



**CREW Careers™: Building Opportunities®  
“Project Suite Space”  
Kimberly Mobley, Gantt Huberman Architects  
Carrie Sharp, JMA Commercial Interiors  
Co-Chairs, 2010 Charlotte CREW Careers™**

On Saturday, March 6, 2010, *CREW Charlotte* hosted the *CREW Careers™: Building Opportunities®* program at the UNCC Uptown Campus. CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) is a national organization committed to the success and professional growth of women in the real estate field. The Charlotte chapter of CREW has more than 200 active members. Since 2005, the group has annually sponsored the *CREW Careers™: Building Opportunities®* program to expose teenage girls to the commercial real estate field and the opportunities that exist within this industry. CREW Charlotte partnered again with the *Girl Scouts Hornets' Nest Council* to help serve this year's teenage participants. As the 2009 CREW Careers™ Co-Chair Jody Odom, Richard Odom & Associates, Inc., said, “Education is the best hammer to shatter the myth that commercial real estate is a field best suited to men.”

This year's event, titled *Project Suite Space*, used a format similar to the popular “*Project Runway*” television program. Four teams, each with 9 to 10 girls, competed in a space plan and design challenge to create a commercial tenant suite in one of four uptown buildings pre-selected and designated by the CREW Careers™ Committee for this year's event: the **Johnston Building** at 212 S. Tryon, the **Tryon Plaza** at 112 S. Tryon Street, the **Duke Energy Building** at 400 South Tryon, or the **NASCAR Office Building** at 550 S. Caldwell Street.

Following check-in and team assignment, the 38 girls were introduced to the history of CREW Careers™ and the objectives of the program, and then updated on the day's rules. With housekeeping complete, Meredith Dickerson (Coldwell Banker Commercial/MECA) was introduced as the Tenant Broker, and Nancy Olah (Consultant, Parker Poe) as the Client. The Client then explained a little about her business and told

the teams what she needed and wanted for her new space. This prepared the teams for their day and laid out the criteria for the *Project Suite Space* planning challenge.

The girls then left the UNCC Uptown Campus Building for a walking tour of uptown Charlotte, and a scavenger hunt relevant to their day's assignment; this included identifying specific kinds of buildings, sites, and public venues. For the planning and design challenge, each team was assigned to one of the four buildings and each had a team guide and two team advisors: Ann Vano (Centdev) advised and Cheryl Steele (Horack Talley Pharr & Lowndes) served both as guide and advisor for the **Johnston Building** team; Dawn Royale (Master Title Agency) and Christine Kuznia advised the **Tryon Plaza** team with Margaret Martin (MECA Real Estate Services) serving as the guide; Meredith Dickerson (Coldwell Banker Commercial/MECA) and Julie Seidenstein (Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough) advised the **Duke Energy Building** team with Whitney Simpson (Cherry, Bekaert & Holland) serving as the guide; and Amy Massey (Kimley-Horn & Associates) and Evie Victorson (Reznick Group PC) advised the **NASCAR Office Building** team with Jade Paunovich (NAI Southern Real Estate) serving as the guide. Each group visited their designated building at the end of their walking tour which provided the girls with an opportunity to review and get a feel for the space they would be marketing and selling to their potential client.

When the teams returned to the UNCC Uptown Campus for a working lunch, they heard from seven women experts in the commercial real estate field: Jade Paunovich (NAI Southern Real Estate) – broker; LaToya Brown (Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein) – attorney; Bobbi Jo Lazarus (Elliott Davis) – accountant; Lauren Peng (CB Richard Ellis) – property manager; Irene Suchoza (Gantt Huberman Architects) – interior design; Georgia Abernethy (Odell Associates) – architect; and Kelly Martin (Choate Interior Construction) – general contractor. This gave the teams a broader overview of the issues that define a real life project similar to the one they were working on.

Following their lunch with the experts, the four teams were given two hours to create a site plan, floor plan, and design board, each of which were included in their presentations to the potential client in front of a panel of judges. Civic leaders and prominent members of the local real estate community who judged this year's presentations included City Councilman David Howard (who brought his teenage daughter), Lucia Zapata Griffith (Metro Landmarks), Sally Daley (CEO of Girl Scouts), Anne Vulcano (Executive VP at CB Richard Ellis), and Stacie Jacobs (The Title Company of North Carolina and President of CREW Charlotte). The teams' presentations were judged on commercial real estate knowledge, teamwork, and professionalism with special awards given for artistic use of visual aids, innovative thinking, and public speaking. Each member of the winning team received a grand prize.

