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As an Etkin Johnson Scholar, I was privileged to attend one of the most prestigious real estate conferences in the country, Urban Land Institutes 2019 Fall Meeting hosted in Washington, D.C from September 18th-September 21st. The city currently has a variety of ongoing development, fitting for this year's discussions which included topics such as opportunity zones, affordability, housing policy, real estate technology, and much more. To see such passionate industry leaders from all over the country was an experience I can truly never forget. I have leveraged this opportunity even further by following up with many new connections I've made at the conference, and utilizing their network for my personal social impact real estate investment company, Wilminvest.

My personal favorite event was entitled "Chipping Away at the Housing Attainability Crisis" which had representatives from Grounded Network Solutions, The Rockefeller Group, and Montgomery County Department of Planning. This was an interesting mix of a non-profit, a local government official, and a private developer having a discussion on projects that are not only attainable for the ever-shrinking middle class, but satisfy local land use and zoning policy using innovative approaches. Some of the topics included –

- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's)
- Community Land Trusts (CLT's)
- Inclusionary Zoning Programs
- Module Housing

Next was "Seizing Opportunity: What's Next for Opportunity Zones where we got to hear from representatives from HUD, CIM Group, Javelin 19, and more. I particularly enjoyed this event because we got to hear from firms that have launched Qualified Opportunity Zone Funds more than \$500 million, and have already broken ground on many of the projects. One takeaway I found was that firms in fact have been looking at a balance of investing directly into qualified opportunity zone businesses as well as directly into property. Although this strategy may seem risky, it can lead to a huge payoff if the company turns out successful. Most of these companies benefiting from OZ investment are in the software, co-working, or med-tech space, and this style of investment seems to mimic venture capital investing.

The closing general session was given by Nikki Haley, former United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations. This discourse was powerful in that it discussed various challenges that we are collectively facing globally. We discussed current political events that could in fact affect our way of life and business here in the United States. Topics included conflicts with Iran, China, and the environment. I enjoyed ending the convention on this note because it caused attendees to look in the mirror to the reality of the situation we are in. No matter what firm we work for, what type of real estate we control, or how many buildings we own, we all share the same planet and there is only one.

I cannot thank ULI enough for awarding me this opportunity to attend this conference, and I will continue to participate in its wonderful programs!