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Investec



Michael Chadwick continued

2007 to €53.4m at the pre-tax level. The company had been hit by the weakening construction sectors of both Britain and Ireland as well as the strength of the euro against the sterling. It was, said Chadwick at the time, "the most challenging trading conditions in over 15 years." As Grafton continues to trade profitably, albeit at a much lower level, its focus is now on tackling the tougher conditions by cutting costs in order to protect its earnings.

Chadwick holds both a BA and MSc and, besides his chair, has conjunct roles within the group of nomination committee member and finance committee chairman. He joined the group in 1975 and was appointed to the board four years later. In 1985, he took his present position as executive chairman.

Sean J Conlon
Conlon & Co



At 39, Sean Conlon is founder of **Conlon & Co** and **Connaught Real Estate Finance**. Before emigrating to America in 1990, he attended the College of Marketing and Design in Dublin and worked as a credit analyst for Middle East Bank in London. Upon his arrival in America, Conlon found work as a janitor. While working in various buildings within the city, he learned that there was an immense opportunity in real estate.

In 1993, he joined Koenig & Strey. Within a few years, and while still only in his 20s, he became recognised as one of the leading sellers of residential real estate in the US. Indeed, his relentless work ethic led to sales volumes that grew exponentially

each year. Conlon regularly set national sales records among real estate agents that exceeded \$170m.

Conlon applied the same energy that had propelled his sales career to pursuing prime real estate assets and turning those opportunities into successful ventures. In January 2000, he formed Sussex & Reilly, an Illinois-based real estate brokerage firm. Sussex began with a 10-person staff and quickly became a major player in Chicago residential real estate. Today, Sussex has in excess of 300 employees and annual brokerage sales volumes of over \$1bn. Conlon, however, subsequently sold Sussex.

Also in 2000, Conlon formed the real estate merchant bank **Conlon & Co** to provide real estate consulting and financial services to clients within many facets of the industry. With this endeavour, he held steadfast to his belief that success is the result of both a hands-on approach and hard work.

Conlon, in partnership with Dan Fowler, acquired Near North National Title in 2004. Near North, a national real estate title company established in 1988 handles over \$5.5bn in real estate transactions annually across the US.

He continued his entrepreneurial ventures in 2005 with the launch of **Connaught Real Estate Finance**, where he serves as chairman and co-owner. The company has approximately \$100m dollars under management and provides mezzanine financing for large residential development projects throughout the US. Conlon is responsible for the growth of the origination platform, an ever-evolving business strategy, and investor relations.

Conlon is also a director at **Broadway Bank**, the most profitable bank in Illinois, and is co-owner of **Van and Conlon**, a development company that builds 50-100 vacation homes in the Midwest.

In 2007, Conlon launched his

newest business, **Conlon & Co Ireland**, in his native country, in partnership with James Carroll, founder of **Investor First**, a successful Dublin-based Real Estate & Development Company. **Conlon & Co Ireland** provides a unique opportunity for Irish investors to profit from Conlon's experience and real estate acumen. In early 2008, **Conlon & Co Ireland** raised a real estate opportunity fund with an institutional Irish investor to invest \$50m in US property.

In less than a decade, Conlon has become recognised as one of the top real estate experts in the US. He is often the "voice of real estate" for journalists and reporters; he has been interviewed by CNN, CNBC, *The New York Times*, *Forbes* and *The Wall Street Journal* to discuss the market and trends within the real estate industry.

In 2006, he was featured in the 60-minute RTÉ documentary *Made in America*, which highlighted his triumphant business successes. The documentary brought Conlon's story of aggressive work ethic, ambition and astonishing accomplishments to millions of viewers. He has been featured in *Crain's 40 Under 40*; awarded *Irish America's Business 100* profile three years running; and spoke at The Wharton School of Business on entrepreneurship and leadership in 2006.

Now in his 30s, Conlon presides over an extensive real estate business. In less than a decade, he and his companies have made an indelible mark on the way real estate sales are performed and transacted.

With his humble beginnings in mind, Conlon graciously takes pride in his many accomplishments. He continues to be an innovator in the real estate industry in order to provide the most knowledgeable and fitting consultation to his clients. **Conlon & Co** also consults high net worth individuals; he provides these clients with advice, asset evaluation, acquisition support and portfolio management.

Conlon is also a passionate fly fisher and loves to travel the world. He splits his time between his home in Chicago and his ancient water mill that he maintains on a well known Irish Salmon river.

Harry Crosbie
Point Village



With an extensive portfolio of properties in Ireland, Harry Crosbie is chairman and a large shareholder in the **Point Village**, a new world class business centre and cultural hub.

At the centre of Dublin's dockside is the O2 theatre, the long-standing music venue that has undergone extensive development and a name change (the O2 mobile network bought naming rights in 2007 for €25m) and reopened in December 2008. Construction of the €850m development on the 12-acre site surrounding the theatre began in 2006 and when it is completed the development as a whole will include a 23,000 sq m shopping centre, a four-star Clarion Group hotel, a car park and a cinema complex. It is expected that it will create 2,000 permanent jobs and has been entirely privately funded by Crosbie and his partners.

Reportedly, the development will have as its signature building the Watchtower. This 120m tower is set to include 500 sq m of office space, 150 luxury apartments and an exterior rooftop bar and restaurant with views over Dublin Bay. The foundations for the tower have been built already, and Crosbie is now working on its internal layout and final decisions. Crosbie is a 50% owner of the O2