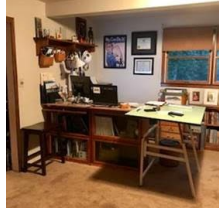


CREW PITTSBURGH

News about Our Members and Events

CREW Colleagues

August 2017



Amy's Home Office



Amy's Downtown Office



Amy's Field Office

CREW Colleague Making Waves

Amy Hopkins, Owner of Urban Terrain LLC



Long-time CREW member Amy Hopkins, the first woman surveyor to be honored with the 2016 Surveyor of the Year Award, has started her own land surveying business – Urban Terrain LLC and has an office downtown at Coterie at 437 Grant Street atop the Frick building (in addition to the one at home.)

“It just seemed the right time in both my personal and professional life to take my skills and experience to the next level and start my own business” says the 11-year veteran of the U.S. Marines. She is licensed in both PA and NY, has eight years of direct experience in the energy business, and has surveyed three major buildings downtown – the Kaufman Building, the Lawyers Building, and the Allegheny Building.

She loves being out in the field and helping clients as much as she can – from start to finish with Land Title Surveys being one of her specialties.

Amy met Joanne Bailey, the founder of Coterie, at a CREW Luncheon earlier this year when Joanne was a speaker on the panel that day. Amy was in the market for space and found that Coterie was a perfect fit.

She has received four referrals from CREW members so far and got the job every time so she’s “4 for 4.”

We congratulate our colleague Amy for her professionalism and sense of adventure! Contact Amy Hopkins at 724-337-1691 or at ahopkins@urbanterrain.net. Coterie photo by Eva Lin Photography

CREW Colleague Spotlight



Jim McDunn, PNC Real Estate & Treasurer for CREW Pittsburgh

Jim will be happy to answer any questions you might have! Catch him at our next Luncheon Program or Connect with CREW.

How did you get your start in commercial real estate?

D.C. import/export trader, Brooks H. Brown, III was in town visiting in-laws. I served them dinner at Maggie Mae’s restaurant and as we chatted Mr. Brown told me. “You need to take your M.B.A. to the Capital, where the government always has open positions that can lead back to the private sector.” So as a FHLBB savings and loan examiner trainee I studied in Snowmass, Colorado for 5 weeks, and learned about all sorts of real estate banker essentials like mortgages, CRE valuation, and construction loans.

What values are important to you as you do your job?

Honesty and humility are essential, especially honesty with myself. Real estate is such a dynamic industry that, although an opportunity may appear to be well matched with significant immediate demand, markets often change quickly. I have seen how an acceptance of our own limitations in planning, underwriting, and executing can lead to greater long-term success. Collaboration and seeking other’s views are helpful. Valuing opposing opinions is important because sometimes they are correct!

Tell us how you were hired for a job. It does not have to be the job you have now unless you want it to be.

In the Great Recession [2008-2010], I was commuting weekly from Pittsburgh to an Asset Recovery position in Wilmington, DE, when I was contacted about an open position in Pittsburgh. The hiring manager remembered me from decades previously when we briefly shared an assignment in Baltimore. She had just bought an Amtrak ticket to her Philadelphia office, so we met for a lovely dinner at the Wilmington station. It was like a scene from a mystery novel with a happy ending!

What do you expect CREW to do for you? Be for you?

To me, CREW has always been remarkably supportive and encouraging. After the Royal Bank of Canada shuttered its U.S. real estate operation, and then again, when Citizens closed its Pittsburgh CRE lending office, my friends in CREW helped me through tough times to find the next best opportunity. I feel honored to be one of the few male CREW board members in its broad network, and appreciate every chance to help with the chapter’s work to promote women’s contributions to the CRE industry locally.



CREW Colleague Spotlight

Tammy Ribar, Director at Houston Harbaugh Attorneys at Law

How did you get your start in commercial real estate?

I started out as a commercial litigation attorney but wasn’t happy in that area for a variety of reasons. I was considering leaving the firm where I was working at the time but after discussing the issues with one of the senior partners, I was offered the opportunity to stay and switch departments from litigation to real estate. I decided to stay and practice in the real estate department which was a real turning point for me in my career.

What was it like at the beginning of your career?

I grew up thinking I was going to be a trial attorney so I was a little disappointed that it did not turn out the way I had always imagined it would be. *L.A. Law* [TV series] made it look so appealing! I even explored leaving the practice of law altogether. Once I switched to the real estate transactional world, I found the practice of law to be very rewarding and I enjoyed the work I was doing. I did have a lot to learn since I did not know much about real estate law when I switched departments. However, I was so lucky to work with experienced and helpful senior attorneys who took the time to train and mentor me and am so thankful for that experience.

What values are important to you as you do your job?

Honesty, integrity and commitment are important values to me in order to effectively represent a client and complete a transaction successfully.

Tell us how you were hired for a job. It does not have to be the job you have now unless you want it to be.

My first job at a law firm was the result of a poker game my husband played with a friend of his who was a lawyer and happened to mention that his firm was hiring. I submitted my resume shortly after that and got the job!

What do you expect CREW to do for you? Be for you?

Networking is hard and it’s difficult to find an organization that provides consistently good networking opportunities. I was urged to join CREW because it is industry-specific and also dedicated to the advancement of women in commercial real estate. I expected CREW to provide good networking but quickly found it to be invaluable to me for the connections I have made to other women in my profession. It has enhanced my practice by providing the opportunity for referrals (both giving and receiving), enhanced knowledge of the industry with great programming, and comradery with the wonderful women who practice in this industry.

How do you achieve (or not) the balance of work and home life?

It is a daily struggle and some days I am good at balancing and others, the balance is really skewed one way or the other. I am blessed to have a spouse who is supportive and understanding. We truly work as a team to do our “day jobs” well and be good parents to our two kids and I don’t know what I would do without him. I try my best in my varying roles as a mom, wife and attorney (among others) but realize that I can’t be perfect in each one every day and have learned not to beat myself up too much as a working mom. Having a cleaning lady really helps!

Do you reply to emails at 11 pm?

Guilty! However, I try not to do that unless it really can’t wait and needs attention right away.

Anything else you want us to know about you?

My husband and I own rental properties of our own and currently have a total of 21 rental units, both commercial and residential so I get to practice what I preach.

Please send your comments to Alicia Smith, CREW Pittsburgh Administrator at admin@CREWPittsburgh.org or Karen Kukish at karenkukish@gmail.com