



2021 Women in Professional Services: Diana Brummer, Goodwin Procter LLP

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Name: Diana Brummer

Title: Partner

Company Name: Goodwin Procter LLP

Real estate associations or organizations that you are currently a member of:

Urban Land Institute,
CRE Finance Council

Why should women consider a career in commercial real estate and related services?

I've spent over 20 years as a lawyer in commercial real estate, and I think it's an incredibly exciting, rewarding and interesting sector. Unlike other corporate and financial industries, commercial real estate has the unique benefit of directly impacting our built environment at all times. Because you're dealing with tangible assets that affect people's lives in an immediate way, there is a great sense of accomplishment in knowing that a deal I've worked on resulted in a structure that people will use and enjoy for years to come. Commercial real estate also provides a lot of varied opportunities for forward-thinking professionals, particularly women, who have historically been underrepresented in the field compared to their male counterparts.

What books or social media influencers would you recommend to other women?

I recently read both Michelle Obama's book "Becoming" and President Obama's book "A Promised Land." Together, they were really a strong reminder of how the people you surround yourself with not only support you but are a crucial factor in your success. Whether it's your spouse, your colleagues, or your friend group, both President Obama and the First Lady did a great job of illustrating just how much their social circle influenced them and contributed to the Obama presidency.

In the past year, what project, transaction or accomplishment are you most proud of?

During the pandemic there have been significant challenges in the real estate industry and I'm exceptionally proud of how our team has been there for our clients when they needed us most.

We've spent a great deal of time representing a number of clients in difficult loan workouts where we were able to help the parties obtain a successful resolution and provide them the support necessary to get through difficult times. Whether it's on the borrower side or the lender side, these workouts allow the parties to continue their construction project or come up with accommodations that both protect the lender and allow the borrower to maneuver through the difficulties. These kinds of results are vital for our clients and the real estate sector.

What steps have you taken to ensure the continued success of your firm?

In the midst of the pandemic I was elected to Goodwin's Executive Committee. In this role, I've been very involved with the firm's overall direction and pandemic response. While there have been obstacles, Goodwin has been fortunate that our capital-meets-innovation platform has proven incredibly durable for both the firm and our clients. We've also tried to be proactive and focus not just on assisting our lawyers in terms of their professional lives, but also offer non-traditional programs that benefit them beyond work. Whether it's mental health initiatives, forums for parents and caregivers, pro bono opportunities, or diet and exercise advice, we've placed a premium on supporting members of the firm as people in addition to lawyers.

How have you adapted and changed in the last 12 months?

There have been a great number of changes, but in terms of a silver lining, the pandemic has definitely brought me closer to my family. As the working mother of two teenage sons, I previously didn't have the chance to see them as much as I would like during the work week. Since the firm started working remotely last year, I've been able to have breakfast and dinner with my sons every day.

How do you keep your team motivated despite conflicts and obstacles?

Because real estate has been so heavily impacted by the pandemic, it's been motivating for me and my team to think about how we can best serve our clients during such unprecedented times. As lawyers, we are in a really unique position to address many of the challenges our clients are facing, and being part of the solution is tremendously gratifying. In order to keep our team connected, the New York Real Estate group holds bi-weekly Zoom lunches every other Tuesday and usually there is a fun topic we discuss. These Zoom lunches have been an invaluable tool for maintaining our connection, as I've learned a lot about my colleagues, from their favorite vacation spot to what career they would have pursued if they weren't a lawyer.

Women have made significant progress in the last year towards equality in the workplace. How do you advocate for your fellow women in real estate?

For several years I have served as co-chair of Women@Goodwin New York. In that role, I spend a lot of time and energy thinking about how to best position women for success not just in our real estate group, but firmwide. Even in the work from home era, we continue to build community through virtual events. In June, Women@Goodwin hosted a Town Hall for women associates and counsel with our chairman and managing partner, where they shared firm updates and led an open discussion about the specific challenges women experience. In September, Women@Goodwin modified its annual "Own Your Career" and "Own Your Success" programs into a completely virtual experience, through which more than 100 women participated in a two-day series promoting

leadership, professional development and networking skills.

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