

# Real Estate Forum

An **ALM** Publication

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## BEST BOSSES IN THE BUSINESS

FEATURING 2018 WINNER  
RIVERROCK'S JOHN COMBS

**BEST PRACTICES: MIND THE GAP**

**PASSING THE TORCH AT  
GEORGE SMITH PARTNERS**

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# BEST 2018 OSSES IN THE BUSINESS

One of life's most persistent and urgent questions are, 'What are you doing for others?'

We at REAL ESTATE FORUM wish we had the wisdom to have come up with that sentence on our own, but the credit goes to one of the great leaders of our day, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Not that we are comparing our feature of the commercial real estate industry's Best Bosses to Dr. King's life mission but his words—these words in particular—can and do apply.

As does John Maxwell's axiom, "The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails."

Or Norman Schwarzkopf's advice: "Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy."

Or one of our favorites from Theodore Roosevelt: "The best leader is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and the self-restraint to keep from meddling with them while they do it."

For the third consecutive year, we have examined the industry landscape in search of executives that exemplify the best in leadership. And boy, did we find them.

In almost all cases, the people we selected are noteworthy for the relationships they have forged with their employees. In others, we have lauded professionals who have guided their companies through perilous times or challenging markets. Some of these executives have overcome severe health challenges and still managed to maintain their corporate path. In other instances, people have had to step into the role of CEO on the heels of a departure of a beloved leader. In all cases they persevered.

As you read through the following pages we hope you are as personally and professionally inspired as we were when we first learned about their stories.

## THE VISIONARY

# Steven E. McCraney

If you are touring industrial facilities in the Southeast US, you'll probably come across a Steven McCraney creation. McCraney is president and CEO of McCraney Property Co., a company he founded 28 years ago. He and his team have since developed more than 15 million square feet of industrial/distribution and office-flex properties—many of which are uniquely designed. The exteriors of the industrial buildings are reminiscent of retail storefronts, with modern high-end finishes and landscaping similar to what you'd see in front of a retail store.

To understand why, one must first remember that design within industrial has traditionally been an afterthought with efficiencies emphasized without regard to aesthetics. To determine what industrial users' needs might be in five years, McCraney met with execs in the traditional industrial, e-commerce and freight-forwarding industries. He came away from these meetings convinced that industrial real estate, given its growing importance in the supply chain and overall level of activity, will one day be another retail outpost. Few can say he was mistaken.

In general, McCraney is a believer in the concept that the work environment is as important as the way and type of work one does. From the architecture to the egress and ingress, design elements are incorporated into his properties to enhance the feeling of place.

Of course the work itself is integral to McCraney's belief system, which has been imparted to his employees. As a company, success is not just by client satisfaction, but by the firm's commitment to the core principles the CEO put down: Building Relationships. Building Communities. Building Value. Driving Customer Service.

Sr. property manager Michael Lanford testifies, "I am a 100% different person than I was my first day. The experience and knowledge I've gained is unbelievable. I don't want to work anywhere else because of the satisfaction I get from my work." The firm has been recognized multiple times and across multiple platforms for its customer-service oriented team and its best-in-class industrial product.

As for McCraney himself, he lives his life by the Helen Keller quote: "Life is either a great adventure or nothing." As such, he is an active alpine climber and has scaled many of the world's tallest peaks for the children's charity, "Place of Hope."

