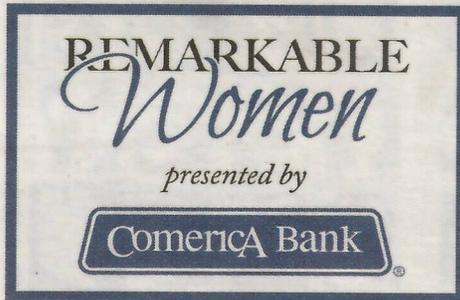


A Daughter's Twist on Family Business

Eliza Solender blends nonprofit service into her commercial real estate career



Gary Scott and Eliza Solender in their office.
(PHOTO: COURTESY ELIZA SOLENDER)

By Rachel Snyder
PEOPLE NEWSPAPERS

Eliza Solender found her niche helping nonprofits navigate property decisions after following her father, Robert, into the commercial real estate industry.

"I watched him, and I thought, 'That looks like fun,' so I went to work with him, and meanwhile I served on a number of nonprofit boards including The Family Place, Mental Health America of Metropolitan Dallas, and the Museum of Natural History, which is now the Perot, and ended up chairing all of those nonprofits," she said. "They all had real estate issues that came up, and we had well-meaning real estate brokers representing us, but they really didn't get how to work with nonprofits."

Her experience working with her father representing Scottish Rite Hospital on a transaction also prepared her to help.

"I saw how that worked," she said, thinking, "Maybe I should do this. I could help these nonprofits."

Solender and partner Margaret Hall founded Solendar Hall in 1991.

"We sent out 250 letters to different nonprofit organizations talking about who we were, what we wanted to do, and the phone

on hundreds of nonprofit transactions all over North Texas," she said.

After a few years, Solender bought Hall's interest but credited her former partner with giving her "the courage" to start her own company.

Solender said she and her team recommend architects, contractors, zoning consultants, and attorneys to help nonprofits with projects and work with the nonprofits to visualize what they need.

"You don't want to let the real estate drive the business goals. You want the business goals to drive the real estate," she said. "This is what I do: Help them get their business strategy together so we can go out and find the very best property for them."

Recently, Solender/Hall represented Family Gateway in a deal to lease space at 1421 W. Mockingbird Lane owned by Catholic Charities Dallas for the new Simmons Family Gateway Resource Center.

"As commercial real estate continues to increase in value, nonprofit organizations are seeing more of their budget go toward rent and real estate related costs; thus, they have to become ever more creative in how they fulfill their space requirements," Solender said. "A transaction like this is so satisfying because it is a win-win for both organizations."

What advice do you have for other women business leaders?

I think that it's important to not pull up the ladder – to reach down and to help other women. I was active in Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) here in Dallas, and I was the chapter chair, and I went on to become the national president, and the women in CREW taught me real estate, and I owe them a lot for having taught me real estate.

What are some fun facts about you?

I'm married to my husband, Gary Scott. We've been married for 47 years. We have lived in our house 36 years, and we are constantly remodeling it, and we have it filled with contemporary art.

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