

TOM OLINGER

Counting the Dough: Life around the Cash Flow

Graduate: Class of 1984 Occupation: Finance / Chief Financial Officer

Growing up in a small town, Tom Olinger never expected he would be working in San Francisco and interacting daily with the entire world. Graduating in 1984 from Forest Park, he never knew exactly where he would end up. Now he deals with the financing of a multimillion dollar company and raising funds through public and private debt.

You could call Tom quite the family man. Marrying his wife, Chris, and starting a family after college, Tom and Chris now have two sons and a daughter. To me, he fills the role of uncle and godfather. Involvement in his kids' sports keeps him busy while away from work. He enjoys watching his children's sporting events. For the past twenty years, coaching and playing basketball has added to his list of activities. Currently, he coaches St. Mary's Catholic School's sixth grade boys' A team and second grade girls' basketball.

Life is not all fun and games. Tom demonstrates how hard work and effort pay off. As the chief financial officer of AMB Property Corporation, he works in San Francisco and his office sits on Pier One over the San Francisco Bay. Owners and operators of industrial warehouses worth fifteen billion dollars, AMB has warehouses located in major airports and seaports. Part of his job includes traveling, mostly pertaining to New York, but he's made it to the numerous other offices throughout the world--such as Hamburg in Germany and Tokyo in Japan. Tom directs all of the company's financial matters: treasury, accounting, finances, investor relations, and marketing. Time management remains the most backbreaking part of his job. Before coming to AMB, Tom worked as the vice president and corporate controller at Oracle.

Looking back on his high school days, he describes them as “very fun and enjoyable.” One of his greatest memories came in sports; being named All-Conference and MVP for three years in golf is something he will never forget. He also participated in wrestling and band. Another memory includes how the teachers incorporated fun into learning and made homework manageable. By remaining close to three friends from high school, he still maintains Forest Park ties.

An overall, positive experience describes Tom's college years. Attending Indiana University, he graduated in 1988 with his bachelor of science degree with a major in finance. Taking a variety of classes helped Tom find a major he wanted to pursue.

Before deciding on business, he changed many times from engineering to architecture to business. He recommends IU because they have a beneficial business program for undergrads; in fact, their finance department ranks in the top ten of the nation. IU opened a new, diverse population and multiethnic environment--a world most of us don't experience in Dubois County. The diverse population he found there helped him adapt culturally, which has allowed him to work globally.

Growing up and attending school in a small town, Forest Park prepared Tom. He believes you should have confidence against competition on any level. He learned from this experience: "The most important part of being confident is not being afraid to fail. You can do this by applying yourself and what you have learned. Never be intimidated. Respect everyone, but fear no one!"