

**Kirt Jacobs:** Welcome to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs. This is an archived edition when our program was called Leadership Landscape TV.

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**Kirt Jacobs:** Welcome to another installment of Leadership Landscape where we go inside the minds of local community leaders and legends and offer some keen insights into how they see themselves and more importantly just what makes them tick. I'm Kirt Jacobs host of Leadership Landscape where former interviews have with included former mayors, state politicians, renowned national sports writers, heads of business concerns, community activists and developers. Today our guest is C. William Weyland Jr better known as Bill Weyland to most around these parts. He's a managing director of City Properties LLC. He's a lifelong Louisvillian and an award winning architect and real estate broker Weyland family once ran the Monarch Lincoln Mercury dealership for several decades. And quote, "Dad was a car guy but none of the rest of us are Weyland once said. He loved it but Dad always taught us to do what we love and focus on what we are good at."

It is safe to say what he is good at and his passion has had a tangible impact on the urban core of downtown Louisville. He has a concentrated study in urban planning in Rome, Italy in the early 70's with a bachelor's of architecture degree from the Fighting Irish the University of Notre Dame in 1975. His personal commitment to revitalizing downtown has manifested itself into three prominent projects. The first is the Louisville Slugger Museum with the world famous bat out front, The Glassworks District commonly known as the Glassworks Building which blends a unique innovative mixture of art, urban living and tourism. Arguably this development really kicked off a different mindset that downtown development could turn a profit for developers and investors alike. His latest project is the old YWCA building which is actually the historic Henry Clay hotel, which we have a piece of it here in front of us, utilizing both new market and historic tax

credits. With these three prominent developments he's been instrumental in developing over 50 million dollars worth of real estate in Louisville over the last 10 years. Sporting a what me worry grin as you probably already witnessed the developer seems unconcerned about the bustle around him on construction sites. Quote "All construction projects come down to the wire." unquote. Weyland says with a laugh. "I've been doing these things long enough that I just expect it now.

I can see where somebody who's not familiar with the chaos of a big construction job would be more worried than I am." Bill and his wife Edith have five children ranging in age from 26 to 14. Welcome Bill to Leadership Landscape. It's a true pleasure having you here today and you are leaving your footprint as we speak on downtown Louisville.

**Bill Weyland:** What fun.

**Kirt Jacobs:** What drives.. You're lifelong Louisvillian but what drives you to do these projects. These are not easy projects I think it's a safe observation.

**Bill Weyland:** I think that's part of what's attractive about it. I think it I think it's it's always challenging and you're always looking and having to find new ways to do things and I think that that's that whole orientation towards lifelong education that can be so exciting. But you know it really comes back to what what dad encourages everybody. It's just I love being involved in this stuff and I love being able to put together things. I also you know way back got that lecture about to whom much is given much is expected.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Oh yes, Oh yes.

**Bill Weyland:** I've always felt very blessed and I got a great education and and I just felt like you have a responsibility to give back and make things happen. You know to do things. And I've had the opportunity thank goodness...

**Kirt Jacobs:** There is more to come

**Bill Weyland:** ...to make things happen.

**Kirt Jacobs:** I think I might know the answer to this but whom do you credit most influential in your life Bill? Can be more than one person.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Well there have been a bunch of people. And you know for sure a lot of folks around but it always starts with family. And you know dad was very personable knew everybody and very solid businessman that was well respected and he kind of always had his business downtown. And so downtown became important to me. Mom was very involved civically in different activities and you know there was always voluntourism. Part of what we were you know educated in. My wife has been fabulous in supporting me and let me leverage us to the hilt.

**Kirt Jacobs:** That's real important in any project.

**Bill Weyland:** That's exactly right. So that's it's been great. You know I had some great influence from my contemporaries of mine who went out and did some innovative things and I got to watch him and learn from him. Mike Sanders one of my buddies from college got into oil exploration and he would grind and do consulting and make enough money to survive and then he go try to drill oil wells. And honestly I sort of borrowed that philosophy I kind of grind through the architecture consulting business and try to free up time to get into real estate development. And you know that was a big influence in showing me that things like they could be done.

**Kirt Jacobs:** If there is one Bill, what is your biggest professional regret? In other words if you could armchair quarterback your life hindsight 20/20?

**Bill Weyland:** Sure

**Kirt Jacobs:** Regrets a strong word.

**Bill Weyland:** I always wanted to go faster and I have a really some-

times felt like all of the professional background that I got almost paralyzed me.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Really

**Bill Weyland:** You know and when I first got out there I kept looking for those perfect deals. But unfortunately I really had been educated about structural systems and roofing systems and different things and had a look at a property and I'd want it to be perfect. And I realized later there are no perfect deals out there. But there were a lot of them that I didn't pursue. And now ironically I really look for the most imperfect...

