

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION

# Real Estate Forum

SEPTEMBER 2018

An **ALM** Publication



## CREW NETWORK

CHARTS A FRESH COURSE

### FEATURING


2018'S WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

NEW HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

CRE'S WOMEN TO WATCH

Real Estate Forum Presents

## THE WOMEN OF INFLUENCE HALL OF FAME

n the following pages you will read the stories of 23 amazing women—REAL ESTATE FORUM's 2018 inductees into the Women of Influence Hall of Fame. They are principals and directors and CEOs of commercial real estate companies. Some made the decision to found their own firms. They have closed on billions of dollars of transactions that range across all CRE asset classes.

Their stories are as varied as their backgrounds, but they have one very important factor in common: they are in the minority in the CRE industry, which is very much dominated by men. They have had to prove themselves, usually more so than their male counterparts have had to, to get just a foothold in the industry and then again as they climbed up the ladder and earned more responsibilities.

And now here they are: accomplished, respected and at the top of their game. They have also risen to the upper echelon of the field and today serve as the paragons to which young women in the field aspire to.

Perhaps most important of all they are determined to advocate for the next generation of women coming up behind them. This new cohort will likely find themselves still fighting the good fight against subconscious bias but it won't be as difficult as it was for this first generation of pioneers.

This year's new entrants into the WoI Hall of Fame nearly double the size of our roster, which until now counted 25 of the most well-known professionals in the business. If those numbers of any indication, CRE is indeed coming a long way.—**Erika Morphy**



### DONNA M. ABOOD

As principal and managing director of Avison Young in Coral Gables, FL, Donna Abood has not only leased well over 50 million square feet in South Florida, she has also become a trusted advisor to some of the most influential business leaders in the community. She was recently named the 2018-2019 chair of the executive board for the Florida State University Real Estate Center as well as chair

of the 2018-2019 development committee of the Miami-Dade Beacon Council. In fact her CV stretches more than a full page, listing the organizations on which she is a board member—a list that ranges from the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind & Visually Impaired to the Actors Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre.

In addition, Teresa Benavides, executive assistant to Abood, reports that she is a dedicated mentor to many young and upcoming professionals. Abood herself also cognizant of the challenges women continue to face in commercial real estate. Unfortunately, she says, the type of behavior that has led to the #metoo movement is not foreign to any business. “Earlier in my career I have made efforts not to pay attention to “locker room” talk or advances and move on to the business at hand to deliver service and results to the client.” Today, she says, she would see to it that the offender is funneled through the proper HR channels.



### DEBRA STRACKE ANDERSON

In addition to being president of Sloan Street Advisors, Debra Stracke Anderson is serving for the third time as chairman of the board for ITRA Global, an international organization that provides site selection and tenant representation for corporate users around the world—one of the very few women in the industry to attain that status. While there, she has led the organization through a global expansion and

rollout of new initiatives.

At the McLean, VA-based Sloan Street, which she’s been with for the past 18 years, Anderson is responsible for all activities of the company including delivery of client services, business development and marketing.

Anderson has been dedicated to the commercial real estate industry for decades, earning the CCIM designation in the 1990s. She is also an SIOR, a designation earned largely through business and transactional volume, and has served on the boards of organizations that work to improve the lives of children and young people. In addition to numerous prior awards, in 2016 she received the Ronald R. Pollina, PhD Leadership Award from ITRA Global, in which she was recognized for outstanding leadership, mentorship and contributions to the organization. She has served the board of ITRA Global for 15 years, in addition to her terms as chairman, and in a mentoring capacity as chairman emeritus.



### SUSAN BRANSCOME

Only 2% of mortgage banking professionals are women. Susan Branscome is not only among that 2% but she’s also one of just two women in the US who have started a mortgage banking firm. Branscome sold her company to NorthMarq Capital in 2014 and continues to lead the Cincinnati and Louisville offices for the company as senior vice president and managing director.

