Over the last decade, so much has been written about diversity and inclusion within the commercial real estate industry. The industry is labeled as one of the most obstinate to change. “The absolute worst” as one diversity diagnostician labeled it. As though guilt could move a mountain, the slings and arrows are shot every once in a while towards the owners, managers and brokers of thousands of gleaming buildings and the response is at best quiet from the industry. The pressures that drive systemic change—bad press, lost business, shareholder discontent—are hardly if ever felt by real estate companies. It is a business driven by relationships first and foremost. Therein lies its strength but also its weakness.

If you never went to a different restaurant, if you never drove a different car or you never visited a different country, your reference points would be so narrow that it would become embarrassing in peer to peer conversation. You would quickly become marginalized, drift into silence and feel uncomfortable. You would want to get back to your happy place and feel warm endorphins again. The desire to reconnect to the familiar would be heightened and urgent. You would want to find those people who have only eaten at one restaurant, driven one car and never ventured outside their own corporate limits.

That is what bedevils this industry when it comes to stepping outside into the air of adventurous hiring. Scary place that is. Easier to find those who know those I know already. But the future is lurking. And that future is multi-color, multi-cultural and multi-thought. It’s European. And African. And Asian. And Indian. And the commercial real estate industry is largely missing the last three.

REAP was and is an effort to change that. It’s been around for nearly two decades and if it doesn’t ring a bell, well, quite honestly, it should. Its supporters are trade association heavyweights—ICSC, NAIOP, ULI, BOMA, NAA and NMHC. Its sponsors are well known—Wal-Mart, McDonald’s, Forest City, Cushman & Wakefield, Starbucks, Sperry Van Ness, CBRE and JLL to name a few. It has an eight market presence where it brings minority professionals into a 10 week education/networking program that educates and attempts to connect very talented people to very successful companies. The only problem is most of the commercial real estate industry supports diversity in theory but is rather lacking in execution.

You know the numbers. Less than 2% in the c-suite. Less than 5% in the boardroom. Where the industry has made inroads hiring more female professionals in the last decade-plus, professionals of color are still trying to get through the door.

REAP has selected a number of alumni market leaders in each of its eight markets. All are accomplished professionals. All have strong opinions on what they perceive as the difficulties they and their peers have encountered trying to enter commercial real estate. Some of their comments are quite pointed.

A Message From the Executive Director

Follow and add @projectreap

REAP—The Real Estate Associate Program

REAP is a talent resource . . .

REAP is a means by which talented professionals of color are exposed to the world of commercial real estate

REAP is a means by which commercial real estate companies looking for talent can link with accomplished professionals eager to achieve success in commercial real estate

REAP is a 10 week, 20+ class program teaching market analysis, financial analysis, deal negotiation, brokerage, asset management, property management and leasing within the sectors of retail, office, multi-family and industrial

REAP is supported by the industry’s leading trade associations

REAP is sponsored by the industry’s leading companies

REAP graduates work throughout the commercial real estate industry filling key roles in management, finance and development

REAP was founded in 1997 in Washington, DC and has since expanded to Atlanta, New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Cleveland, Columbus and Dallas-Fort Worth

continued on page 2
A Message From the Executive Director

Let’s start with a comment from REAP Chicago…

“I believe companies commitment to diversity is lip service, and not just in commercial real estate. The talking points and sound bites are great at investors meeting and annual reports. Where people focus their hiring indicates how broad of a reach they are trying to have.”

And 300 miles east from REAP Cleveland…

“Companies use the excuse that they are not able to hire a diverse pool of talent because they cannot find individuals with the skill sets needed. I believe they are not looking in the right places. They are closed to expanding their search.”

This from REAP Washington, DC…

“I believe a lot of companies are only concerned about profit and losses for their companies and do not see the bigger picture of expanding their employee base. There are a lot of talented diverse candidates in the marketplace that would be an asset to any company that would give them the opportunity.”

Moving south and west, a perspective from REAP Dallas…

“Companies are so comfortable with the “how things have all ways been” thinking and afraid to give the opportunities to minorities. They aren’t maximizing the potential that unlocking the doors can give to their companies.”