**Kirt Jacobs:** Yeah you probably look for the most hairs on it.

**Bill Weyland:** You know because I really realized the reverse. That you know the professional background allowed me to deal with problems that a lot of other people will run from and I don't need to run from them because I understand them. So instead of looking for that piece that is perfect we look for the things that are imperfect. That are that are professionalism and our experience can give us an edge and let us do something that other people can't deal with.

**Kirt Jacobs:** I'm going to go off on a little tangent here. What's been the most surprising with with some of these projects? That was just like kind of a wow moment or what have I got myself into moment or.... Just curious because you really have taken on some really unique properties that are going to live on long after you're gone. Which is a great testament legacy to yourself but in the moment in the arena of doing it. It's got to be some insight.

**Bill Weyland:** You know for me. I've been fortunate enough to have a vision about where I want to get to.

**Kirt Jacobs:** OK

**Bill Weyland:** And all the little glitches that happen. Really I've never really looked at as much of a glitch. In my mind if if you if you

run into a wall there's a window there someplace. You just go find it.

**Kirt Jacobs:** That is a good one. A good analogy.

**Bill Weyland:** You know and I just I just keep looking for that window to jump through so that I can get something solved. So as long as I can keep heading in the direction of where I think I'm going to end up. Which thank goodness we've always been able to do. I guess I'm just tenacious enough to keep looking for the window and just won't say no. I think the thing that's been most surprising and really gratifying is the response. People use the building and in the... Original you tried to plan everything through and have all everything's solved. And as time has gone on I've realized that you can't you can't do that and really shouldn't do that. Because the fun of it is leaving some of that canvas unpainted so the other people can sort of shape it a little bit and it becomes much more dynamic. And so I was one of the things I learned from Lynn Winters where you start is not where you end. And I really I don't think we ever finish a project. You know to me there are always evolving. Glassworks is evolving.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Yes it is.

**Bill Weyland:** H&B keeps evolving. The Henry Clay will just keep evolving and I kind of like that. It's a dynamic that really a lot of projects don't have but I thoroughly enjoy it.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Is it kind of like an unsolved mystery at time?

**Bill Weyland:** And its shaped...

**Kirt Jacobs:** That is unraveling.

**Bill Weyland:** ...by just a lot of people. And as long as we can keep engaging people and they get enthused about it I think I think that's the exciting thing about it.

**Kirt Jacobs:** On the flipside of that earlier question about regret

what is your biggest professional triumph if you could name one? Can be more than one.

**Bill Weyland:** My biggest one is whatever's next.

**Kirt Jacobs:** I like that. That is a great answer.

**Bill Weyland:** I'm almost totally based on whatever's next. And I can tell you why. Ten years ago I would have thought that I would never get the opportunity to anything like an H&B again. I mean it was a great thing and I was really excited about it and it just led right into... The experiences I learned at H&B turned right into Glassworks. And I couldn't have done Glassworks if I hadn't done H&B. But then Glassworks really in a lot of ways had a bigger impact on the city because it did change people's attitudes about living downtown. It really garnered some national attention about how you mix business and the arts and suddenly it was a more important project. But the experiences and that just led to the Henry Clay which personally right now I'm just I'm so excited about it. I just. It is a stunning building that was about to be lost to this community.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Yes it was

**Bill Weyland:** Having the opportunity to just walk in the lobby. I just love walking in the lobby. It's just it's a beautiful building with gorgeous materials and and couldn't have been done with that the experiences of H&B and Glassworks. And so I guess I'm kind of wondering what the next one is but I'm really looking forward to it.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Glassworks you know the Glassworks building or Glassworks district was really a paradigm shift in the mentality of investing in downtown Louisville. I think it's arguable that maybe 4th Street Live would not of and the arena we could go on. It's just phenomenal the response that had in the feeling you know vote in the community.

**Bill Weyland:** You know and I always say the same thing it always came from education. And the best thing that happened to me is

that spent that year in Italy. I saw, you know I'm from Louisville. It just opened my eyes to a much broader base of education. Much more broader experience of culture. Broader experience of buildings and people and I saw people spaces that were magnificent magnets. In Rome we lived near Piazza Navona and it was like having an outdoor living room. And that whole concept of having outdoor space that is that dynamic and attractive was really something I had never seen before. It totally shifted my idea about what architecture was and how important it was in cities especially. And I'll never forget. I came back here and I and I really thought you know this city needs to be a 24 hour city. This city needs to move forward have those dynamic spaces and because the city is the heart of whatever community it's in the center off. And it needs to have a whole 24 hour aura about it that gives security and gives activity. And and you know in the 70's there was a lot of discussion about that. But being able to actually play a role you know 20 years later and make some of those things happen which just you know is kind of a dream come true.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Wow What kind of answer to this, you touched upon it, but what do you find exciting about all this? Just is it the mystery of the building process that that you that and excites you? I'll leave it to you. Floor it your.

