

A Collaborative Culture

An Interview with Adam Singer,
Executive Managing Director, Suburban Washington, D.C., Savills

EDITORS' NOTE Adam Singer is one of Savills' longest-tenured professionals providing real estate advisory services for a multitude of companies in Washington, D.C., northern Virginia and across the United States. Since he joined the firm, then Studley, Inc., in 1983, he has accumulated an impressive list of clients consisting of large associations and foundations, as well as companies in the professional services and government-related industries. Singer has been the recipient of numerous industry honors including the Commercial Real Estate Brokerage Association of America (CREBA) Realtor Associate of the Year Award, Top Commercial Leasing Broker Award and Public Service Award. In 2005, the organization also honored him with the prestigious Brendan McCarthy Memorial Award in recognition of his community leadership and philanthropic efforts. Singer has served on the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's (JDRF) National Board of Chancellors for over 35 years and is a past chairman of its Washington D.C. chapter. He is the founder of the organization's annual Real Estate Games fundraiser, an Olympics-style event that has raised over \$10 million from within the industry since its inception in 1990. Singer was recently announced as the recipient of Savills' top honor, the Studley Person of the Year Award, recognizing an employee with an established history of distinguished philanthropic or charitable service and leadership.



Adam Singer

FIRM BRIEF Established in 1855, Savills (savills.us) is one of the leading real estate advisors in the world. Savills helps organizations find the right real estate solutions that ensure employee success. With services in tenant representation, workforce and incentives strategy, workplace strategy and occupant experience, project management, and capital markets, Savills has elevated the potential of workplaces around the corner, and around the world, for 165 years and counting.

What have been the keys to Savills' success?

An important pillar of success at Savills is focused on working together as one large partnership. We are a team of several hundred people. We hire great talent, embrace smart ideas, and our familiarity fosters the sharing of best practices.

We also have a clear vision of what we are trying to accomplish, which is creating value for and supporting the mission of our clients through their real estate. Whether we are negotiating a single transaction or managing a worldwide real estate portfolio, we remain committed to acting in the best interest of those we serve.

How do you define the Savills culture?

Our culture is entrepreneurial and grounded in connection and collaboration. We are at a size and scale in the United States and Canada where we can maintain

that familiarity with each other. Our nimble approach gives us the ability to assemble the best possible advisory team to solve each client's specific real estate challenge anywhere in the world. I've worked on a few national accounts over the years with colleagues from offices across North America, and I have known everyone on my team and their particular set of skills before the projects start.

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Will you highlight Savills' commitment to being a purpose-driven firm?

Savills has been a philanthropic trailblazer setting the tone for charitable giving and community involvement within the commercial real estate community for many years. Our firm is wholly dedicated to the leadership, service and support of national and local organizations and special initiatives that improve the world around us. With a history of expertise in tenant representation, advocacy and action are at the core of who we are and what we do. One example is the JDRF Real Estate Games that I started 30 years ago in D.C.

What has made Savills a place where you have wanted to spend your career?

It has been my pleasure to be here for 37 years. Looking back, I can say that I'm proud of what I've accomplished. Our platform is tenant representation, meaning that we only represent the user side of the formula and not landlords in our leasing. It is a customer-service based approach. I've found success in this area and trained other people to do well.

At the same time, when I got into this business, I decided I was going to leverage this industry to cure diabetes with Savills' support. As the founding partner firm of the JDRF Real Estate Games, my Savills partners in New York, Chicago and Nashville have taken leadership roles in building this great industry event in their cities. I believe we have changed the voice and tone of philanthropy in those cities. Efforts include planning logistics, enlisting colleagues and peers as competitors or event facilitators, and recruiting donors. I was particularly proud to be the D.C. JDRF Gala honoree in November 2019. My wife Suzanne introduced me and we raised \$2.2 million for research. I am honored that my partners and my industry has embraced my mission to cure diabetes.

Will you discuss the progress that has been made in the fight to cure diabetes?

At the November JDRF Gala, I talked about what it was like to be diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 18 during my college physical, and what it's like to take 70,000 shots of insulin in my life. I also talked about the changes I've seen and how lucky I feel to have been a part of the decisions that led to changes that make life easier for people with Type 1 diabetes, and how lucky I have been to share hope and vision of a future without diabetes with hundreds of people that I have met.

In the past six months, I've been saying in my speeches that we don't talk about cures when we talk about this disease. We talk about what is next and we talk about hope. We talk about eliminating fear and pain. With the advent of technology to make living with diabetes easier, I believe that we're at the beginning of the end of diabetes. When I was diagnosed in 1978, my life expectancy was 57 years old, and I'm turning a healthy 60 years young this May. There has been incredible progress since 1978, and I will continue to commit my time and energy to this cause. I am on a 59-year lucky streak. That is pretty great. ●