



WLI Champions Profile (2019)

Name Rachel Russell Krenz

Title Director, Real Estate Development

Company Ram Realty Advisors

Discipline Real Estate Development

Describe a Magic Moment in Your Career or Life: In the middle of a long and heated rezoning process where neighbors were in opposition of a development, we asked everyone what they wanted for their neighborhood, instead of what they did not want. It was a turning point in the process where an argument turned into a conversation; where people began to envision the desired future in addition to celebrating the past; where all stakeholders worked together to solve details of that future vision; and where trust began to build. I felt the room lighten. I felt the possibility of everyone getting a win. That evening fortified my responsibility as a developer to be not only a community builder, but also a community facilitator.

Describe Who or What has been a Key Influencer in Your Life: The biggest influence in my life has been the tribe of friends and family who have supported me at my weakest moments and encouraged me to brag at my peaks. There is nothing better at helping you be your best self than having authentic relationships with people who advocate for you at all times.

Professionally, Clay Grubb had a large influence on my career. He not only saw the potential in my work, but he graciously handed over opportunities that he was given so that my career could blossom. He put me on the North Tryon Vision Steering Committee, signed me up for McColl Center's Innovation Institute (a life changing experience), entrusted me with large projects, and taught me a philosophy of development for which I am forever indebted. Having someone you respect trust you to represent them is a great responsibility and honor.

Next Big Challenge as an Industry: There are many challenges in our industry, but one that I want to highlight is the balance of vision and execution. Our industry has the ability to make significant impacts on our community and thereby individual's daily lives. If we don't envision how to make people's lives great, we cannot succeed at our jobs. Daniel Burnham's quote of making "no little plans" is one of my favorites. We need to vision grand plans. And at the same time, we need to be sure that we are executing with tangible actions. Both execution without vision and vision without follow-through are lost opportunities. Charlotte has been fortunate to have had leadership that believes in both, setting an example for other cities and for junior members of our industry. It is a constant challenge, but we need to keep pushing for this balance of vision and execution.

What is Your Secret Talent: I am a pretty mean competitor at board games.

Your Take on Championing Others . . . We all need a champion and everyone should be championing someone. Open, genuine conversations with anyone and everyone have gotten me where I am today. I try to do the same for anyone who is seeking support. You have to listen, you have to share sincerely, and you have to provide opportunities for people to blossom.

One Word that Captures You: Authentic