

# CONDO report

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## The Condo Market Today

While the non-stop media talk of a real estate bubble on the verge of collapse may have abated in the last few months, there is no longer any doubt that the market is in the midst of a correction. Condo prices are still moving upward but not at the break-neck pace of a year or so ago. The average price per square foot for condos jumped 13% on the Upper East Side and 10% on the Upper

West Side between the first quarters of 2005 and 2006. Such increases only seem modest when compared to the frenzied 22% jump in price per square foot for condos citywide from 2004 to 2005.

These more moderate price increases are seen by many as an indication of uncertainty on the part of buyers who are watching energy prices soar, interest rates climb, inflation threaten, and the stock market slide. Feeling less confident about the economy, and no longer in a rush to purchase, buyers are biding their time before plunging into the real estate market. Many who are priced out, or have temporarily opted out, of the real estate market are moving into rentals; between the fourth quarter of 2005 and the first quarter of 2006 the average rent per month increased 16% on the Upper East Side and 14% on the Upper West Side.

al firm Miller Samuel, the inventory of condos rose by 70% from April 2005 to April 2006 while coop inventory increased by 37%. He further notes that in April this year there were 3,100 condos and 3,700 coops, even though the housing stock is three-to-one coops over condos in Manhattan. These numbers illustrate the enormous number of new development condos that are flooding into the market, and how rapidly the balance is equalizing between condos and coops.

### NEW ON THE MARKET



**215 West 95th Street** Apt. #16H  
4 Rooms PRICE: \$1,100,000  
*Bright two bedroom with stunning Hudson River views! Located in the heart of the Upper West Side, convenient to both Riverside Park & Central Park in a full-service condo. Web # 874854*

### NEW ON THE MARKET



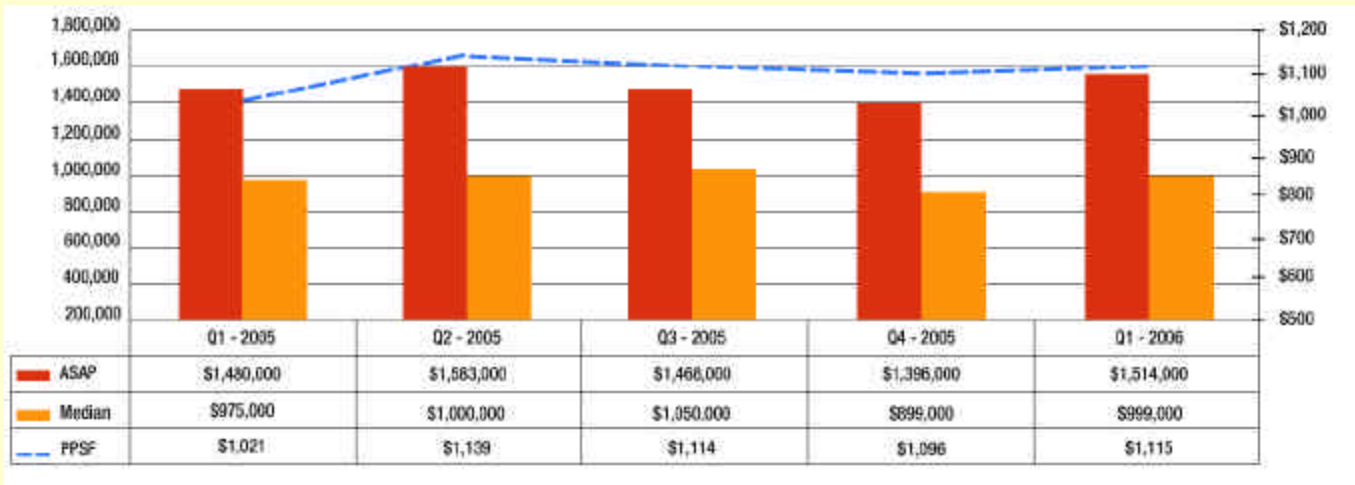
**171 East 84th Street** Apt. #29E  
5.5 Rooms PRICE: \$1,999,000  
*Sitting high atop the Upper East Side, this true three-bedroom/ 2.5 bath home has spectacular panoramic skyline views of Manhattan and dazzling light all day long. Web # 877410*

As buyers take pause, the average number of days on the market has increased from 64 in May 2005 to 119 in May 2006, and bidding wars are now the exception rather than the rule. Meanwhile, due to buyer restraint and the rapid pace of new development throughout the city, inventory has been building over the last several months and is now over 60% above what it was just one year ago.