**Bill Weyland:** Well I have always I guess you could say I had a short attention span. I like everything and one of the reason I got in architecture is because in my mind everything sort of related to it. You know whether you're talking about music or painting or construction or people or psychology. You know I could kind of funnel it into an architectural mentality and do something with it. And I think that's that's been the fun of these projects. They are very complicated and essentially the way we do it is we assemble teams of experts. I mean I pride myself in not knowing anything.

**Kirt Jacobs:** At least you're honest.

**Bill Weyland:** I can't you can't be an expert. I learned you know Bob Knowland years ago my first mentor and he basically said you know you don't need to detail and tell a roofer how to build a roof.



They know how to build a roof. You need to tell him how you want it perform and how you want to look but don't tell him how many nails to put in because they know more about it than you do. And that is exactly right. I found that to be a broader thing than that. I mean you know we work. You know on an H&B we work with museum consultants and structural consultants and parking garage consultants and restaurant consultants and you know all sorts of people who are experts. And all I do is sort of... I'm sort of the conductor. I glue all these people together and try to tell which one to play at what time and where and and that is really a lot of fun. I learn a lot. I get exposed to a lot of people that are that are really creative and we get to shape them into making projects that couldn't happen both without them and the other folks into really dynamic spots. And the same thing with bankers and accountants and people that I never really you know it initially in my career didn't have a lot of interaction with. They had become actually critical because urban finance is about as complicated a things you can get into. And over the last 10-15 years we've kind of developed an expertise in that. And that is the fun of it. I mean it goes from talking to plasterers to talking to gun accountants to talking to you know sophisticated bankers and that's what I enjoy.

**Kirt Jacobs:** This show is about leadership. Can you define leadership and one word? In the great lexicon of the English language. Can be more than one word.

**Bill Weyland:** Well for me I mean for me I you know the kind of leader I am I'm not the sort of the classic leader I don't think because you know..

**Kirt Jacobs:** Well leadership comes in many form.

**Bill Weyland:** My orientation is vision. I rely a great deal on being able to see things that other people don't necessarily see for whatever reason. But I think the other piece and in the piece it's always been important to me and really the way we've led both as a company and as an individual is we do it. And maybe leadership for us for me is about doing it.



**Kirt Jacobs:** Just get out there and do it.

**Bill Weyland:** And and and you do it and you create a model that hopefully inspires other people that gets other people to create their own businesses. I'm really happy when a guy like Ken Shapiro comes in and creates a jazz club that's worked. You know in a space that we created. So we create an opportunity but you got to have the other guy who actually sees it and runs with it. And then so the you know the leadership part was was getting that first piece done that partially blank canvas so somebody else can take it. A Ken VonRowan can take it and create a bigger presence in glass. Ken Shapiro can take it and create jazz. A Silver Spoons can take their opportunity and created events venue that is you know very special and historic and has a sense of the 1920 style that's extremely neat. And that's what's been great all those things are locally driven homegrown and you know we're off the subject of leadership.

**Kirt Jacobs:** No. No we are not.

**Bill Weyland:** It is really what to me is important. It's not only thinking about it. It's getting it done in creating that opportunity for other people.

**Kirt Jacobs:** If you could change one thing Bill in your own life or in general what would that be.? Can be a large scale question or small scale. However you want to interpret it.

**Bill Weyland:** You know I guess I have a hard time looking back and saying and because everything's been such an influence. And I must admit I have learned far more... Everybody says this but it's really been true in my case I've learned far more from my failures. The things that I might want to change if they were such lessons for me. In fact I've tried to tell the kids first find something you really want to do and then don't be afraid of making mistakes. And I tell them you know you will never be able to make mistakes of the magnitude and frequency of your father. So just you know just don't be intimidated by it you know. And so really from that standpoint I just you know I've really tried to learn every time I've run

into a big obstacle. And it's been very valuable to me.

**Kirt Jacobs:** So there's beauty in failure maybe is the mantra.

**Bill Weyland:** I'm convinced.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Really

**Bill Weyland:** Yeah

**Kirt Jacobs:** You've done some beautiful stuff which is not a failure. Could you describe in detail a particular incident or scenario in your professional or personal life where you've utilized the style of just do it philosophy of leadership as we talked about a moment ago?

