

# 40under40

HONORING HOME BUILDING'S

By David Barista, Editor-in-Chief, and Jeff Zagoudis, Associate Editor

**A**n alligator hunter, break dancer, horse trainer, and former professional basketball player are among home building's young superstars to be named 40 Under 40 winners for 2012 by the editors of *Professional Builder* magazine.

The 40 professionals featured in the following pages represent the next generation of leadership and innovation in home building, and they're all under the age of 40. We proudly present our 40 Under 40 class for 2012.

## ALBERT D. SEENO, III, 37



President, Discovery Builders Inc., Concord, Calif.

### PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Licensed contractor in California and Nevada; Nevada gaming licensee

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Launched home-building company at age 25  
Grew firm to employ 155 people and build more than 500 homes annually, making it one of the Bay Area's largest home builders  
Also owns a commercial/public works construction company and an underground pipeline installation firm

### EXTRACURRICULAR

Named Citizen of the Year by the Pittsburg (Calif.) Chamber of Commerce  
In 2011, donated the land and building for the School of Imagination in Dublin, Calif., which caters to children with special needs  
Donated labor and material to renovate the interior and exterior of his church

### OFF THE CLOCK

All-time flick: "Remember the Titans" ("It shows that hard work and working together can allow someone to overcome obstacles and be successful")  
Getaway spot: Cabo San Lucas  
Hobbies: anything outdoors, including hunting, fishing, and driving job sites (of course!)

### SECRET LIFE

Can still break dance like he did in high school

## MARK WAHL, 38



Co-owner, President, Cobblestone Homes, Saginaw, Mich.

### EDUCATION

BA, Business Administration, Saginaw Valley State University

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Successfully transitioned firm from remodeling to home building in 2003  
Grew company to build more than 50 homes annually in a county where permits were down 80 percent from 2003 to 2010  
Constructed Michigan's first net-zero-energy home, called Vision Zero, in 2010; has used the home to educate other builders and trades on energy-efficient construction  
In 2011, built InVision Zero, a net-zero-energy home for sale below the average U.S. new-home selling price  
Recently completed 12 energy-efficient test homes that will be owned/rented and monitored for five years to provide performance data  
Gold Award, 2011 Energy Value Housing Awards

### EXTRACURRICULAR

Board member, HBA of Saginaw  
Member, Green Built Michigan and HBA of Bay County

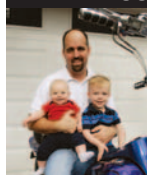
### OFF THE CLOCK

Can't live without his iPad  
Hobbies: training and selling horses  
Getaway spot: Gatlinburg, Tenn.  
Fave food: apple cinnamon oatmeal  
On the nightstand: "Good to Great"

### SECRET LIFE

Previously made a living as a professional horse trainer

## BRAD FESS, 33



President, NuDesign Builders, Inc., Maitland, Fla.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Bought out his sole business partner in 2009 and quadrupled annual home sales to more than \$1.5 million by 2011

Expanded scope of services to include commercial construction and renovation, including tenant improvement buildouts, health clubs, and night clubs

Upgraded firm's business technology systems, adding cloud computing capability and remote access to back-office systems with iPads and iPhones

### EXTRACURRICULAR

Participates in annual construction mission trips through his church

### OFF THE CLOCK

Hobbies: riding his Harley, offshore fishing, spear fishing, lobster diving, traveling, and chillin' in the garage with his two boys  
Getaway spot: Cayman Islands, for their crystal-clear waters and great fishing and diving  
On the nightstand: "Super Crunchers"  
Fave food: a tie between steak and chocolate chip cookies

### SECRET LIFE

Hunts alligators ("It's a team activity and quite a rush. Our biggest catch was 13 feet, 2 inches!")

## CLAY AURELL, 38



Principal, AB Design Studio Inc., Santa Barbara, Calif.