Interestingly, while inventory is up across the board it hasn't risen equally in all categories. According to Jonathan Miller, CEO of the apprais-

It remains to be seen whether the growing inventory will have a short or long term effect on prices. At the moment well-priced units can still sell in a matter of weeks but only if they are well-priced. Indeed many observers believe that much of the current inventory consists of over-priced units owned by sellers in denial-those who have yet to accept the reality of a changing market.

## Condos more desirable?



Condo prices were relatively unchanged over last year, with the average and median sale prices up just +2%.

People generally spent more than ever before to own a condo, desir-

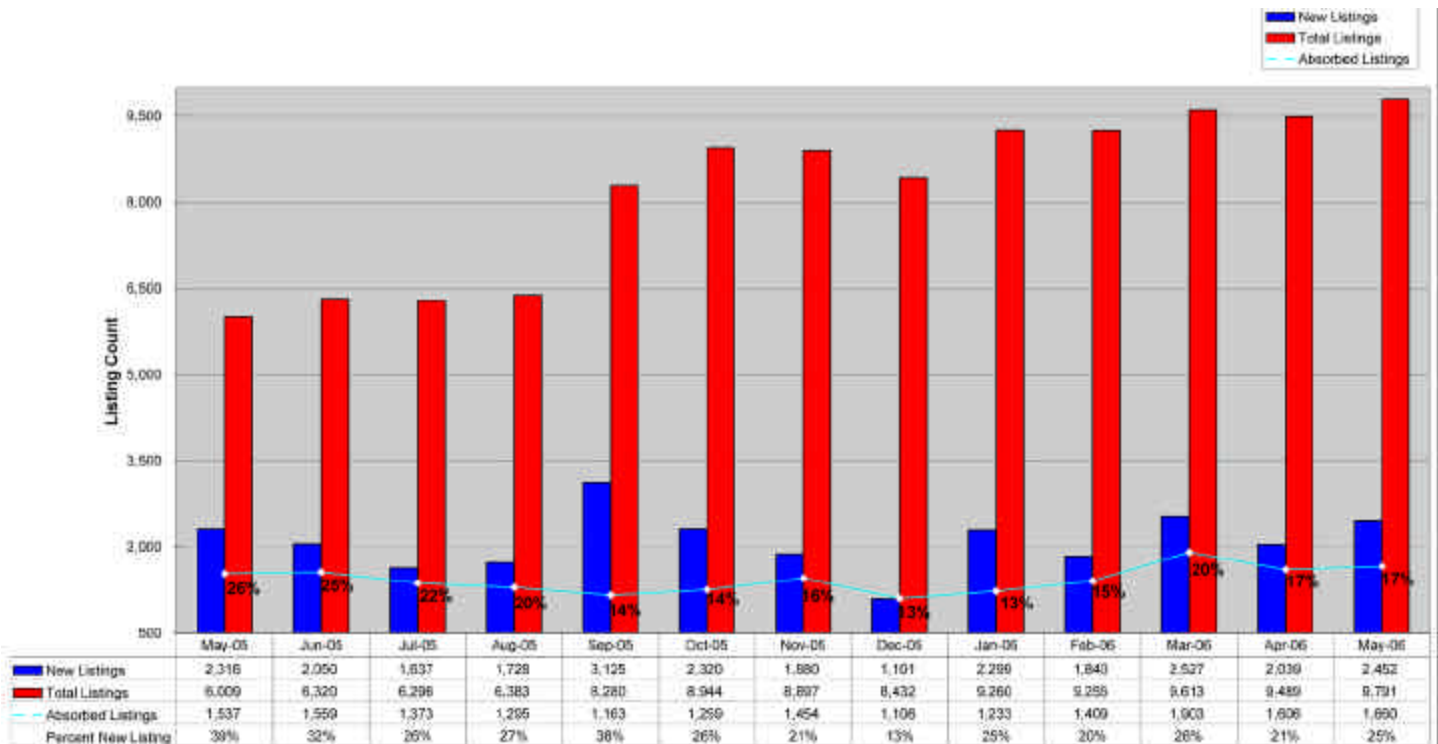
able for the owner's autonomy and for the luxurious amenities offered in the new project construction that has been coming on the market.

The value as measure in price per square foot ws up +9% over first

quarter 2005 and +2% over fourth quarter 2005.

*[Information above furnished by 1st Quarter 2006 Corcoran Report]*

## Manhattan Absorption v New-Total Listings



\* All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only and has been compiled from sources deemed reliable. Though information is believed to be correct, it is presented subject to errors, omissions, changes or withdrawal notice.

