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Alumni Spotlight: Bob Champion

Alumni Spotlight: Q&A with Bob Champion, MRED '96

Bob Champion MRED '96, is the founder and president of Champion Real Estate Co., one of the pioneers in creating urban mixed-use project developments. He is a leading national expert on shopping centers, vertical retailing, public-private partnerships and mixed-use development with retail, residential, office and entertainment components. His company's mixed-use developments in Southern California include Gaslamp CitySquare in San Diego, The Pasadena Collection and The Burbank Collection.



Bob Champion

As president of Champion Real Estate Co., what is a typical work day like?

The majority of my day is spent meeting with various team members to help problem-solve, improve strategies as market conditions change and ensure that our team is executing our strategies in the most efficient, productive and professional manner possible. The remainder of my time is spent mostly evaluating opportunities that our team feels have merit.

In your field, what do you consider to be the most rewarding aspect of your work?

Taking an idea that I visualize in my mind and making it a reality.

What are the biggest challenges?

Trying to maintain our competitiveness through innovation.

Earlier this month, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Champion Real Estate Co. bought a 2.76-acre collection of parcels in Hollywood for \$20 million, and that the plan is to build a \$100-million apartment and retail development near the Hollywood & Highland entertainment complex. What made you choose this location?

I see it as a perfect infill mixed-use location with public transit, jobs and numerous amenities nearby.

Do you see some opportunity emerging in this area of Hollywood?

The City of Los Angeles is currently finalizing the update to the Hollywood Community Plan. When adopted, this updated plan will set in place public policy that will ensure the transformation of Hollywood into a 24/7 urban icon that was originally envisioned by the Los Angeles Redevelopment Agency.

What is your vision for this development project?

Our vision is to build a mixed-use project that will further activate the Highland Avenue corridor, will provide urban housing adjacent to a major regional public transportation hub, will provide student housing to more than 5,000 full-time, entertainment trade school students in Hollywood, and will provide additional public parking for the Musicians Institute and Panavision, which are a part of our project.

What impact do you hope the development will have on this neighborhood and community?

Our project is located in the transition area between Hollywood Boulevard and the single family residential neighborhood south of Selma. We hope that our project is the perfect analogue for future development in the area.

How do you feel the MRED program helped prepare you professionally?

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I give the MRED program 100% credit for my career success.

What lessons from the USC Price School have you been apply in your work?

The program gave me the tools to properly assess the risk/reward of any opportunity and to successfully develop and execute business strategies on the properties we chose to buy.

In addition to being an MRED alum, you're also an adjunct faculty member for the program. What courses do you teach?


I teach a product course on retail and mixed-use development.

What would you say is your favorite thing about being an instructor?

To hopefully have a positive influence on the lives of my students.

Your son is entering MRED student — which makes him the first-ever “second-generation” student in the program. What do you hope he gains by going through the MRED program?

I am confident that he will learn the skill sets necessary to take a leadership role in our company.

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