



2021 Women in CRE: Pia Riverso, Rivkin Radler LLP

November 02, 2021 - Spotlights

Name: Pia Riverso

Title: Partner

Company Name: Rivkin Radler LLP

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

In the past year I successfully completed negotiations on two significant construction contracts – one for a major distribution center in the Northeast, and another for the development and construction of a community and youth sports facility and parking structure in Suffolk County, N.Y. Each of these projects were time-sensitive, involving in one case more than a year of discussions, and in the other, several months and numerous drafts joining the interests of multiple parties and resolving issues to reach completed project agreements.

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

A career in commercial real estate and construction law is challenging and demanding, but the results are satisfying and rewarding. There are many opportunities to meet other women in the industry who are willing to provide guidance and share the benefit of their experiences. It is a career that is constantly evolving and growing, but there is flexibility in schedule and vast opportunities available to create your own destiny for those just starting their career, and for the most experienced professional. Given that there is still a small number of women in the industry, you can stand out by demonstrating creative thinking, professionalism, confidence and a strong personality.

How do you contribute to your community or your profession?

I serve on the advisory board of the Manhattan College O'Malley School of Business, which provides insight on issues related to the school's curriculum in order to prepare students to be career-ready and opening additional avenues to career opportunities. I also participate in pre-law presentations to students of Manhattan College, addressing inquiries on the practice of law and career opportunities with a law degree. In addition, each year I participate in the Manhattan College W.I.S.E. (Women Inspiring Successful Enterprise) program, where I present during a weekly enrichment session that focuses on professional development, leadership, and expectations of an intern. I am also a member of the New York County Bar Association Construction Law Committee, where members address topics impacting the construction practice in New York.

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

We face many challenges as a result of the pandemic, most significantly the loss of day-to-day interaction and contact among our attorneys and staff. Maintaining communication, being available, and showing an interest in the personal and professional development of those you work with is essential. And above all, always leaving the door open in the event that any difficulties arise to openly discuss and resolve any conflicts. I often call upon my training as a mediator to resolve any conflicts by listening to the issues presented and trying to have those involved actually participate in and reach a resolution, the result of which is typically more successful than just deciding the conflict without the participation of those involved.

How do you advocate for your fellow women in real estate?

The best advocate for a woman in the real estate, or construction industry, is oneself. Being strong, knowledgeable, thorough, positive, intelligent, and patient, and by responding to clients and other counsel directly, timely, and efficiently you will earn the respect of your peers and clients. That results in those that work with you becoming your best advocate, as they will relay the positive experiences they have with you.

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

As opposed to “instructive” or “self-help” books, I find that reading fiction allows my imagination to soar and complements the hours spent reviewing very technical documents and agreements. It’s akin to exercising and stimulating a different part of my brain. One of my favorite authors is James Patterson, and in particular, the Women’s Murder Club series, which is now up to book 21. The series follows four professional women – a detective, medical examiner, reporter, and assistant district attorney – as they work together in traditionally male dominated fields, to investigate and solve various crimes and balance personal lives with their professional careers.

Tell us a thing or two about you that is NOT on your resume or LinkedIn profile?

Despite having a strong personality necessary for a woman in the construction industry, I am a traditionalist and old-fashioned at heart. I enjoy cooking, baking, trying new recipes, farmers’ markets, apple picking, and entertaining in my home on a large scale (for which I complete all the cooking myself). My colleagues reap the rewards, with desserts being the most favored “leftover.” The closeness of family and friends is vital. The isolation of COVID made me realize how much I need the interaction of my family, co-workers, and friends. I am fortunate to have a “tribe” – a small, close group of professional women who are always available for inspiration, friendship, to celebrate victories and provide support when defeats occur.