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2021 Ones to Watch: Michael Cronenberger, PE, Specialty Division Manager, Helical Drilling Inc.

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Which project, deal, or transaction was the “game-changer” in the advancement of your career? A support of excavation for a new hospital addition in Portland, ME. This was a fairly recent job but the support of excavation required a tier of bracing. Not an unusual project but the last few years at Helical, we have been diversifying and pushing more into the support of excavation market in New England. When COVID-19 hit we had just landed the job weeks before everything shutdown and it was a great project for the company. Although it wasn't our first support of excavation job and certainly won't be our last, it took a lot of hard work to get us to the point of doing this project and it was very gratifying personally to sell it and watch our guys working on it.

What led you to your current profession? From a young age I always have been a person who gravitated towards building things. Even in my summer jobs in high school and college I tended to pick jobs that allowed me to do these things. Even in my spare time my hobbies include wood-working and renovating homes as I enjoy the challenges of framing. If I wasn't an engineer and enjoyed the math side of things, you would probably see me out in the field with the crews.

What advice can you offer to someone who is interested in a career in your industry? This isn't a 9-5 job! It requires a lot of dedication and hard work. If you're not willing to put in the time to continually educate yourself and adapt with the industry this won't be the place for you. It takes long hours of hard work and dedication. Your reward will be to work with some of the most talented people and watch some of the most amazing projects get built. Boston is a tough market and requires unique solutions to its difficult geology, site locations and logistics as no two jobs are ever the same, but it's the challenges we look for and what makes it fun.

Who was/is your mentor and how did s/he influence/help you in your career? My mentors have been my parents. They worked hard their whole life to give myself and my sisters the tools to succeed in life. They helped put us through college when they never had the chance and always encouraged us to pursue our goals. Watching them work hard has molded me into the person I am today. I do not take what I have for granted and am constantly doing what I can to keep moving forward and advancing.

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