

BANKER & TRADESMAN

THE REAL ESTATE, BANKING AND COMMERCIAL WEEKLY FOR MASSACHUSETTS

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IN PERSON



Poised To Transact

BY JIM CRONIN | BANKER & TRADESMAN STAFF WRITER

Joan Parsons became interested in real estate at an early age – a very early age. Her father was on the planning board in her hometown of Braintree. Hearing him talk about his work guiding development in the South Shore town showed her how careful planning can make a big difference in the success of both the property and the area.

While her practice as a real estate finance lawyer representing lenders at Riemer & Braunstein is not exactly the same thing, she takes the same care to help her clients prepare for and gather finances for development as her father did in directing real estate decisions. She is also the immediate past president of New England Women in Real Estate (NEWIRE).

Joan Parsons

Title: Senior Partner, Riemer & Braunstein; Boston. Immediate Past President, NEWIRE; Boston
Experience: 22 years

Q: Is there anything that is still challenging about real estate finance for you after two decades in the business?

A: My practice is primarily representing lenders who are lending to developers building shopping malls, office parks, mixed-use projects – all of the things you guys write about, basically. It's a very fast-paced practice with things moving and changing all the time, which is what

keeps it interesting and vibrant. Every deal is different, the players are different. I love the way the pieces fit together, and since there are so many, you never quite know how they're going to fit. Things change with economic cycles and what's being built and where, or what's going to fly or not. Sometimes it'll be an environmental issue that tells you to ease back a little bit. The next time it might be a

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title issue, or a major lease that's going to be signed that moved sideways. There are many parties and personalities involved that make it interesting and challenging. As to what's on the horizon, generally people are more willing to transact now. It's busier. There's much more energy and enthusiasm now than there has been in a while. People are poised to transact.

Q: What are the things you took from your experience at NEWiRE that you can apply to your work?

A: Becoming involved in leadership in an organization like NEWiRE really allows you even more of an opportunity to connect with and meet people and therefore network with them, which leads to both business referrals and friendships. It's very rewarding to have the opportunity to work with all these women that met years ago and have come up the ranks together. Now we're higher up in our careers and decision-makers, so we can really refer business to each other. It's given me a more visible role in our community.

Q: What motivated you to get involved with NEWiRE's mentoring program?

A: NEWiRE has had a mentoring program for a number of years, but a couple of years ago I was one of the people who said we should really make it a formal program and institutionalize it as a benefit to our members. It's an opportunity for newer members who could be either younger members just joining the industry, or they could be NEWiRE members working for a number of years to connect with more veteran members. Some people might want to tune-up their resume because they're thinking of making a career change. Or they may have a review coming up and they want to bounce some ideas off someone or even practice what they want to say. There are many types of goals that you might have. Last year and the year before I was mentoring a young woman lawyer who is in the finance world. We're in different sectors but I've found that the mentor relationship has been absolutely mutually beneficial. She has said that she's enjoyed talking about career decisions, and I very much enjoy hearing what she's seeing in the market and what deals she's looking at. I'm always happy to share my experiences and advice. And it never feels like work to me. I enjoy talking to people who are excited about our industry.



JOAN PARSON'S FIVE FAVORITE RINKS TO WATCH HER KIDS PLAY HOCKEY:

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|---|--|---|--|---|
| 1 Bright Hockey Center,
Cambridge | 2 Brooks School,
North Andover | 3 Edge Sports Center,
Bedford | 4 Kelley Rink,
Chestnut Hill | 5 Herb Brooks
Arena, Lake
Placid, NY |
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