



New York

Women's Leadership Initiative

Summer 2022 Newsletter

Dear ULI New York,



I can't believe it has already been two years since I joined our WLI executive leadership here at ULI New York. It has been an amazing experience to collaborate with our incredible team. We've made it through a lot together since spring 2020, and supporting our community is more important than ever.

When we all have limited bandwidth—there's not a person reading this who's not stretched in multiple directions—the impact we can make with any precious few hours we have to spare can be exponentially powerful. I am inspired

every day by the hours and dedication the WLI NY team seems to keep finding, and at the work we do together. Two key focus areas highlight for me why this organization has been so vital over the years: **Connection**, how we build a stronger network at ULI and in the field through the Programming, Membership Engagement and Communication committees here at ULI NY; and **Impact**, how we can be proactive with outreach to increase the presence of women and diverse members at ULI and in our fields through our local WLI Foundations, University Outreach and Special Projects Committees.

The enduring successes of WLI are all by, and for, the incredible women we get to work with. Connection has been so important in learning from each other in navigating

the constant changing landscape of our fields. Despite the challenges of not being able to collaborate in person all the time, our Programming Committee was able to increase attendance and the reach of our signature events, including Learning from Leaders. In-person tours started again. Membership Engagement has developed a multi-layer strategy to connect our community, with larger meetings, personal outreach, and coffee chats in the park between the programming events. Communications has been incredible at sharing updates of the great work of WLI and individual members throughout the year.



Our ULI NY WLI hosted a tour of the South Bronx senior housing development project 1490 Southern Boulevard on June 8, 2022. This award-winning women-led project tour is one of many exciting in-person programs our WLI has been organizing to enhance professional development for our members.

Initiatives focused around impact and how we bring more women and diversity into WLI have also expanded over the past years through the incredible work of the ULI Hines Grant-winning Real Stories project (which will be featured in soon-to-be-released content), the Foundations Committee, which just launched a fellowship program, and the continuing work of University Outreach. All are committed to shifting the paradigm to connect with women earlier in the education process, building that bridge into the professional landscape with a support network through WLI. Our chapter now has two Foundations Fellows (featured in this newsletter) and we've continued expansion of University Outreach to over 12 schools from an original number of 6, targeting a broader and more diverse range of universities.

As I look back on the year, I am always looking to what impact we can have on the next generation. We wouldn't be here without the incredible work and initiative of the women who came before us. We are aligned at WLI in our commitment to continue to work to create a better place for the generation to follow.

On a personal note, I'm writing this one month since Mother's Day and I'm thinking about the recent tour I got to give to my mom and my daughter of the Steinway Tower in Manhattan, a project I led design for with an incredible team at SHoP. It was emotional for me to share the milestone of completing a project at that scale with my mom, because of course on so many levels I would not be who I am without her. She's also an architect; she started practicing in the 1970s. She always put herself out there to be a leader and representative—including when she was the only woman at her

local AIA in the early 1980s. She led design review on our local city council and supported the next generation of women leaders through volunteer work and Girl Scouts. She pushed me to forge my own path and recognize that we are stronger as a team. Looking across Central Park from hundreds of feet up with her and my daughter that day made it clear how essential it is to continue the work of ensuring that girls of my daughter's generation and those to come have an even better landscape to navigate through than what we've had.

I continue to be inspired by the incredible women who came before me at WLI, especially two in particular who were a key part of getting me involved in early WLI NY dinners at the Peking Duck House. **Ronne Hackett**, Co-founder and CEO of the Clarett Group, is being honored this year with the 2022 ULI New York Visionary Leadership in Land Use Award, and **Bethany Ropa**, Managing Director of Real Estate at UBS Investment Bank, is the incoming Chair of ULI New York.

I am tremendously excited about **Anne-Sophie Hall** becoming Chair of WLI NY this new fiscal year. She is an incredible WLI leader and has been a true partner as Vice Chair of our WLI this past year, a fellow architect and wonderful mentor to our team. We're also thrilled to welcome **Lauren Amicucci** as WLI NY Vice Chair for FY23. Lauren was one of the founding co-chairs of our University Outreach group and she's done an incredible amount of work in advancing the next generation of women in our professions.

