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Rappaport of Century Investment Co., named as BusinessWest's 40 Under Forty

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Liz Rappaport, manager of properties, marketing and human relations at Century Investment Co., has been named as one of BusinessWest's 40 Under Forty. In 2007, BusinessWest introduced a new recognition program called 40 Under Forty. It was intended as a vehicle to showcase young talent in the four counties of Western Mass. and, in turn, inspire others to reach higher and do more in their community.

A chance encounter with an employee from W.F. Young led to Rappaport working in that company's equine division for a couple of years.

But another family business called, specifically, the commercial real estate firm her grandfather started 70 years ago. So Rappaport went back to school to earn her MBA, then knocked on the door at Century Investment Co. "I said, 'Dad, will you hire me? Because, if you don't hire me, I'll just apply to your competitors.' That's what got me hired," Rappaport said.

Over the past three years, Rappaport has managed the sale of more than \$1 million in real estate and negotiated leases with a host of tenants at Century's many properties.

"Technically, Dad calls me the assistant gofer," she said. "One day, I'll be doing a mortgage refinancing and signing tenants to 10-year leases, while the next day, I may have to go pick up trash somewhere or help out parking staff. I'm a jack of all trades, master of some, hopefully."

One thing she has mastered is the technology of her industry, introducing new digital and print marketing materials and updating the bookkeeping system. "We're bringing the company into the 21st century, updating accounting processes and establishing the first digital marketing campaign, getting us on the Internet."

Rappaport also pours herself into civic volunteerism, most notably serving on the board of the Western Mass. Council of the Jimmy Fund, taking a leadership role in several fund-raising activities each year. She takes pride in helping to fight against childhood cancer, but is also proud of her place in her family's business.

"I love working with my father, and I love real estate. I get to interact with tenants, but also get the finance side, the accounting aspects, the management side â€” a little bit of everything," she said.

"You've got to like what you do."

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