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REBNY celebrates industry leaders at 124th Annual Banquet January 16th

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Shown (from left) are: Henry Celestino, L&L Holding Company; Kevin Wang, KRW Realty Advisors; Robin Fisher, Newmark Knight Frank; James Whelan, REBNY president; Jodi Pulice, JRT Realty Group; William Rudin, REBNY chairman; and David Greenbaum, Vornado Realty Trust.

Manhattan, NY The real estate industry gathered with city and state dignitaries on Thursday, January 16th at the Real Estate Board of New York's (REBNY) 124th Annual Banquet to celebrate the professional and civic achievements of David Greenbaum, Héctor Figueroa, Jodi Pulice, Henry Celestino, Kevin Wang, Jay Kriegel, and Robin Fisher.

Addressing an audience of 2,000, REBNY president James Whelan presided over the evening's festivities for the first time.

The two posthumous honorees, Héctor Figueroa and Jay Kriegel were given special recognition for their commitment to making New York a better place. Kriegel's son, Connor, and Figueroa's wife, Deidre McFadyen, along with 32BJ SEIU president Kyle Bragg accepted the awards and paid emotional tributes to the lives and legacies of the honorees.

While presenting The Kenneth Gerrety Humanitarian Award, REBNY chairman, William Rudin said, "Héctor was a valued partner to our industry and a fierce advocate for his members. He was a champion for working people and a leader in the fight for economic, social, and racial justice."

In honoring Kriegel, the John Zuccotti Public Service Award honoree, Rudin said, “Right up to the end, Jay was a machine of ideas—always pushing for affordable housing, better schools, and good jobs. He was a mentor and a friend to me and to so many of us here tonight.”

U.S. senator Chuck Schumer delivered introductory remarks paying special tribute to Figueroa, Kriegel and former REBNY chairman, Burton Resnick.

Schumer went on to outline specific policy objectives for New York. “It is my goal to be the first New Yorker ever to be the majority leader in the Senate of the U.S. And if I get that office, I’m going to tell you two things: We will get Gateway built and we are going to restore the full deduction of state and local taxes.” The statement was met with a thunderous ovation from the audience.

Schumer was joined by elected officials, including congressman Gregory Meeks, Manhattan borough president Gale Brewer, Brooklyn borough president Eric Adams, and several members of the NYS Senate, State Assembly, and New York City Council. Numerous city and state commissioners, civic and business leaders were in attendance.

The dinner program concluded with an educational video about the upcoming 2020 Census and its importance to New York. The video was produced with assistance from the NYC Department of City Planning, the Association for a Better New York, Hunter College, and the Queens Public Library.

The awards presented at this year’s banquet are among the top professional distinctions in the real estate industry. The honorees were:

Greenbaum, vice chairman of Vornado Realty Trust, received The Harry Helmsley Distinguished New Yorker Award for his contributions to New York’s civic welfare and to the broader real estate community.

Figueroa, president of the Local 32BJ of the Service Employees International Union, was posthumously awarded the Kenneth Gerrety Humanitarian Award for his service to the community and lifelong commitment to improving the livelihoods of his members.

Pulice, founder and CEO of JRT Realty Group, received The Bernard Mendik Lifetime Leadership in Real Estate Award for her accomplishments in real estate, her leadership, and her service to the real estate industry over her career

Celestino, vice chairman of L&L Holding Co., received The George Brooker Management Executive of the Year Award for his superior accomplishments in property management and his outstanding professionalism, civic achievement, and contributions to the real estate industry.

Wang, owner of KRW Realty Advisors, received the Louis Smadbeck Memorial Broker Recognition Award for his personal and professional integrity, leadership, prominence in the brokerage community, and service to REBNY’s committees.

Kriegel, senior advisor for Related Cos., was posthumously awarded the John Zuccotti Public Service Award for his accomplishments and service in the public’s interest.

Fisher, senior managing director at Newmark Knight Frank, founder and CEO of BLACE, received

the Young Real Estate Professional of the Year Award for her integrity, professionalism, and personal ethics. This award is selected by the Young Men's/Women's Real Estate Association of New York.

The sponsors of this networking event were:

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The 124th Annual Banquet's underwriters were Crown Castle, Rockefeller Group, Rose Associates, and Suffolk Construction.

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