

POST FOCUS ON COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE



NORMAN Sturner has just signed a contract to sell one building and has closed on another.

Sturner ponied up \$32 million to buy 509 Fifth Ave. from embattled **Joseph Moinian** and also signed a contract to sell 1412 Broadway to Harbor Group International for \$150 million. The building is about 84 percent occupied.

The Norfolk, Va.-based Harbor was one of three finalists vying for the building on the northeast corner of W. 39th Street, just south of Times Square.

Harbor bought 4 New York Plaza last year and has signed the Daily News and US News & World Report as tenants, and has a pending deal with American Media. Rents are in the \$30-plus range.

"We're very, very happy with that and see this as a nice Midtown building to complement the downtown building and are going into this with a long-term view," said **Jordan Slone**, chairman and CEO of Harbor.

"We feel good about where we are buying in the cycle in Manhattan," he added.

"Over the next few years we'll see an improved market and this is a nice building that will do well as the market recovers. We're looking at everything."

Murray Hill Properties' own **Joshua Siderow** — son of Chairman **Neil** — brought in the buyer.

Commenting on the quick change in a market that has

gone from little investor interest to competing bidders, Sturner said offers for 1412 were only in the \$140 million range just a few months ago. That sale is expected to close by the end of the year.

Back in June, we also told you investor **David Werner** had acted as the matchmaker between Moinian and Sturner on the 12-story 509 Fifth Ave. The 50-foot-wide site on the eastern side of the mid-block between 42nd and 43rd streets has 60,000 square feet.

Sturner intends to create commercial condominiums and cash out.

One condo will contain the retail space occupied by Baker Shoes; the second would consist of the 11 floors of office space, including 10 floors now leased to Israeli Discount Bank.

Meanwhile, Moinian has teamed up with SL Green Realty Corp. and is fighting in state Supreme Court to save his newly redeveloped 3 Columbus Circle from being foreclosed on by mortgage holder the Related Cos.

At issue is a \$54 million-plus "bogus" pre-payment penalty being demanded to pay off the current mortgage.

The French retailer **Comptoir des Cotonniers**, which targets trendy mothers and daughters, has signed a 10-year lease at 345 Bleecker St. for 850 feet on the ground floor and roughly 500 feet in the basement. The asking rent was \$425 per foot.

The label already has a shop in SoHo, with a second spot opening soon on Columbus Ave.

Anna Rhein and **Jason Turner** of Zelnik & Co. brought the retailer to the trendy location and repped

both sides of the deal.

Gerson & Gerson, the fashion parent of pre-teen label **Bonnie Jean**, is relocating its showroom and sales office to 17,000 square feet at 100 W. 33rd St. from nearby 112 West 34th St.

The new building, owned by Vornado Realty Trust, tops the real-estate investment trust's Manhattan Mall.

Gerson & Gerson and its **Bonnie Jean** line have fans that include **Malia** and **Sasha Obama**.

Jordan Mandel of The Vortex Group and **David Starr** of UGL Equis represented Gerson & Gerson on the nine-year transaction, while Vornado was represented in-house by **Jared Solomon** and **Craig Panziner**. The asking rent was \$44 a foot.

The **Jeffrey Modell Foundation** is moving to the 47th floor of 780 Third Ave.

The 4,146-square-foot space is now under construction and has "airplane views and sweeping views of the East River."

The asking rent was \$70 a foot. The foundation, run by parents **Fred** and **Vicky Modell** and extensively supported by the real-estate industry, is relocating from 747 Third Ave.

The tenant did not use a broker, while **Jodi Pullice**, **Greg Smith** and **Kate Pezzolla** of JRT Realty Group represented the TIAA-CREF property that has a 154-seat auditorium as part of its amenity package. This deal was one of 11 that added up to 55,000 square feet leased just this year.

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