# 988 Fifth Avenue

## A Condominium among Co-ops

By Deanna E. Kory

On February 28, 1926 Pease & Elliman, a prominent New York City rental agency, published an advertisement in the New York Times promoting the year's best "new apartment buildings in desirable locations." Prominent on the list was 988 Fifth Avenue, a thirteen-story building designed to resemble



the palazzos of Renaissance Italy. The building, which would be ready for occupancy that August was extremely luxurious; there was only one apartment of 10 to 11 rooms per floor. Another ad for the building appeared in the Times in June and emphasized many of the buildings features. According to the ad, 988 Fifth Avenue was "an apartment building possessing every desirable feature of modern completeness and luxuriousness." It stressed the large size of the apartments, listing the dimensions of the living room (28 x 18 feet), the "sleeping room" (23 x14), and the dining room (23 x 20). Furthermore, the ad emphasized that the apartments were "open on all sides," featured "all outside rooms" and "unusually high ceilings," and contained "many commodious closets" and "wood-burning fireplaces."

The June ad also made sure to mention that 988 Fifth Avenue was designed by J.E.R. Carpenter. By the mid-1920's, J.E.R. Carpenter was one of the most sought-after residential architects in New York City, particularly for his designs for the luxury apartment houses that were beginning to

dot the streets of the Upper East Side. Before ascending to the height of the New York architecture scene, however, Carpenter had established himself as an architect in the South. A graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a student at the École des Beaux-Arts, Carpenter's early designs in Nashville,

Birmingham, and Atlanta put him on the architectural map. His move to New York in 1909 to design a residential building for Spencer Fullerton Weaver, a developer and architect famed for his partnership with Leonard Schultze, placed him even more in the public eye, and Carpenter quickly gained notoriety.

After completing several projects for Weaver, Carpenter branched out on his own, expanding his operation shortly thereafter to encompass development as well as design. By 1920, Carpenter's numerous projects on the East Side had established him as an architect whose additional development expertise made him the designer of choice for developers of luxury residential projects. In fact, Carpenter's designs are generally believed to have changed the face of New York apartment living, as he is credited with having initiated and perfected the "off the foyer" apartment layout. As such, a residence in a building designed by Carpenter is highly sought after for its historical value. Living at 988 Fifth Avenue is thus a unique and historical experience!

### Just Sold



404 East 66th Street Apt. #11GH

Asking Price: \$2,100,000

Terraced Home in the Sky! Two Bedroom - Two Bath with Huge Terrace in luxury Condominium.



250 West 88th Street PH #805

Asking Price: \$1,095,000

Fantastic Loft-Like 5-Room Penthouse in Prewar Condominium

For a free and confidential price valuation or to view our properties, please contact

Deanna E. Kory at 212-937-7011

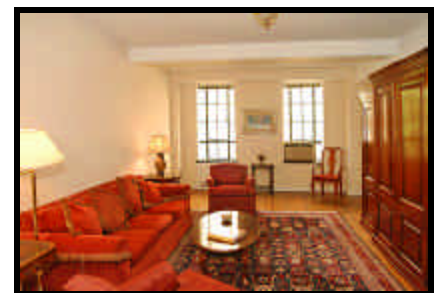
DEK@corcoran.com

or

Christine K. Morgan at 212-937-7017

CKM@corcoran.com

### ON THE MARKET



353 West 56th Street Apt. #4F

\$969,000 Large classic one-bedroom in excellent condition in the Parc Vendome, one of NY's most prestigious landmarked bldgs. Web # 877553

# What is Title Insurance and Why Am I Paying So Much For It?

By Marc Israel

The day of the real estate closing can be a terribly stressful one for the buyer. The closing room is filled with all sorts of people who seem to be there for only one purpose-to collect money from the buyer. The room is filled with a broker or two, far more attorneys than seems to be necessary, and stacks and stacks of papers to sign and checks to write. Among all of those checks is one that is written to a title company which the buyer often thinks is for more money than they had expected. It is perfectly understandable for the buyer to ask "Who is this title company? What is their role in the closing? And why the heck am I paying them so much money?"

Title insurance is an insurance policy that legally protects both the purchaser and his or her lender against any disputes that may arise over the legal ownership of the property being purchased. This means that if after the date of the closing some person or entity should claim to have an ownership interest in the property or alleges that they have a lien against the property, the purchaser will have no risk of loss or liability against such a claim. In that case, since the buyer purchased title insurance at the closing the title company would be required to defend against, and if necessary settle, such a claim.

