

Sarah Komppa Essay – 2016 Fall Meeting

My experience in Dallas was fantastic. What a warm, welcoming city. From the cab ride into town from the airport, it was readily apparent that Dallas is booming...highway expansions and new development projects are sprouting like weeds. I was able to stay downtown in a condo building thanks to Airbnb, and while downtown has the bones of a great, authentic place, it felt compartmentalized and auto-oriented. The extreme highway expansion seemed to emphasize that point, but the city seems headed towards something special in their urban core.

The Fall Meeting experience was wonderful as well. I sincerely enjoyed getting to know my liaison, Onay Payne, Partner with Clarion Partners out of New York. I look forward to staying in touch with her in the future and hope I can return her hospitality one day. With Onay, I attended the Commercial and Retail Council (Gold Flight) events, including a cocktail event on Tuesday evening and Council Day on Wednesday. The sessions were engaging and insightful and a wonderful opportunity to hear from some of the industry's veterans. As a group, and in smaller groups over lunch, we discussed national retail trends, local retail successes, the election, the overarching real estate cycle and more. The biggest takeaway from my Council experience was further motivation to join a Council in the future.

At the various WLI events, I was inspired to meet women from around the country and world that are helping to promote WLI's mission. I learned of innovative programming ideas from other WLI chapters that we will put into action in Colorado. Hearing from Lucy Billingsly, partner at Billingsly Company and daughter of Trammel Crow, was energizing to say the least. She seemed to roll forward in her career with great purpose but without asking questions – something we all should reflect on from time to time.

The core mission of ULI's Women's Leadership Initiative, to promote the advancement of women throughout their careers as leaders in the real estate industry, speaks to me personally as an emerging woman architect in Denver. I often reflect back on my weeks full of meetings with clients, contractors and consultants and take stock of the times when I was the only female in the room – an occurrence that happens more frequently than not. I doubt the men in the room notice that fact, yet there is still work to be done to increase the number of women at the table.

In short, I am very grateful for the Prologis Women's Leadership Initiative Scholarship to attend the Fall Meeting and look forward to continuing my involvement in ULI and WLI for many years to come.