



Charlotte

WLI Champions Profile

Name Liliias Folkes John
Title Public Private Partnership Advisor
Company City of Charlotte
Discipline Economic Development

Describe a magic moment in your career or life.

October 2007, I'd just got my masters in Real Estate and took a consulting job doing commercial interiors. My dream job was to work at Columbia University on the Manhattanville New Campus project but they were only hiring licensed architects and engineers at the time.

Perhaps a month later I get a call about a job opportunity at the Business School. I told them I'd just started some place and wasn't interested. 2 months later they called again, I still decline and say I'm not interested. A month later they call a third time and I finally say well what is the position? What could I possibly be qualified for at the Business School? The position was to be the Business School Owner's Rep/Project Manager for their new campus in MANHATTANVILLE! *faints* Within 2 months I left consulting!

Describe who or what has been a key influence in your life.

Margaret Streicker, she was my first boss out of college. She was a developer and started her own firm. I was her first employee and I had absolutely no real estate experience at all and she took a chance because I was eager to learn the industry! I was a film major in college, my concentration was screenwriting, but I convinced her that making a film and building a house were the same thing.

Both take materials where on their own are nothing much, but when you put them together and create something absolutely amazing and unique every single time!

What do you see as the next big challenge as an industry?

Creative solutions to solve the affordable housing crisis. This pandemic is going to add to the number of people who need affordable rent, creative living situations, less space, more space.

What is your secret talent?

I loveee to refinish antique furniture and DIY reno projects

What is your take on championing others?

It's a part of my natural personality to champion for others, speaking for others who cannot speak for themselves is the core of my faith, and I was so fortunate to have a career where I can use that same quality at work, advocating for developers in the public sphere.

What is one word that captures you?

Learner! 😊