

# SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS JOURNAL

## **Executive Profile: Holly MacDonald-Korth on taking over family business, making name for herself in finance**



By [Eman Elshahawy](#) – Digital Producer, South Florida Business Journal  
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**Holly MacDonald-Korth**

**Birthplace:** Michigan

**Residence:** Miami

**Current position:** CEO, KDM Financial and managing director and CFO, J.W. Korth & Co.

**Past positions:** President and CFO, KDM Financial; senior vice president, Overstock.com; financial systems analyst at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve in Washington, D.C.

**Education:** Bachelor's of Business Administration with Honors in finance from University of Miami.

**Organizations:** Secretary and founder of the Point Lookout Land Conservancy in Michigan.

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Born with an entrepreneurial spirit, Holly MacDonald-Korth says one of her earliest memories was compiling historic information about neighborhoods she visited as a child, creating a book and selling it door-to-door.

But finance, not sales, would be her calling. As the daughter of finance professional James W. Korth, MacDonald-Korth grew up around the industry and went on to take the reins of the family business. For over 17 years, the industry veteran has made a name for herself in the finance sector, joining KDM Financial since its inception in 2016.

KDM specializes in commercial real estate loans from \$5 million to \$100 million. MacDonald-Korth was named president and CFO of the company in 2017 before becoming CEO in May 2023. She's also a managing director and CFO of J.W. Korth & Co. where she oversees all operations, finance and business development for the firm. J.W. Korth is a broker-dealer and RIA that specializes in selling fixed income investments to dealers, institutions, and high net worth retail clientele.

In her free time, MacDonald-Korth likes to spend time with her twin children or volunteer with organizations dealing with affordable housing, mothers, and children in need.

**What was the first job you ever had?** Working for my father's investment banking firm in Michigan when I was still in high school.

**Why did you decide to get into the lending industry?** I was already working with my father, and at a family party we were thinking about starting another company with Danny Llorente, our other founding partner of KDM Financial. We started talking about lending on properties that had cash flow and hard-money lending to be able to yield something like 10% with an asset securing the loan. And it was sort of like a lightbulb went off where we thought maybe we could do this because we have all of these high-net worth investors who are looking for income producing investments. So that was the catalyst for us figuring out how to do our initial plan for commercial real estate mortgages and issuing bonds in order to fund them. So then the bondholders get paid by the interest payment that the borrowers make.

**Do you have any advice for individuals who are early in their careers?** Raise your hand and ask for the responsibility. Ask to be put in charge of the project, ask to be able to do some new idea and raise your hand in meetings to volunteer.

**What is a recent goal you have set for yourself?** Right now, we're launching our first fund vehicle, and the goal is to get that launched in the first quarter of next year.

**What is something you are passionate about?** Teamwork and personal responsibility. So in the workplace I am the opposite of a micromanager. I like to empower everybody to feel like they can find the best path to doing their own job. I want everyone to feel like they have an equal voice in meetings and can speak up on what they think. We don't always rule by committee, but I think it's important to hear a diversity of opinions and voices on a topic before we come to a decision.

**What are some of your hobbies?** Cooking, entertaining and I like to do a lot of arts and crafts and home decor.

**What are some of your favorite sports?** Tennis and going to the gym.

**What is a finance-themed movie or television show you like to watch?** I like "Shark Tank," but also I watch Bloomberg for finance news. "Big Short" was also a great movie about the financial crisis.

**Who is the one person, dead or alive, you would like to meet?** Warren Buffet. I had a dream the other night I was talking to him about all of my opinions on the economy and how the commercial real estate challenges were going to play out.

**What's your favorite food or cuisine?** I'm torn between the spicy rigatoni at Carbone or sticky rice with spicy tuna and truffle oil. So it's between Italian and Asian cuisine.

**What are some of your go-to South Florida spots?** Any restaurant on the water. I like Smith & Wollensky in Miami Beach and the Bayshore Club and Strada in Coconut Grove.