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High climb:
Broken bones, inexperience, don't deter 'control freak'

Malcolm Parry

Ten years after founding since-acquired Sotheby's International Realty Canada, Ross McCredie is working on a global stage.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: It's 10 years since former Intrawest sales director **Ross McCredie**, then 37, approached New York-based Cendant Corp for Canadian rights to the Sotheby's International Realty title it had licensed from Sotheby's Auction House.

He had few bargaining chips: "I wasn't a real-estate broker, I didn't own a brokerage, I was young, and I'd had a head injury."

That was from when the high-jump champion and iron-man competitor was hit by a car beside Whistler's Shit Happens mountain-bike trail. He woke up in St. Paul's Hospital with a broken neck, an ear almost ripped off, his face and upper body filled with glass shards "and memory that took six months to come back." A year earlier, seven weeks and multiple surgeries were needed to reconstruct his face following a skiing accident that also perforated his bowel.

Knowing that Sotheby's Auction House would have final word on Cendant's decision, McCredie pitched its brass on assembling a company of "navy seals" who could represent the top-level international clients they wanted. By May 2005, he and 20 employees were in business "without a single listing, not a lot of money, and determined that franchising would totally destroy the brand." Today, 30 offices house 1,000 staff, including 400 realtors. "And I know every one," said McCredie, who retains one from perhaps 30 applicants: "We hire slowly and fire quickly. I'm a control freak about the brand and what we do."

What McCredie did himself was launch the Student Travel Services firm at age 18, sell it at 22, sail the Caribbean on what was to have been a world tour, co-found other travel businesses and have then-Intrawest boss **Joe Houssian** send him to sell units in Invermere's Panorama Mountain Village resort. Rebounding to the Whistler sales-director job in $600-million-sales-year 2001, he saw such exuberance as 37 Four Seasons private residences sell in 45 minutes for $1,209 a square foot. Houssian also introduced McCredie to future wife **Kristi**.

Today, McCredie is also COO of Montreal-based 360 VOX Corp., co-founded by president-CEO Robin Conners, that acquired Sotheby's in 2012. In May 2014, minority owner and chair **Ned Goodman** steered 360 VOX into the Dundee Corp. he heads in a deal that valued the firm at $55.3 million and provided consideration of $45.5 million to other shareholders. The change created a global real-estate fund able to acquire major international developments. They include Croatian oceanfront projects worth $800 million and perhaps $2.5 billion respectively, and a $4-billion-range scheme with 50,000 homes in China. Other projects include the former Intrawest Edenarc 1800 resort at Mont Blanc, and a proposed, $600-million-range hotel-casino complex with Paragon Development Corp. beside BC Place.

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THEY DO: The world's 19th-richest individual dined with 1,199 in the Vancouver Convention Centre Saturday. **Lee Shau-kee**, 86, was fourth-richest before Hong Kong reverted to China in 1997. That decline aside, a $22.7-billion personal fortune still gives the Hong Kong-based Henderson Land Development company's 62 per cent owner plenty of clout. It also made him a desirable guest for the $350-million, media-and-property Fairchild Group founder, **Thomas Fung** at the marriage of Fung's 32-year-old son **Joseph** to **Michelle Tam** Saturday. Lee was doubtless no less pleased to see Henderson stock trading at $45.15 HKD, up 24 per cent since March. Ditto its 2014 and 2015 revenues being projected slightly above 2013's $23.3 billion HKD and much above 2012's $15.6 billion HKD.

Subsidiary Henderson Development (Canada) Ltd.'s interests include Vancouver's International Village Shopping Centre and adjacent Paris Square, Coquitlam's Henderson Place Mall, and The Centro development in Scarborough, Ont.

The Canadian schemes of two Vancouver developers at the wedding, Westbank Projects' **Ian Gillespie** and Concord Pacific's **Terry Hui**, handily outrank Henderson's. Concord Pacific is owned by Hong Kong-based **Li Ka-shing**, the world's 17th-richest individual with a net worth of $34 billion.

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THE NEW FORTY: For handling $2 billion in assets as the Raymond James firm's top-producing financial adviser since 2009, **Andrew Johns**' team members named him The Wolf of West Georgia Street. That was in a video the 10 produced for Johns' 40th birthday recently. Johns once adopted a more salubrious title. Figuring that restaurant dishwashing mightn't impress potential employees, he listed himself as a "ceramics technician."

