

Real Estate Journal

COVERING ALL OF LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK CITY AND UPSTATE NEW YORK

Lenore Janis of PWC has devoted herself full-time to expanding the reach of the organization

lj Lenore Janis



PWC

Professional Women in Construction (PWC), under the leadership of Lenore Janis, is about to launch a Mega Trade Show & Recruitment Fair on October 17 in New York City. Aptly titled The BIG Show, it is attracting national construction companies, mid-size and small businesses as well as woman & minority-owned firms. Janis notes that "The construction industry buys everything and offers a wide range of employment opportunities. We anticipate a very crowded room."

PWC activities today are a far cry from 1980 when she and 11 other women formed PWC, a support organization dedicated to the advancement of professional, managerial and entrepreneurial women in the industry. Before the year was over, the pioneering women had hosted a two-day

conference in Manhattan on industry issues affecting -- and stonewalling -- women. Soon after, Janis and other PWC members began lobbying in Washington and Albany to establish stated goals for the participation of women in publicly funded projects. In 1983, they were rewarded when the newly elected governor of New York State, Mario Cuomo, set a WBE goal of 5%. By 1985, the organization voted to give men in the industry full membership privileges -- to increase business-to-business interaction for the women.

Today Janis is the president and CEO of PWC National, a widely respected nonprofit association with chapters in N.Y., N.J., Conn., Capital Region (D.C., Md., Va.) and Northeast Penn. PWC now counts over a thousand members comprised of business and professional women and men, corporate entities and public agencies. National's website www.pwcusa.org receives over 25,000 visits a month.

Since its early days, PWC has attracted industry and government leaders to its

monthly -- and sometimes bimonthly -- events. Capacity crowds of construction and real estate professionals attend interactive industry sessions, trade shows, golf outings, awards receptions, and breakfast forums.

Clearly, Janis' commitment to the cause has propelled the organization's phenomenal rise and continues to fuel it now. It is a dedication born of early roots.

In 1979, with eight years experience in the family-owned steel fabrication and erection business, she braved the odds and launched her own steel erection firm, ERA Steel Construction Corp. ERA was among the first few woman-owned construction companies to become government certified as a WBE (women business enterprise). Janis successfully performed as a subcontractor for many government agencies including the DOT, NYCTA, LIRR, and MTA. Her work for the public sector ultimately enticed her to accept an executive position with New York City government.

In 1986, she was appointed

the first woman director of the Bureau of Building Management for the NYC Department of Sanitation, in charge of 250 tradesmen and multi-million dollar projects.

Since 1995, she has devoted herself full-time to expanding the reach of PWC. A former vice president of CMAA-NY, she has served on the board of the NY Women's Agenda, and is a member of New York Building Congress, National Minority Business Council, U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce, and General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen. Commended by Women in Communications, she has been honored by American ORT, NOW (NYC) and Construction Specifications Institute-NY. Most recently, Janis was inducted into the White Plains High School Hall of Fame.

Janis concludes that while PWC may have started off like the "Energizer Bunny" bumping into walls, but never giving up - it has been on the fast track for the past dozen years. "The BIG Show in October will be a landmark turning point," she predicts.