



Steve Flachbart
Senior Vice President
Hayes & Sherry

“Steve’s work ethic is one of the first things anyone who works with him will notice. He approaches every transaction and client relationship with the same level of effort and follow-through, regardless of deal size or complexity. In an industry where timelines shift and details matter, he stays on top of things without needing to be pushed. He doesn’t cut corners, and that consistency makes him a reliable partner on any assignment.”

What accomplishment or project so far in your career are you most proud of? Relocating from Chicago to Rhode Island in the middle of my career was the biggest challenge I’ve faced in business. Most of the opportunities I created in Chicago were local in nature and, unfortunately, did not transfer to Rhode Island. What was transferred was my expertise in real estate brokerage and the ability to build meaningful relationships. I was fortunate to join Hayes & Sherry and seamlessly fit into their client-focused culture. Rhode Island has also offered me the opportunity to work on multiple facets of brokerage and expand my knowledge of the business.

Who has been a mentor or influential figure in your career, and what is the most valuable advice they have shared with you? I’ve been privileged to work with many people who have provided guidance and mentorship throughout my career, but one person who provided the best life example came from outside of real estate. My dad was a high school teacher, taught at a community college and sold residential real estate. He worked three jobs at times to ensure the success of our family. He had a client-focused approach to teaching his students and saw incredible potential in each one. Many still keep him updated on their progress and success. His lessons on how treat others remains a guiding principle for my business.



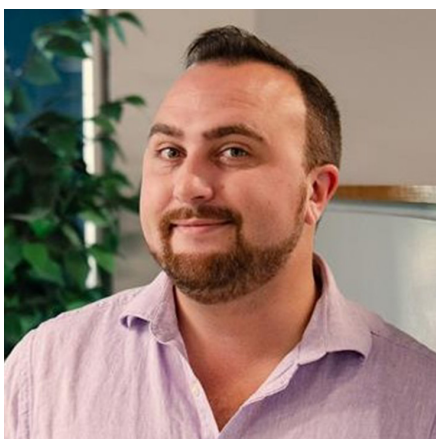
Ian Staber
Project Manager
SV Design Architecture + Interiors

“Ian’s strength in the team extends beyond one area. During design and documentation, he emphasizes high design quality and technical integration. He skillfully manages the construction details while realizing the design concept. Most importantly, his client relationships are invaluable. By prioritizing their goals and viewing

the process from their perspective, Ian fosters long-term connections and ensures successful project delivery.”

What accomplishment or project so far in your career are you most proud of? At SV Design, I’ve had the privilege of contributing to an affordable senior housing project for Harborlight Homes: Maple Woods. I often immerse myself in the project details, which allows me to ensure quality while deepening my understanding of the broader impact we have on the community. The overwhelming letters of gratitude from residents expressing their love for their new homes serve as a powerful reminder of the significance of our work in helping fulfill dreams as a team.

What trends or opportunities do you see shaping the future of the industry? I believe that prioritizing the needs of our inhabitants is crucial in commercial architecture. As codes evolve to ensure basic standards, it’s essential for us to go beyond and actively support each other and our environment. By incorporating thoughtful design, we add significant value to the communities we serve. We aim to be adaptable, supportive, responsive, responsible, and empathetic in our approach to design and construction, creating spaces that truly enhance the lives of those who use them.



Jonathan Sheppard
Project Engineer/Associate
DiPrete Engineering

“We have seen Jonathan Sheppard grow into a reliable and thoughtful leader at DiPrete Engineering. His strong technical skills, collaborative approach, and attention to detail make

him a valued member of our project teams. Jon’s commitment to quality work, teamwork, and professional growth reflects the leadership potential that makes him deserving of recognition as a Rising Star.”

What inspired you to pursue a career in your industry, and what path brought you to your current role? Throughout my life, I have developed artistic skills that I use to communicate ideas and concepts visually. Working in civil engineering feels like a natural extension of that. Land development is one of the more creative areas of the field, and it allows me to apply those skills to produce real world results. I’ve always wanted to help improve the built environment, and now I do.

