

From the Business First:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/louisville/print-edition/2011/05/13/more-women-find-opportunities-in.html>

More women find opportunities in male-dominated commercial real estate industry

Premium content from Business First - by Lucy M. Pritchett, Correspondent

Date: Friday, May 13, 2011, 6:00am EDT

Related:

[Commercial Real Estate](#), [Education](#)

Rhonda Karageorge broke into the business of commercial real estate at a time when not many were willing to give opportunities to women.

"Sometimes I would show up with a client, and the male agent on the other side would greet me with, "Hey, kiddo. Where's the agent?"

Not entirely professional, she recalls.

Karageorge, 45, began her career in 1993 when she got her real estate license. She started with Kessler Group and learned from sitting in on meetings with clients and at closings. She now is vice president of sales and leasing for Commonwealth Commercial Real Estate, 10444 Bluegrass Pkwy.

"Today, there are more opportunities in the profession if you are competent with the computer," she said, citing days when she would have to search plat books for properties.

A veteran in commercial real estate, Karageorge was the first female president of the local chapter of CCIM (Certified Commercial Investment Member) in its 25-year history.

Is she glad she stayed with her career?

"Absolutely. Typically, many women don't choose commercial real estate as a career but come into the business because a parent is in the business," Karageorge said. "But as more colleges are offering courses in commercial real estate and more knowledge is readily available, I think more women will choose commercial real estate as a career. But it has been slow to happen in Louisville."

On pages 36 and 37, Business First looks at three women who are building their careers in the commercial real estate industry.

Lainey Jurich has learned the value of relationships in industry

Lainey Jurich has a “that’s life” attitude toward her involvement in a profession that traditionally has been the purview of men.

“Regardless of the field, men will be in it,” Jurich said. “I am the only female broker in the office (of 10) and am blessed to work with strong, confident men who treat me well.

“I have never had a fear of hearing ‘No,’ ” she said. “I am not intimidated.”

Jurich, 32, is a commercial brokerage adviser with Commercial Kentucky Inc. She has been with the firm since 2007 and in real estate since she was 21. She has spent many a family dinner talking shop with her father, **Steve Habeeb**, a real estate developer and investor and owner of H&G Management LLP.

“He was a huge influence in my career,” she said.

“He reminds me that there is always a fair deal,” Jurich said. “Both parties can find the middle ground and leave the table feeling good. That comes with treating everyone with human care and respect.”

But her father was not her only mentor. **Fred Faulkner**, president and CEO of Faulkner Real Estate, made her learn when she started out working with him in 2002.

“I would go to him with a construction question and we would put on hard hats and go out to the field. Or, if there were questions about a lease document, he would bring in an attorney. It was a true opportunity to grow and learn the business,” she said.

Jurich’s bread and butter is the retail business, and she cited her relationship with the franchise owner of Zoe’s Kitchen, a fast-casual restaurant.

“It has turned into a personal relationship. We have gotten close, and I understand their goals, their money and know their family.”

She has helped the owner find space in two locations, one in the PNC Plaza at Fifth and Jefferson streets and one at The Summit shopping center. She currently is working to find a third site.

A career in commercial real estate is one Jurich would definitely recommend for women — but with the caveat that it needs to be a long-term plan.

“It is important to start with a good firm. You need large clients and big deals to become known,” she said. “But until that happens, you get to be in the meetings and meet the players.”

And even though the good ol’ boy network still lives, Jurich believes that she and her peers are part of their own network.

“After 10 years in the business, I have developed relationships with clients and with my peers,” she said. “My great training has turned into great ammo. I am proud to be in the business.”

Lainey Jurich

Title: Commercial brokerage adviser, Commercial Kentucky Inc., 333 E. Main St.

Age: 32

Education: Bachelor's degree in business, University of Louisville, 2001

CBRE's Amy Miranda enjoys variety of tasks in real estate work

For Amy Miranda, who has a driven, type-A personality, dealing in commercial real estate has proven to be a great career.

Miranda, 29, is senior associate with CBRE Louisville on Dutchmans Lane.

"What I like best is how my job changes every day. And I love the people I work with, the managing of relationships and time. I play many roles every day," she said.