Other school-and-university summer jobs carried more weight. He founded a landscaping business in Victoria, then an awning cleaning firm — motto: We work when you don't — that paid him $72,000 after taxes. Rather than cool his heels before enrolling at Paris' L'Ecole superieure de commerce, he founded Andy's Walking Tours, and soon had groups of 25 paying $15 each to be escorted around town. He learned arbitrage at age 12 by having Alberni Valley Times subscribers pay three weeks early for newspaper he delivered, then pocketing the bank interest.

Not everything panned out. Accepted by the University of Calgary Dinos hockey team, the Junior B left winger was sidelined by a motorcycle accident. More rewardingly, he got a B. Comm at UVic, coached a British wheelchair-basketball team and surfed the Pacific coast and Hawaii on the battered board displayed in his office. A student job at the French BNP Paribas bank's international-trade desk saw him streamline a hitherto-fax-based trading system.

Rejected initially by Raymond James, Johns joined Canadian Western Capital. That firm was acquired as a tax loss by Goepel McDermid, for which Florida-based Raymond James Financial Inc. paid $48 million US and a million shares of common stock in 2000. So, he got the job anyway, much to his and the firm's benefit.

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Caring for $2 billion in assets, the Raymond James firm's Andrew Johns had staff call him the Wolf of West Georgia Street on his 40th birthday.

Former Hong Kong government executive Frederick Ma and Fairchild Group head Thomas Fung flank multibillionaire Lee Shau-kee.

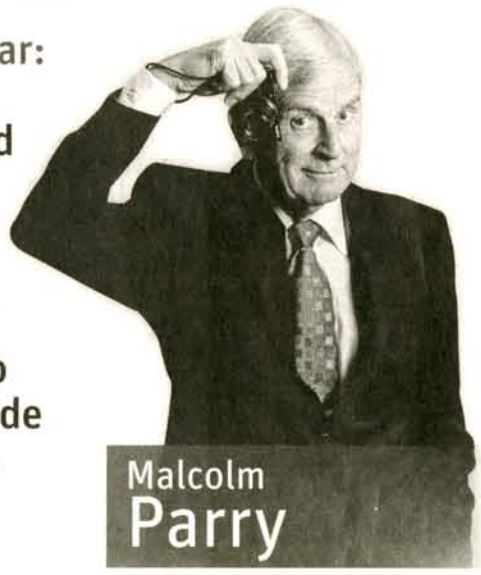
Westbank Projects chief Ian Gillespie and Concord Pacific's Terry Hui attended the Joseph Fung-Michelle Tam wedding.

Sotheby's International Realty Canada listings typically include the likes of this $8,995,000 home near West Vancouver's Eagle Harbour.

TOWN TALK

Fung-Tam wedding a truly global affair

Spectacular: Dazzling dishes and sparkling ceremony made for a real who's who of self-made successes



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Michelle Tam and Joseph Fung were married while surrounded by 1,200 guests, thousands of flowers and a sky filled with exploding fireworks.

Ballet BC's dancers greeted the company's donors and other supporters at an event on the Scotiabank Dance Centre rooftop patio.

VOW NOW: Some 1,200 people dined on peppercorn beef tenderloin, miso-glazed sablefish and tofu-crepe vegetable rolls the Culinary Olympics Team Canada prepared for **Joseph Fung** and **Michelle Tam**'s recent wedding reception in the Vancouver Convention Centre. Canadian, Chinese and Spanish fireworks out-dazzled Honda Celebration of Light displays.

And the world's 19th-richest man, **Lee Shau-kee**, did cross the Pacific by private jet. Rumours aside, though, it flew alone. When a minor mechanical mishap grounded the Fung family's plane in Hong Kong, its 39 wedding guests took commercial flights.

As for giving the newlyweds cash, Fairchild Group founder **Thomas Fung** and actress-wife **Amy** followed corresponding Chinese tradition by diverting some to Doctors Without Borders, the BC Women's Hospital and the University of B.C.

"Without me, this wedding could not have happened," Fung announced to laughs, meaning his biological rather than fiscal role.

That said, the Magee Secondary graduate's considerable wealth might have rocketed in 2006. Offered a majority position in a Hong Kong investment-banking concern with market capitalization of $3.6 billion and the prospect of doubling its share price in 18 months, he respected Amy's wish to stay in Canada. So, love prevailed, as the Fungs doubtless hope it will for the next generation.

