



## Project REAP celebrates 25 years of diversifying CRE at Silver Jubilee event

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Shown (from left) are: NY/NJ/CT REAPER of the Year Randall Powell, REAP alum and board secretary Katrina Rainey, Esq., and REAP board chair Michael Kercheval.

Manhattan, NY “Diversity creates profitability. Diversity creates success. Diversity improves our economy and diversity improves our society and REAP embodies all of that,” said REAP chair Michael Kercheval speaking at the NY/NJ/CT Silver Jubilee event celebrating 25 years of diversifying the talent pipeline in commercial real estate (CRE) since the founding of Project REAP (Real Estate Associate Program) in 1998.

Katrina Rainey, Esq., a REAP 2006 alum and secretary of the REAP board, and currently a site acquisition director with Microsoft, relayed how the organization has helped build her career from day one. Recruited to create and launch McDonald’s property management program shortly after completing the REAP Academy, she has continued to maximize her REAP network which helped her transition into her current position. Rainey said, “REAP has been an amazing opportunity to help propel my career in not only teaching me the language of commercial real estate but also networking skills.”

NY/NJ/CT REAPER of the Year Randall Powell, REAP 2019 alum and co-founder, principal and CEO of his own firm, Infinite Horizons LLC said, “I am forever grateful for the transformative impact REAP has had on my professional journey...REAP has been an amazing platform for myself and my organization, and it is ...these endeavors and the vision of people that come together to support and teach each other like yourselves that gives us an opportunity to grow our businesses and become substantial in this marketplace.”

Lamont Blackstone, CRX, acting executive director of REAP, called out the most toxic critics of DEI as impeded by an “antebellum” way of thinking, an outdated mindset that fails to grasp present-day urgencies and realities. Blackstone said, “Diversity is not a threat, it is simply an effort to expand the talent pool of this nation.”

The program was followed by networking with fare provided by NY/NJ/CT Silver Jubilee Event Champion ICSC and other sponsors.

REAP Silver Jubilee events began in the fall of 2023 in Dallas, Atlanta and Los Angeles and will continue in additional key markets this year.

Denham Wolf was the Early Investor Level Sponsor; Greystone and Monge Capital the Investor Level Sponsors; and IREM (Institute of Real Estate Management), Grow America and All Renovation Construction (founded and led by REAP 2017 alum and Board member Allan Suarez) the Jubilee supporters.

Kercheval, a supporter of REAP since its inception and the retired CEO and president of ICSC, remained upbeat about the future pledging that he “looks forward to another quarter century of success.” Kercheval said, “Today we face some major challenges in our industry and in the economy ...it is very, very troubling. We can stand up and continue to push that mission...We’re creating opportunities and we’re training. We’re opening doors and ... we’re supporting people for a

lifetime of career success in real estate...We're going to continue to make a difference.”

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