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## John Adams III, 32

*Real estate broker/principal, Cornerstone CRES|Cushman & Wakefield Alliance*

By [Laura Ayo](#)

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John Adams III, Real estate broker/principal, Cornerstone CRES|Cushman & Wakefield Alliance

While studying finance at the University of Tennessee, John Adams landed an internship with Morgan Stanley.

"I wanted to be a stockbroker," he recalls. "I was supposed to do my training in the World Trade Center. Sept. 10, 2001, was supposed to be my first day."

His training was postponed before he ever traveled to New York, but the events of Sept. 11 that year played a role in causing him to reconsider his career choice after graduation.

"My second love was real estate," he says. "I liked putting the deal together."

In September this year, Adams teamed with other local brokers to launch the Knoxville office of Nashville-based Cornerstone Commercial Real Estate Services, which is aligned with national

firm Cushman & Wakefield.

He credits the training he received from Steve Boles, a former colleague at Wood Properties, which Adams joined in 2003, with helping him gain the confidence he needed to broker deals on his own.

"When I started at Wood Properties, I was young and green and didn't have a lot of experience in commercial real estate," Adams says. "In 2006 or 2007, I probably had two or three larger deals that helped me realize I could do this and I could do this on my own."

He continued his education by obtaining the Certified Commercial Investment Member designation from the Commercial Investment Real Estate Institute in 2007. A year later, he earned the Society of Industrial and Office Realtors designation. He is one of the three brokers in Knoxville to hold both designations.

Adams is a past president of the East Tennessee chapter of CCIM, serves on the board of directors for Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Tennessee and is this year's president of Nucleus Knoxville.

During the Great Recession, Adams helped broker the largest lease transaction for Wood Properties in 2009, a renewal of TeamHealth's space at the Centerpoint Building, where the company operates a customer service center.

"We're starting to see more activity in commercial real estate and we're hoping to be on the front end of the commercial market," Adams says of the firm he and his colleagues launched this year. "The new activity we've seen should help the market turn around in the next 18 months or so."



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