



CEO

INSIDE DALLAS BUSINESS



2021
HEALTHCARE
ANNUAL

How H-E-B
could disrupt
DFW's grocery
retail market

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, *and* INCLUSION

The Quest for Inclusivity

It starts with understanding the realities of others. It moves ahead by focusing on outcomes. DFW executives share strategies for progress.

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20 EDITOR'S NOTE

DOSSIER

25 YOU NEED TO KNOW
Ashley Buchanan,
The Michaels Cos.

28 MEET THE 500
James Dunn,
Orix Real Estate Holdings

28 LOCALLY SOURCED
Casey Barber,
Rose Gold Rosé

30 SMALL BUSINESS
Lola Lott,
CharlieUniformTango

32 ON THE TABLE
Benjamin Vann, Impact Ventures

34 INNOVATORS
Alejandro Laplana, Shokworks

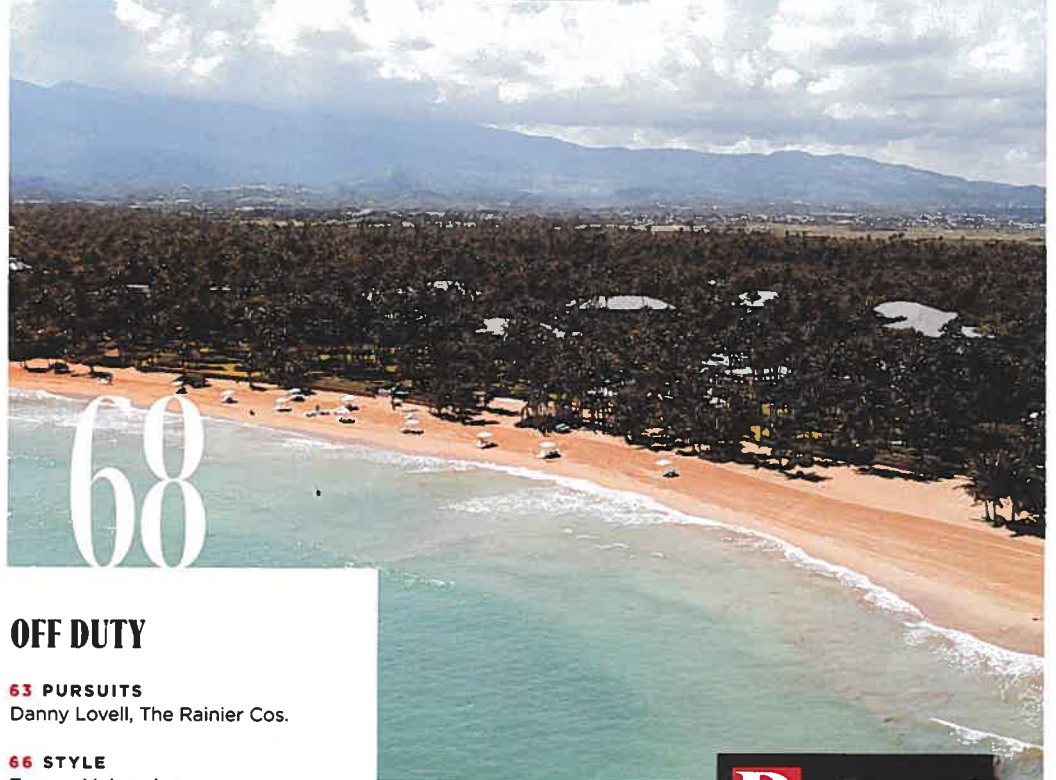
FIELD NOTES

55 LEADING OFF
Suzy Batiz, Poo-Pourri,
Supernatural, and Alive OS

56 REAL ESTATE
The entrance of 1,000-pound gorilla
H-E-B is the latest disruption to
hit the North Texas grocery retail
market.

58 ON TOPIC
Nancy Brown of the American
Heart Association, Byron Sanders
of Big Thought, and Debra Brennan
Tagg of Brennan Financial Services
on what has them most excited
about the future.

