

CREW Charlotte Raises Funds, Builds Community

Providing scholarships to women in commercial real estate is one of the group's top priorities

CHARLOTTE — CREW Charlotte, the local chapter of the national networking organization dedicated to advancing women in commercial real estate (CRE), is a community of women supporting women. Its 300 members (about 30 of whom are men) share advice, contacts and support – and all are committed to seeing more women make careers in their male-dominated industry. Offering scholarship dollars is one of the most important ways CREW impacts the community and their industry.

This year, CREW members have raised \$20,000 for scholarships – \$12,000 from the seventh annual ABC Networking on Sept. 6 and another \$8,000 from Casino Night held earlier in the year. Since 2004, CREW Charlotte has donated more than \$140,000 to CREW Network Foundation, UNC Charlotte and Queens University.

“Helping women further their education is one of the most important things we do,” said CREW Executive Director Patty Trepp Drummond. “There’s still a feeling that this is a tough field for women to break into and advance in. Our networking events and mentoring programs provide a way in, and our college and graduate school scholarships help prepare women to enter this field and build a career.”

Olivia Leyland, 29, received one of those scholarships. She earned her degree in interior design last December from the Art Institute of Charlotte while also working full-time. After being awarded the scholarship, she immediately got involved with CREW and was paired with a mentor. “My mentor, Mary Sullivan with LITTLE, met with me monthly and even helped review my portfolio before I graduated,” Leyland said. “Her guidance has been tremendous.”

Last spring, Leyland spoke at a CREW luncheon about her scholarship experience and told the audience she was looking for an internship. CREW member Carrie Sharp with Indoff Commercial Interiors contacted her with an internship opportunity. “I learned a great deal from her and her partner, Dave Marrow, which then helped me land a full-time position with PMC Commercial Interiors.”

Leyland continues to be heavily involved in CREW, even serving as co-chair of UCREW, the University outreach committee. “I attribute a great deal of my success to CREW,” she said. “I would not be where I am today without this amazing organization.”

Robyn Swayne, 36, earned a CREW scholarship, too. She works full-time at BB&T (where she’s worked for 14 years) while also working toward a master’s degree in real estate at UNC Charlotte. She’s on track to graduate in the spring of 2018. The CRE relationship manager works with clients to finance their investments in commercial real estate ventures such as hotels, multifamily, retail, industrial and more.

“I was already in the commercial real estate business when I joined CREW, but being a part of this organization made me feel part of the community,” Swayne said. “It has been an incredible resource

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

for me. Networking has helped me navigate the CRE business community. I have met a number of women in the business who I have worked with as clients and partners to get deals closed.”

Being a CREW member has had a direct impact on Swayne’s career. “Work, for me, is also about community,” she said. “Being part of the community makes me more successful [thanks to the] resources you develop by knowing people in the CRE world.”

CREW, she said, allows her “to be a better resource for clients.”

Founded in 1989, CREW is the commercial real estate industry’s premier business networking organization for women. More than 10,000 CREW Network members represent nearly every discipline within the commercial real estate industry globally and have a presence in more than 70 major markets.

More about CREW Charlotte

CREW Charlotte is a chapter of CREW Network, with the mission of influencing the success of the commercial real estate industry by advancing the achievements of women. CREW Network members represent all disciplines of commercial real estate. CREW Network is a national organization with over 8,000 members in over 75 chapters across North America focused on promoting business, providing educational opportunities and sharing information among members at local, regional and national levels. For more information on CREW Charlotte, visit crewcharlotte.org.