Branscome has been supportive of women in commercial real estate from the beginning of her career; she was one of 10 founding members of the Cincinnati Chapter of Commercial Real Estate Women. That is little wonder: she describes her early years in the CRE industry in the 1980s as being one of a very few number of women. “The challenge was being accepted and given opportunities my male peers were receiving,” she recalls. “Eventually, this came from hard work and proving myself.”

All told, Branscome has more than 36 years of experience in commercial real estate lending and mortgage banking, having originated more than \$3 billion in CRE debt throughout her career. She’s no stranger to the finance business—before diving into the commercial mortgage banking industry, Branscome was a construction lender with Bank One and permanent loan lender with Carillon Advisors. Today at NorthMarq Capital, she manages client relationships with more than 25 life companies.



### BROOKE DENIHAN BARRETT

Brooke Denihan Barrett is the only woman in New York City—and one of a handful in the world—to own and run a hotel investment and management company, New York City-based Denihan Hospitality. In 2006, Denihan Barrett, along with her brother Patrick, made the decision to buy out the rest of the family and run the day-to-day operations of company.

The new initiatives she implemented at the time have had a lasting effect on the firm and are the reasons Denihan is thriving today. These decisions included a new geographic and acquisition strategy, which paved the way for the company to change its business model to include third party management. Today, Denihan Barrett leads the operations of The James and Affinia brands and Denihan’s luxury independent boutique hotels.

Along the way Denihan Barrett has also worked hard to promote other women in the organization and to use her position to help the next generation of female hospitality professionals advance their own careers. She understands the challenges they face because she faced them too. When contemplating the takeover, she says, “I understood the stigma of running a family business as a woman and wasn’t certain that I’d command the same respect among peers as my father did.” Yet she decided to make the move partially because “I felt that women just entering the workforce were bypassing our industry given the lack of diversity at the top, and I had the unique opportunity to change that.”





### MAUREEN A. EHRENBURG

As president of JLL's global integrated facilities management division, Maureen Ehrenberg provides the strategic direction, global investment priorities and vision for the business. Her international facilities management and global product teams are responsible for the integrated service delivery to over 1 billion square feet of managed facilities in the Americas and a combined global portfolio in excess of 1.5 billion square feet.

Ehrenberg is the immediate past chair of the global board of the International Facilities Management Association and a current board member. Ehrenberg, in fact, is active in a number of associations including the Open Standards Consortium for Real Estate, the Real Estate Advisory Board and the Executive Women in Corporate Real Estate, among many others, and is also a fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

After 30 years in the business, Ehrenberg's view of CRE is that it is an industry in flux. The traditional lines between capital markets, valuation, investment, brokerage, property and facility management and project management are blurring, she says. "What this implies for women in CRE is that the traditional skill sets historically required to be successful are shifting, as are the career opportunities and success metrics." Her advice: Be open to change, think about new operating models and what the potential impact could be to disrupt traditional CRE models.



### CHAR FORTUNE

For the past 30 years, Char Fortune has been considered a trailblazer for women in the real estate business. She achieved icon status in the Southeast CRE community, holding positions of escalating responsibility at such firms as Carter, CBRE, Beacon Properties, Cushman & Wakefield, Trammell Crow and Grubb & Ellis.

In 2010, Avison Young CEO Mark Rose recruited Fortune to be a principal and director of Learning and

Professional Development and to develop the learning program for the entire firm. It was an inflection point for Fortune: while she had spent a considerable amount of time over her career teaching, mentoring and developing colleagues, she now wanted to dedicate the remainder of her working time to giving back to the industry that had given her so much.

She joined Avison Young in its Atlanta office, just as the firm was being established in the US, designing Avison Young University with a mix of online and in person classes and programs that would best meet the needs of the rapidly growing firm. She also built an Emerging Leaders program, which now has more than 300 participants. From that group, over 30 have become principals of the firm in the past eight years.

