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2024 Women in CRE: CREW Boston members

September 27, 2024 - Spotlights



CREW Boston's mission is to develop, advance and champion the success of all women in the commercial real estate industry by:

- Creating a diverse, multi-cultural and welcoming community.
- Creating a forum for all women to impact the future of commercial real estate.
- Providing excellence in programming to create both professional and personal growth opportunities for all women throughout all stages of their career.
- Engaging, involving, and connecting members through networking and relationship building.

Shelly Gouin

Shelly Gouin, Officer, Debt Capital Markets at TA Realty

What advice do you have for young women aspiring to enter commercial real estate?

It's not enough to keep your head down and do good work. You also need to pick your head up occasionally and take action to move in the direction you want to go. Maybe that's getting involved in an organization like CREW to build your network and develop new skills or looking within your organization to seek out mentors. Try something uncomfortable to grow and learn and it will pay off in often surprising ways.

How has CREW Boston/CREW Network helped your professional development or how has your involvement in CREW Boston/CREW Network impacted your career?

Through my involvement in CREW Boston over 13 years, on committees and the Board, I've had fantastic opportunities to develop my skill set as a leader and have gained valuable insights into organizational dynamics. CREW Boston has given me access to countless incredible real estate professionals who have become friends and mentors. And all the growth I've found through CREW has served to make me a better contributor in my day job.

Kate Moran Carter

Kate Moran Carter, Shareholder / Director at Dain, Torpy, Le Ray, Wiest & Garner, P.C.

What recent project, transaction, or accomplishment are you most proud of?

Representing project proponents in Boston zoning disputes can often feel like a real slog, because so many projects require zoning variances that are often easily challenged on the merits by abutters. Our client, a Dorchester-based charter school, was granted zoning relief in 2019 to add additional classrooms, support spaces, and a middle school sized gym to its existing K1-8 school. Three neighborhood groups filed three separate lawsuits. We just successfully dismissed the third, and final lawsuit. Although the case is likely headed to the Massachusetts Appeals Court, this is a significant step forward for our client's project, and makes the expanded school, and expanded educational opportunities for this community, a more likely reality.

What advice do you have for young women aspiring to enter commercial real estate?

As in any industry, demonstrate your value through your intellectual curiosity and hard work. Read about the projects that are being built in your community. Understand the policy initiatives at the local, state, and federal level that are shaping the built environment. Know the names of the leaders – women and men – in the industry, and find out what projects or initiatives they are working on.

Invite them for coffee. Ask questions. Volunteer your time to put on an event, write an article, speak on a panel. Becoming a part of the commercial real estate industry means so much more than simply acquiring a job at the right company.

Liz Berthelette

Liz Berthelette, CRE, Head of Northeast Research & National Life Science Research at Newmark

What advice do you have for young women aspiring to enter commercial real estate?

My advice is to start building connections early on and throughout each phase of your career as relationships are essential in the commercial real estate industry. These groups offer networking, mentorship and professional development opportunities and resources that can help professionals navigate the industry. Mentorship is especially valuable – seek female mentors who can guide you through challenges and offer practical advice. Above all, advocate for yourself, embrace new opportunities and leverage your network to grow in the field. With persistence and the right support, you can thrive in commercial real estate.

Yanel de Angel

Yanel de Angel, FAIA, Managing Director, Principal at Perkins&Will

What recent project, transaction, or accomplishment are you most proud of?

The recent opening of the Malone Family Tower for MaineHealth is the culmination of a decade-long development initiative to enhance patient access for better outcomes. Designing healthcare environments where patients, caregivers, and staff can thrive requires a holistic approach to caring for people. It is about designing intentional spaces that promote well-being, where people can find respite and calm; about achieving the right building performance to create a quality experience; and about designing with empathy to remove barriers at every moment in the wellness journey. All these ideas converge beautifully in the Malone Family Tower, and I take great pride in our team's unwavering dedication.

Marya Gorczyca

Marya Gorczyca, P.E., Senior Principal at Haley & Aldrich, Inc.

What advice do you have for young women aspiring to enter commercial real estate?

Don't hold yourself back. Sometimes we worry too much about the unknowns or what if scenarios. Try new things and don't be afraid of uncertainty. If you want everything to be perfect and in control in your life it is not realistic. Try to embrace and enjoy the excitement of new things. Additionally, there is no end to learning and gaining knowledge about our industry which is one of the great things regarding what CREW offers. I have learned so much from the women I have met through CREW and the great programs offered. Knowledge is powerful and invaluable to career advancement.

Amy Prange

Amy Prange, Vice President of Development, Seaport at WS Development

What is your vision for the future of women in commercial real estate?

My dream is that the days are numbered when I attend a construction, design, permitting, financial or legal CRE meeting where I am the only or one of the only women in the room. I believe that we should all be focused on growing a diverse pipeline for the industry. Representation matters and when women can see themselves in a future role after seeing other women role models succeed, that breeds confidence and ambition. Commercial real estate is an exciting industry to be a part of. I hope that someday soon, as many women are successfully involved as men.

Zoya Puri

Zoya Puri, Senior Vice President at Beacon Capital Partners

How has CREW Boston/CREW Network helped your professional development, or how has your involvement in CREW Boston/CREW Network impacted your career?

Since joining CREW Boston in 2017, the organization has been instrumental in my transition from design and programming to commercial real estate development and delivery. CREW's events, programs, and connections with members have offered valuable resources and fostered a supportive network of peers and mentors. As a young woman of color in a predominantly male-dominated industry, CREW has helped amplify my voice, providing opportunities for growth and ensuring that my perspective is represented in the field.

Lisa Serafin

Lisa Serafin, President at Athena Real Estate Development, LLC

What is your vision for the future of women in commercial real estate?

Over the span of my career, women have come a long way in terms of general representation in CRE. However, I would like to see more women in top senior leadership roles at established companies as well as more women investing in deals in order to take advantage of the unique upside opportunities of being in this field. We must continue to intentionally identify and facilitate the conditions where both of these are possible.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540