Before going any further in this discussion it is extremely important to note that the New York City marketplace is unique in its relationship with title insurance due to the large number of Co-op apartments in the City. Although a full discussion of the

legal status of a Co-op is beyond the scope of this article it is important to understand that Co-ops are not real property. The owner of a Co-op does not own "title" to any piece of real property and, instead, acquires legal rights to occupy, enjoy and eventually sell the Co-op apartment by virtue of a Proprietary Lease and shares of stock in the Co-op corporation. What this means for our discussion of title insurance is that, with the exception of rare circumstances, title insurance is not purchased by a buyer of a Co-op at closing and



there is no title insurance policy.

On the purchase of all other types of real property including condominiums, townhouses, houses, multi-family properties, and all forms of commercial properties and vacant land, the buyer will be required to purchase title insurance. Either the purchaser's attorney, or in some cases the lender, will retain the title company to conduct the title search and issue the title insurance. The title company is usually retained at the time that the contract to purchase the property is signed and they begin their search of the legal

records related to the property at that time.

A title search is actually comprised of many different searches of various city, state and other databases and records. Depending on the type of property being purchased, the Deed and any mortgages or liens for the property will be certainly be researched and copies of those documents produced. Searches related to Certificates of Occupancy, building violations, status of taxes for the property, and many other matters will be also be undertaken, as well as searches for any judgments against either the buyer or seller.

A condominium is unique in that, unlike a Co-op, it is real property but, similar to a Co-op, it also is housed in a building with other apartments. As such, the various members of the condominium jointly own the common areas of the building. What this means is that the title company needs to conduct all of the searches it would ordinarily make related to the particular condominium apartment. However, in addition, the title company will also search to make sure that none of the common areas of the building, which the buyer is also purchasing a share of, are encumbered so as to make title defective.

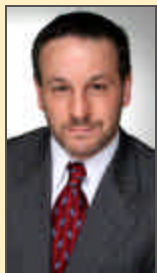
When all of these searches are completed they are compiled into a title report which is then delivered by the title company to the attorneys for the buyer, seller and bank. It is then the responsibility of those attorneys, together with the title company, to "clear" or resolve any potential impediments to title prior to the closing date so that at the closing "good and marketable title" can be conveyed to the purchaser, as required by the Contract of Sale between the buyer and seller. Once all of the various impediments or title "defects"

are cleared the title company will then issue title insurance in favor of both the buyer and his lender, and will deliver that insurance policy at the closing.

The prices for the title insurance premium that is paid by purchaser are set and regulated by New York State. This means that every title company in New York charges the exact same price for the title insurance premium. The amount of the premium is calculated based on various factors including the purchase price of the property as well as the amount of the mortgage, if any. Therefore, every buyer in New York State pays the exact same price for the same insurance.

Although a buyer may not enjoy writing the check to the title company it is actually money well spent. The premium is a one time payment which protects the owner against any claims for the entire time that he or she owns the property and it allows them or her to comfortably refinance, transfer or sell the property in the future. With the title policy in hand, the buyer can leave the stress of the closing table behind with peace of mind and assurance that they own the property free and clear of any claims against it.

**Marc Israel** is Vice President and Special



*Counsel to American Land and is based in their New York City office. Marc heads up the sales and business development efforts for the New York City office, advises clients on title issues, and assists them with all*

*title related legal matters. Please do not hesitate to call Marc for any of your title or real estate needs.*

*He can be reached in the office at 212.239.1000, on his cell phone at 516.967.7378, or by email at: [Misrael@Americandlandservices.com](mailto:Misrael@Americandlandservices.com)*

## Feng Shui for Sellers and Buyers too...

By Elana Kilkenny

In today's real estate market there are many variables that contribute to a buyer's decision to purchase a particular property; often a preeminent factor is his or her emotional response to a specific home. With this in mind many sellers now employ Feng Shui, the intuitive art of creating an environment that promotes harmony, love, health, and wealth, to sell their homes more successfully.

A fundamental Feng Shui principle is that environments have a powerful emotional effect on the inhabitants (for our purposes, sellers) as well as on those who visit (buyers). There are many different factors, both tangible and intangible, that contribute to the "feel" of a property, and Feng Shui offers many practical and affordable enhancement techniques that complement any design style. For sellers, many of these applications can be used to sell their property more easily and at its highest value. For buyers, these concepts can provide them with insight into their reactions to different properties and empower them to make a more informed decision about their next home.