### EDUCATION

BArch, California State Polytechnic University – Pomona

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Started his own company at age 30  
In 2007, became the youngest architect member to sit on the local architecture review board and served the community for nearly five years

### OFF THE CLOCK

Hobbies: snowboarding, cycling, and working on cars  
Getaway spot: Cinque Terre, Italian Riviera  
All-time flick: "Snatch" ("Hilarious antics and creative filming sequences")

### SECRET LIFE

Bought a 1966 Ford Mustang at age 13, got his license on his 16th birthday and drove it to school

## DAN GABEL, 36



Project Manager, Toll Brothers, Dublin, Calif.

### EDUCATION

BS, Physics, New Mexico State University; Program Management Certificate, Defense Acquisition University

### PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Licensed real estate broker; Qualified SWPPP Practitioner; Certified Erosion, Sediment and Storm Water Inspector; Certified Instructional Systems Designer

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Manages all operations, from marketing and sales to purchasing, construction, and warranty for

multiple Toll Brothers communities  
Full P&L responsibility for luxury residential  
single-family and three-story condominium  
projects

**EXTRACURRICULAR**

President, Trevi at Sorrento Homeowners  
Association  
VP, Sorrento at Dublin Ranch Community  
Association

**OFF THE CLOCK**

Enjoys soccer, football, and volleyball

**SECRET LIFE**

Formerly held Top Secret clearance as a U.S. Air  
Force officer  
Once ate dinner with Clyde Tombaugh, discoverer  
of Pluto

**DEREK VEERKAMP, 38**

**VP, Development Manager,  
Hunt Development Group,  
Virginia Beach, Va.**

**EDUCATION**

BS, Civil Engineering, University  
of Minnesota; BS, Accounting,  
Upper Iowa University; MBA,

Regis University; MS, Environmental Engineering,  
Air Force Institute of Technology

**PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS**

Licensed Professional Engineer

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Helped build the second pilot project of privatized  
junior housing at Norfolk Naval Station  
Built the first new-zero-energy home on a military  
base (Fort Campbell, Ky.)  
Helped rebuild community on Little Rock AFB in  
Jacksonville, Ark., following a tornado

**OFF THE CLOCK**

Hobbies: running, traveling, reading, hiking, and  
canoeing  
Ran his first half marathon in 2011  
Getaway spot: Egypt

**SECRET LIFE**

Worked as a DJ for many years and still does  
occasional gigs

**RYAN HILL, 33**

**VP, Hill Construction Company,  
San Diego**

**EDUCATION**

BS, Engineering – Construction  
Science & Management  
emphasis, California State  
University – Chico

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Grew revenue of family-owned business by 500  
percent during the recession  
In 2007, company set the record for most homes

## HONOR ROLL

**TROY ABROMAITIS, PG. 26**

Development Manager  
Wallmark Homes Ltd.

**CLAY AURELL, PG. 20**

Principal  
AB Design Studio Inc., Santa Barbara, Calif.

**HOWIE BERMAN, PG. 25**

COO  
The Ruby Group, Goshen, N.Y.

**PETE BERMAN, PG. 26**

CEO  
The Ruby Group, Goshen, N.Y.

**JASON BLENKER, PG. 23**

President  
Blenker Building Systems Inc., Amherst, Wis.

**CHRISTOPHER BROWN, PG. 24**

Broker, Principal  
NEXT New Homes Group, Roseville, Calif.

**CHRISTOPHER BURTON, PG. 27**

CEO  
Christopher Burton Luxury Homes, Melbourne, Fla.

**ANDREW BYSTRY, PG. 23**

President  
Bystry Development Investments &  
Construction Inc., Madisonville, Tenn.

**JESSE DEUBEL, PG. 25**

Co-founder, Owner  
Casa Verde Builders LLC, Albuquerque, N.M.

**RYAN DE YOUNG, PG. 22**

VP, Finance  
De Young Properties, Fresno, Calif.

**MATT DILL, PG. 25**

President  
Beechen & Dill Homes Inc., Burr Ridge, Ill.

**MOLLIE ELKMAN, PG. 22**

Executive VP  
Group Two Marketing & Advertising, Philadelphia, Pa.

**HEATHER FERRIER, PG. 22**

General Manager  
Ferrier Custom Homes, Fort Worth, Texas

**BRAD FESS, PG. 20**

President  
NuDesign Builders, Inc., Maitland, Fla.

