

# For Women Leading Real Estate In Philadelphia, No Apologies But Lots Of Gratitude

August 21, 2022 | Matthew Rothstein, Bisnow Philadelphia (<https://www.bisnow.com/author/matthew-rothstein-51988>) (<mailto:matt.rothstein@bisnow.com>)

The pandemic challenged many parts of commercial real estate like never before, and women in the industry were challenged even more deeply. But in the years since the crisis began, Philly women in CRE have thrived, reaching unprecedented levels of success and influence.



The women featured (<https://www.bisnow.com/philadelphia/news/women/meet-the-women-at-the-forefront-of-philly-cre-at-this-crucial-juncture-114253>) at *Bisnow's* Philadelphia Women Leading Real Estate event at the Notary Hotel on Aug. 18 embodied the dueling impulses of celebrating triumphs and refusing to accept the status quo as good enough. The spirit of the evening could have been boiled down to one of the guiding principles Thomas Jefferson

University (<https://www.bisnow.com/tags/thomas-jefferson-university>) Vice President of Real Estate Dominique Casimir listed in her keynote address.

“You need no one’s permission to pursue your passion,” Casimir said.



Casimir switched careers into commercial real estate during the Great Financial Crisis, a period of total disruption she took as an opportunity — a move that may have felt familiar to a room full of women who made enormous strides over two-plus years of the pandemic.

“As odd as it sounds, it was the best time to follow my passion,” Casimir said. “It tested how deeply I wanted it. I had no permission to fail and I had no safety net.”



Even though they all had to draw on deep wells of internal motivation, each speaker spoke glowingly of the support systems they were able to rely upon, whether at home, at their companies or in the greater real estate community.

Many speakers and award recipients were quick to acknowledge they had relied on others in the room to get where they are.





For being in charge of her company's swelling pipeline of construction projects and leading work sites through unprecedented uncertainty, Post Brothers (<https://www.bisnow.com/tags/post-brothers>) Senior Vice President of Development Sarina Rose won the Leader of the Year award.

For securing several leases for retail tenants on Philadelphia's high streets, JLL (<https://www.bisnow.com/tags/jll>) Managing Director Paige Jaffe won the Dealmaker of the Year award.



For taking her firm to heights never before reached by companies owned by people of color, Mosaic Development Partners (<https://www.bisnow.com/tags/mosaic-development-partners>) co-owner Leslie Smallwood-Lewis won the Innovator of the Year award.

For playing an integral role in her company's influential new developments, Lubert-Adler Real Estate Funds (<https://www.bisnow.com/tags/lubert-adler-real-estate-funds>) principal Jessica Morgan won the Rising Star award.



In keeping with the event’s spirit of gratitude, the selection committee for the awards also created its own category: Unsung Heroes. The following were recognized for doing the work and providing the support that can go ignored in most award ceremonies. Those honorees were:

- Allied Universal security officer and supervisor at 2Liberty Anastasia Rodriguez.
- CBRE (<https://www.bisnow.com/tags/cbre>) Managing Director Diane Weinberg.
- JLL Senior Manager of Sales Enablement Jennifer Blatstein.
- Building Industry Association (<https://www.bisnow.com/tags/building-industry-association>) of Philadelphia Executive Director Marianne Scott.
- NAIOP Philadelphia (<https://www.bisnow.com/tags/naiop-philadelphia>) Executive Director Sarah Maginnis.
- Philadelphia City Planning Commission (<https://www.bisnow.com/tags/philadelphia-city-planning-commission>) Executive Director Eleanor Sharpe.

— Stockton Real Estate Advisors Leasing Advisor and Marketing Manager Jacklyn Hadzor.

— Brandywine Realty Trust (<https://www.bisnow.com/tags/brandywine-realty-trust>) Life Sciences and University Partnerships Director Sara Merriman.

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See Also: Cold Storage Feels The Chill Of Inflation, Power Costs  
([/national/news/industrial/cold-storage-power-costs-labor-inflation-115485](#))

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