

John Ferguson

Business Development Director—Southeast Wisconsin, J.H. Findorff & Son Inc.
Member Since 2016

John Ferguson has a deep personal commitment to Milwaukee and just a quick drive around the city shows where his professional passion lies.

As Business Development Director—Southeast Wisconsin for J.H. Findorff & Son Inc., John's excitement for the industry and respect for his company is palpable.

"Working at Findorff is a team sport," said John, who has a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of North Alabama. "There's a high level of integrity at every level of the company. We are people with a purpose and a mission."

Continually ranked among the top Milwaukee-area construction firms by the Milwaukee Business Journal, Findorff's roots go back 132 years in Madison, where the company was founded, while the Milwaukee office will soon celebrate 50 years. The firm won two Business Journal 2023 real estate awards for the Associated Bank River Center as best office renovation (large category) and Marquette University College of Business Administration as best new development (education category).

While Findorff's big projects get a lot of notice, their smaller projects also serve the community in a big way, according to John.

"We take on projects of all sizes with many being large, high-profile buildings, but a great deal of our most impactful projects are small," said John, who was recruited by Findorff in 2020.

On the larger side, The Couture project is the city's newest 44-story lakefront high-rise in plain view as you make your way to the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center for Rotary meetings. The firm is currently working on a large addition and renovation of Nicolet High School and Marquette University's new College of Nursing and renovation of its Wellness + Recreation Center. They recently completed another of several projects for Lakefront Brewery as well as The Trade, an Autograph Collection Hotel by Marriott in the Deer District where John hosted a Tyrotarian Tour in the spring.

Following in the footsteps of his father who once headed the Rotary Club of Berkeley, California, John joined the Rotary Club of Milwaukee in 2016. He serves on the board of directors but may be best known for heading up the annual Golf Classic, the premier fundraiser for the club's scholarship program. The program, which has raised \$700,000 over the years, has supported 36 graduates with 27 scholars this academic year.

"Getting involved in the golf outing has been such a meaningful and fun opportunity," said John. "The money we raise and the impact we have on the lives of our Rotary Scholars is something I'm really fired up about. Our committee is a really great team."



Findorff is one of two Gold Sponsors of the Golf Classic and John and his wife Holly are co-sponsors of the event's Bloody Mary Bar.



"I am deeply committed to Rotary and Findorff fully supports my involvement," John said. "Giving back to the community is something that is very important to me and is also a core value at Findorff. There's a total alignment there."

In addition to Rotary, John is on the board of NAIOP–Wisconsin, a commercial real estate development association. He serves on Wisconsin Policy Forum's Economic Development Committee and is involved with the Commercial Association of Realtors, the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce and Milwaukee CRE, a week-long immersion program for high school students from underrepresented backgrounds interested in commercial real estate careers.

John, a native of Berkeley, California, and his wife Holly, who is from New York, met in 2012 and after long-distance dating decided to meet in the middle. They moved to Wisconsin in 2015, drawn by its four seasons, a growing development scene and its appeal as great place to raise a family. The couple live in Brookfield and have three children: Mary, almost 5, Mitchell, 3, and Keira, 1.

When he is not working or chasing his kids, John's enjoys golf, running and men's league hockey. In hopes that his kids take to hockey, too, John builds a backyard rink every winter.

"Growing up in California, having your own ice was nothing more than a dream. Building the rink has been a lot of fun and we're making memories for many years to come."



Editor's Note: *Rotary People of Action* is a bi-monthly series written by a group of Rotarians. This feature was written by Jeff Smoller and edited by Mary Bolich.