**JARED FORD, PG. 22**

Operations Manager  
Fortune-Johnson General Contractors, Norcross, Ga.

**MAX FRANK, PG. 26**

VP  
Watt Communities, Santa Monica, Calif.

**JASON FRIEDLAND, PG. 23**

Partner, Director of Operations and Investments  
Iron Stone Strategic Capital Partners, Philadelphia

**DAN GABEL, PG. 20**

Project Manager  
Toll Brothers, Dublin, Calif.

**ANDREW GIL, PG. 26**

General Manager  
Mystic River Building Co., Mystic, Conn.

**JORDAN GOLDMAN, PG. 25**

Engineering Principal  
ZeroEnergy Design, Boston

**BRAD HARPER, PG. 27**

CFO  
Saluda River Club, Lexington, S.C.

**RYAN HILL, PG. 21**

VP  
Hill Construction Company, San Diego

**BRIAN HUMPLIK, PG. 27**

Construction Manager  
North Houston, Grand View Builders, Houston

**BRYAN HUTCHINSON, PG. 23**

Chief Relationship Developer  
Victor Myers Custom Homes & Real Estate,  
Bartonville, Texas

**CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT, PG. 27**

Partner  
Knight Homes, Jonesboro, Ga.

**MARC LIFSHIN, PG. 26**

Partner  
LG Construction + Development, Chicago

**STEPHEN MCKAY, PG. 23**

VP  
Cranbrook Custom Homes, Shelby Township, Mich.

**CHRISTINA PRESLEY, PG. 27**

President, Colorado Division  
Meritage Homes, Denver, Colo.

**WARREN RALSTON, PG. 24**

President  
W.C. Ralston Architects LLC, Chantilly, Va.

**ALBERT D. SEENO, III, PG. 20**

President  
Discovery Builders, Inc., Concord, Calif.

**JUSTIN SEVIER, PG. 22**

Manager, Operator  
Vintage Residential LLC, Shreveport, La.

**SCOTT SHOEMAKER, PG. 23**

President, Owner  
Shoemaker Homes, Ridgeland, Miss.

**BRADLEY SULLIVAN, PG. 26**

General Manager  
Sullivan Building & Design Group, Quakertown, Pa.

**KEN TRAUOGOTT, PG. 27**

Architectural Supervisor  
NVR, Inc., Frederick, Md.

**DEREK VEERKAMP, PG. 21**

VP, Development Manager  
Hunt Development Group, Virginia Beach, Va.

**MARK WAHL, PG. 20**

Co-owner, President  
Cobblestone Homes, Saginaw, Mich.

**MELISSA WAHL, PG. 24**

Co-owner, VP  
Cobblestone Homes, Saginaw, Mich.

**JASON WERR, PG. 25**

President  
Jaw Builders, Wheaton, Ill.

**ANDREW WHITE, PG. 24**

Co-owner, Project Manager  
Edge City Homes, Lexington, S.C.

**HEATH WILKINSON, PG. 24**

President  
UIP General Contracting Inc., Washington, D.C.

completed in one day for the Baja Challenge, which provides homes for persons in need. Has won multiple awards for new-home building and renovations projects.

### OFF THE CLOCK

Hobbies: fishing, surfing, and free diving  
Enjoys walking his 130-lb. Akita  
All-time flick: "Dumb and Dumber"

### SECRET LIFE

His grandmother dated Howard Hughes

### JUSTIN SEVIER, 30



**Manger, Operator, Vintage Residential LLC, Shreveport, La.**

#### EDUCATION

BS, Construction Management, Business Administration minor, Louisiana State University

### PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Certified Green Professional

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Founded residential and commercial construction company in 2006  
Company has grown every year since founding  
Designed, completed, and sold multiple townhome projects and is currently designing a "mansion condo" that will begin construction this year

### EXTRACURRICULAR

Board member, Northwest Louisiana HBA

### OFF THE CLOCK

Hobbies: golf, hunting, fishing, and anything related to LSU  
All-time flick: "Christmas Vacation"  
Getaway spot: New York City

