

## Collaborative and Empowering

An Interview with Jessica Baran, Vice President, Head of Leasing, Rudin

**EDITORS' NOTE** *Jessica Baran is the Vice President, Head of Leasing at Rudin and oversees leasing for Rudin's luxury residential portfolio. Baran has worked in Property Management and Real Estate for the past 22 years in both the private and public sector. Prior to joining Rudin in 2021, she worked with Equity Residential where she held multiple leadership roles in the NY Metro area. Baran attended the University of West Georgia and holds a BA in Marketing and Management.*



Jessi Baran

**What excited you about the opportunity to join Rudin and made you feel it was the right fit?**

I've worked in the real estate industry for over 20 years, nearly 15 of which have been in New York City, so I've known of Rudin's best-in-class reputation for a long time. I wasn't looking to leave my last employer when I was approached by the company in 2021 to lead residential leasing. I just couldn't pass up the opportunity given Rudin's prominence and its portfolio of high-

**COMPANY BRIEF** *Founded in 1925 by Samuel Rudin and his siblings, and now led by the third and fourth generations, Rudin Company (rudin.com) oversees the daily operations of 33 properties in New York City. The portfolio is comprised of 17 residential buildings totaling 4.7 million square feet and 16 commercial office buildings totaling 10.5 million square feet.*

end residential communities. During the interview process, it became clear that the position aligned with what I wanted out of a role and the organization embodied my values and professional pursuits. It was a perfect fit, and I've never looked back.

**How do you describe Rudin's culture and values?**

Rudin is a family run organization that truly feels like a family. The environment is collaborative and empowering. It is a place where your input and expertise are valued. At Rudin, making the right and ethical decision is the standard, without fail, and I know I'm fully supported. This extends to dealings in all facets of the business and beyond – from our customers and employees to the city itself.



241 Central Park West in New York City (above); 945 Fifth Avenue (upper right)

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**What do you feel have been the keys to Rudin's strength and leadership in the industry?**

Rudin's reputation of fairness and respect precedes it, and that's the type of company you want to conduct business with. The Rudin name is also synonymous with New York City – it's been their backyard for almost a century, and it's important to all of us that the city continues to grow and thrive. Beyond real estate, Rudin is heavily engaged in civic and philanthropic initiatives such as their long-standing commitment to the New York Marathon and The Association for

a Better New York. The combination of all these efforts truly defines the "Rudin Way" – it's about so much more than managing a business; it's about being part of the fabric of the communities where we operate.

**Will you highlight your role and areas of focus?**

I lead the leasing department for Rudin's multifamily portfolio, which consists of 17 luxury residential properties totaling 4.7 million square feet. My time is largely dedicated to overseeing and directing the senior members of amazing onsite teams at our



*211 East 70th Street (above and upper right)*

individual buildings. I also closely study market dynamics and have a keen understanding of the macro factors at play. This helps ensure we are reaching our goals, keeping our buildings occupied and our renters happy.

**What are your views on the state of the New York real estate market?**

There is always going to be demand in New York City. The pandemic and recovery presented its own challenges, but people will always want to live and work here. New York always prevails. The city's residential market is extremely resilient, as evidenced by how quickly it recovered in 2021. Our buildings are highly occupied, and we are extremely confident that will continue.

**What does it take to be successful in leasing?**

The most important thing is understanding the market and your product so you can effectively and impactfully connect with your customers. Everybody in the industry is selling four walls. To succeed, you have to differentiate yourself using the unique touchpoints you have. People are buying Rudin's reputation more than anything else, so it's essential to find a way to authentically share with current and prospective renters that they're in good hands.

**Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the industry?**

I do, and elevating women within the industry is something that I'm super passionate about. Over the years, I've mentored a lot of women. I look to lead by example, helping others grow and showing them that leadership roles are theirs for the taking. It is always helpful for women to find allies who provide them with honest feedback and propel them forward. In the same way that others pushed me, I want to positively impact the next generation of women in real estate.

**What advice do you give to young people interested in a career in real estate?**

You need to start somewhere and then fully immerse yourself in the industry. It is important to listen and absorb every bit of information there is to learn. The real estate industry is so dynamic – whether you're on the residential or commercial side – there is crossover and it's all intertwined. It's important to surround yourself with the best and brightest and seek a mentor that will help to guide you. We all need someone we trust who can serve as a sounding board and help us grow in our careers. ●