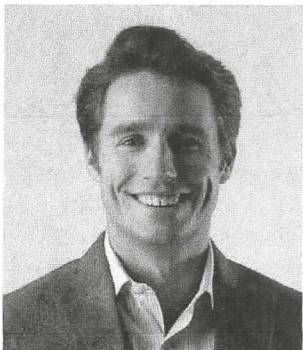


SOME ARE TAKING their shot at business ownership; some are applying principles of entrepreneurship to their tasks with existing companies. All, though, are poised to become part of the next cohort of business leadership in Kansas City. So meet a score of young people who think beyond their years with visions of success—and are applying the tools to make it a reality.

20 in their twenties

by Dennis Boone

WYLIE CURRAN CURRAN COMPANIES



Wylie Curran is all business: He followed up a finance degree from Miami University in Ohio (minor: entrepreneurship) with an MBA from the Cox School of Business at SMU. And the 27-year-old president of Curran Companies has a sterling business pedigree through his father, Pat, a co-founder/owner of Sporting Kansas City. But while

Dad is definitely around as a principal and sounding board, the younger Curran is making his own waves with the private-equity firm he formed in 2010. “Our model is very different from traditional private equity,” he says. “Our partnership with a management team creates a perpetual investment horizon as long as we continue to meet our mutual goals.” One example of that was Clore Automotive, which saw its revenues rise by 60 percent in three years on his watch after the Currans acquired full ownership. Now his goal is to acquire one company a year for the next five years and turn Curran Companies into “the premier sponsor of lower middle-market management buyouts in the Midwest. And we are well on our way.”

CARA COY LEAD VENTURES



The qualities of an entrepreneur are not those of business owners alone. Resourcefulness, creativity, high energy and commitment to success are all part of the tool kit Cara Coy packs for work each day as marketing director for Lead Bank. She wears another hat, as well: managing director for Lead Ventures, a business accelerator

program run by executives from the bank. In that capacity, she works with other entrepreneurs who have secured financing from the bank. After earning her degrees in advertising and graphic design from Iowa State, she spent just two years on that track before the financial services world beckoned. Now 28, Coy is building a strong network of connections for both business and her career development, hailing from the likes of the *Kauffman Foundation*, *OneKC for Women*, *Silicon Prairie News*, *KC Startup Village* and *Under30CEO*. Kansas City, Coy says, “is full of innovators, experts and educators who work together selflessly to build something great.”