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2018 Women in Real Estate: Jody Skaff, The Kane Company

September 28, 2018 - Spotlights

Name: Jody Skaff

Position: Broker

Company: The Kane Company

Years in real estate: 31

Real estate associations or organizations you're a member of: NHCPE, National Association of Realtors

What honor, achievement or recognition means the most to you and why? My earliest achievement and certainly one of my most memorable was the first deal I ever negotiated in 1987 when I naively asked a computer store tenant to pay \$60 per s/f and he agreed when the going lease rate was in the neighborhood of 60% less. This was at the forefront of the computer revolution and I was fortunate to capitalize on the popularity of computer sales. My largest deal was the sale of the former Southgate Plaza, a 200,000 s/f grocery-anchored shopping center in Portsmouth that was in dire need of an upgrade from both a tenant mix and a cosmetic standpoint. Waterstone Retail Development was seeking a retail property to re-develop and we were able to convince the owner that it was an optimal time to sell.

What is the best advice you have received, and who was it from? A woman for whom I worked with while leasing regional malls advised me to always call everyone back, no matter who it is. The reasoning behind this is that the shopping center industry, although ostensibly sizeable, can really be quite small and you frequently interact with the same people throughout your career. It is a foundational tool of professional courtesy that I have continued to practice over my 31 years in commercial real estate.

What are some of the benefits of being a mentor or having a mentor? Mentoring is an unselfish act of relaying your accumulated knowledge and experience and insuring the continuation of your vocation. I didn't have a mentor, per se; with each of the companies for whom I worked (and continue to work) in real estate, it was basically up to me to figure things out. In each case, I would say it took about a year with each job until I felt completely comfortable and familiar with the task at hand. There is something to be said for a "sink or swim" indoctrination as it instills confidence when one succeeds. Having said that, it would certainly have been helpful, especially with my first job in

real estate, to have had an adviser to guide me.

What honor, achievement or recognition means the most to you and why? I am proud of all of my deals. It is always gratifying to sell a \$1M+ property which I did twice in the past year but it is equally satisfying to help a small local business find a suitable location in which they can prosper. All deals require effort. In many cases, the smaller deals are more time intensive than the larger ones, so you need to calculate how much time you are investing in proportion to the commission you will receive.

Who or what has been the strongest influence on your career and why? My parents were the strongest influence for me, inculcating a strong work ethic and a moral compass to follow. My father was by all measures a highly successful, respected businessman who taught me that you can achieve your goals without compromising your values. He demonstrated this by example and I have tried to live and work by that credo.

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