She noted that a residential property transaction might close in 30 to 45 days, but a commercial deal might take 12 to 18 months or longer to complete.

Along the way, she said, she works with contractors, engineers and architects.

"I get to go to some cool places," she said, such as the top of the dome on the Aegon Center and the Zappos warehouse in Bullitt County. "I also know about companies and jobs that are coming to Louisville before the general public."

Miranda, the only female broker in an office of 14, focuses on selling and leasing office space and consulting with companies on moving decisions such as relocations, build-outs and downsizing.

She credits her father, **John Miranda**, with suggesting a career in commercial real estate. He is the owner of Pinnacle Properties, 802 Lily Creek Road, which builds homes, condominiums and office buildings.

Amy Miranda was a loan officer with First Residential Mortgage in Louisville before getting a real estate license in 2006. She joined CBRE Louisville the following year.

She admitted that it is difficult to get started.

"It is important to get involved with a good company and align yourself with good mentors," she offered. "Here we work on teams, so you have three to four built-in mentors who are vested in your success."

Miranda spent 18 months taking classes and passing the certified commercial investment member five-part exam, which includes a written portfolio.

"The certification is like a master's degree in real estate," she explained. "It focuses on investment real estate and explores what people are looking for in commercial real estate."

As a woman making her way in her career, she has found that in Louisville, most of her male peers and clients have a certain level of old-fashioned etiquette. "They almost always insist on driving, and they open doors for me."

The men she deals with respect her and listen to her opinions.

"Men will listen if we come across with authority and do our jobs. They are quick to ask me what I think," she said.

The advice that gets her through the day came from her father.

"Always follow through with what you say you are going to do. And love one another and treat others as you would want to be treated."

Amy Miranda

Title: Senior associate, CBRE Louisville, 6060 Dutchmans Lane

Age: 29

Education: Bachelor's degree in marketing and management, Miami University, Miami, Ohio, 2004; CCIM (Certified Commercial Investment Member), 2010.

Kelly Will joined her father in real estate partnershipCommercial real estate broker **Kelly Will** recalls the best piece of professional advice she has gotten: "Be patient and don't be pushed. Take time to go over the details."

This guidance came from her father and business partner, **David Will**. The two are partners in Will Realty LLC.

"My dad is my mentor. He has a vested interest in me," Will said.

Will got her residential license when she was 18 and began working in commercial real estate at age 21.

"Residential real estate involves more emotions than commercial," she said. "We work business to business. There is a lot of upfront planning: finding a property, working with engineers, planning and zoning, architects."

She remembers the first project she saw from beginning to end. It was Cedar Springs Center in Fern Creek.

"We actually lived on the property when I was growing up. Dad developed the Wal-Mart center there. It was interesting to come back to a place that was once all trees and see the grading, the foundations of the building go down, and the center fill with tenants.

"I was in on it the entire way," she said of the five-year project.

Has she felt the sting of discrimination as a women in a male-dominated profession?

"When I was starting out and visited one work site, I was told by the construction foreman to come only at lunchtime — that I was too much of a distraction to the workers. That was 10 years ago," she said.

"It has taken awhile, but people we deal with have gotten to know me and know that they can talk to me and will get the same answer and sense of direction as they would from my dad," she said.

In a switch from its commercial focus, the company bought the Legacy Lofts condominium development on East Main out of foreclosure last winter.

The project had stalled, and Will Realty has rebranded it as SoHo Lofts.

"Now I am split between residential and commercial," Will said. "I have worked one on one with every tenant and even know the colors of their walls."

The company began selling the 38 units on March 1 and has sold three, with seven under contract, she said. The units range in price from \$98,500 to \$375,000.

With a decade of experience, Will said, she has learned many lessons.

"When I make a mistake, it is very expensive. If I miss a building detail, it could be a \$60,000 error. Or in the case of a land lease that might run for 50 years, the tiniest detail could have huge ramifications."

Kelly Will

Title: Broker/partner, Will Realty LLC, 5815 Round Hill Road

Age: 31

Education: Bachelor's degree in international business, 2000; MBA in 2005, both from Bellarmine University

Send comments to cgreer@bizjournals.com.