



On the Forefront of Innovation in Ann Arbor Commercial Real Estate: Ron Dankert of Swisher Commercial

Ann Arbor has changed a lot over 45 years. In 1972, The Stooges were playing house shows and Ron Dankert was starting his career in real estate. Ron has been with Swisher, which turns fifty in 2018, since nearly the beginning. Over that span, he has stayed on the forefront of the Ann Arbor commercial real estate industry by engaging with the community and endless flow of business leaders drawn to Ann Arbor.

Ron served two mayoral appointments on the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority, and played a key role in the emergence of the downtown that we know today. With larger department stores and variety stores having moved out of the downtown in the '70s and '80s, the vacancy rate in the heart of the city was high. Ron saw the potential for the packed streets we see today; he saw a full day of activity and a vibrant city that wasn't fully dependent on September through April (U of M schedule) and football Saturdays.

In the early 2000s, Ron was one of the first to start placing tenants in open, loft-style offices above the restaurants and shops. This first wave of the millennial generation to come out of college was looking for something different than drop ceilings and cubicles – and Ron saw a perfect combination in the old department stores downtown and Ann Arbor's goal to revitalize the area. Now, fifteen years later, the vacancy downtown is hovering around 2% and some of those first tenants are longtime clients.

Now, Iggy Pop is playing stadium shows, the Blind Pig is getting new owners, and Ron devotes much of his time to the city, his family and mentoring the next generations of brokers and community leaders in addition to managing his properties.

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