60 THOUGHT LEADER
Jennifer Chandler, Bank of America



OFF DUTY

63 PURSUITS
Danny Lovell, The Rainier Cos.

66 STYLE
Tammy Meinershagen,
Medina USA

66 GREATER GOOD
Tom Landis, Howdy Homemade
Ice Cream

68 WELL TRAVELED:
PUERTO RICO
Evelyn Torres-Gomez, Solaris
Technologies

70 ROOTS
Sanjiv Yajnik, Capital One

100 END MARK
Adelfa Botello Callejo



ON THE COVER:
Caren Lock of TIAA,
photographed by Sean Berry

LOVELL BY JONATHAN ZIZO. END MARK: ADELFA BOTELLO CALLEJO FOUNDATION. STYLE: BEAU BUMPUS. TRAVEL: THE ST. BEATIS PAULI BEACH RESORT. PHOTO: JONATHAN ZIZO

OFF DUTY

THE PERSONAL SIDE OF DFW BUSINESS LEADERS

PURSUIITS

All-American Golfer and Real Estate CEO

Danny Lovell leads The Rainier Cos., which invests in commercial properties of all types. But he still hasn't lost his passion for golf.

story by **BEN SWANGER**

photography by **JONATHAN ZIZZO**



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WHEN HE WAS ON SUMMER BREAK AS A 9-year-old, Danny Lovell's mom would drop him off at the Henryetta Golf Course in rural Oklahoma, and the young tyke would play as long as the sun allowed. But despite his passion for golf, Lovell, who today serves as CEO and president of The Rainier Cos., would initially go on to excel on the tennis court. He won the Oklahoma State Tennis Championship in high school and earned a tennis (and basketball) scholarship to Oklahoma Christian University. But the allure of his first sport was too strong, so he set aside his Wilson racket in favor of less-than-tour-ready clubs. Lovell walked on OCU's NAIA-level golf team, and it didn't take him long to find his stroke. He logged back-to-back All-American campaigns in 2001 and 2002, becoming the first walk-on in OCU history to do so.

After graduating, Lovell took a post at Gleneagles Country Club as an assistant professional. It was there that he met a club member who would help fuel his quest to go pro. During a round of golf, Lovell shared his dream but said he needed money to fund the pursuit. The member told him, "If you shoot under par on the back nine holes, I'll invest in your golf career." Lovell came in two shots under to earn an investment from the member and 15 others the member corralled. They put in

about \$150,000 between 2003 and 2005 to fund Lovell's golf career. Unable to successfully turn pro, he stashed away his Titleists in 2006 to take a job with The Rainier Cos. after getting to know the company's founders. "They needed a business development person, and they were willing to give me a shot," he says. The firm, which buys and sells all property types, has closed on about \$2.5 billion in assets since its founding in 2003.

While climbing the ladder at The Rainier Cos., his competitive itch for golf returned. In 2010, Lovell regained amateur status. A year later, he won the North Amateur, shooting six under par, shooting 68, 74, and 65. He has also played in four USGA events and won a club championship at Preston Trail Golf Club. Throughout it all, his day job did not suffer; he was named president and CEO of The Rainier Cos. in 2019.

Lovell still plays in up to six amateur events a year. His wife, Amber, is an avid golfer, too. In 2018, the pair won the Championship Couples Tournament at Pebble Beach Golf Course in Carmel, California. The parallels between sports and business are interesting, Lovell says. "In college, I walked on, someone gave me a shot, I ended up being good enough, and became an All-American," he says. "At Rainier, they gave me a shot; I worked hard, made the team, and then became CEO." **D**

INSIGHTS

The Rules of the Game

When dining with potential business colleagues, real estate exec Danny Lovell says he can learn a lot about them by the way they handle themselves. "Do they ask the waiter for every little thing every 10 minutes? That indicates that they'll be high maintenance," Lovell says. A person's character also is revealed on the links, he adds. "Do they fluff up their lie in the rough? They may be willing to do anything to get ahead." Lovell says. "Do they say they had a six when they really shot a seven? Cheater; beware. Do they take a lot of time to hit a golf shot? It could mean that they're very deliberate and that quick decisions don't come easy."

AVID PLAYER
In his best game, Lovell shot a nine under par. Today, he maintains a 6 handicap.

