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“I’m a sucker to get into something I don’t know a lot about.”

John Davis

Senior Vice-President,
Corporate Planning Associates



JOHN DAVIS’S CHILDHOOD wish was to become a superhero. Perhaps he could have become Philanthro Man. It may not be a catchy Marvel nom-de-guerre, but it fits. That’s because the six-foot-five former Eskimos linebacker (1991-92) uses his philosophical thrust to nudge the generosity of Calgary’s wealthiest citizens.

As senior vice-president of Corporate Planning Associates, Davis helps his clients manage and invest their money and, yes, get even richer. At the same time, he talks to them about the importance of giving back to the community.

Davis’s father, a Canadian National Railway Co. executive, was a principled man who didn’t take anyone for granted. “I saw my dad go over-and-above at times to help people,” says Davis, who tries to walk that same line.

As co-chair of United Way’s finance and insurance division, he and 25 volunteers under him have raised \$7.4 million in the past three years. In 2005, he became board chairman of Saint John’s School of Alberta. The boys’ school is set to launch a \$6.5-million capital campaign in 2008 to build a new residence and enhance bursaries. Davis is also chair of a Calgary Foundation committee, which last year directed more than \$300,000 to non-profits to help fund environmental projects for Calgarians.

“You make [your community] a better place for your kids to be and volunteering makes you more socially aware, and that’s really important,” says the father of four. “I’ve never had a shortage of things to get involved in. And I’m a sucker to get into something I don’t know a lot about.”

— Anthony A. Davis

In His Own WORDS

If I could spend one day as any celebrity, I would be Bill Gates because of what he has been able to achieve in both the corporate and philanthropic worlds.

Most people don’t know that I can actually look after my kids by myself when my wife is away.