**First Impression.** Because first impressions play a vital role in a buyer's decision-making process, sellers should pay particular attention to the energy of their home's entry. For instance, a buyer may feel claustrophobic or blocked if, upon entering a residence, there is a wall, partition, or too many objects in the area. An obstructed entry may also

prevent a buyer from taking in the true dimensions of the entire property.

To adjust this situation, Feng Shui suggests lifting the energy of the entry and giving a sense of movement. Depending on the home's decor, consider placing a beautiful mirror, reflective object, or metallic



wall covering on the offending wall. If such an object reflects a shabby hallway or view, consider using artwork or painting techniques that pull you into the space through perspective and depth. Adding a decorative water fountain or melodious

door chime to greet buyers also creates a soothing invitation into the home. Use ambient lighting (bright but not glaring) in the entry and throughout the entire home to further lift the energy.

**Clutter and Life Energy.** Clutter is one of the biggest drains on the energy of a home. Clutter lowers the energy level and often produces a chaotic or fatigued energy. Clutter also obscures the true dimensions of the property and might even make a potential buyer question how well the home has been maintained. In this case the only way around it is through it; this means de-cluttering the home, as opposed to making a common Feng Shui mistake by adding elements like mirrors and crystals which will only magnify and multiply the clutter.

For sellers, de-cluttering often leads to a more successful sale of their

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property. It can also have a revitalizing effect on their lives at a time when they are already in the midst of a transition (moving to a new home). In this process it is important to organize "hidden" spaces such as closets, drawers, and the space under the bed, as clutter can be felt as well as seen. Once the clutter has been cleared, consider bringing in some live plants to lift the life energy of the environment (plants with rounded and broader leaves are usually more soothing than spiky plants).

### **Good Design, Challenging Energy.**

One of my mottos is that good design is not always good Feng Shui and good Feng Shui is not always good design (although it can be). A home might look like it comes out of an interior design magazine, but it still might present badly to potential buyers. This could happen, for instance, if the art and decorative objects are overtly aggressive, violent, or melancholy. It is wise to create an environment that makes it easy for buyers to imagine themselves living there peacefully and happily. Therefore, sellers should consider editing the art and symbols they have on display, or modifying certain features in their home, while they are in the process of selling it.

For example, a collection of large tribal masks might symbolize travel and power to the seller but feel menacing to a potential buyer. In a similar vein, sellers may love their home's low ceiling with beams but to buyers these architectural features may create a sense of pressure or low energy. Consider painting the beams and ceiling the same color and utilizing strategically placed up-lit lighting (such as inexpensive floor cone lighting) to lift and lighten the energy.

**Furniture Placement.** Feng Shui contends that a home's furniture should be arranged in a way that creates a

balanced flow throughout the space. It is beneficial to have a furniture layout that allows a buyer to walk easily through each room. Similarly, seating arrangements should appear to invite conversations, and beds should be placed in a manner to inspire sweet dreams and relaxation.

If the energy in a property feels like it gets lost or moves too fast, sellers can artfully place furniture to slow down the flow in an inviting way. For example, if a property has a large expanse of windows that are visible upon entering, a buyer might love the airiness but also feel that the space is cold, or that his or her energy comes into the space and "goes out the window." With this type of layout, consider using items such as low pieces of furniture or heavier sculptural pieces to slow down the flow of energy and keep the buyer's energy in the property, while at the same time not blocking the positive features of the windows.

**Intangible Features.** Intangible features are invisible forces that act upon physical form and reality. In addition to physical clutter, many homes have energetic debris that has built up over time. This can be a result of negative emotions, events, or stress that the seller or previous tenants have experienced. Feng Shui contends that these energy patterns become imprinted in the environment and can impact the inhabitants of a home (the sellers) as well as those who visit (potential buyers).

To some this may seem like a new-age concept, but it is actually an experience that most people have had at some point when they have entered a space and had a negative emotional reaction, even though there were no tangible cues that would explain this feeling. The most thorough and powerful way to change this energy is to hire a profes-

sional who is experienced in clearing and blessing spaces. This process brings renewed vitality to a property, can contribute to a more successful sale, and often has a healing and transformational effect on the life of the seller.

Buying and selling real estate may be a challenging and confusing process but, by enlisting the wisdom of a Feng Shui expert, the experience can be enlightening and empowering as well. Owners who discover the emotional impact their environment has on them and on potential purchasers can make adjustments that could reap large rewards when selling. Buyers familiar with Feng Shui principles are better equipped to evaluate properties. Indeed, a consultation with a Feng Shui expert can benefit those who are selling a home or looking for a new one, as well as anyone who wants to make his or her current residence an inspiring and nurturing haven.

