



Paving the way for women in real estate: Early efforts making an impact welcoming females to the industry

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The real estate profession has afforded me so many opportunities over the last twenty years. I strongly believe that my success in the industry did not happen in spite of my gender, but rather that my gender enhanced my abilities as a retail broker. Women in real estate have always excelled, but have made particularly noteworthy strides in recent years. I hope that my early efforts had a real impact in real estate becoming more welcoming to females.

Retail real estate, my third career, was a perfect fit for me, and although I remember having to fight for deals in the beginning, my determination and perseverance became an indispensable asset. I have always been a shopaholic, and love talking to designers about their store locations, and where they should open another one. My deal volume increased rapidly and I took great joy in surveying retail landscapes that I personally had shaped.

Early on, though, I realized what a rarity it was to encounter a woman at the negotiating table or even in the halls of my own offices. I've always believed that women are ideally suited for the retail business. Many of us are great shoppers who have expansive knowledge of the current products in today's marketplace. Armed with that interpretation, I made it one of my top goals to encourage more women to enter the profession.

First, I helped found an organization dedicated to stimulating camaraderie and support among women in real estate. The Association of Real Estate Women (AREW) is an institution in New York City, with soaring membership levels, unique scholarship opportunities, and thought-provoking speaker series. As a past president of the organization, I take pride in our continuing ability to be a champion for women and to understand the unique obstacles we all must overcome.

In creating the "The Founder's Award" given annually by the AREW board, I sought to recognize the outstanding achievements of various women in the industry. Every year, women enjoy countless successes in their professions, in both business endeavors and community involvement. It is imperative that we acknowledge these efforts.

The national Commercial Real Estate Women Network (CREW), allows me to work with women across the country. This organization, which enjoys record-breaking memberships in its sixty-five chapters, gives women the opportunity to make contacts with their colleagues, helping them to advance their careers. Experienced CREW members serve as valuable resources to their colleagues, offering advice on professional issues as well as the balancing of work and family obligations.

Within the New York chapter, we have hosted many successful events that not only provide a unique forum for women to receive support, but also demonstrate the growing number of females in the profession. The passionate commitment exhibited by all of my fellow members is very inspiring. Another undertaking that I deemed important to increasing the number of female colleagues was to

help guide budding female brokers. Being a mentor is one of the most rewarding aspects of my career. It enables me to pick women from all walks of life, some who are brand new to the real estate industry and others who have a small amount of experience, and help them orchestrate a career and experience the business more fully.

Taking on the job of teacher is an enormous responsibility and a huge time commitment, but the rewards are well worth the work. My knowledge, amassed from 20-plus years in the real estate industry, helps me to identify an individual's talents and strengths. For instance, some brokers are multilingual - a huge asset when you are working with a European retailer coming to New York for the very first time - while others are better suited to working with landlords.

An accomplished broker must be flexible, and understand that New York is the world's fastest moving market. It takes a strong work ethic and unending determination to keep up, but the rewards are much greater in the end, for men and for women.

Retail brokerage is no longer considered a male-dominated profession, thanks to supportive organizations and meaningful teachers. Although women must still jump great hurdles, I am proud of all the positive changes I have seen in two decades. Here's to more success stories from women in real estate!

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