### SECRET LIFE

Great-great uncle was John Sevier, former governor of Tennessee and U.S. Representative, whose statue sits in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol building

### MOLLIE ELKMAN, 29



**Executive VP, Group Two Real Estate Marketing & Advertising, Philadelphia**

#### EDUCATION

BS, Business Administration, Florida State University

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Manages marketing and social media for builders across the U.S.  
Specializes in tracking developments in media and marketing  
Educates builders on modern marketing through seminars and webinars  
Developed You.Twit.Face, a full-service social

media marketing program initially created specifically for builders; program has since expanded to numerous industries  
Led re-launch of Elkman Advertising, originally started by her great-uncle in 1954

### OFF THE CLOCK

Became a mom in August 2011  
Hobbies: reading and traveling  
Fave food: her sister's cheesecake brownies

### SECRET LIFE

Once volunteered in Ghana with Global Volunteers, administering polio boosters, building a community library, and teaching in various schools in a local village  
Shares the same birthday with her younger sister, but six years apart

### RYAN DE YOUNG, 30



**VP, Finance, De Young Properties, Fresno, Calif.**

#### EDUCATION

BS, Accounting – Real Estate emphasis, University of San Diego; MS, Accounting  
Financial Management – Real Estate emphasis, University of San Diego

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Established De Young Properties' EnergySmart home line, in which all homes are built to the Energy Star Tier II standard and are GreenPoint Rated  
Co-created the De Young EnergySmart Net Zero home, which received a Pacific Coast Builders Conference Gold Nugget award in 2011  
Established company's purchasing department  
Lead construction of a home for "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition"

### OFF THE CLOCK

Plays drums in Carpe Noctem, a modern rock band  
Hobbies: volunteering, traveling, concerts, skiing, snowboarding, wakeboarding, and San Francisco 49ers football games  
Fave food: Grandma's pasta and meat sauce

### SECRET LIFE

Third-generation home builder; his grandfather started building homes after World War II  
Helps raise money for Saint Agnes Medical Center in Fresno; served as committee co-chair for two years

### JARED FORD, 36



**Group VP, Fortune-Johnson General Contractors, Norcross, Ga.**

#### EDUCATION

BS, Civil Engineering, Western Kentucky University; MS, Civil Engineering, Georgia Institute

of Technology

### PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Certified Engineer Intern, Ohio Board of Professional Engineers

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Started at Fortune-Johnson straight out of grad school, working his way from assistant superintendent to group VP in 12 years  
Directly involved in construction of 23 projects, including 4,600 apartment units, for a grand total of \$536 million in gross receipts

### EXTRACURRICULAR

Member, Associated Builders and Contractors of Georgia  
Member, National Multi Housing Council

### OFF THE CLOCK

Hobbies: basketball and tennis  
Avid Ohio State football fan  
All-time flick: "Top Gun"

### SECRET LIFE

Can't live without his iPhone and iPad

### HEATHER FERRIER, 31



**General Manager, Ferrier Custom Homes, Fort Worth, Texas**

#### EDUCATION

BA, International Business – Spanish, University of Texas – Arlington

### PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Certified Green Professional

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Designed and built her home as the first LEED for Homes Platinum project in Texas  
Created new marketing program for Ferrier, focusing on social media  
Redesigned company's website, which earned the Best Website award in the Building Systems Council's Sales & Marketing Awards competition  
Won Green Remodel Project of the Year from NAHB and a Gold Award in the 2012 Energy Value Housing Awards

### EXTRACURRICULAR

Member, NAHB Certified Green Professional Working Group  
Member, NAHB Green Building Conference planning committee  
Blogger, ProudGreenHome.com

### OFF THE CLOCK

Hobbies: traveling, working out, and wine  
Fave TV shows: "Project Runway" and "Mad Men"  
Getaway spot: Kauai, Hawaii  
Pilates instructor in her spare time

### SECRET LIFE

Great-grandfather immigrated to Texas from Scotland to help build the Texas State Capitol as a stonemason