Though I am sad to leave this role, I'm looking forward to all the progress to come and continuing to support these two incredible women and the rest of the ULI New York WLI team.

Thank you to the WLI NY 2021-2022 team and here's to looking forward to the next 10 years of WLI!

Dana Getman, AIA
WLI New York Chair FY22
Principal, SHoP Architects



Are you or someone you know interested in applying for our ULI New York Alice Connell WLI Scholarship to receive complimentary registration to the 2022 ULI Fall Meeting in Dallas, October 24-27, 2022?

Application Window Now Open for ULI New York's Annual Alice Connell WLI Scholarship!

The ULI New York Alice Connell WLI Scholarship is designed to promote the participation of women at ULI's annual Fall Meeting and to elevate leadership and professional development opportunities among women in the ULI New York District Council.

This year we are excited to offer scholarships to TWO deserving and well-qualified recipients!

Each scholarship includes one complimentary registration to the 2022 ULI Fall Meeting, as well as reimbursement for pre-approved travel expenses up to \$1,000. Each scholarship recipient is asked attend all possible WLI-branded events at the Fall Meeting.

Female-identifying members from the ULI New York district council who are **under the age of 35** are encouraged to apply. The recipients will be selected based on their ability to express how their involvement with ULI New York and attendance at this year's Fall Meeting will advance both their professional interests and likely future participation with ULI - globally or at the District Council level.

Find out more and apply [here!](#)

Foundations Fellows Program Recipient Spotlight

We are pleased to introduce the inaugural two members of the WLI Foundations Fellows Program: **Justina Bethune** and **Kyalah Astwood**! Launched last fall as a permanent program of WLI-New York, its purpose is to encourage diversity and equity in the real estate industry. Our goal is to increase the number of women entering the industry by providing access to events, online training, mentoring, and networking so they are empowered and supported throughout their careers.

Our WLI Communications Committee spoke to Justina and Kyalah about their backgrounds and what they're hoping to achieve with the program and the industry at large, and here's what they had to say.

Justina Bethune



Describe your background and what influenced your choice to pursue real estate as a career?

I am a 2nd-year Master of Regional Planning student at Cornell University. I have a bachelor's degree in Architectural Studies and a passion for Affordable Housing. I have a history of working in the housing and policy sectors of the NYS foster care system. I decided to pursue a career in affordable housing real estate

because I feel that it needs to change. I believe the affordable housing sector needs to be more diverse and incorporate more lived experience from people in lower income communities and low-income families. To adequately make more inclusive changes, I want to be in affordable housing real estate to advocate for more affordable housing and represent on behalf of the families that need it.

What interested you in ULI/WLI, and what do you hope to get out of your membership?

What interests me in ULI/WLI is having the opportunity to connect with women from all real estate sectors. I love that I can learn from women at the top in their fields. I've never had the opportunity to connect with so many like-minded people passionate about their careers. I hope to learn more about various professions in the real estate industry. I hope to be able to take all the courses and tours to learn new skills and systems that will positively impact my career. I hope to grow as a woman and establish myself in NYC to become great in my career.

What change do you hope to see in the industry going forward?

I hope to see more affordable development projects that are successful and thriving. Second, I hope to see more affordable housing resources for lower-income families. Third, I hope to see more accessibility and inclusivity for lower-income families. Finally, I hope for more representation and community engagement in creating affordable housing projects. I hope to push forward these changes in the profession, and I hope that I am successful in doing so.

Kyalah Astwood



Describe your background and what influenced your choice to pursue real estate as a career?

I graduated in 2021 with a Bachelors Degree in Philosophy while completing the Project Destined Commercial Real Estate Internship Program. The rigorous training and live deal competitions helped me establish my competence, clarity, and confidence in commercial real estate. I will be attending

Baruch College Fall 2022 for the MS in Real Estate program.

What interested you in ULI/WLI, and what do you hope to get out of your membership?

I heard about ULI from a Baruch College student. They recommended I attend the ULI NY WLI University Outreach Career Development Event in 2021. During this event, I learned about the Foundations Fellowship Program and I knew I wanted to be a fellow. Through this program, I hope to foster long-lasting relationships with women in real estate and continue learning real estate from ULI courses. I appreciate serving in the first cohort and hope to see more diversity in this industry.

