

as a strategy consultant for Bain & Co. After some traveling in South America, Nick is working for Bain in its Toronto office.

DONALDSON

See 1990s Job News.

HAMER

Alexandre Hamer, Com'02, has moved from Athens, Greece, to Pune, India, where he is the General Manager, Sales Strategy & Product Development, for Mercedes-Benz India Pvt. Ltd.

KAPPAYA

Yusuf Kappaya, Artsci'08, has accepted a position as Operations Manager at Canadian American Clothing, located in Zona Libre, Puerto Cortes, Honduras. He writes, "I'm in Honduras managing a recycled clothing operation as I get ready to return to Queen's for grad school. It's quite different from school life, but I've been able to apply many of the lessons from my time as a House President at Queen's to the everyday business here. I'm forever grateful for the opportunities provided to me at Queen's which have made me not only a more effective leader but a more whole person."

MCLELLAN

Helen McLellan, NMBA'01, has been named Executive Officer in the Faculty of Science and Engineering at York U.

TABACHNICK

Geoff Tabachnick, Com'04, is living in New York City and working for Clarium Capital Management, a global macro hedge fund.

FAMILY NEWS**MCCONNELL**

The McConnell family celebrated three generations of Queen's alumni when **Kirsten**, Artsci'08, graduated.

Kirsten is pictured here with grandfather Neil, Arts'50, and father Fred, Sc'83. Neil has retired to Stratford, ON, after a successful teaching career, during which he was Superintendent of Schools for Bruce County from 1970 to 1984. Fred, who is the Director of Product Management for Mitel software, lives in Ottawa with his wife, Sheila Currie, Artsci'84. Kirsten, whose degree is in Development Studies, plans on working in Africa for a year and a half before returning to school for a Master's degree. The McConnells are extremely proud of the diverse way their Queen's degrees have served them and look forward to many more Queen's graduates in the family in the future.

DEATHS**DUTTON**

See '90s Deaths.

SPOTLIGHT - '00s**Trash talk**

Mike Thorne, Artsci'01, already had a well-developed entrepreneurial streak by the time he arrived at Queen's in 1997. In grade four he started a garbage pickup service, charging businesses in his home town of St. Catharines, ON, a dollar per bag of litter he picked off their properties. In grade seven he made key chain holders, selling them door to door for four dollars apiece.

Then, while his first-year chums in residence were worrying about where they were going to live the next year, Mike was busy combing real estate listings, looking to buy the perfect rental property in the student ghetto. "I was a lot more fascinated with rental properties than my courses," says Mike, a 6'3", 230-lb. father of one, who also competed for the Queen's track and field team in shotput. "When I think of Queen's, I have tons of great memories, but most of my time was spent looking at properties."

With help from his parents, Mike put down \$10,000 for a property at Brock and Albert, then took equity out of the house to buy a second property on Alfred two years later. When the arrival of the Ontario double cohort pushed up property values the following year, he sold both for a combined \$250,000 profit.

"I had no doubt from the day I met Mike he'd be the most successful person I ever met," says his friend Abe Choi, Sc'01, who lived with Mike in his first house at Queen's, and is now studying medicine at McMaster.

So was Mike destined for a career as a real estate mogul? Actually, this 30-year-old born entrepreneur is back in the trash business, and now he has his sights set a little higher than he did in grade school. He's the founder of a company called Just Junk, a rapidly growing junk removal service, that he hopes will not only rival industry leader 1-800-GOT-JUNK, but become "the most reputable brand in the service industry, period."

"Penetration rates [for professional junk removal services] are very low," he says. "There's plenty of room for both of us."

In a business that is still largely comprised of small-time operators, Just Junk, like Vancouver-based 1-800-GOT-JUNK, offers clean, on-time service by polite, uniformed drivers who tread carefully in boot covers and clean up afterward. "All the customer has to do is point," he says. Just Junk drivers will recycle or donate as much of the unwanted material as possible to minimize what goes into the landfills.

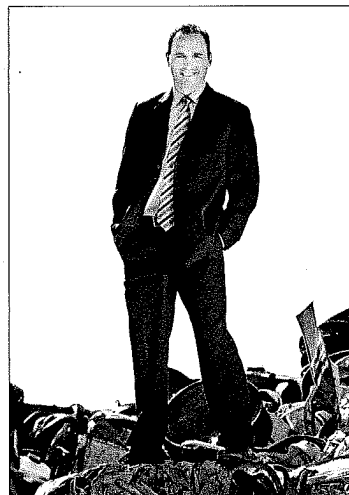
Mike got the idea for the business during his first job after graduating from Queen's, when he worked as an operations manager for Bell Canada in Toronto. A corporate audit determined a roomful of old furniture, computers, and cubicles was a fire hazard. The junk had to be removed, and it fell to Mike to find out how to do it. "I thought, how does a company like this co-ordinate disposal of all of this? And what is every other business across metropolitan North America going to do?" he says, adding that back then he didn't know of his future rival's existence. "That's when the light went on."

Mike quit in 2003, moved back to St. Catharines and incorporated Just Junk, starting operations with a 1975 Econoline van he bought for \$500. He had nine calls his first day.

Since then he's grown the business in the Niagara Region and beyond, by franchising the Just Junk concept and taking on four franchisees in Ontario's Golden Horseshoe and in Florida.

The economic slowdown has led to a reduction in enquiries by would-be franchisees, but not to a slowdown in business. "The only thing that slows residential demand for junk removal is weather," Mike notes. He's determined to grant 10 new franchisee territories by mid-2009 and have 100 franchisees in place by 2012, in Canada and beyond. That's still a fraction of the more than 300 1-800-GOT-JUNK franchises. But with only one major rival in a nascent industry, there's a heap of business still to be won.

"I haven't had any regrets or second thoughts since I made the final decision" to become a franchisee, says Tom Dickson, who left his job as a car dealership finance manager last summer to take Just Junk into western Toronto. After hauling in \$18,000 in revenue in each of his first two months, Dickson's take rose to \$24,000 in November 2008. "Mike is a very intelligent and extremely dedicated person, who's adamant that he will succeed and has to succeed," Dickson says.



COURTESY OF MIKE THORNE

- BY SEAN SILCOFF, COM'92