



2021 Ones to Watch: Eleanore Martins, Akerman LLP

September 21, 2021 - Spotlights

Name: Eleanore Martins

Title: Partner

Company Name: Akerman LLP

Real estate associations or organizations that you are currently a member of: ULI NY NEXT committee member, The Citizens Housing and Planning Council's Policy Innovation Network

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

I am most proud of a recent land use approval for a rezoning to permit a hotel development on Arthur Ave. in the Bronx's Little Italy. Hotel development in the Bronx is extremely limited, even pre-pandemic, but we were able to work closely with surrounding institutions including the NY Botanical Gardens, the Bronx Zoo and Fordham University to get the project through the onerous public approval process. On a personal note, as a graduate of Fordham University that lived in that neighborhood both during and after college (and in fact, for the first two years of my life), it was especially fulfilling to work on something that I truly believe will benefit an iconic NYC neighborhood.

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

My mentor was an attorney at a boutique land use law firm I worked at as a paralegal right out of college. Having a female attorney as a mentor who truly loved the field convinced me to go to law school to pursue a career specifically in NYC land use law.

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

I believe that remaining connected with my team not only professionally but personally and socially (especially during the recent challenges of the pandemic) is critical to maintaining motivation. I am lucky to have an excellent and very collegial team in our NYC land use practice, and it was a huge challenge to adjust to working remotely without team members feeling isolated.

How do you contribute to your community or your profession?

I am involved in ULI New York as a member of the ULI NEXT committee and a member of the New York City Bar Association. Additionally, I am an active member of Akerman's New York Community Impact Team and serves as a mentor to three associates in the New York Land Use practice through Akerman's mentoring program.

What led you to your current profession?

I originally wanted to be an architect. But after interning with an architectural firm in college, I realized I didn't have the passion to take me through a graduate program in architecture. However, I was exposed to land use and zoning while there, an area of legal practice I had no idea existed, and loved that I could be a lawyer without sitting behind a desk all day working on documents. One of my favorite things about this field is being able to point to various buildings in the city and know that I helped make those a reality, whether it's a much needed affordable housing development or a hotel on Arthur Ave.

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