A particular point of pride: Avison Young's executive leadership is 45% diverse and has been for years. But as she looks around the larger industry, Fortune sometimes shakes her head at the lack of diversity, though she notes that change is gaining momentum.



### MARYANNE GILMARTIN

After more than two decades with Forest City Ratner Cos., Gilmartin co-founded L&L MAG, a development company with industry veterans David Levinson and Robert Lapidus of L&L Holding Co. As CEO of the New York City-based company, she is pursuing opportunities across the commercial, residential, retail, entertainment and cultural sectors. Yet L&L MAG is not just another developer entering New York's busy CRE

real estate scene—it is also one of the first major development firms run by a female CEO in the US.

Yet that designation isn't foreign to Gilmartin. As CEO of Forest City Ratner, managed a multimillion-square-foot portfolio and spearheaded some of the city's most transformative projects, including the New York Times Building, New York by Gehry and Barclays Center, the centerpiece of the \$4.9-billion, 22-acre mixed-use Pacific Park Brooklyn development. Her many successes led the Real Estate Board of New York to award her with its prestigious Bernard H. Mendik Lifetime Leadership in Real Estate Award last year.

Gilmartin hopes to see more women enter the industry, which she says also needs greater disruption in the innovation economy. "This disruption needs to take place on the talent fronts." We must "demand our industry be more inclusive, democratic and merit-based to ensure we look like the communities within which we invest and build."



### DEBORAH L. HARMON

Some 10 years ago now-CEO Deborah Harmon set out to found her own real estate private equity firm. She sought the wisdom of women who had gone before her yet found that among hundreds of real estate private equity funds, none were majority women-owned. With a co-founder and partner in Penny Pritzker, Harmon set out to launch the industry's first women-owned real estate private equity fund—Artemis Real

Estate Partners. The effort required 225 meetings over the course of 26 months to close \$436 million with 11 institutional investors.

Today in Washington, DC-based Artemis, which invests across the CRE asset and risk spectrum, remains majority women-owned; minorities and women comprise 55% of its employees. Since its inception in 2009, the firm has raised nearly \$4 billion of capital.

Now in her 36th year in the CRE business, Harmon is currently serving as chairperson of the Pension Real Estate Association Foundation, which raised \$11.2 million last year to endow a new partnership with Sponsors for Educational Opportunity. The funds went toward creating the first-ever real estate track at SEO with the goal of increasing the diversity of entry-level talent. The program has so far placed 47 interns with 33 partner firms, significantly exceeding its original goal of 25. Harmon is also a trustee of ULI, is on the board and executive committee for Women for Women International, and was appointed by former President Obama to serve as a commissioner for the White House Fellows program.



### SALLIE JAROSZ

Sallie Jarosz entered the CRE industry in 1983, a time when women weren't in professional or leadership positions. Taking advantage of the mentoring support of both men and women, she quickly rose up the ranks to become a veteran of the mortgage banking and lending industry.

Jarosz co-founded what is now known as Grandbridge Real Estate Capital, which she helped form in 1994 as Laureate Capital. She helped grow the firm \$1 billion in assets to a multi-billion-dollar portfolio, and from 20 people to 200 operating in offices in 23 states.

Today she is an SVP and the CRE director for an \$8-billion bank in the Southeast US—NewDominion Bank, a division of Park National Bank. Among her duties is overseeing all CRE originations, business development and underwriting; creating policies and procedures for financial functions; financing investment and development projects; handling all legal aspects of a transaction. Over the past 12 months, Charlotte, NC-based Jarosz has produced in excess of \$46 million in loan production, which was 32% over plan and secured in excess of \$500,000 in fees, in this case 333% over plan. She also gained deposit relationships in excess of \$7 million, a whopping 466% over plan.

Outside of her day job, Jarosz is the current president-elect for CREW. "I am proud to have set a standard for others to emulate," she says. "Women are still suffering from a pay gap issue and unconscious bias, but we've made huge strides in the industry."