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KEY PEOPLE: Hong Kong-born wedding guest **Bing Thom**, 73, was reportedly the only Asian-descent person in his Magee secondary grade. That ratio reversed while Thom built a global architectural career that included Thomas Fung's Aberdeen Centre and fellow guest **Tom Chan** and brother **Caleb**'s Chan Centre at UBC, which still awaits an organ. At the reception, Thom reconnected with rock guitarist and former Vancouver Board of Trade chairman **Henry Lee**, who, as vice chairman and director of Tom Lee Group Companies in Kowloon, now feeds Asia's appetite for Steinway pianos.

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FULLY COMMITTED: Goh Ballet artistic head **Chan Hon Goh**'s students entertained Fung-Tam guests by dancing to music from Faust, an opera based on Goethe's hardly newlywed tale about the Devil taking a man's soul in trade for boundless — if temporary — knowledge and delights.

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TWO GOOD MEN: One wedding attendee, **Leon Tuey**, arrived from China to be "houseboy" in a Shaughnessy mansion where his father had cooked. Later, while teaching art at John Oliver Secondary — the National Gallery of Canada has a Tuey etching — he thought: "I could be an investment analyst." He moved to Toronto, became VP and director of RBC Securities, founded Leon Tuey Inc. and, returning in 1990, looked after the assets of the family whose servant he'd been.

Also at the nuptials was Montreal-raised **John Yee, who** had washed dishes in his parent's Chinese restaurant, graduated from medical school, launched a stellar career in Michigan, and now heads Vancouver Coastal Health's thoracic-surgery group. Why did he quit a much-higher-paying job? "If my mother gets sick, I want her to be in the hands of someone like ... me."

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STEPPING FORWARD: Ballet BC artistic director **Emily Molnar**, executive director **Branislav Henselmann** and board chair Dr. **Kevin Leslie** entertained donors on the Scotiabank Dance Centre's roof terrace Wednesday. The company's 29th season will begin Nov. 6, but dancers are already preparing for the May 7 premiere of a Molnar-choreographed work titled Rite. With Black Mountain band keyboardist **Jeremy Schmidt**'s score and designer **Omer Arbel**'s set, it's a tip o' the tutu to Sergei Diaghilev and Igor Stravinsky's Rite of Spring. Parisians rioted at that ballet's 1913 premiere. But it literally set the stage for contemporary companies like Ballet BC, which will tour perform in Montreal, Quebec City and the Maritimes in long-before-spring January.

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JOUR DE GLOIRE: Parisians rioted lethally July 14, 1789 by storming the Bastille prison to set off a head-rolling revolution. Consul-general **Jean-Christophe Fleury** and French Community members will occupy Shaughnessy's Hycroft mansion peaceably Monday for a $150 banquet and singing of La Marseillaise.

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HOPE SPRINGS: It was 1998 when since now-retired **Al Arsenault**, now-sergeant **Toby Hinton** and other city coppers founded the Odd Squad Productions Society and filmed the Downtown Eastside drug-use documentary Through A Blue Lens. When it premiered, Hinton said: "A lot of police thought (addicts) were a writeoff, a complete waste of time. But, if you want to be part of the solution, you have to look a long way past enforcement (and) deal with the — quote, unquote — criminals."

Fundraising events help OSP "empower youth to make positive life choices about drug use and criminal behaviour."

At a recent one, executive director **Doug Charlton** described an October-launching series produced with Surrey Safe Schools, the Gang Task Force and Brightlight Pictures. In one episode, Father **Greg Boyle** says the many gang adherents his L.A.-based Homeboy Industries has helped reform shared "a lethal absence of hope."

Can't say that about Odd Squad.

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Thomas and Amy Fung greeted transpacific and global reception guests following son Joseph and Michelle Tam's wedding.

Ballet BC Board chair Dr. Kevin Leslie and artistic director Emily Molnar continue to see the company grow and gain respect.

Fifteen years after co-founding Odd Squad Productions Society, Al Arsenault and Toby Hinton will see it launch an anti-gang video series.

Financial analyst Leon Tuey and thoracic surgeon John Yee came from humble beginnings to make valuable marks on the world.

City-trained architect Bing Thom greeted former Vancouver Board of Trade chair Henry Lee who leads many Tom Lee Group Asian operations.

Attending the Fung-Tam wedding, Thomas and Amy Fung's former brother-in-law David Ho now lives quietly with wife Winnie.