



**2022 Women in Professional Services: Beth Zafonte, Akerman  
LLP**

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Beth Zafonte  
Director of Economic Development Services

In the last 12 months, what ONE award were you most proud to receive? I was most proud to receive the CREW NY 2022 Impact Award for Economic and Community Improvement for my representation of New York Proton Center, the first and only proton therapy center in New York State.

What advice would you give the next generation of women in your industry? I have two pieces of advice. First, show up in person. The commercial real estate industry is fueled by relationships. While a hybrid work environment may be convenient, it cannot replace face to face interaction and the connections and learning that occurs when you are with your team in person. Second, actively participate in our industry organizations. Involvement will provide you with (i) access to building reciprocal relationships with other professionals that will serve as resources for your deals and you for their deals, (ii) business, educational and leadership opportunities, and (iii) genuine experiences that foster meaningful long-term business relationships and often the added bonus of personal friendships.

In the last 12 months how have you helped your industry grow through professional creativity, innovation and leadership? I helped to establish and lead the DEI task force for WX/New York Women Executives in Real Estate. I also served on the awards committee for ULI NY Annual Awards for Excellence in Community Development and was appointed to serve as co-chair of one of ULI NY Mixed-Use product councils.