### JULIE KIMBLE

Starting as a development assistant in the mid-1980s, Julie Kimble worked her way up through positions of increasing responsibility and leadership at St. Paul Port Authority, Opus Corp. and Johnson Controls Global Workplace Solutions before starting her own Minneapolis-based company, KimbleCo., four years ago. Today her WBE-certified CRE services firm focuses on consulting, brokerage and corporate advisory services. Almost 100% of KimbleCo.'s work has been referrals or repeat business and the company, which posted 30% revenue growth from the previous year, gives 10% of its pre-tax profits to charity.

On top of building a successful all-women team, Kimble has developed and leased in excess of four million square feet throughout her career. She served as development consultant to the state's first WELL- and LEED-certified office building; is on the board of National Association of Women Business Owners' Minnesota Chapter and is the planning commissioner for the City of Roseville.

Kimble, who has lived on three continents, is a major advocate for business and civic causes. She is active in the CREW Network, having served as president of the local chapter and as the national chair for the CREW Foundation. She also volunteers extensively and is on a number of boards including a nine-year stint with Feed My Starving Children. During her tenure, she traveled to Haiti and the Philippines to work in the field.

## OLSHAN

**Olshan Frome Wolosky LLP**

Proudly Congratulates

**Nina Rokat**



On Her Induction Into  
*Real Estate Forum's Women of Influence*  
2018 Hall of Fame.

Nina joins a select group of only 25 professionals across the nation to be inducted for this highly competitive honor.

**OLSHAN FROME WOLOSKY LLP**

1325 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS NEW YORK NY 10019  
WWW.OLSHANLAW.COM

## CONGRATULATIONS PRECILLA!



**HUNT**  
HUNTREALESTATECAPITAL.COM





#### DONNA R. KOLIUS

As an executive vice president at JLL, Donna Kolius' primary focus is the sale of national real estate portfolios for corporations, private investors, financial institutions and REITs. Prior to joining the Houston office of JLL, Kolius was a senior vice president with CBRE's portfolio services group for 33 years. While there, she received a number of awards including the Chairman Award for Leadership, Colbert

Coldwell Circle (three times), the Rainmaker Award and ranked third out of 1,800 CBRE sales pin North America. She also was named a Wal-Mart Broker of the Year.

Over the course of her career, Kolius has been responsible for the sale of 109 national real estate portfolios with a total of 2,993 assets and an aggregate sales price of \$4.12 billion. The CCIM designee is involved with professional associations including ICSC and is a member of JLL's Women's Business Network, where she has served as a mentor to numerous young real estate professionals. Kolius' mentees are now full-time partners on her transaction team.

"I have made a point throughout my career to promote work environments that are safe, fair and that promote success regardless of physical or spiritual differences," she says. "It is refreshing to be a participant in an industry that is representative of the communities we serve."



#### KIMBERLY LAMB

Now senior vice president of operations for the Lincoln Harris Corporate Service Group in Nashville, Kimberly Lamb has worked in CRE her entire adult life, with the last 15-plus years in senior leadership roles. Specializing in healthcare nationally, she leads a team in asset, property and facilities management, engineering and construction management, on a portfolio aggregating 34 million-plus square feet. She serves more than 80 private and institutional clients ranging from healthcare REITs to hospital systems.

Previously, Lamb served as regional real estate director for Ascension Health, helping to build the CRE platform for two major regions of hospital systems and Ascension Senior Living nationally. She was the first female managing director for Colliers International and the first woman to serve on Lincoln Harris Corporate Services Group's executive committee. She has served as a chapter president for the Institute of Real Estate Management.

Throughout her 36-year career, she has worked to empower others to lead, coaching and mentoring people in the industry through her work with ULI, CREW and ICSC. Lamb is also a participant of Future Forward 2025 for CoreNet Global, where her role is to identify what CRE will look like in the next 20 years. "My belief is that AI, technology and Big Data will significantly affect the role we play," she says. "We must look to the future now in order to meet the minimum price of admission to compete and succeed."

make a splash.