The 2010 *Project Suite Space* program again strongly supported the theme that: **CREW Careers™ is Changing the Face of Commercial Real Estate.**

Other participants included: Speaker Coach: Amy Clement (Childress Klein Properties); Speaker Committee Co-Chairs: Cristy Nine (CB Richard Ellis) and Diana Palecek (Smith Moore Leatherwood); and Back-up Speakers Jetta Gill (Hines), Barbara Atkinson (Tyler 2 Construction), and Amanda Murphy (Greer & Walker). TLC committee: Randy Hopkins, MAI (The Hopkins-McElhannon Group, Inc.); Prizes: Sarah Funkhouser (Chicago Title Insurance Company); Morning Crew: Whitney Pelton (Modular Designs), and Sandy Stone (Bio-Dry); Judges Panel: Brenda Murray, CPM (Dynamic Real Estate Services, LLC); Girl Scout Liason: Jennifer Ware (Alliance Commercial Real Estate Services); Media Committee: Charity Kimmel (SouthWood Corp.), Allison Edgar, Partner (Parker Poe), Jennifer Orman (Lake Architectural), Kathleen Rose, CCIM (Rose & Associates Southeast, Inc.), and Keeley Brown (Charlotte Business

Journal); Goody Bags: Diane White (DG White Enterprises); UNCC Ambassador: Rochelle Rivas (The Darton Group); Measure of Success: Cindy Clayton (Corporate Visual Artworks) and former CREW Charlotte Executive Director, Ava Gritzuk.

To view photographs and a video presentation of a prior CREW Charlotte CREW Careers™ event, visit: <http://www.crewcharlotte.org/crewcareers.html>

**Members of the press are invited to contact us at any time to find out more about CREW and the young women who participated in the 2010 *Project Suite Space* challenge.**

The 2010 CREW Charlotte and CREW Careers™: Building Opportunities® local sponsors included: Johnston Allison & Hord, The Title Company of North Carolina, Paragon Commercial Bank, Charlotte Business Journal, Bank of America, Greer & Walker LLP, Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP, Kimley Horn & Associates, Mulkey Engineers & Consultants, Odell, SouthWood, Terracon, TPM, Bojangles, JMA Commercial Interiors, Clear Sky Images, Lance Etheredge Construction, Mecklenburg Paint Co, Tyler 2 Construction, Gantt Huberman Architects, UNC Charlotte, Smith Moore Leatherwood, and The Budd Group.

CREW Charlotte's core purpose is to advance the success of women in commercial real estate. Founded in 1991, CREW Charlotte has grown its membership to over 200 real estate professionals. In 2010, CREW Network celebrates 21 years of advancing the success of women in commercial real estate. Through various programs, including UCREW and eMentoring, CREW Network reaches teens, college students and professional women at all stages of their careers to educate and inform about careers in commercial real estate.

The CREW Careers™ program was launched in Dallas in 2004 and taken across North America in 2005 by CREW Foundation in conjunction with CREW Network's Industry Research Initiative, which was the first measure of the progress that women are making in commercial real estate. In 2009, CREW Careers™ took place in approximately 21 cities throughout North America to reach more than 1,000 student participants. Students have cited engaging role-playing and hands-on interaction with female business leaders as the key to the program's success.

About CREW Foundation: **CREW Foundation ([www.crewfoundation.org](http://www.crewfoundation.org)) was founded in 1998 as the philanthropic arm of CREW Network to support advancing the success of women in commercial real estate through charitable, philanthropic, and education programs. Through CREW Foundation, CREW Network members seek to make a difference in the lives of women and girls who want to achieve the same successes that they have attained through their careers in commercial real estate. CREW Network is one of the first professional groups of its kind to create a national philanthropic effort. CREW Foundation is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are deductible as charitable donations for federal income tax purposes. Furthermore, CREW Foundation is classified as a public charity under section 509(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code.**