Congratulations to Justina and Kyalah. WLI members, please introduce yourselves to our Fellows at upcoming programs and give a warm welcome to the ULI-NY community!

Blazing Their Own Path: Women Leaders Spotlight

Elaine Braithwaite and **Jessica Yoon** are both Senior Directors at L+M Development Partners focusing on affordable and mixed-use projects. As women of color in mid-career, leadership roles, WLI interviewed them to learn more about their career paths, what they are working on, and what they are looking forward to coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Elaine Braithwaite



Elaine Braithwaite is a Senior Director at L+M Development Partners, where she manages a portfolio of affordable housing and mixed-use projects in New York City. She has over seven years of public and private sector experience in real estate development, land use, and planning. Prior to joining L+M, Elaine served as Senior Advisor for Housing for the New York City Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development. In this role, she was responsible for implementing the Mayor's Affordable Housing Plan and led area-wide re-zonings and mixed-income development projects across the city. Elaine attended the University of Pennsylvania (Bachelor of Arts in Urban Sociology) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Master in City Planning).



Jessica Yoon

Jessica Yoon is a Senior Director at L+M Development Partners, where she has been leading affordable housing and mixed-use projects in New York City for over five years. She has been involved in financing new construction projects totaling over \$1 billion with a focus on community uses and sustainability. Jessica holds a B.S. in Urban and Regional Studies from Cornell University and a M.S. in Real Estate Development from Columbia University. She holds the CPHC certification from Passive House Institute.

WLI: What brought you to affordable housing development?

Braithwaite: I am an urban planner by training and have always been interested in affordable housing. I started as an intern at L+M, which led to a full-time position after graduate school. I then spent a few years in government as Senior Advisor to the then-Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development, Alicia Glen, working on housing and economic development policy. It was illuminating to understand how the City evaluated and prioritized projects, and while there, I made a number of personal and professional connections. I came back to L+M to focus on affordable and mixed-use development in June 2017.

Yoon: I had always been fascinated by transformative projects that uplifted neighborhoods. A pivotal affordable housing finance class in grad school helped me understand how public and private goals around housing production can align if you have the right incentives and motivators in place. While living in New Orleans, I got to

know a mixed-income, mixed-use development L+M built; now I am in my sixth year at L+M working on affordable housing new construction projects in and around NYC.

WLI: What is your experience as a woman of color in real estate? Any thoughts on what we could do better collectively to support and elevate women in the industry?

Yoon: I benefited greatly from people helping me, trying to get to know me, and including me at that very beginning stage of my career at L+M, when I started right out of grad school at an entry level position. Two of the senior project managers I worked closely with were women, and Lisa Gomez was the COO at the time. In hindsight, it was reassuring to have multiple examples of women in leadership and helpful to see their different styles and how they got things done. I find it important to carry this forward: making time for young women - and young people in general - and creating a nurturing environment, so that they feel safe to make an honest attempt, even if they may fail, so that they can learn and put their best foot forward.

Braithwaite: There are very few black women in the real estate development industry. And while the industry is getting better at bringing people in, there are still challenges in creating spaces in organizations for people to grow and advance. Hiring is just the beginning. Making sure people - in particular women of color - grow and thrive once they are hired is important. In my experience, having people in your corner and being able to cultivate personal relationships is so critical; I have been lucky in that regard at L+M. The more women and people of color who are at the top, the easier it is for women and people of color to see themselves in future leadership positions. I also believe that salary transparency and clarity on paths for career advancement can greatly benefit women of color, and I hope that organizations continue to work on both.

WLI: What is a project, or a part of your job, that you are proud of?

Braithwaite: [Cooper Gardens](#), a 314-unit multi-site mixed-use project in the Bronx that is a partnership with St. Barnabas Hospital. The project, which includes a 50,000 SF wellness center, a teaching kitchen, rooftop farm, a daycare and pharmacy, pairs affordable housing with health and wellness and is a great example of a public-private partnership project that aims to more comprehensively meet the needs of a whole person.