You're not everyone else.  
It's time to stand out of the pack.

**This is life in the green.**

**VG**  
VILLAGEGREEN

Visit <http://lifeinthegreen> to learn more



### JANICE MAC AVOY

Over the past three decades Janice Mac Avoy has made a significant mark in CRE legal circles, both in her client work at Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP, where she is a New York City-based partner, and within the larger industry thanks to her litigation work. During the real estate crash of 1991, Mac Avoy worked across practices to manage the large volume of CRE-related litigation as deals fell apart. She later founded the

firm's real estate litigation practice, which she still heads.

Mac Avoy is the "go to" litigator who makes a point of helping her clients avoid litigation. When she does go to court, she usually re-emerges victorious and has several high-profile wins to her credit. She is widely recognized as one of the leading practitioners on both non-recourse carve-out guaranties and ground lease transactions. Indeed, she is one of the few real estate litigators with significant transactional experience.

Mac Avoy heads the firm's pro bono committee, and is on Fried Frank's Diversity Committee and on the steering committee for the Women's Forum Planning Committee. A leader in advocating for women's rights to reproductive freedom, she was lead signer in an amicus brief to the US Supreme Court in *Whole Women's Health v. Hellerstadt*. She is also a founding member of Women in Real Estate, which launched earlier this year and aims to foster relationships between women CRE professionals across all seniority levels.



### JODI V. MEADE

Fifteen years ago, Jodi Meade took the bold step of founding and launching the Automotive Properties Group at CBRE after identifying a niche that needed to be filled in the market. Then, four years ago Meade brought the team to Avison Young, where she became principal and national director of the Los Angeles-based group.

Since the group's inception, Meade has led more than \$2 billion

in automotive commercial real estate transactions, focusing on acquisition, expansion, leasing, relocation and auto-mall development. Her clients are who's who of car manufacturers and dealer groups and include GM, Ford Motor Co., Premier Automotive Group, Sonic Automotive, Nissan North America, Sage Automotive Group, West Coast Customs and Penske Automotive, among others. Simply put, it is hard to find anyone who can match Meade's depth and breadth of knowledge in this specialized field.

Supporting and mentoring women in a very male-dominated industry is a longstanding passion for Meade, who is a founding member and past co-chair of the AY Women's Networking Group, which was established in 2015. Her advice to young women entering the field "is to keep pressing on and not to let anyone tell them that they can't accomplish something. Women breaking into male-dominated careers has become more commonplace, but there are many more roads to travel and mountains to move."



### MARLA J. MALONEY

Marla Maloney joined Cushman & Wakefield after five years at Ford Motor Co., quickly advancing through C&W's property management operations, which she now leads as president of asset services, Americas, out of St Louis. Under Maloney's leadership, the asset services portfolio has doubled in size in the past two years, with more than 100 million square feet added in 2017 alone, for a total portfolio size

of 700 million square feet.

Following C&W's merger with DTZ, Maloney played a critical role in integrating C&W's culture and best practices, motivating the team of more than 4,000 to be excited about the firm's future and the services it provides. She teaches the "CEO of the property" mentality, instilling in her property managers the desire to run their properties as if they were the owner.

To accomplish this, she says, "you must engage with people in person and learn how they think to run the business effectively. Clients are more trusting when there is a true partnership and trust you as their boots on the ground to manage their assets."

A key member of C&W's executive management team in the US and Canada, Maloney is an active member of the firm's Strategic Accounts leadership team, focused on providing comprehensive, integrated solutions for key investor clients. She's also involved with C&W's Americas Executive Committee and the Women's Integrated Network, as well as a number of industry organizations.



### EDNA MEYER-NELSON

Not one to back down from a challenge, Edna Meyer-Nelson has always flourished in male-dominated industries. She blazed new trails for women in her wake, starting from her time in banking, when she counseled and encouraged numerous women to start their own business, to the point when she took her own advice and formed the Richland Cos. with partner Suzanne Klein in 1993.

