



CREW ATLANTA'S OWN LESLIE BURKE WINS ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT AWARD

-CREW Atlanta member selected from nationwide submissions -

ATLANTA (OCT. 2010) - An entrepreneur is defined as one who renews society and invigorates industry by seeking out and capitalizing on opportunities. CREW Atlanta is proud to announce that its own Leslie Burke embodies this way of doing business as she has been awarded CREW Network's Entrepreneurial Spirit Award. This national award honors a CREW member who has achieved unique career success or milestone during the past twelve to twenty-four months as the result of an exceptional entrepreneurial spirit.



Burke was nominated by her CREW Atlanta peers and was chosen from hundreds of submissions from across the country. She will be recognized at the CREW Network convention in San Francisco Oct. 20-23, 2010.

"I am incredibly honored to be receiving this award," said Leslie Burke. "I want to thank everyone in the CREW Atlanta family for their support." She credits her confidence to go out on her own in large part to the support and camaraderie she experienced while participating in CREW Atlanta's Leadership Program. "I can't begin to convey how beneficial the CREW organization has been for me, particularly the outstanding Leadership Program put on by CREW Atlanta. That program was instrumental in getting me over the fear of stepping off the cliff without a net. I needed to show myself – and the world – what I was capable of."

By the end of program I knew beyond any doubt that absolutely nothing was stopping me from venturing out on my own except myself.”

“Everyone at CREW Atlanta is so proud of Leslie for winning this prestigious award,” said Melissa Hall, President of CREW Atlanta. “She exemplifies what it means to be a successful entrepreneur in the commercial real estate industry. We look forward to seeing continued prosperity from her business and are delighted she is representing CREW Atlanta.”

After two consecutive corporate layoffs in 2001 and 2008, Burke decided to start her own company, Athena Real Estate Advisors LLC. Her business model utilizes a national bench of independent contractors in the emerging area of FDIC-related opportunities, including working with FDIC Prime Contractors and private firms acquiring assets from failed banks. Athena received its WBENC (woman-owned business) certification in 2010.

On client assignments Burke also brought fellow Atlanta CREW members Cynthia Alexander, Suzanne Hale, Charlotte Kollin, and Karen Purdy into the fold and soon the all-female “Athena team” was receiving recognition and accolades from FDIC managers they worked with. In the process of developing her “bench” she incorporated as many CREW members on her teams as possible, demonstrating her ability to take advantage of new opportunities and develop creative business strategies and help fellow CREW members along the way.

Burke’s big break occurred when national investment banking firm Eastdil Secured decided to funnel all of its independent contractor relationships through three firms, and selected Athena (the only woman-owned business) to be one of the three. Today, Athena has more than fifty commercial real estate subcontractors nationwide and is growing every month. Burke’s focus in 2011 will be on expanding her base business, forming alliances as a WBENC partner, and exploring other entrepreneurial ventures. She also hopes to use her talents

to promote CREW Network's collegiate UCREW effort, so that the next generation of women in commercial real estate can rise further and faster than ever before.

Leslie Burke began her commercial real estate career in 1986 after obtaining a MBA with a concentration in real estate from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Over her 25-year career she has held positions with Arthur Andersen, MetLife, Archon Group/Goldman Sachs, and Prudential Financial. She is currently the founder and President of Athena Real Estate Advisors LLC. She joined CREW Atlanta in 2003 and participated in CREW Atlanta's Leadership program in 2007/2008. She has held numerous chapter leadership positions including Sponsorship Chair, Public Policy Vice Chair, and UCREW Vice Chair. She has also been involved at the national CREW Network level, participating on the Grant Selection Committee, and chairing the CREW Network Awards committee. Burke is also on the Board of Directors of the John Ripley Forbes Big Trees Forest Preserve, a 30-acre old growth urban forest in Sandy Springs, Ga.

About Commercial Real Estate Women of Atlanta

Founded in 1982, the mission of CREW-Atlanta (www.crewatlanta.org) is to enrich the real estate industry by empowering women into positions of influence. With active participation in the industry for nearly thirty years, CREW-Atlanta is a member of CREW Network (www.crewnetwork.org), a growing organization of nearly 8,000 members and 66 chapters across the United States and Canada that provides a business development network representing every discipline in commercial real estate. CREW Atlanta, having approximately 400 members, is one of the largest chapters of CREW.

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