**Bill Weyland:** Well probably the easiest one to talk about is the most recent. And I think it is very very much explains how we do things and how I do things. I was given the opportunity to address the the Henry Clay. Obviously it's a it's a massive thing. You can't think about buildings as an individual project because in effect it's important to create a center of things. And so you you've got to create something that's broader based. So we have immediately started thinking not about the building. But the building in the context of a block and the block in the context of what had been the historic theater district. And you know that that allowed me to start sort of dreaming the dream of how would we ever get this thing back together. But it same same scenario. You know it's about relationships with a lot of expertise a lot of experts. Who would come in and spend time with me. And we would test different ideas. I always sort of walk into these things with a relatively blank slate. It is about a process that in it's almost like a funnel or you try to just really take time and consider every possible idea. Because if you don't you might miss...

**Kirt Jacobs:** So nothing's off the table

**Bill Weyland:** At the beginning it's just as broad as we can make

it. As broad as we can imagine it. And we try to get as many people involved with the expertise to help us that we can. And then we start trying to make decisions about what's going to be what's going to define a niche for us what's going to take advantage of what is there from a building standpoint the location standpoint and mesh all those things until you come to what you think is sort of that first stage answer. But that first stage answer is just that. It is it is the canvas that is ready for all sorts of people to jump into. And and so we've been able to you know attract Silver Spoon, Who I have great respect for. We've been able to attract Bun Berry Now. We've been able to attract you know great range of tenets that are in the residential side of the building and able to attract retailers. And I think they're attracted to that thing because they have the opportunity to impact it as much as I did. And you know and again it just keeps growing and evolving and.... You know then once you've got all those ideas you've got to be able to attract the capital.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Minor detail.

**Bill Weyland:** Yeah and because of the past and experience in and the car dealer blood that lets me sell things.

**Kirt Jacobs:** There you go. There you go. That's why I wanted to put that in there, your family history.

**Bill Weyland:** You know it's allowed me to mesh some things and it's not about you know it's not about some particular. For me some particular line of expertise because I really I really feel like it's just it's just a glue thing of other people that's allowed us to pull this stuff off. And so the Henry Clay has over the course of the two year run. You know come to life. And we've got other phases on the drawing board.

**Kirt Jacobs:** It has. It is.

**Bill Weyland:** It is and will and that's the beauty of it.

**Kirt Jacobs:** I'm going to throw a little tangent question here since

your builder. Is it is there a particular project that you'd love to wrap your hands around that either A exists or it doesn't exist? If you kind of had your dream project or have you already lived it. You kind of have the mantra of the best is yet to come, I've sensed in our short time talking. Is there a project that... It doesn't even have to be Louisville. I mean I don't want to put you on the spot but if you've got something in mind and you don't want to share that's fine too.

**Bill Weyland:** Years ago I used to throw out ideas and study thing all the time. And and what I the most frustrating thing was to study something and then you couldn't control the property or you couldn't buy or somebody else ran with the idea because you couldn't control it and you were just spinning your wheels. And so I don't know about 10-15 years ago I got very disciplined about not thinking about things that I couldn't have a direct impact on.

**Kirt Jacobs:** That is powerful.

**Bill Weyland:** And I really kind of wall it off. Now you know what I'm excited about right now is we've got seven acres down by Glassworks and I have got a vision for an urban neighborhood. And I'm very excited about it and I want to have the discipline to gradually see that things through so that it becomes a really dynamic space for the city. Same thing with the Henry Clay. We've got a whole master plan there. We control it. We have a great opportunity and so I've got all sorts of ideas percolating in there..

**Kirt Jacobs:** Percolating. The conductor at work

**Bill Weyland:** And I and I can't wait. But I'm always looking for that next opportunity. Something of scale. Something that will have an impact. I don't know what it is but we're out there scouring around something that's five years removed from now that will take that long to get there and I'm looking forward to whatever that opportunity is.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Well great. This is the question I want to ask you. You know you did architecture in the mid 70's. You come up. You've

been a lifelong Louisvillian. You've seen a change in leadership from where and I say this with all due respect the Bingham's had a bit of a stronghold on Louisville and now that whole generation is fading away rapidly if you will. And that mindset. Do you see a difference in today's leaders than in past generation? There's no right or wrong answer.

