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# **Carlos Vaz - MBLA 2011 Honoree (Business Owners)**

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Date: Friday, May 20, 2011, 4:24pm CDT



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As the eighth child of a family of nine children raised in a wood and mud house in Brazil, Carlos Vaz says he doesn't ever remember a moment he wasn't working.

"When I was walking, I was working," Vaz said. "At the age of 13, I opened and closed the butcher shop for my dad. So, on the weekends, I was working full-time. I never complained. It meant we were able to put food on the table."

Vaz, founder and owner of Dallas-based CONTI Organization, acquires and improves nonperforming multifamily properties in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and Houston.

After Vaz finished law school in Brazil, he moved to Boston and switched his focus from law to economics.

When he first arrived in Boston, after the expense of an airline ticket, he was short money for rent, but it wasn't a problem, he said. Vaz always worked when he needed money, so he picked up two or three different jobs and worked his way through school.

"Challenges are going to come, but you need to find your 'why,' and it can't just be money," Vaz said. "In my case, it was always my family. I can go through a tough time, but they cannot. I won't allow that to happen."

His work ethic comes from his family, which he includes in every aspect of how he conducts

business, he said. Vaz named CONTI Organization after his mother.

"I believe the way people do business is the way they live as a person," Vaz said. "You can't have business on one side and family on the other side. It's all intertwined."

Vaz credits the people around him for his success and for his selection as a Minority Business Leader.

"I'm glad I was chosen, but it's not because of me," he said. "It's the people I have with me, because of them — that's why I was chosen. Not because of myself."

Vaz passes along his hardworking nature to his employees.

Vaz constantly asks himself — and employees — how he can bring value to a project, something he encourages his employees to do as well, he said.

"That's what sets us apart; the way we operate," Vaz said. "We offer more than what we are being asked for. That's the one reason why we've been successful."

Candace covers commercial and residential real estate and sports business.