Yoon: [Sendero Verde](#) in East Harlem, a more than 700-unit affordable housing complex that meets passive house standards and many community development goals, including a school, a senior center, and community gardens. It is complex, challenging, and the first project I am leading from start to finish.

WLI: What are you most excited about next, career or otherwise?

Yoon: I am excited about working on Alafia, a new project in East New York. I look forward to shaping the project and putting together the financing.

Braithwaite: I look forward to traveling again, personally. I missed it! I am also excited about a new project in Philadelphia where we are working with the Philadelphia Housing Authority to redevelop one of their campuses into a vibrant mixed income community, and also exploring markets outside of NYC.

ULI New York WLI Member Shout-Outs

Hats off to **Sylvia Xiaomeng Li** who recently received the **Ibo Balton Community Planner Award** from **NYC Citizens Housing and Planning Council**. Sylvia led New York City Department of City Planning (DCP)'s SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan, which made history in late 2021 as one of the first neighborhood rezonings for affordable housing in a predominately white, amenity-rich, high-income neighborhood. Additionally, we congratulate Sylvia for her **new role as a Director at HR&A's** New York Office!

Congratulations to **Roshy Chhillar** for landing an internship at **Silverstein Properties** this summer! Roshy is a graduate student in the **Baker Program in Real Estate** at **Cornell University's SC Johnson College of Business**. Roshy is an Editor for the Cornell, Real Estate Review, Captain of the UT Austin Case Competition team, VP of Alumni/Outreach for the Associate Real Estate Council (AREC), and VP of Career Development/Corporate Outreach of the Association of Cornell Women in Real Estate (ACWIRE). Prior to Cornell, Roshy studied at NYU and worked as a valuations associate with Savills focusing on multifamily and office offerings.

Coming out of roles in traditional real estate investment services, **Vivien Wu** moved to the tech side as a **Strategy & Ops Manager** at **Pippin Title**. Pippin brings title search into the paperless and cloud software age by digitizing and classifying each record for easy retrieval, and enhancing the customer experience through workflow integration, automation, and real-time tracking. In the meantime Vivien continues to fundraise and create grant writing programs for artists and filmmakers in New York, Boston, and Europe.

This year's ULI New York WLI Chair, **Dana Getman**, was named to the **AM NY & Politics NY Real Estate and Development Power Player's List** this spring. The publication quoted her commentary on her career and work on the transformative development Essex Market: "As an architect of public spaces, you don't really know if your design is successful until you offer it up to people. It's been incredible to see how the space fosters community."

Meagan Chiappetta recently took on a new role, moving from Investment Management at Edison Properties to **Director of Asset Management at AvalonBay Communities**. WLI also recognizes the innovative spirit she constantly brought to her

role in the Membership Engagement committee spearheading welcoming Coffee Chats over the past three years. Congratulations on the move!

About ULI New York's WLI

The mission of ULI's Women's Leadership Initiative is to raise the visibility and number of women in leadership roles in ULI and the real estate industry.

Any woman-identifying ULI member is automatically a WLI member here in NY. There is no additional fee or application to be a member of WLI. Only our WLI committee and leadership positions are application based.

Here are ways you can get more involved in the WLI community:

- To keep your ULI member profile updated, visit my.uli.org
- To post a job: Join the [LinkedIn Group](#) and share your post
- To network: [attend a WLI or ULI event](#), happening monthly
- To recognize a fellow WLI member's achievements, submit a [Member Shout-Out](#)
- To volunteer: [apply](#) for a committee or leadership position - application window is open annually January - March
- To connect with WLI Committee Members to learn more about what we do, find us on [LinkedIn](#) or the [ULI Member Directory](#)
- To suggest a story for our next newsletter: email [Vivien Wu](#) or [Alison Coen](#), WLI Communications Committee Co-Chairs

ULI Provides a Variety of Resources to Support its Members, Including:

WLI Mentor Circles - WLI National has organized a new program for peer mentoring circles that connects Full Member ULI women from around the country. [Learn more here!](#)

Digital Programming From Around the World – Explore industry insights within the largest global real estate library through an easy-to-use, intuitive search tool - ULI's Knowledge Finder. [Learn more here!](#)



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