

Buyouts

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NEWS & ANALYSIS

Off-duty: Partners Group's Rob Collins on sliders, mountain biking and helping Dad invest in PE

Collins shares with us his love of family and summer beach parties and why there is no better sanctuary than the great outdoors.

Buyouts' Off-duty provides a snapshot of top investors, including a few details about what they do when not chasing deals.

When Rob Collins, Partners Group's co-head of private wealth, joined the firm in 2005, his dad asked how he could invest in private equity. A retired New York City social worker, his father had savings to put to work but lacked a vehicle.

This, Collins told Buyouts, led to the 2009 creation of a "first-of-its-kind solution" for US retail investors, the '40-Act evergreen fund, to which his dad wrote the original \$50,000 check. "He was the seed investor," Collins said, effectively launching "democratized private equity" in North America.

Today, private wealth is all the rage in private markets, with GPs of all types and sizes devoting huge resources to accessing this still mostly untapped source of capital. The widely emulated '40-Act fund now oversees \$14 billion on behalf of 50,000 investors, Collins said.

Last year, Partners Group formally established its \$39 billion private wealth business under the leadership of Collins and Christian Wicklein. Collins, a partner, also heads the New York office.

Earlier in his career, Collins worked at Salomon Smith Barney and UBS Warburg. He lives in New York with his wife and two kids, three blocks away from his father.



Robert Collins, Partners Group

Where is your hometown?

New York, New York!

If you weren't in PE, what job would you like to have?

Biotechnology executive.

How do you relax when you're not working?

Playing and reading with my two young kids.

What book are you reading right now?

Euroshock: How the Largest Debt Restructuring in History Helped Save

Greece and Preserve the Eurozone, by Charles Dallara.

What is your favorite song, album, performer or music genre?

It really depends on the mood, time and place. I'm spending more time on SiriusXM switching among Classic Rewind, Ozzy's Boneyard, Deep Tracks, Classic Vinyl, plus a little Grateful Dead and Lithium.

What is your favorite meal, recipe, cocktail or bottle of wine?

My favorite meal is whatever my wife and I grill for our family and friends during summer beach parties. Typically, sliders and corn salad.

What is your favorite place for a vacation, sanctuary or a place to explore?

My annual mountain bike camping trip with a dear friend from grade school. We've explored some beautiful parks, such as the Pisgah National Forest, the Badlands and Arizona's Black Canyon Trail. No better sanctuary than the great outdoors.

Who in your career do you regard as a mentor?

My older brother Garry.

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Professionally, what was your toughest moment?

Managing the portfolio through the early months of covid with a newborn and a serious foot injury.

What was your most rewarding moment?

Creating the first purpose-built private equity fund for the US wealth market in 2008-2009.

It was especially rewarding because my father helped inspire me to pursue the project. My father scrimped and saved his whole life. When I joined Partners Group, he told me he wanted to invest in the funds

I helped build. But I didn't want him to commit to a traditional fund and then be burdened with the paperwork, the capital calls, the J-curve, the late K1s and all of the complexity that was required. When we launched the fund in 2009, my father wrote the first \$50,000 check.

It is incredibly gratifying to know that by supporting me, my father became the first person to democratize private markets 15 years ago!

What PE buzz words or jargon do you hate most?

"Semi-liquid" has been my least favorite for a few years now. I prefer "evergreen."

What advice would you give a young person interested in a PE career?

Try not to get caught up in titles and roles. Keep an open mind and try to identify where the growth is and where and how you can contribute.

What word or phrase best describes you?

As boring as it comes, but I'd have to say, "responsible."