The benefits of inclusion to the industry are great. Expanding a talent pool only produces good results. Catholic high school athletic teams benefit from being able to draw the best from the larger community as they are not confined by geographical boundaries. Works in sports. Works in business. As COO, I knew that repeating past hiring practices would not serve us in the future where our clients would demand greater multicultural representation. Sperry Van Ness International Corporation supports REAP because it gives us access to diverse talent that more fully represents our prospective clients. More than promoting diversity and inclusion, REAP introduces our brand to accomplished professionals who can solve problems, create opportunities and open new doors. Investigate the benefits REAP can bring to your company. Because great talent leads to greater success.

Diane Danielson
Chief Operating Officer
SVN International Corp

Why Should You Support Project REAP?

Simple.

It’s Good Business.

The Sperry Van Ness® organization has always taken an innovative approach to separate itself in the brokerage business. As COO, I knew that repeating past hiring practices would not serve us in the future where our clients would demand greater multicultural representation. Sperry Van Ness International Corporation supports REAP because it gives us access to diverse talent that more fully represents our prospective clients. More than promoting diversity and inclusion, REAP introduces our brand to accomplished professionals who can solve problems, create opportunities and open new doors. Investigate the benefits REAP can bring to your company. Because great talent leads to greater success.

Diane Danielson
Chief Operating Officer
SVN International Corp

For more information go to www.projectreap.org

To support or bring REAP to your market, contact Gregg McCort, executive director, at 646-729-3460

REAP is a 501 C3 Corporation
REAP Leaders and Board of Directors

Mission Statement
To educate minority professionals in the disciplines of commercial real estate in order to create career opportunities for the student and a significant talent resource for the real estate industry.

The REAP Staff
- Gregg A. McCort, Executive Director/President, New York, NY
- Doug Bibby, President and CEO, National Multifamily Housing Council, Washington, DC
- Thomas Bisacquino, President and CEO, NAIOP, Herndon, VA
- Henry Chamberlain, APR, FASAE, CAE, BOMA International, Washington, DC
- Michael P. Kercheval, Executive Director, University of Colorado Real Estate Center, Boulder, CO
- Henry Chamberlain, APR, FASAE, CAE, BOMA International, Washington, DC
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Concela Tarver
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Matthew Gates
BA, African-American History
UCLA

Matthew Turner
BS, Supply Chain Management
Lehigh University

Melissa Wyatt
BS, Psychology/Chemistry
CSU, Bakersfield

Michael Chappell
BA, Human Resources
Michigan State University

Natasha Amlani
BA, Philosophy
Minor: Public Affairs/Public Policy
University of California

Natasha White
JD
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Columbia College Chicago

Portia Udoh
BA, Political Science
Loyola Marymount University

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BBA
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* Not pictured

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NAIOP
Janice Parham
BOMA
Robert Weeks
ULI
Richard Pace
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Rhadika Reddy
Ariel Ventures
Vince Adams
Greater Cleveland Partnership
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Eaton
Randy Ruttenberg
Fairmount Properties
David Browning
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Downtown Cleveland Partnership
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2015 REAP Alumni Fundraising Campaign

This year’s “$50 + 5” fundraising campaign raised nearly $7,000.00 for the year. Thank you to all alumni who contributed to the campaign. Special thanks to Mary Hsu, Los Angeles ’12, Otto Beaty, Columbus ’14, and Sharon Gentles, Los Angeles ’12, who made contributions of $250.00 or more.

Below is a list of alumni who contributed to REAP’s mission. Thanks to one and all:

- Zaniab Adio-Saka
- Cynthia Alexander
- Jamar Arbello
- Lisa Averyhart
- Ken Baker
- Otto Beaty
- Shelia Bennett
- Marvin Benton
- Valerie Bickerstaff
- Jim Brewer
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- Julian Taylor
- Karen Todd
- Luis Viera
- Nicole Wade
- Donald Waytes
- Jason Wells
- Natasha White
- Charles Wilson
- Dwayne Wyatt

A Look at REAP’s Market Leaders

REAP recognizes the following alumni for volunteering their time to promoting REAP’s mission and value at the market level. Introducing our REAP Market Leaders Group:

- Quinn Green & Solomon Colvin III
  REAP Atlanta
- Staci Stout & Damian Bond
  REAP Washington, DC
- Angela Brooks & Jimena Sayavedra
  REAP Chicago
- Autumn Glover & Clarence Simmons
  REAP Columbus
- Mary Hsu & Camille Ellison
  REAP Los Angeles
- Amber Lewis & Hann Smith
  REAP Cleveland
- Sammy Saunders & Jamar Arbello
  REAP NYC
- Shicara Hollie, Angel Radcliffe & Jonathan Redmond
  REAP Dallas
REAP Alumni on the Move

Sheila Bennett (REAP Columbus 2014) has joined Coldwell Banker King Thompson, serving the greater Columbus metropolitan area.

