

BY ANDY ASHBY

Born and raised in Memphis, Jeb Fields has a high opinion of the city's future.

"I think Memphis is very well positioned to compete in the global economy and I think we're just seeing the beginning of it," he says. "In the global supply chain, Memphis is a key link."

As a vice president at Commercial Advisors LLC, he has glimpsed the city's future from a commercial real estate perspective.

Fields has attended conferences and meetings where he has heard the Bluff City mentioned in the same breath as New York, Los Angeles and Chicago when it comes to global logistics hubs.

"It makes you feel good about this city," Fields says. "Being involved in commercial real estate, it has made it more exciting to live here."

Before Fields got involved in commercial real estate, he was focused on construction. A degree from Auburn University in construction management trained him to estimate, schedule and run construction projects.

"I liked it because what I was learning today, I could see the practical applications in the future," Fields says. "It teaches you how to take a very large project, break it down into its parts and put it together in an orderly fashion."

After college, he worked in the construction division of NCBS, Inc., a subsidiary of National Bank of Commerce which integrated banking branches into grocery stores.

From there, Fields became a construction manager for Pickering, Inc., an architecture, engineering and construction management firm.

When he was 26, he went to work for his family in the hardwood lumber industry.

Fields worked at Walter M. Fields Lumber Co., Inc., for four years, but decided he wanted to change direction.

"I decided I really liked the sales aspect of the lumber industry," Fields says. "But I also liked the construction industry: managing the project and having a lot of different things going on at once."

Fields has found a happy marriage of these two concepts at Commercial Advisors, although he had to leave Memphis to get the job.

After searching for a commercial real estate job in Memphis, he decided



ALAN HOWELL | MBJ

Jeb Fields
Vice president,
Commercial
Advisors LLC
Age: 34
Birthplace:
Memphis
Residence:
Memphis
Education:
Bachelor
of science
in building
construction,
Auburn
University
Family: Wife,
Lisa; daughter,
Sarah Mae, 11
months
Hobbies:
Outdoor
sports, family
time

Bred in construction

Construction background serving Jeb Fields well in commercial real estate

to try Nashville. There he met Jeff Haynes, the chief manager at Boyle Investment Co.'s office in Nashville.

Haynes knew Wyatt Aiken, a senior vice president at Commercial Advisors in Memphis, and told Fields to talk with him.

After an interview and a consultation with his future wife, Lisa, Fields took the job and started work Jan. 2, 2004.

Fields' construction background helped him right away at Commercial Advisors.

Fields works on the user side of the commercial real estate equation, and with every office or industrial move, there is some build-out or other construction involved.

"Initially, I didn't know the first thing about real estate, but I was able to add value right off the bat because I understood the construction side," Fields says.

Darrell Cobbins, CEO of Universal Commercial Real Estate LLC, worked

with Fields for four years at Commercial Advisors before striking out on his own.

Cobbins notes how Fields' construction background helped in the commercial real estate field, whether it

'I was able to add value right off the bat because I understood the construction side.'

was building out a client's new space or accessing upgrades on potential investment properties.

"That type of experience is really valuable," he says. "I didn't have it, so I always went to him with questions. It was always good to have a peer you bounce things off of in that regard."

Cobbins says being under the tutelage of Aiken has helped Fields' professional growth as well.

"When you're working with someone like that, you pick up a lot of their

attributes and learn a great deal from their experience," Cobbins says.

While at Commercial Advisors, Cobbins worked with Fields on a few transactions.

"This is an industry that is very competitive; some might describe it as cutthroat, but when you encounter someone like Jeb, you find he's an honest person

and a great guy," he says.

Honesty has been a guiding principle in Fields' career.

"I think it's important to try and conduct your business honestly," Fields says. "At the end of the day, you have to be able to look at the guy in the mirror and be proud of the person you're looking at. I don't think you can do that unless you conduct your business in that manner."