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O'Neill sworn in as 2014 REFA president at GBREB installation

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John O'Neill of Holland & Knight LLP was officially sworn in as the REFA's president for 2014 at the Greater Boston Real Estate Board's (GBREB) installation of officers event held on January 30, at WilmerHale LLP. Sworn in alongside O'Neill were the four presidents representing the other four divisions of the GBREB in addition to REFA: The Commercial Brokers Association (CBA), The Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), The Greater Boston Association of Realtors (GBAR), and The Rental Housing Association (RHA). In addition, Gordon Pulsifer, CEO and Founder of First Resource Companies, was sworn in as Chairman of the GBREB.

REFA programming continues to be strong into the first two months of the year. On January 8, REFA Education hosted a fundamentals program on the basics of insurance. The presentation was led by Bernie Gitlin of Risk Strategies Company and was well received.

Also in January, Peter Palandjian, chairman and CEO of Intercontinental Real Estate Corp. hosted an Emerging Leaders Series at his office in Boston. Palandjian talked about his career path and offered personal insight on professional development. The Emerging Leaders Series programs are planned by the REFA emerging leaders committee, and are intended to give younger professionals the opportunity to network and engage with a senior-level executive in the industry.

On the heels of the very successful Annual Forecasting Luncheon in January, REFA held their Annual MBA Wrap-Up Luncheon on February 13 at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. This annual luncheon serves to give perspective and analysis from the Mortgage Bankers Association's Annual Commercial Real Estate Finance/Multifamily Housing Convention and Expo, held this year in Orlando. Greg LaBine from HFF moderated a panel of industry experts who attended the conference, including Joanne Adkins from John Hancock Real Estate Finance Group, Todd Goulet from KeyBank Real Estate Capital, and Marilyn Mawn from JP Morgan Securities, Inc.

The next REFA education program, titled, Asset Allocation for 2014 - How Institutional Capital will be Flowing into Real Estate, will take place on February 27 at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. Sean Ruhmann from NEPC, LLC will moderate a panel discussing real estate as an asset class, views of the real estate market today, and how allocation of capital to real estate will look in 2014. Panelists include Marc Cardillo from Cambridge Associates, Paul Mace from Tufts University, and Tim Schlitzer from MassPRIM.

For more information about REFA upcoming programs and events, please visit our website at www.REFA.org.