Though Charney tried not to influence Cole's decision of colleges

(nor did Charney's sister, Debbie Weitzman '84), his choice has been a welcome one. "Whitman is far more than the School of Management on the first floors of Slocum, as it was back in my day," says Charney. "I look forward to engaging further with my alma mater while Cole is at Whitman."

As a member of Whitman's Real Estate Advisory Council, Charney gives of his time and expertise. He credits Joanne Gocsek, Whitman's senior director of development, for helping formalize his connection after a bit of a hiatus while he built his career. "If anyone can take a spark and turn it into a raging fire, it's Joanne," says Charney. "She is genuine, honest and a reminder of everything good about SU."

Charney recently proposed a Consurtio project and has assembled a team of professionals to

work with Whitman students on that effort. "What Whitman is doing via Consurtio is fascinating," says Charney. "Dean Kavajecz's vision and the leadership of Consurtio CEO Terry Brown have me more than a little envious of current Whitman students. The mutual benefits of student-client engagement are immeasurable, and the future for students involved is even greater."

For Charney, like most alumni, the draw of SU is compelling. "I vividly remember returning to campus after many years," he shares. "I was flooded with memories and reminded of the personal evolution I experienced during those four years. That connection really draws you back. Now my son will create the next generation of Orange memories as he continues the Charney family legacy at SU." 

***"I VIVIDLY REMEMBER
RETURNING TO CAMPUS
AFTER MANY YEARS. I WAS
FLOODED WITH MEMORIES
AND REMINDED OF THE
PERSONAL EVOLUTION I
EXPERIENCED DURING
THOSE FOUR YEARS. THAT
CONNECTION REALLY
DRAWS YOU BACK."***

