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## MEREDA recognizes four exceptional individuals for their contributions to real estate development and policy in Maine

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Portland, ME On January 26, 2022, the Maine Real Estate and Development Association (MEREDA) recognized four exceptional individuals for their significant and lasting contributions to real estate development in the state of Maine. The awards were presented in person at this year's forecast conference at the Cross Insurance Arena attended by close to 800 real estate professionals.

Josh Fifield was selected for this year's Robert Patterson Jr. Founder's Award, for his extraordinary commitment and dedication to MEREDA over the years.

Fifield is a vice president of the business insurance department at Clark Insurance, where he works with business owners to identify their risks to help protect their hard work, assets, employees, and

most importantly, their families.

In 2014, Fifield started volunteering with MEREDA as a committee member on the marketing & membership committee. He then joined the board of directors in 2017, a year he was also recognized with MEREDA's Volunteer of the Year Award. Over the years, Fifield has also co-chaired the membership committee and recently served as president from 2020-2022. It was his steady hand that guided the organization during a time of unprecedented uncertainty and upheaval. Even with those challenges, in Fifield's tenure, MEREDA saw financial stability and growth in membership. He continues to serve on MEREDA's membership and executive committees. MEREDA is grateful for Fifield's unwavering dedication and leadership!

The MEREDA Public Policy Award is presented each year to an individual whose efforts have made a significant impact on public policy changes that benefit responsible real estate development and ownership in Maine. This year we recognize senator Matt Pouliot for his leadership in housing creation policy, and for his support of MEREDA's efforts.

Pouliot has been a steadfast supporter of MEREDA policy priorities, including his help in maintaining the Maine Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, his support for the establishment of a Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE) program, his vote for the 2022 Housing Act, and his sponsorship of two MEREDA priority legislation items for the 131st Legislature. Additionally, Pouliot has recently risen as a leader in bipartisan discussions about smart public policy to help curb Maine's housing crisis. Last fall, he served on the Legislature's recent Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Land Use Regulations and Short-term Rentals – the final report of which is the starting point for the work of the new Joint Select Committee on Housing, which Pouliot was instrumental in establishing.

Pouliot is also a leader in real estate sales and development in Kennebec County and beyond. Most notably, he has helped revive the historic Water St. corridor in Augusta through redevelopment of downtown properties, including the New Purington Brothers Block, which won a 2022 Maine Historic Preservation Award. His support for responsible real estate development, approach to policy making, and service as a leader both in the legislature and in his hometown of Augusta make Pouliot a clear choice for this year's Public Policy Award.

The Volunteer of the Year Award is awarded to those who generously share their time, talents, and energy with MEREDA. This year we honor the contributions of Ben Brennan.

Brennan is a senior sales executive for KONE Elevators, located in South Portland. Responsible for new equipment business development and project management, Brennan partners with stakeholders of new and existing real estate developments in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts.

With MEREDA, Brennan was an active and engaged participant on DevelopME's Committee early on, which led to him serving as co-chair from 2020 - 2022. In this role, he worked to engage membership and create professional development opportunities within the organization for the next

generation of industry professionals. In 2021, Brennan started serving on MEREDA's board of directors, where his can-do attitude and interest in MEREDA's initiatives became even more evident. More recently, he joined the local issues committee, and demonstrated his commitment by asking to become co-chair! Brennan is happy to lend a hand when asked and has become a great addition and vocal advocate of MEREDA. MEREDA looks forward to working with him for many years to come!

The President's Award is given by MEREDA's current president, Craig Young of The Boulos Company, in recognition of someone who has made significant contributions on MEREDA's behalf. This year's President's Award goes to Shelly Clark, for her enduring contributions to MEREDA.

Clark started with MEREDA in January 1997. That year the forecast conference had only 105 people in attendance. Clark has helped grow that event and MEREDA into what it is today. Now, serving as MEREDA's executive director, Clark manages all day-to-day operations, including coordinating educational programs, managing membership development, and providing support for board and committee activities. During the pandemic, Clark went beyond the call of duty. Working from home, she kept the organization going. She was there to help everyone who needed it, from planning online events to supporting membership efforts.

MEREDA congratulates these four exceptional members, and thanks every volunteer whose contributions of time and talent make the association's continued success possible.

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