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He's Zere to stay

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One could say that Michael Paul Zere, executive vice president of Zere Real Estate Services, has real estate in his blood.

Having grown up the son of Marie Zere, founder and president of Zere Real Estate, he got a taste for the business at an early age. "I've been around it (real estate) my whole life," he said.

Now he's established his own niche focusing on small and mid-sized companies in the Veterans Memorial Highway/ MacArthur Airport market. "Central Suffolk is my bread and butter," Zere said.

His initial experiences in real estate came while he was a college student, first at Suffolk Community College and later at SUNY Stony Brook. When not in class, he was often out putting up exclusive signs for Zere Real Estate.

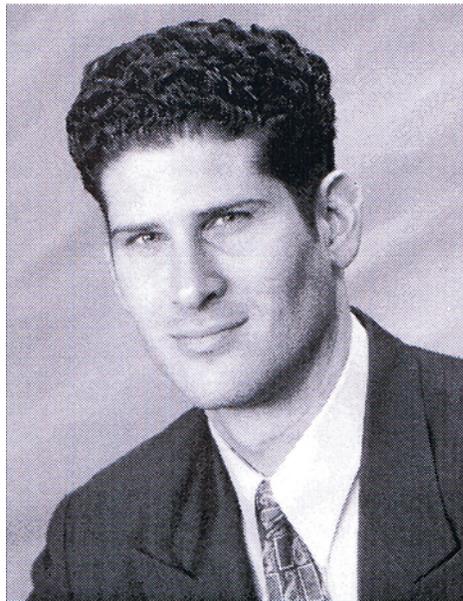
After college, Zere traveled the world, spending time in both Asia and Europe. It was upon his return that he began to invest the time and effort required to become a successful broker.

In 1989, Zere began working inside his mother's office. Though he continued to install signs, he began familiarizing himself with office management. "I did all the things that I could without a (real estate) license," he said.

What attracted him to commercial real estate was the opportunity to use his head. "It's using your imagination, picturing a company in a building and then making it (the deal) work," he explained. "It's never boring, it's always a new experience."

In 1990, when Zere got his sales license, he quickly entered the commercial real estate fray only to watch the once-fruitful market of the mid-1980s whither and die.

"It was tough," he said. But he had found a bur



SIGNS OF SUCCESS: Michael Paul Zere has emerged as one of Suffolk's leading brokers.

geoning market to work with along the Vets Highway corridor. He soon established a reputation with companies looking for office space in the area surrounding MacArthur Airport.

"I work with everybody," he said, noting most of his deals come as a result of referrals. "These are companies that are going to grow at some point, and when they need space they'll remember me."

Over the past four months he has closed more than 37 lease transactions representing more than 75,000 square feet of space. Among those transactions was Ironworks Digital, a CD replication company that needed 1,700 square feet space.

"We tried calling several realtors," said Charles Smith, sales director of Ironworks. "But most didn't call back." He said Zere not only called back but

began to show them space at several locations that might fit. Although he has closed deals for space across Long Island, central Suffolk is his key market. His link with the region is so strong that Zere, who prides himself on providing a high level of service to his clients, moved from Smithtown to Ronkonkoma to be closer to the office and, more importantly, to better serve his customers and clients.

And that service includes doing things that other brokers might consider out of the ordinary, such as showing available space at night with a flashlight or on weekends. Then again, there are few brokers who drive a Chevrolet Silverado or install their own real estate signs.

"That's the hunter in me," said Zere, who is married and has a four-month old son.

Zere has also become an avid golfer. Despite having only recently picked-up the game, he regularly shoots in the 70s. He attributes his improvement to the same drive that helps him succeed in the real estate arena.