

Richard Granoff '84 »

Design, Build, Play

FOR RICHARD GRANOFF, THE KEY TO LEADING A FLOURISHING architectural firm—and a fulfilling life—is balance. As founder and managing principal of Granoff Architects in Greenwich, Connecticut, he espouses a design philosophy that blends respect for the past with excitement about the future. And as a family man and active outdoorsman with a passion for entertaining and travel, he encourages and exemplifies an attitude of “work hard, play hard” among the company’s diversely talented professionals. “I am very fortunate to be working on such great projects, in such a great place, with such wonderful people,” says Granoff, whose team comprises an international mix of men and women who are architects, landscape architects, and interior designers, and includes several SU alumni. “Treating people with respect and dignity is very important to me, whether they are employees, workers at a construction site, clients, or vendors. Work-life balance is also essential. The culture at my firm is not ‘all work and no play.’ Rather, it is: ‘Get your work done, then go spend time with family and friends.’”

Granoff launched the firm in 1989 at age 28, just five years after graduating from the School of Architecture, having first worked in New York City with noted architects and fellow alumni David Rockwell '79 and Jay Haverson '78. He started the company solo out of his townhouse, and two years later moved to a rented downtown office space and hired his first employee. By the time the firm celebrated its 10th anniversary, it had grown to 10 people. That number grew to 25 in time to mark its 25th year.

Most recently, Granoff purchased a building in Greenwich that will serve as the future headquarters of the award-winning firm, whose work—often featured in the media—“spans the spectrum” from custom homes and multifamily residences to office buildings, commercial interiors, and restaurants. “We are gut renovating an old industrial building that was built by the power company in 1928,” says Granoff, a LEED-accredited professional who values sustainable building practices and green design. He is also a residential and commercial real estate developer. “We just received historic designation from the state of Connecticut, and are turning it into a Class-A office building, but with a funky downtown style,” he says.

Being actively involved in the community is important to Granoff, who lives in Greenwich with his wife, Jill, and their two sons in a home he designed and built. He has served on the board of numerous nonprofit organizations and recently

received the Light a Fire award from *Greenwich Magazine* in recognition of his philanthropic efforts. Additionally, Granoff Architects is committed to providing pro bono design services for local projects.

Granoff is equally generous in his contributions to Syracuse



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University, to which he feels “extremely indebted.” He established the Richard S. Granoff '84 Endowed Scholarship Fund in 2009 and joined the School of Architecture Advisory Board in 2014, when he also received the Dean’s Outstanding Alumnus Award. And he’s proud and happy that his son, Jacob Granoff '17, is entering his fifth year as a Syracuse architecture student. “I’m thrilled to be on the advisory board and enjoy the

camaraderie and the professional dialogue that occurs among a roomful of architects about where the profession is headed and what education should be for architects,” Granoff says. “I received an excellent education at the School of Architecture, which enabled me to successfully pursue my career. As such, it is important for me to give back.”

—Amy Speech