



2021 Ones to Watch: Jennifer Gebbie, Farrell Fritz, P.C.

April 20, 2021 - Spotlights

Name: Jennifer Gebbie

Title: Counsel

Company Name: Farrell Fritz, P.C.

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

Commercial Industrial Brokers Society of Long Island (CIBS); Long Island Real Estate Group (LIREG)

Who was/is your mentor and how did s/he influence/help you in your career?

After time in Big Law, I was questioning whether I wanted to continue practicing in a law firm setting. Then I was connected by my alma mater with the managing partner of our firm at the time, Charlie Strain, who convinced me to come in and meet Chris Daly, the leader of our lending practice. I am so thankful that I did. I came over to Farrell Fritz in 2012 and this move dramatically changed my perspective on life at a law firm. Chris has mentored me not just substantively as it relates to being a smart lending lawyer, but perhaps more importantly, to be a calm, rational and decisive thinker. I will strive to pay it forward as I move ahead in my career.

Top three things on your bucket list:

Tasting my way across the Amalfi Coast, connecting with family in Italy, Ireland and Scotland, and learning to play the piano.

Favorite quote:

“If I waited until I had all my ducks in a row, I’d never get across the street. Sometimes you just have to gather up what you’ve got and make a run for it.” – Judge Lynn Toler

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

I helped launch a new initiative with my colleagues called the Long Island Professional Women’s Supper Club, aimed at building meaningful business relationships among women in the real estate and finance industries. The idea was born after attending countless industry events with a very small female presence and recognizing that men and women network differently. We meet once a month to share a meal and conversation (and while we have had to adapt the format during the pandemic, we have kept the group connected this past year with virtual events). Supper Club’s intimate, casual evenings afford an appropriate atmosphere and the time required to really get to know each other

and discover how we can help each other achieve both our individual and collective goals.

How do you contribute to your community or your profession?

In addition to my commitment to Supper Club, I am also proud to serve on the board of The Child Center of NY, an organization that operates in NYC's toughest, most under-served communities, with the goal of providing the right skills, education and emotional support so that children of any background can thrive. I was first drawn to Child Center because of their holistic approach—they focus on the entire family, not just the child, but parents and caregivers too and I'm overwhelmed by the magnitude of what they accomplish. Child Center operates mental health, substance abuse, early childhood education and youth development programs, a health home program, home visiting programs and residential treatment facilities. Their services are critically important, especially this last year.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

Initially I wanted to be a hotel or restaurant owner. I actually started my undergraduate degree at Penn State as a hotel and restaurant management major. I spent my summers waiting tables at a local restaurant. The restaurant owner encouraged me to major in finance or accounting, and I later switched to the business school and graduated with a B.S. in finance. I minored in business law which made me realize I liked studying the law, but I knew from the beginning if I entered this profession it would be in a transactional role. I wanted to do deals. Rather than pursuing a career in hospitality, today I enjoy traveling and exploring culinary delights from everywhere.

What led you to your current profession?

I decided to work between undergrad and law school. Many people said I should go directly to law school or I'd never go, but I surprised them. I started out in market research at PaineWebber (later UBS) and then at a private firm, The NPD Group. I honed my analytical and writing skills and gained valuable client development experience. I really liked it, but something was missing. After six years, I enrolled at Hofstra Law and started a second career. It just made sense for me to become a "dirt" lawyer because, you might say, I have real estate in my blood – my maternal grandfather and his brother were brokers, my uncle and my parents are brokers, my brother is in architectural lighting and my twin sister is an architect.

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