**Bill Weyland:** No. I'm very excited about where we are.

**Kirt Jacobs:** OK

**Bill Weyland:** I think as I've watched Louisville had a mentality that it was going to stay the way it was. I didn't like that at all. And you know I think I think you're either. You know you're either. Nothing against Paducah but I used to I used to say look we're either going to have to aspire to be an Indianapolis or Cincinnati something bigger than we are. Or where aspiring to be Paducah or Carrollton or some other little river city. Because you can't have it but you can't i just stay where you are. And if you stay just where you are you'll lose the orchestra and you lose the opera and you because you can't afford all the amenities that we had when we were a great you know dynamic city in the 1920s. You can't just live off that legacy forever. You've got to keep growing it. And I think we've seen that issue. But I think we've we've had in the last 20 years I think the first big shift was letting the mayor succeed himself. So I remember when Jerry was in for his first four years and I was just starting to get involved in things. The four years were up. He had just gotten started. And if he had gone to go out of office at that point we would have not been able to build what we see today. So having a mayor have longer than four years. They need that eight years. I think it's been a great thing. Metro government I think has just broadened our whole base. It allows us to develop a community vision. I think that's absolutely critical. Having a having a county and a city that are at odds with each other is the is the curse of a lot of metropolitan areas. I see it in St Louis. I see that you know around our region. Cities that have not been fortunate enough to pull that off are going to be hurt increasingly as time goes on. And so that's a big thing and then I think you're right the private sector. You've got you've got a much more dynamic group that is pushing

forward and you're seeing investment in the city that you didn't see by private people also years ago.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Most I've ever seen in my lifetime. It is phenomenal.

**Bill Weyland:** It's fabulous. And it really makes me feel like the city is going to be moving the foundation is there to move rapidly into into a much better regional economic force. We've got UPS to build on. We've got a lot of expertise in the restaurant industry to build on. We've got a growing medical district which is very exciting. Humana's done some great work. We've got a bubbling up of young companies. I think this is a great town to start a young company and because it's economic to live here and you can have to have an impact real quick. So I think it's it's it's exciting.

**Kirt Jacobs:** This is a question I always like to ask our guest because I never know what answer we're going to get. Bill if you were granted two weeks right today. No obligation. No Blackberry. No cell phone and e-mail. No commitments. Two week mini-vacation from life if you will. How would you spend those two weeks?

**Bill Weyland:** I'd be I'd be traveling. I'd gather all the kids together then we'd go off and just see more cities.

**Kirt Jacobs:** See more cities.

**Bill Weyland:** You know the kids would probably get tired of traveling with me because I have you know we have to walk around every place you know you know see everything. But I love traveling and I always tell people look I go to a city with a camera and I bring back a lot of great ideas and I steal them and it works. You know.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Well this final question we ask our guests and you know we ask them whether they're younger or older. When the great day comes how do you want to be remembered Bill? I mean you're doing things are going to live on well after you and I are long gone. Hopefully. How do you want to be remembered?

**Bill Weyland:** You know I think just by the nature of what architects do. We build things that become sort of you know monuments to life. What you've achieved and that's kind of a nice thing from architectural standpoint. But really the thing that is by far the most important to me and the thing that I really hope I remembered for in an immediate group of people is that you know I was a great dad . The kids are you know just didn't have a real great experience with their life and and how we've sort of guided them in how we've introduced them to what their grandparents and my grandparents and my wife's grandparent. That whole family sort of thing I think is really important. I think it's I think it's important for for Louisville. We have a great native born population here and I think there's a lot of pride in this community and you know where they went to school and where they've lived. And and I think that's important I think you have to have that pride in your in your place and I hope the kids have that. And that's what I want to remember their family experience and I want them to come to this city and I want to try to have an impact. And that would be the best, That would be the best thing.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Well you have the unique position to be able to do that with those buildings. You know it's a living intangible legacy. I want to try to reach up and grab this piece of plaster. I don't know how heavy it is. If I can get it over here this is a piece from Henry Clay correct?

**Bill Weyland:** Yes it is

**Kirt Jacobs:** All right well there you have it. I can imagine what it looked like before it was painted and fixed up. Bill I was quite a pleasure having you on Leadership Landscape.

**Bill Weyland:** Enjoyed it Kirt.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Keep up the good work for many decades and years to come.

**Bill Weyland:** Hope so.



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**Kirt Jacobs:** Thank you for listening to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs. This episode was archival audio from when we were known as Leadership Landscape TV. If you have any feedback, general comments, or a recommendation for a suitable guest feel free to email me at [kirt@moxietalk.com](mailto:kirt@moxietalk.com) or catch us on Facebook under MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs, or on Twitter under [@kirtjacobs](https://twitter.com/kirtjacobs) or our extensive website at [www.moxietalk.com](http://www.moxietalk.com)