Staci Stout (REAP DC 2013) has been promoted to Analyst on the Federal Transaction Team at JLL. She was previously a Brokerage Coordinator at JLL.

Adeola Adejobi (REAP NY 2013) is now an Agency Attorney at the New York City Housing Preservation and Development Agency.

Reginald Richardson (REAP Chicago 2014) has relocated to Melbourne, Australia and accepted a new role as Client Manager, Global Merchant Services Group at American Express-Australia.

Reginald Owens (REAP Cleveland 2015) is now Senior Consultant/Project Manager for Performance Systems.

Kenneth R. Jackson (REAP Los Angeles 2012) accepted a new role as Transactions Coordinator - Due Diligence at Thorofare Capital, Inc, a middle market loan origination and servicing company.

Gardner Rivera (REAP New York 2010) is now Managing Member, Paper City Investments, specializing in ground up urban multifamily development in New Jersey.

Tory Horton (REAP Chicago 2015) is now Director of Finance/CSBO for Thornton Township High School District 205.

Joseph Moreno (REAP Los Angeles 2011) will be working in acquisitions for The Reliant Group, a private equity firm that specializes in multi-family and affordable housing nationwide. The firm is based in San Francisco.

Aisha J. Thomas (REAP Los Angeles 2014) has accepted a position with the Atlanta Housing Authority as a Temporary Market Analyst. She will also start in June as an Associate with Marcus & Millichap, specializing in Multi-Family and LIHTC Investment properties.

Akil Hameed, MBA (REAP Cleveland 2012) Broker/Owner, FASS Real Estate Services is working on a joint venture project with CBRE, focusing on a Court Appointed Receivership Property Management deal of a 50,000 sq ft neighborhood shopping center. In addition, he was been installed as the new Ohio Realtist Association State President for a 2-year term.

Lisa Tomiko Blackburn (REAP Dallas 2015) is now Director, Legal Counsel at CEC Entertainment, parent company to Chuck E. Cheese’s & Peter Piper Pizza. She was also selected for an MBA fellowship at University of North Carolina.

Angel Radcliffe (REAP Dallas 2015) recently started CAS Consultants, providing financial consulting/reporting to small businesses as well as real estate vendor services.

James Daughtry (REAP Los Angeles 2014) is now Real Estate Entrepreneur at Gotham Properties International Inc. He will focus on identifying and assessing the feasibility of new opportunities for acquisition/rehabilitation of Multi Family & Single Family homes in the South Bay Area of Southern California.

Kelly Dotson (REAP Cleveland 2013) is now a Banking, Finance and Commercial Real Estate Paralegal for Jones Day Law, Cleveland.

Ebony Sampson (REAP DC 2013) is now at Metro Commercial Real Estate in Philadelphia, PA, and was recently promoted to Senior Sales Associate - Brokerage Services, representing retail tenants in the Greater Philadelphia Region.

Chantell Glenn (REAP Atlanta 2012) accepted the position of Director of Economic Development for the City of Riverdale (GA).

Quinn Green (REAP Atlanta 2012) has been installed as 2017 incoming President of the DeKalb Association of REALTORS, reporting to the Georgia Association of REALTORS.

Ryan Johnson (REAP New York 2010) is now an Associate Director on the Acquisitions Team at MetLife Real Estate Investors.

Tyler Ford (REAP Columbus 2014) joined VanTrust Real Estate as a Development Manager.

Mike Mendoza (REAP Cleveland 2015) is now an Associate at FASS Real Estate Services.

Micheal Crowner (REAP Chicago 2013) was admitted to the Kellogg School of Management for their Fall 2016 MBA program.

Nancy D. Aldredge Foster (REAP Los Angeles 2011) has relocated her company, Abacus Marketing Partners, Inc. to Las Vegas, Nevada, and is actively working with the Nevada Contractors Association, Summerlin Chamber of Commerce, Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. and the High Speed Rail.

Shmel Graham (REAP Los Angeles 2011) is now an Asset Manager for the City of Los Angeles - Mayor’s Office of Budget, Innovation & Excellence.

London Kemp (REAP Los Angeles 2012) is now a Director of Real Estate for NBC Universal.