Meyer-Nelson now serves as president and CEO of the Houston-based company, which has purchased and managed over four million square feet valued in excess of \$425 million. In the past year, the firm has secured more than 890,000 square feet in leases and maintained a 90% occupancy rate across its portfolio. Always looking ahead, Meyer-Nelson plans to expand the firm's presence into other markets while remaining active in several professional, civic and charitable causes.

Richland was named Business of the Year at the Governor's Business Forum for Women, and this year, the YWCA of Houston awarded Meyer-Nelson with its Outstanding Business Woman Award. She has also been inducted into the Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce Hall of Fame; received CREW Houston's first Circle of Excellence Award; and is the first woman to receive the Commercial Real Estate Landmark Lifetime Achievement Award from the Houston Business Journal and its inaugural For-Profit CEO of the Year Award.





### JANET D. NEMAN

For multiple years Neman has been distinguished at Charles Dunn Co. as one of the top 10 agents, and came in as its top-ranking broker last year. Her accolades have reflected these accomplishments, receiving awards for “Broker of the Year”, “Most Multifamily Portfolio Units Sold Companywide”, “Most Transactions of the Year” and “Largest Commission of the Year,” among others.

As senior managing director in the Los Angeles office, Neman specializes in the analysis, marketing and sale of properties, currently handling over \$150 million in listings. She has sold in excess of \$1.5 billion in assets in her 30-year career, including some of the largest portfolios on the market.

Neman is not only active in many industry organizations, she’s also committed to the community through her work with charitable organizations. She has been recognized for her efforts—the Century City Chamber of Commerce gave her its Women of Achievement award, which honors women whose professional dedication and community involvement are inspirational, and she received the award for Woman of Diversity at the Comerica Bank & the Los Angeles Lakers’ Best of LA Women’s Business Awards.

Neman keeps a close eye on local issues such as the potential repeal of Costa-Hawkins and Los Angeles’ Transit Oriented Communities program. “We are going to be more connected by mass transit and cities will “intertwine” with one another,” she says.



### LYNN OWEN

Over the course of 32 years in commercial real estate, Lynn Owen has been responsible for a collective \$20.5 billion in assets under management, representing approximately 100,000 units. Owen was the owner of two companies, and the sale of the second firm led her to meet TruAmerica CEO Bob Hart, whose vision convinced her to move from Seattle to Los Angeles to help build the firm’s multifamily business.

Over the course of the past four years, Owen helped to grow TruAmerica Multifamily into one of the most active multifamily investors in the US. As chief operating officer, she is responsible for the firm’s \$7.2-billion portfolio of approximately 34,000 units across California, Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, Utah and Maryland. In the past year alone, she spearheaded the firm’s acquisition of nearly \$1 billion worth of new assets, was involved in the disposition of \$650 million in properties and managed a construction budget of \$400 million.

Owen is also known as a dedicated philanthropist and fundraiser for cancer research and efforts to end homelessness.

Looking back over the course of her 30 years in the property management industry, Owen’s advice to anyone entering CRE today “starts with having confidence in your own decisions. From your first moment on the job believe in yourself and don’t hide behind the thoughts and decisions of others.”

**con•ver•gence** \ noun.

**The process of coming closer together,  
especially in characteristics or ideas.**

**Connected to a cause, we believe in working together to accomplish goals.** For 25 plus years, our loan originators have been hyper-focused on providing expert **commercial real estate finance**. Finance is what we do, and we do it well.

WORKING **SMART**, ONE TRANSACTION AT A TIME.

 **Bellwether**<sup>SM</sup>  
 **Enterprise**  
**CAPITAL ON A MISSION**

**#dothemath**  
**WWW.BELLWETHERENTERPRISE.COM**  
866.420.2966 | info@bwecap.com

**BELLWETHER ENTERPRISE IS A NATIONAL, FULL-SERVICE, COMMERCIAL AND MULTIFAMILY MORTGAGE BANKING COMPANY THAT PUTS PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES FIRST.**





### NINA ROKET

Nina Rokat is not only a partner in the real estate practice group of Olshan Frome Wolosky LLP and chair of the firm's commercial leasing practice but she is also co-administrative partner—one of the few women lawyers in New York with such direct management responsibility. Rokat represents owners, developers and tenants in leasing transactions for most asset classes including the telecommunications space.

