



BY PAUL HELLSTERN, THE OKLAHOMAN

Tim Strange, managing director of Sperry Van Ness, commercial real estate, stands at Lake Park Tower, 6525 N Meridian Ave., which he and Zach Martin have listed for sale.

Executive Q&A with Tim Strange

His lips are sealed on sale of church

*By Richard Mize
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Being quiet about your church is sort of odd in the Bible Belt, where one's light is never expected to be hidden under a bushel and is always supposed to shine.

But business is business and with a contract pending, real estate executive Tim Strange said he couldn't talk about the sale of the former Bell Isle Community Church building at 2600 NW 55 Place in Oklahoma City. The church house holds the origins of what is now Crossings Community Church, at 14600 N Portland since 1999.

We tried. But Strange, 54, talked about other things — a little about his involvement with Crossings the church, as opposed to Belle Isle the church building, the local property market and his leadership, as managing director, of Sperry Van Ness, which he brought to

Oklahoma City in 2004 with colleague Gary Gregory.

Q: You're selling your church! That can't be good. Just kidding. Tell me about the building, why it's for sale and what kinds of feelings you have about it.

A: Can't answer due to contract for sale on building.

Q: Do you remember the last song, or hymn, you sang there?

A: Never went to church in that building but last solo at Crossings was "To Be Like Jesus." I have a bass voice so the choir director really has to look for songs in my range.

Q: What did you want to be you grew up? What happened?

A: A Naval aviator. But my 20-50 vision wouldn't allow me to because you needed 20-20.

Q: From mechanical engineering at Southern Methodist, how did a nice guy like you wind up in the real estate business?

A: By accident. I started in manufacturing management with Procter & Gamble in Dallas, moved to Cincinnati and moved back to Oklahoma City because my wife missed Oklahoma City. In Oklahoma City, I started in property management and then went into leasing and sales.

Q: It's been more than four years since you and Gary Gregory brought Sperry Van Ness to Oklahoma City. Obviously, you've been successful. What's the secret of your success?

A: The Sperry Van Ness core covenant of putting the client's interests first combined with the marketing platform and national reach are unsurpassed in the industry. Plus the timing of our startup as Oklahoma City was on the cusp of a breakout to a "Big League City" didn't hurt.

SVN's ability to mass-market properties through our "maximum exposure" has been one of the driving factors. A significant amount of deals we have handled were the result of SVN's marketing platform from the Monday calls, e-mail blasts, etc. We have a market platform that is unmatched by any other firm in the city.

In the end, though, I give all the glory to God for my success. I know if I do my small part He will more than do his big part.

Q: What deal have you done that you're most proud of? Tell me about it.

A: The sale of Bricktown Square at auction (in November 2005) for 25 percent more than all the local experts thought it was worth. It was our first auction, an auction for a prized property, not a distressed one, and we closed it in 75 days from the date of the auction.

This sale has been validated by the redevelopment of the "Candy Factory" by Chuck Ainsworth and Jeff Moore, part of the block that we sold to Jeff.

Q: The Oklahoma Association of Realtors has been promoting strong and rising home values here with the slogan "Good Thing You're in Oklahoma." Why is it a good thing you're in Oklahoma, or Oklahoma City, as a commercial real estate specialist?

A: Oklahoma City is one of the few markets in the nation that has been relatively unaffected by the national downturn in the economy and in residential and commercial real estate.

While commercial brokers in markets all over the country are struggling to get deals done, we are fortunate enough that market dynamics are strong with rising occupancies and rental rates in nearly every type of commercial space.

As a result, deals are being done at higher-than-average purchase prices, while owners of commercial buildings are achieving higher net operating incomes due the increases in rental rates. We are truly fortunate to be facilitating deals in Oklahoma City.

Personally speaking

- **Position:** Managing Director, Sperry Van Ness, commercial real estate, Oklahoma City.
- **Date of Birth:** April 20, 1954.
- **Birthplace:** North Carolina, but my family was originally from Birmingham, AL. My father was transferred several times, so I ended up in Oklahoma City in high school.
- **Residence:** Oklahoma City.
- **Education:** John Marshall High School, 1972; Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering, Southern Methodist University.
- **Family:** Wife, Marylee, is marketing director at Sperry Van Ness; daughter Juliann, senior at the University of Oklahoma majoring in public relations with a minor in nonprofit management; daughter Katylee, sophomore at OU majoring in public relations.
- **Industry and civic involvement:** Commercial Real Estate Council of Oklahoma City, 2009 president; Rotary Club 29 of Downtown Oklahoma City, past member of the Board of Directors, "Jingle Leader" for a fundraiser for the club for a year; Leadership Oklahoma City, Board of Directors, Member of Class XII; Boy Scouts of America, Last Frontier Council, Silver Beaver Award, past member of Board of Directors.
- **Church Involvement:** Member of Crossings Community Church, choir member and occasional soloist, choir council president.
- **What magazines do you read?** The Economist, Golf, Diver.
- **Web sites you regularly read?** Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University (recenter.tamu.edu) and Forbes.com.
- **What's in your CD Player?** Josh Groban, The Who and Michael W. Smith. I like Christian music and rock 'n' roll.