What accomplishment or project so far in your career are you most proud of? I am most proud of projects that solve unique and complex challenges and result in real improvements to people’s daily lives. I am currently working on several municipal drainage projects that address flooding issues affecting residents and businesses. Seeing those projects lead to tangible quality of life improvements is especially rewarding to me.



Eduarda Alves
Owner | Post-Construction Clean
E Alves Cleaning Service, Inc.

“This company stands out for its resilience, consistency, and ability to deliver under pressure in an often overlooked trade. In an industry

where construction cleaning is undervalued and under-budgeted, they continue to raise the standard, proving their work is not just the final step – but a critical part of every project’s success.”

What inspired you to pursue a career in commercial real estate, and what path brought you to your current role?

I started in cleaning and naturally moved into construction projects, where I saw how important the final stage really is. No matter how great the build is, it’s the cleaning that brings it to life. I built my company by showing up, working hard, and proving that what we do matters – even when it’s often overlooked.

What accomplishment or project so far in your career are you most proud of?

I’m most proud of building a company that consistently delivers under pressure, even in unstructured conditions. We walk into active job sites with no clear plan for our scope, multiple trades still working, and tight deadlines – and still get the job done right. Earning repeat business in those conditions speaks for itself.



Claudius Zorokong
SVP, Commercial Banking Officer
Rockland Trust Bank

“As a financier, colleague and friend, Claudius is truly a rising star in the affordable housing sector. He is a driving force behind Rockland Trust’s growing initiatives, expertly balancing technical financial acumen with a mission-driven focus. Whether navigating complex Low-Income Housing Tax Credit structures or collaborating with syndicators and housing agencies, his commitment never wavers. He is dedicated to improving the well-being of families and their communities.”

What inspired you to pursue a career in this industry, and what path brought you to your current role?

Curiosity and a desire to change professions led me to real estate. I studied political science and worked in a congressional office for several years before deciding to pursue a career change. I entered the field through a real estate analytics firm, where I learned the fundamentals and realized I wanted to focus on real estate finance. After working in multifamily securitization, I was introduced to Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) financing, which opened my eyes to a new segment of CRE and the value it provides, especially for tenants of the resulting developments.

Who has been a mentor or influential figure in your career, and what is the most valuable advice they have shared with you?

I’ve been fortunate to have many influential figures throughout my career. One piece of advice that’s stuck with me is to always have a succinct opinion. Said opinion does not necessarily need to always be correct – or even voiced, depending on the circumstance. Whether correct or not, the value is in thinking critically. A former manager always asked what I thought the solution was when I posed a question, which was frustrating at times, but forced deeper thinking and led to learning opportunities. I’ve come to appreciate the value of those moments and the lasting impact to my development.



Louis Barone III
Project Manager/Associate
DiPrete Engineering

“It has been a pleasure to see Louie grow into a trusted leader and problem-solver at DiPrete Engineering. Since joining the firm in 2021, his technical strength, commitment to clients, and willingness to mentor others have set him apart. His promotion to Project Manager reflects both his impact today and the leadership potential we see for the future.”

What inspired you to pursue a career in your industry, and what path brought you to your current role?

When I was a kid, large skyscrapers and structures would catch my attention. I have always been drawn to the built environment and watching ideas turn into something tangible people use every day. I enjoy problem solving, puzzles, and working with a team to accomplish tasks. Civil engineering felt like a natural fit as it combines problem solving with real world impact. I began my career in structural engineering, then transitioned into land development, where I enjoy the collaboration with project teams. Seeing projects built and used by the public is what makes the work rewarding for me.

What accomplishment or project so far in your career are you most proud of?

I am particularly proud of my work on electric vehicle charging infrastructure projects throughout New England. I have been involved in permitting and designing several of the first DC fast charging stations in some municipalities. These projects required navigating new regulations, coordinating with utilities, and working closely with local officials permitting this infrastructure for the first time. Knowing these sites are now serving the public is something I take pride in, along with the opportunity to work on so many different project types that impact the community.