In addition, she is head of the firm's hiring committee and founder and chair of its Women's Committee, which serves as a networking, business development and mentoring platform for Olshan's women lawyers and their clients and colleagues.

In the past 12 months alone, Rokat has worked on some of the industry's most high-profile deals and developments. Among them are TurnStyle, an underground retail destination in the 59th Street Columbus Circle concourse; the One Willoughby Square office tower, which serves as a significant piece of the Downtown Brooklyn Redevelopment Plan; and the NBA's Brooklyn Nets lease for its new corporate headquarters in Downtown Brooklyn.

"I've spent my entire career in New York's CRE market and, over time it's been gratifying to see the number of women in key positions rising," she says. That said, it's "still a male-dominated field and it's going to take a lot more grit and hard work for the generation of women behind me to continue to advance."



### FELICE K. SHAPIRO

One of the first female senior, chief underwriters in the title insurance industry, Felice Shapiro's work over her 35-year career has made her a vanguard in her field. Indeed, among her major accomplishments are her work on the \$5.4-billion Stuyvesant Town transaction and \$1.2-billion Atlantis Resort project in the Bahamas.

Currently, she serves as an EVP and chief underwriter for AmTrust

Title, and serves on the New York City-based firm's board of directors. As chief legal officer, she oversees all legal and underwriting decisions for both the direct and agency sides of the business.

Beyond her strong presence in AmTrust's executive suite, Shapiro has had a significant influence on the industry. She was the first female president of the New York State Land Title Association and has served on the executive board of the Title Insurance Rate Service Association, the quasi-governmental association that develops and updates the title insurance rate manual for New York.

A strong believer in the credo of "giving back" to the community and mentoring young people, Shapiro offers CLO courses at no cost to the individual. She tries to "contribute to increasing opportunities to other females through speaking engagements and as a role model to other young women attorneys." In the end, though, she notes, "it's not about being a female; it's about being really good at what you do, so that others can't question you."



### KENNE SHEPHERD

Kenne Shepherd, a registered architect, LEED-accredited professional and one of the leading designers of high-end retail and residential environments, established her full-service company, Kenne Shepherd Interior Design Architecture PLLC, in 1993 in New York City. Over the years she has built a reputation for creating compelling spaces notable for their clear organization and planning, refined detailing, rich

materials and innovative use of technology and lighting, while adhering to the budget and schedule set by such clients as Calvin Klein, Salvatore Ferragamo and Wolford, among others.

"My continuing exploration of the relationship between human activity and the built environment, design trends and sustainability have only deepened my commitment to creating environments that enhance the way we live, work and play," she says.

Besides her architecture and interior design bona fides, Shepherd also has a background in construction, real estate and city planning. As such she has been active in CREW, among other organizations, and in 2017 she received CREW New York's Impact Award for Career Advancement for Women. In addition Shepherd established CREW Connections, a monthly program of networking coffees, cocktails and dinners, and is the co-chair of CREW New York's 40th Anniversary Gala Committee, to be held in October.



### AUDREY L. SOKOLOFF

Audrey Sokoloff serves as a global head of Skadden's transactions practices, representing clients in real estate, real estate finance and private equity, as well as acquisitions and sales, partnerships, joint ventures, recapitalizations and restructurings in the New York City office. She was named to this position earlier this year in recognition of her transactional excellence and leadership. In this role, she over-

sees the firm's banking, capital markets, energy, investment management, intellectual property and technology and real estate activities in the Americas. She has served clients, such as Anbang Insurance Group, JPMorgan Chase Bank and Deutsche Bank, on some of the biggest transactions in recent CRE history.

