

Buyouts

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FIRMS & FUNDS

Off-duty: KPS's Michael Psaros on the ocean, Zeibekiko and the only PE words that matter

Psaros shares with us his favorite song, his extensive philanthropic activities and his fantasy job in the front/business office of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

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

KPS Capital Partners, co-founded by Michael Psaros, is a manufacturing and industrial-focused buyout shop with an enviable track record.

The firm has won Buyouts' deal of the year four times and Buyouts' turnaround deal of the year five times. The most recent award was for last year's sale of golf equipment maker TaylorMade, which on an equity invested basis earned 19.1x cash-on-cash and on a total capital invested basis earned 8.8x cash-on-cash.

KPS's leadership team, including managing partners Psaros, David Shapiro and Raquel Palmer – and earlier, Eugene Keilin, now co-founder emeritus – has worked together for more than three decades. Before, Psaros was an investment banker with Bear Stearns.

Outside of work, Psaros is an archon of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Order of St. Andrew. He is also vice chairman of Friends of St. Nicholas, the organization responsible for constructing a national shrine in the place of a Greek Orthodox church destroyed on 9/11's Ground Zero.

The Psaros family in April endowed the Psaros Center for Financial Markets and Policy at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business.



Michael Psaros

Where is your hometown?

Weirton, West Virginia, a proud steel town.

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

Working in the front/business office of the Pittsburgh Steelers.

How do you relax when you're not working?

The ocean. I have salt water in my veins. I love being on the sand or on the water on my boat.

What book are you reading right now?

The War that Made the Roman Empire, by Barry Strauss; The Caesars Palace Coup, by Sujeet Indap and Max Frumes; and The Complete Works of St. John Chrysostom.

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

My favorite song is "Roza" by Dimitris Mitropanos. My favorite artist is George Dalaras. My favorite music genre is Greek Zeibekiko and 1980s rock (Hair Nation channel on satellite radio).

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

Sanctuaries: The Hamptons and Palm Beach, in season. Vacation: the Aegean, Rome and the Napa Valley. Place to explore: Japan.

Who in your career do you regard as a mentor?

Eugene Keilin, the "K" in KPS, inspired me. My partners at the firm, David Shapiro and Raquel Palmer, are my heroes. My grandfather Mike ("The Barber") is the giant of my life.

Professionally, what was your toughest moment?

When our partner Gene [Keilin], now

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retired, accompanied me on a fundraising meeting more than 25 years ago while being treated for a life-threatening cancer.

What was your most rewarding moment?

In June 2021, KPS hosted a party at One Vanderbilt to celebrate the 30th year of my partnership with David [Shapiro] and to welcome everyone to our new office. Being together as a team again and celebrating three decades of success was an important milestone for me personally and for our firm.

What PE buzz words or jargon do you hate most?

The only words that matter are “realized, cash-on-cash money multiple.” Everything else is irrelevant.

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

First, integrity, character and reputation are paramount. Second, developing judgement is critical. Analyze each difficult decision made by your senior leadership and then ask why and learn.

What word or phrase best describes you?

Passionate, selfless, driven.