

YOUNG AGENT ENJOYS CAREER-FAMILY BALANCE

By Jerri Culpepper

JOHN ROGERS, PRODUCER
INSURANCE AGENCY OF MID-AMERICA, INC.



At age 35, John Rogers is at a sweet spot in his life.

He is enjoying his career as an agent/producer with Insurance Agency of Mid-America, Inc.

And he loves being a family man. He and his wife of eight years, Julie, spend as much time as possible together, doting on their two young daughters: Gabby, 3, and Reagan, 17 months.

The Oklahoma City native inherited at least part of his work ethic from his parents. His father was the finance manager for a local furniture store until his retirement several years ago. His mother still works in the Oklahoma County Assessor's Office, where she has been employed for 40 years.

From his parents, Rogers also learned the importance of family. Throughout school, his parents were involved in all of the activities in which their son was involved, including baseball. And when he was accepted into the University of Central Oklahoma in 1999 on a baseball scholarship, they continued to attend those games as well.

At the time, Rogers' sights were not yet set on a career in the insurance industry. In fact, he said, laughing, "Like most college students, I originally had no idea what I wanted to do – other than play baseball."

With a general idea that he might like to pursue a career in some area of law enforcement, he declared that as his major. His senior year, Rogers interned with District Judge Ray C. Elliott. After his graduation from UCO in 2004, the judge helped him land a job as a probation officer.

"That lasted six months," Rogers recalled,

chuckling. "I quickly discovered that was not what I wanted to do."

His next job was as a claims adjuster with Farmers Insurance in Oklahoma City.

This was a much better fit. For the next six years, he learned the ropes as an adjuster, then moved to field claims.

In 2010, Cody McNeill and Todd Triplett suggested to Rogers that he consider a career move to the Insurance Agency of Mid-America to work as a producer.

"I was resistant at first, but in October 2010, I made the transition. It was probably the best decision I have ever made," Rogers said.

Mid-America, a Union Standard appointed agency, is headquartered in southwest Oklahoma City, with branches in Edmond and Tulsa.

From the first day on the job, Rogers was made to feel welcome and an integral part of operations. He especially credits Mel Holt and Phyllis Simmons, both with Union Standard (the former is now retired), with his early education there.

They warned him that, in the beginning, learning the ropes would be "like drinking water out of a fire hose" – the water being an analogy for information overload. They had him spend a day with them to learn about underwriting, and along with other "Heavy Hitters" took him to the corporate offices in Dallas to learn about different aspects of the business.

"Union Standard emphasizes educating their young agents because they know it will make their job easier if they have agents who know what an underwriter does, if they know the whole picture," he explained.

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At Mid-America, Rogers' main focus has been on bringing in new businesses and, importantly, retaining them.

Though it may not always be convenient, he tries to be available day and night, even weekends. "My clientele, mainly people in the construction agency, don't work 8-to-5, so why should I?" he asks.

Rather than identifying one major accomplishment during his career thus far, Rogers said he prefers to celebrate ongoing successes, such as bringing on board each new customer.

He shared a piece of advice he likes to share with prospective clients: "Every business owner needs five people, outside of their organization, that they can rely on: a reputable insurance agent, a CPA, a good attorney, a good banker – and the Man Upstairs. If you have those five pieces in place, you are setting yourself up for success."

Rogers is proud of having achieved the designation of Accredited Adviser in Insurance and earning recognition as the outstanding student during his

NASBP (National Association of Surety Bond Producers) course of study in January 2014.

Asked about any current challenges, Rogers replied that keeping on top of the technological changes occurring in the industry tops his list.

"I've got an old soul," he said. "I'm admittedly not technologically advanced, so keeping up with the technology and updates in this industry is very challenging for me. I'd rather have a notebook and pen and pencil than have to learn a new platform."

Fortunately, he belongs to several trade organizations – notably IIAO – that offer a range of services to both young and established agents, including training and tips on how to tackle issues ranging from legislative concerns to technological ones.

When he's not wearing his insurance hat, Rogers can be found spending quality time with his family, playing golf (which he says satisfies his competitive itch), or fishing for bass and crappie at Lake Eufaula – and in general enjoying his time in that aforementioned "sweet spot." ■

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