Sokoloff is a member of ULI, the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan and the NY State Bar Association, and she supports numerous charitable organizations with a focus on sustainable agriculture and the arts. She is part of Skadden's Diversity Committee, where she acts as sponsor of Skadden's LGBT Affinity Group, and in 2014 she led the firm's launch of its Straight-LGBT Alliance, a first among peer law firms.

"When I began my practice 30 years ago, women were few and far between and that has certainly changed dramatically," Sokoloff observes. "Nonetheless, we still have a long way to go and need to remain focused and diligent in sponsoring and mentoring diverse players in the industry."



### AMY H. WELLS

As a partner at Cox, Castle & Nicholson in Los Angeles, Amy Wells is one of a small number of women serving as the lead counsel of some of the country's largest public pension funds and is frequently consulted on real estate, infrastructure or private equity transactions.

When Wells joined CCN, there were less than a handful of women partners and associates. It was not uncommon for clients with real

estate transactions to be uncomfortable working with women attorneys and virtually all lead lawyers on significant transactions were men. Overcoming that bias required exceptional legal skills and the ability to navigate relationships both inside the firm and with clients in order to gain trust.

Today, as lead partner of CCN's institutional investor practice group, Wells is responsible for maintaining client relationships with the firm's public pension clients across the nation. She also champions for the success of fellow female attorneys; two of her mentees were recently promoted to partner.

One factor behind her success, she says, is that she didn't enter law school immediately after college. "The age difference between me and my colleagues at first seemed to be a disadvantage; however, with age comes maturity. Since I had worked in the 'real world' prior to law school, I had developed excellent people management skills which generally exceeded those of lawyers who went 'straight through.'"

She says the same of her experience as a woman in the field. "Being a woman became an advantage, once my legal skill and negotiating abilities were recognized."

## WOMEN OF DISTINCTION

This year's inductees into the Women of Influence Hall of Fame have nearly doubled the number of professionals who've received the honor. Here are the 25 power players they will be joining.

**Karen Bellantoni**, RKF

**Tere Blanca**, Blanca Commercial Real Estate

**Debra Cafaro**, Ventas Inc.

**Faith Hope Consolo**, Douglas Elliman

**Sherry A. Cushman**, Cushman & Wakefield Inc.

**Annemarie DiCola**, Trepp Inc.

**Laurie A. Grasso**, Hunton & Williams LLP

**Ann Hambly**, 1st Service Solutions

**Sharon Harper**, Plaza Cos.

**Jean Kane**, Welsh and Colliers International

**Laurie Lustig-Bower**, CBRE Group Inc.

**Darla Longo**, CBRE Group Inc.

**Melanie Meyers**, Fried Frank

**Golfie B. Wolfe Miller**, Millbrook Corporate Real Estate Services

**Jeanne Myerson**, The Swig Co.

**Daun Paris**, Eastern Consolidated

**Sonia Ransom**, Allen Matkins

**Carol Rosenthal**, Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP

**Rosemary Scanlon**, New York University Schack Institute of Real Estate

**Lori Schneider**, Marcus & Millichap

**Ann Sperling**, Trammell Crow Co.

**Darcy Stacom**, CBRE Group Inc.

**Tara Stacom**, Cushman & Wakefield Inc.

**Jan Stermin**, Berkadia

**Mary Ann Tighe**, CBRE Group Inc.

**ALM** REPRINTS  
& LICENSING

## Showcase Your Recognition

To compete in today's competitive legal marketplace, you need an added edge over your rivals. Highlighting your recognition in ALM publications provides an authoritative and impressive way to display your accomplishments.

Showcase the acknowledgement that you have earned and leverage that endorsement with ALM reprints, e-prints, permissions and plaques.

**Order your custom reprints today.**

**Contact: 877-257-3382 | [reprints@alm.com](mailto:reprints@alm.com)**

[almreprints.com](http://almreprints.com)

