

Monte Paden will work now, play later

ROBERT MONROE
Sentinel Staff Writer

Monte Paden is guided by several aphorisms in his life as a businessman: "Winners never quit; quitters never win," "If you fail to plan, plan to fail" among others.

The Hanford resident wants to be a millionaire by the time he is 25. He is closing in on both milestones.

Paden, 24, picked up the Chris Betts Memorial Award from the Fresno State University Craig School of Business last week for "excellence in the study of entrepreneurship" as the school puts it. But considering he is already into the third year of his professional career, "study" seems too passive a word.

The former Hanford High School wrestler started Paden Enterprise "on a shoestring budget" as a Fresno State junior and now also handles the books and marketing of Paden Construction with father Tom as his partner. His days start at 5 a.m. and work goes on into the night; tasks, he says, might just as easily include digging ditches as making spread-sheets.

Even though he is getting rich young and doing it at a time and in a state where some businessmen are happy just to be staying afloat, Paden does not see his accomplishments as all that astonishing.

"I don't see it as a big deal," he says. "I'm just determined to do something with my life. A lot of people are happy with a 9 to 5 job. I'm happy when I'm making deals, I guess."

He decided that about the same time he was old enough to start reading the newspapers. Money-making has been a family affair at least as far back as the days of Paden's grandfather, A.P. Domingos, who came to Kings County from the Azores as a Portuguese immigrant able just to write his name and the date.

"All he wanted to do was work," said Paden.

When Domingos died, his farm and dairy was a multimillion dollar operation.



Monte Paden poses at the foundation of a Paden Construction home near Grangeville Boulevard and 9 1/4 Avenue.
Gary Feinstein/Sentinel Staff Photographer

Paden himself was willing to work as a child, raking leaves, mowing lawns, delivering newspapers or whatever needed to be done. "I'd just find any little opportunity."

He continued working during high school stocking shelves at Food King after school. He kept on in college, starting his business selling fitness and bodybuilding products on the side as he worked full-time as an accounting clerk at the Fresno law firm of Chinello, Chinello, Shelton and Auchard.

At least for the near future, Paden sees himself staying with Paden Construction while the construction cycle is on the upswing. He and his father might have another two subdivisions in Hanford and Lemoore to build soon.

Maybe later, he will focus more on Paden Enterprise and expand it to include his own clothing line.

Paden's goal might be the same as most other people's — to make enough money to

live comfortably. But his path there diverges from most. He works for it and then works some more.

As he put it, "I can play now and pay later or pay now and play later." Success for him has meant choosing the latter, forcing himself above all else to live within his means.

"I'll work hard for a long time, then I'll reward myself with a little something," he says.