

## Love of the Deal

By Sandy Penny

Wylie Elson says he got into business brokerage because he loves all the aspects of making a deal, but it took him a while to settle in. Elson was working as an account executive for Hewlett Packard in the mid '80s when he met Eugene (Gene) Merfeld, a successful business broker and author who became a long-term friend and mentor. Merfeld identified Wylie's talent and passion for business brokerage and encouraged him to pursue it. However, Elson admits he still had some exploring to do.

He first came to Taos in 1991, lived at the Lama Foundation, and became an integral part of their fund raising and development team. After moving to Albuquerque, completing medical school in 2000, and interning at the V.A. Hospital, Elson decided not to practice medicine. He returned to Taos

in 2001, made it his home, and with an open space in his business life, founded his local brokerage.

His career quickly took on three distinct divisions. Beginning with representing local businesses with revenues of \$450,000 to \$5 million; he then developed a specialty in hospitality properties in the range of \$1.25 to \$10 million. Most recently, his mentor Gene Merfeld invited him to become the western regional associate of Merfeld and Schine, a national mergers and acquisitions firm, where he handled larger businesses in the \$2 to \$15 million range. Elson quickly developed a reputation for his knowledge, helpfulness, experience and skill at facilitating transactions for any size business.

His business brokerage is now known as the largest, oldest and most successful in the enchanted circle. Along the way, he has



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acquired an impressive database of potential buyers who are waiting for the right business to hit the market.

The sale of a business is an emotionally charged event that can be scary or intimidating for a seller. Elson handles the complexities and details to create a smooth transition. He initially gets to know the owners, history,

performance, assets, profitability and potential earnings of a business. During the sales process, he continually educates his clients.

Elson's company puts together a marketing package, pays for a wide variety of advertising that sometimes includes expensive print media like the Wall Street Journal, and evaluates whether prospective buyers are serious. He says there's a lot of behind

the scenes work that neither the buyer nor the seller sees. He explained, "I have to know if a buyer has the money, the experience, and the will to proceed."

After information is exchanged between buyer and seller, Elson schedules and facilitates a site visit. He serves as a coach and negotiator who helps the buyer and seller reach a "meeting of the minds" on price and terms. Elson is a strong ally for sellers and even advises them about possible tax implications of a sale, referring them to other professionals, such as accountants and attorneys, as needed.

Elson confides, "My goal is for both buyer and seller to be thrilled to have worked with me. I want them to come back and recommend me." He enjoys the whole process of bringing the deal together and handling the complexities that make it happen. He admits, "It's nice to be doing something really fulfilling for me and my clients."

## What's The Story?

By Mark Ian Saxe

As Southwest Stoneworks prepares for its ninth annual stone carving workshops, the past informs the future. The first workshop in 2001, with Patrick Plunkett as the first Guest Instructor, began very dramatically.

Scheduled for September 14, 2001, 9/11 forced Patrick, who worked at the White House as stonemason in residence, to leave his tools behind during the evacuation. For days, we wondered if we could go forward with the workshop. The instructor was stranded in DC, and many students were unable to get flights because US air space was shut down. Patrick got his tools out two days later, and found a flight to New Mexico in time for the first day, but many participants had to drive long distances.

This year, Southwest Stoneworks offers two workshops.

Session 1 "Classical Carving" (July 18-24), will be taught for the fifth year by Joseph Kincannon of Austin, Texas, formerly the lead stonemason at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in NYC. Guest Artists include John Suazo, a Native American carver from Taos Pueblo, and Benjamin Lopez, a santero (carver of saints) from Española, New Mexico. Lopez helped invigorate saint carving in northern New Mexico, and his work is in museum collections



throughout the nation.

Session Two "East Meets West" (August 10-16, 2009) features Guest Instructor Nicholas Fairplay, master carver from Oberlin, Ohio. He began carving at age 16 at Chichester Cathedral and has been carving for 31 years. He studied at the City and Guilds of London Art College, followed by Baroque and Renaissance architecture and sculpture in Rome. His work includes Westminster Abbey, Houses of Parliament, and St. Paul's Cathedral. He was the head carver and instructor at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in NYC. He recently carved four massive lions from 24-ton marble blocks for Utah's state capitol. Visit fairplaystonecarvers.com.

Guest Artist, Kazutaka Uchida from Tokyo, Japan, studied at the École des Beaux Arts and returns for the seventh year. His work is in the permanent collections of the

Museum of Modern Art in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in Toyota, Japan, and most recently, the Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto. His elemental stone shapes, their scale, and overall effect find resonance in his Japanese heritage of clean lines, subtle beauty, harmonious relationships, bold transformations, and respect for the natural material. Lopez continues his work from session one in session two.

Beginners work next to seasoned carvers for artistic "cross-pollination." With a small

student/teacher ratio, daily demonstrations cover stone selection, roughing out, design, tool selection and care, splitting, shaping, carving, drilling, polishing, and rigging, as well as video presentations.

In line with our current economy, and to encourage young people to participate, a discount will be offered to full-time students. College credit is available through UNM. For more info, visit saxstonecarving.com or contact Mark Saxe at (505) 579-9179 or southweststoneworks@yahoo.com.



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