

★ ★ ★ *Women of Distinction* ★ ★ ★



WINNER ★ DEBRA SMITH

Executive Vice President, Legacy Partners
Commercial Inc., Foster City

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“Our industry is all about making money for our investors,” says Debra Smith, executive vice president

for Legacy Partners, in Foster City.

Legacy is involved with investment management, acquisitions, development, property management, marketing, construction and design services.

“We buy a lot of distressed properties and reposition them in the market and sell them. The exciting thing for me has been a taking a property that has been mismanaged or not managed to the optimum, doing a lot of capital work, and then having a keen eye for marketing,” she says.

Smith adds, “The exciting thing about our industry is that no day is like the next. I travel a lot. I might be putting out a fire one day, meeting with the investment committee the next and dealing with the budget the next.”

She quit college in the Midwest and moved to the valley with her husband 26 years ago so he could attend grad school and has been with Legacy for 20 years.

Before joining the company, she worked for a smaller real estate firm in Menlo Park.

She’s most proud of her daughters and the team she has built at Legacy.

“It is an incredible group. An individual is only as good as the team they are surrounded by,” Smith says.

John Faust, managing director for Legacy, says that Smith is a hard worker. “Her follow-up and ability to get things done is pretty extraordinary. There are so many moving pieces, daily issues, and she does a great job of getting it done.”

Smith loves to run, read and play tennis. She and her family enjoy going to the desert and have a home in La Quinta.

Although she has been in the real estate industry for a long time, she is still highly motivated.

“I get up every day and try to figure out what needs to be done each day to qualify for the job I am in,” Smith says. “This is a real estate business. People like to do business with people they trust. I have been in a lot of positions and have grown in the industry and with Legacy. It is exciting for me to hire new people, bring them on board and mentor them as well. I look for people who have passion, not pedigree.”

DANEK S. KAUS is a freelance writer based in Mountain View.

