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WEEK OF THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2019

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## GOLD MEDAL AWARDS

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### Judges cite Donna Abood for Women of Influence selection

By MARILYN BOWDEN

Donna Abood, principal and managing director in the Miami office of Avison Young, a global commercial real estate firm, was in 2018 inducted into the national Real Estate Forum's Women of Influence Hall of Fame. For this outstanding accomplishment, Ms. Abood was awarded Miami Today's 2019 Silver Medal for an Individual.

Real Estate Forum's Women of Influence Hall of Fame honors accomplished and respected industry veterans "at the top of their game" who continue to advocate for the next generation – a description that might have been written with Ms. Abood in mind.

In 1989, when she founded Abood & Associates, the ranks of women in commercial real estate were thin.

"The few women who were in the industry," she says, "tended to have some sort of male influence – a father or uncle or older brother in commercial realty who

was willing to encourage them. It went on that way into the '90s, when more women became engaged with it.

"In my case, it was my father who was my mentor. He was in development, and he and I were very close. I used to love to go to development sites with him and to watch the transformation of a drawing into a beautiful building. In fact, I got my real estate license when I turned 18."

Now, though, about a third of the commercial real estate workforce is female, Ms. Abood says, and her own experience as a mentor suggests that figure will increase.

"I am very active at Florida State University's Real Estate Center," she says, "and I'm encouraged by the numbers in college getting their degrees in real estate.

"I think some of the skills that women have intuitively – empathy, an ability to listen, a natural ability to multitask – help to make us strong players in the industry."

During her career Ms. Abood



Photo by Marlene Guaroni

Donna Abood, principal managing director for Avison Young in Miami,

has leased more than 50 million square feet of commercial real estate in South Florida as a representative for institutional and local ownership, and represented tenants in hundreds of transactions. She has become a trusted business advisor to some of the most influential business leaders in the community.

By 2002, when Abood & As-

sociates merged with Wood-Faye Realty Group to become Colliers International South Florida, her company had grown to become the largest privately held, locally based commercial real estate firm in Miami-Dade.

She's also very much committed to community service. Ms. Abood was named 2018-19 chairperson of the executive board

of the Florida State University Real Estate Center and became the 2018-19 chairperson of the development committee for the Beacon Council. She serves on the boards of a long list of Miami institutions, from Miami Lighthouse for the Blind & Visually Impaired to Actors' Playhouse at Miracle Theatre.

Throughout her distinguished career, Ms. Abood says, mentoring has remained a passion. She's a founding member of CREW Miami – the name is an acronym for Commercial Real Estate Women – and says one of the reasons her present position at Avison Young is a good fit is that the firm's culture encourages young women.

"Avison Young is a phenomenal conduit for women to develop a career in real estate," she says. "The company has grown by acquiring very successful firms, and also emphasizes growing the next generation through recruitment of talent. We are building a great base of brokers. It's a world I'm very comfortable in."

# The gold standard for giving



Please join us in congratulating **Donna Abood**, a generous supporter of Baptist Health through our Giving Society, for being honored with a Gold Medal Award as Miami Today celebrates 20 years of honoring the best of the best in our Greater Miami community.

