



Don Steinger, Steinger Development

For Don Steinger, life has been a series of lessons learned and successes achieved.

“For me, it’s not about my career history, it’s about reflecting on what I’ve learned and, hopefully, the contribution I’ve made,” says Don Steinger, a lawyer and real estate developer.

As a young man, he went to college and says those early college experiences “taught me a lot of lessons.” With an industrial management degree in hand, he took a job at International Harvester in Fort Wayne.

“The lessons I learned through my college and early career experiences were that everyone matures at different points,” Don says. “I learned that what isn’t common sense to one person can be memorized and put together by another person to create knowledge.”

People who “connect the dots” and create such knowledge are, Don says, “brilliant. I am proud to recognize their brilliance, and I try to surround myself with them so I can learn from them.”

After earning his law degree, Don began working at Snouffer, Haller and Colvin law offices in Fort Wayne. Three years later, he was a partner in the firm, involved in major real estate transactions and the intricate workings involved.

“With those experiences, I developed a burning desire to be my own boss and do real estate deals,” Steinger says. “I had learned something every day, and I knew I could put the lessons to good use.”

Steinger opened a solo practice, specializing in real estate and small business. His first purchase, in 1977, was property for a fast food franchise. That project was followed by the development of Professional Park West Village, Midwestern Office Park, Jefferson Medical Park, Scott Road Corners, and Northbrook Shopping Center. His largest recent project was Chapel Ridge Shopping Center, which he says was the most challenging, most risky, and most exciting.



Through his projects, Don says he learned he is a “fix-it guy. I love moving dirt, seeing every day what has been accomplished.”

Don has also believes he has learned a tremendous amount from others. He especially values relationships with those who are smarter than he is.

“Without partners and mentors, I would never have been able to accomplish what I have,” he says. “I believe one should look at other people who have done what is important to you, figure out how they did it, and then emulate those traits as you build your success.”

Over the years, Don also says he “learned from his mistakes. I never believed I was smarter than any competitor, I tried to outworked them. Every day I love seeing what has been done on a project.”

Don is also committed helping his community grow and celebrate success. He says through his service on the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne board, and to its facility, opened in 2008 and dedicated as the Steininger Center, he realized “it is easier to convince others to give if you have given yourself. And I realized how much pleasure I get from these community investments.”

He also supports and was an early catalyst in the Riverfront Development project, including the recent opening of the new Promenade Park in downtown Fort Wayne. Currently, Don is active in the development of the Headwaters Junction community project, too.

“My bulldog mentality is at work on Headwaters Junction, with the goal to include a roundhouse, railroad turntable and the Nickle Plate steam engine 765,” Don says. “We are all driven by what we love to do and this keeps me going. I used to think it would take three to four years for a development project. Now I realize some celebrations take longer.”

