

How I Made Real Estate Partner: 'Firms Want Attorneys Who Are Entrepreneurial,' Says Mindy Stern of Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg Atlas

"Network strategically, making sure people you believe you can help know, like, trust and remember you. And above all, have fun doing it."

By: Tasha Norman December 30, 2021

[Mindy H. Stern](#), Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg Atlas, New York.



Practice Area: Real estate and trusts and estates law.

Law school and year of graduation: Rutgers Law School, 1982.

How long have you been at the firm and when did you make partner? I joined Schwartz Sladkus as a partner in 2016. My real estate practice includes sales, acquisitions, leasing and financing by for-profit and nonprofit entities, public companies, and individuals. My trusts and estates practice includes counseling clients on all aspects of estate planning to achieve family wealth transfer, asset protection, philanthropic and other goals, and to help them administer trusts and estates. These practice areas frequently overlap, as individuals often own or lease the real estate in which they live and work and some clients are in the real estate business.

Mindy H. Stern/courtesy photo

Why did you decide to practice law in the real estate industry? Of all the courses I took in law school, real estate was the most interesting. It is practical—everyone lives and works someplace—so the prospect of helping individuals and businesses buy, sell, lease and finance appealed to me then, and still does. It is tangible—clients negotiate terms, and lawyers help

them consummate the transaction. I greatly enjoy developing and executing strategies that help clients achieve their goals, and support their businesses and the economy.

What do you think was the deciding point for the firm in making you a partner? Before joining Schwartz Sladkus, I spent almost 30 years at Schoeman Updike Kaufman & Stern, now Schoeman Updike Kaufman & Gerber, where I advanced from associate to partner. In addition to working on traditional “bricks and mortar” sales, leases, and financings, I help many clients navigate the complex, intertwined real estate and estate legal issues that arise from inheriting family partnership and other interests in valuable real estate properties.

By understanding and balancing the different agendas and financial circumstances of the parties, I help clients maintain family harmony using a practical, strategic, and empathetic approach. My deep interest in these topics, and my ability to advocate for clients, has positioned me to achieve success for clients and to be a firm leader. When I decided to change firms, Schwartz Sladkus embraced these traits.

What advice would you give an associate who wants to make partner in real estate?

Clients want lawyers who know more than statutes and case law. They want counselors-at-law who give practical, strategic advice. Young lawyers who embrace this early in their careers and develop both the mindset and the skillset to help clients in this way will achieve the success and personal satisfaction they desire. And firms want attorneys who are entrepreneurial. I encourage younger attorneys to set goals for originating business and develop the strategies and tactics to achieve them. For example, develop a list of referral sources, and nurture those relationships.

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To supplement my experience and knowledge, and contribute to the wider real estate community, I participate in several organizations. I encourage younger attorneys not just to join bar associations, but to get actively involved.

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