

SoCal Power Women: AAREP LA's Garland Fuller On Helping Black CRE Professionals Connect And Succeed

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This limited series profiles SoCal Power Women who have helped shape cities, neighborhoods, businesses and lifestyles in Southern California. These women will be honored at Bisnow's SoCal Power Women (<https://www.bisnow.com/events/los-angeles/women/bisnow-socal-power-women-6739>) event Dec. 14.

Garland Fuller found her way to the African-American Real Estate Professionals' Los Angeles chapter just as her commercial real estate career was getting started. She recalls feeling excited to have found herself in a room full of people she didn't already know who looked like her and worked in the same field she did.

“It was like, ‘Oh, we do exist! We are here,’” Fuller said.

Fuller, a senior diversity recruiting leader at CBRE, now serves on the board of directors as the membership chair for AAREP LA, which was founded in 2013.

More than just a logical fit for the post — Fuller counts eight years in CRE and north of 15 in talent acquisition and development — the leadership position gave her the opportunity to lead in a capacity different from her prior leadership roles in professional settings. Joining the AAREP LA board was not necessarily something she considered volunteering for earlier in her career, “But now that I'm doing it, I would say to others, it's a great opportunity to also get involved from a leadership perspective.”

That opportunity has allowed Fuller to expand her own network and grow both personally and professionally, she said.

Her role as membership chair means interacting with new and existing members, which more recently includes students, as AAREP LA seeks to expand its presence on university and community college campuses to build awareness of CRE as a career path.

To support earlier-career members, AAREP LA has a just-launched mentorship program that pairs those who are newer to the industry with more seasoned professionals. It's exciting, Fuller said, to work in an organization that has always prioritized advancing Black people and people of color in commercial real estate.

“What we're doing is work that we've always been doing, but I think because of the recent events of 2020, it's kind of given us a renewed energy around it,” she said.

The pandemic as well as the uprisings and demonstrations in 2020 spurred discussions in CRE about existing inequality, including racial, economic, gender-based and a host of others. Since then, Fuller has noticed an increase in companies reaching out to AAREP LA to learn more about diversification efforts, or ways to support existing employees who are Black or people of color.

Still, that outreach is just the first step in what should be a long and ongoing process, Fuller said.

“If this is something that you want to do, you understand it's a long-term marathon journey. It's not, ‘We're going to participate for two years and see what happens.’” Fuller said. “Everything happens over time. It's relationship-building — it's not a transactional thing.”

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See Also: What Does The 'New Normal' Of Retail Look Like? Find Out At Bisnow's March 8 Event (</new-york/news/retail/what-does-the-new-normal-of-retail-look-like-find-out-at-bisnows-march-8-event-111606>)

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