



2019 Ones to Watch: Leslie Keidan, Cresa

April 16, 2019 - Spotlights

Name: Leslie Keidan

Title: Vice President

Company Name: Cresa

Year that you entered your current field? 2015

What advice can you offer to someone who is interested in a career in your industry?

First, to get started have some savings in the bank and budget well because these deals take time and you want to make sure you can cover your expenses while building your portfolio. Be organized, confident and resilient because you will hear the word “no” more than “yes.” You will make mistakes, everyone does. Live and grow with them. Most important, really like the people you work with—it makes all the difference. If you are lucky you have some friends in the industry who can be a sounding board as well as give advice.

If you have a mentor, who is it and how has she/he influenced your personal and professional growth?

From the day I started at Cresa, now nearly a year ago, I had a mentor and friend in Jane Roundell. As a managing principal, she helped me acclimate to my new corporate “home” and even invited me to work on some of her accounts. Having someone with her experience to show me the nuances of the job has been indispensable. I had only been in the business for a few years and was still processing the occupier-centric focus of Cresa. Although I grew up in Manhattan with family and friends in real estate, my first career was in media.

What do you consider to be your greatest professional accomplishment in the past 12 months?

I had not one, but two especially noteworthy transactions. In both I was able to match the client to the space. The first, Conductive Coaching, was a career counseling company that leased a full floor. The space and price worked perfectly for the client. The second was Hiller PC, for which I arranged a full-floor at 641 Lexington Ave. This rising boutique law firm required larger space to accommodate its growing staff. We found a space that met their requirements regarding both location and quality of the building. I must credit the landlord, Rudin Management, who ensured a smooth transaction.

Who are some leaders that you admire and why? ?

Warren Buffet for one. He came from humble beginnings, built an empire by investing in products he likes and believes in, and in the end is giving it all away. Tina Fey, I think that any woman who has been able to do what she has and become as powerful as she is in a male dominated industry like television is admirable. Serena Williams, she has become an icon, not just in sports but society as well, she runs multiple businesses, plays the world tour, is a mom and still has a first serve of 122 mph.

How have your life experiences impacted who you are professionally?

These experiences both good and bad have taught me how strong and resilient I have become. The past two years have been the hardest of my life. I believe that when someone experiences a life crisis, they can either be consumed by it or forced to grow. My own challenges created a drive in me to succeed. Strength when faced with loss was a realization to me. I found that I was given wonderful opportunities and the tools to succeed. I want to be the kind of woman that will continue to make my family proud.

Who or what do you attribute to your success?

In my four years as a commercial real estate agent, I have been fortunate to work with some very knowledgeable and generous professionals who have shown me the proverbial "ropes," time and again. But I believe my commitment, confidence and enthusiasm for whatever I do comes from having a strong family background. My father was a notable architect and residential developer who inspired in me a love for real estate, which eventually became my career. My mother was a residential broker who demonstrated discipline at every juncture. My parents encouraged me to trust my instincts, which in this business, is critical.

What was your favorite thing to do as a kid?

I loved summer camp because of the constant activities and sports. I would spend eight weeks each summer at sleep away camp and am still close to the friends I met there. But my favorite times as a kid were on our family vacations, especially those with a cultural focus. Nothing compares to traveling to a city like Paris or Rome with my father as the architectural guide and my mother as the fashion guide. Those times together were personally enriching as a family and intellectually fulfilling.

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