**Elana Kilkenny** offers a holistic approach that empowers people to transform their lives and environments.



She is an experienced Feng Shui consultant, inspirational psychic, healer, and spirited teacher. Elana's services include: Environment Transformation for

Homes and Businesses, Space Clearings and Blessings, and Intuitive Counseling/Energy Healing sessions for individuals and couples. She is also available for corporate speaking engagements and workshops for individuals and businesses. She can be reached via email at [elanakilkenny@yahoo.com](mailto:elanakilkenny@yahoo.com) or by telephone at 212-873-1190

# The Deanna Kory Team

## *Transcending the Ordinary in Marketing Properties*

**O**ur dedication is unfaltering when it comes to achieving the widest exposure possible for our exclusive properties. We offer innovative and creative ideas to showcase the properties such as special events where we gain the attention of potential buyers, the brokerage community, and the media.

Deanna was recently quoted in New York Magazine regarding special events to expose properties.

We hosted a beautiful cocktail party at a Fifth Avenue residence featuring a professional quartet with opera singers, including one of our own team members....Karen Kelley (our team is comprised of limitless diversity and talents)!

Not only did we gain exposure for the property from the event, our efforts were doubled with the attention of the media.

# NEW YORK

JANUARY 9, 2006

## Let's Put On a Showing!

Nobody's turning up at your open houses? Bring in a soprano, a fancy chef, or Quincy. BY S. JHOANNA ROBLEDO

**A**s mezzo-soprano Anna Tonna launched into the final few notes of Handel's sweeping "Ombra Mai Fu," accompanied by the Figaro Quartet, a cluster of audience members stood in one corner discussing the condition of the her-ringbone floors. Anywhere else-Lincoln Center, perhaps, or Town Hall, where Tonna has performed before-this behavior would've been inexcusable. But this was no ordinary show; this was "Figaro on Fifth," where the bait was a recital but the



*Tenor Raymond Aparentado performs with the Figaro Quartet at 1060 Fifth Avenue open house*

prize was Tonna's performance space, an eight-room Fifth Avenue co-op on the market for \$4.8 million. "It was a way to showcase the space," says Corcoran's Deanna Kory, who has the listing. When it comes to high-end properties, fancy brochures, newspaper ads, and a flowery description on a Website may not always be

enough. When a broker wants to nab the attention of colleagues, he has to go to greater lengths to stand out-and that can mean a stunt. Kory says she received many calls after "Figaro on Fifth" from agents congratulating her on the event.



*Deanna entertaining guests*



*Karen Kelley and tenor Raymond Aparentado*



*Deanna Kory and Karen Kelley with guests*

## Meet the Brokers



***Deanna E. Kory***  
Senior Vice President

An absolute professional, Deanna never departs from the highest ethical standards, while thriving on the remarkably productive relationships she develops with whomever she deals

with professionally. Before entering the real estate industry, Deanna worked in public relations, promoting classical musicians, honing her interpersonal and marketing skills that have proven invaluable.

Besides her intelligence, intuition, empathy, and sensitivity to her clients' specific requirements, Deanna possesses vast knowledge of the industry and an unmatched expertise in marketing properties and selling them in record time and at record prices. She has also shown herself to be a superb negotiator, able to represent both buyers and sellers with great success. Deanna has consistently ranked in the top five brokers in Corcoran.

Deanna stands out in the industry for her staging ability to show properties at their best to obtain the highest possible price. She is most attentive to the unique qualities of each property, and ensuring that all transactions proceed smoothly; always putting her clients' needs first.



***Christine K. Morgan***  
Vice President

Coming to real estate from a successful career in publishing, Christine Morgan brings to her clients and customers a reporter's attention to detail and an orderly approach to realizing their real estate goals.



***Karen Kelley***  
Senior Vice President

Though Karen has enjoyed traveling the world as an opera singer, Manhattan is still by far her favorite place. As far as possibilities, there's simply no better place, and she always looks forward to helping our clients find their own special niche here.



***Meghan Kelly***  
Sales Associate

A graduate of the London School of Economics, Meghan worked for three years in finance and marketing at a top Wall Street investment firm before joining the Corcoran group.



***Layla Rose***  
Sales Associate

Knowledgeable, service-oriented, and results-driven, Layla provides honest, straightforward advice throughout the transaction process.

***corcoran***

corcoran group real estate

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