I am humbled and honored to be named as a recipient of this prestigious award which I accept on behalf of the New Jersey Builders Association...in my mind...the true recipient, in recognition for its exceptional service and support in advocacy for the real estate industry.

Carl, I thank you for the extremely kind words of introduction. Your sage advice, counsel and support has meant the world to me throughout my 30-year career.

As a matter of fact, I go back 30 years with many of you. I was staff for the Assembly Housing Committee when Peter Reinhart first made me aware of a job opportunity with NJBA. At that time, Mike McGuinness was environmental staff, Tony Pizzutillo handled government affairs and Dave Fisher had just left his position as environmental director and planner. Small world.

After about 3 or 4 years with the NJBA, I left for a brief stint with the Greenbaum firm. I learned a great deal from my good friend Wendell Smith and had the privilege and the honor to get to know Arthur Greenbaum. (May he rest in peace.)

I want to take a moment to introduce my family; my wonderful husband Sandy, two of my sons, Martin & Paul. I am so very proud of them. My son Anthony, a graduate of the USNA, couldn’t be here as he is preparing for deployment to the Persian Gulf. I ask that you please keep him and all our troops in your thoughts and prayers...and continue to thank them for their service. “They do what they do every day, so that all of us can continue to sleep sound every night.” (At least all of you can sleep sound...I won’t until my son returns in December.)

I would also like to introduce some of the members of my extended family who are here tonight. NJBA’s current President, John Kirkenir, VP Tom Troy, along with the other Officers and several past President’s, as well as our
Association affiliate leaders; Carl, who chairs our PAC, and Devra Goldberg who chairs NJBA’s Mixed-Use Developers affiliate.

The NJBA has had a rich history of promoting the American Dream of homeownership since 1948. And as development in NJ has evolved over the decades, NJBA responded under my predecessor’s leadership - kudo’s to my good friend Tim Touhey and past President’s Dominick Paragano and George Vallone for their foresight in expanding NJBA’s membership base, working with Carl, Ron Ladell, Steve Santola and Ted Zangari, to establish NJBA’s Mixed-Use Developers affiliate – a reflection of the increasing demand for multi-family rental housing, as well as mixed-use development. Today, NJBA serves as a critical resource and advocates for all types of housing opportunities at all price points.

The collective vision of our members is that every citizen in our great state will have a decent place to live that is right for their lifestyle, as well as access to workplaces that are attractive to the community.

NJBA continually strives to bring together those involved in the industry for purposes of mutual advantage and cooperation; to develop and promote professional, technical and ethical standards; to inform and educate the members about advances in building techniques and practices; to disseminate information to the members, the public and the government; and especially, to promote a balanced regulatory framework in which the availability and affordability of safe and healthful housing is increased while the environment and consumers remain protected.

As it relates to the affordable housing issue, NJBA has been a key player in every legislative effort in Trenton since the inception of COAH over 30 years ago, and today remains a party in all ongoing litigation, working in cooperation with our friends Kevin Walsh and Adam Gordon at the Fair Share Housing Center.

With the encouragement and financial support of the membership we entered the fray – in almost every one of the 15 Superior Court vicinages around the state, including the activity as it relates to the Middlesex, Ocean and currently, the Mercer County trials, with the advice and guidance of counsel, Tom Carroll and Rick Hoff.

It is critical that we, as non-profit trade associations, clearly articulate our positions and interests to policymakers as early and often in the process as possible
because government profoundly impacts the work that we do; whether it involves changes to government policies, agency regulations or other changes.

As leaders of these trade organizations, Mike and I are both keenly aware of this impact and must remain actively and vigilantly engaged on behalf of our memberships. Advocacy is a coordinated effort across the various interests within the industry. So, I’d like to thank our RE partners for their support and cooperation – folks like Jarod Grasso at the Realtors, Dave Brogan with Apartment Association, Ted Zangari on behalf of ICSC and as Chair of the Smart Growth Coalition.

NJBA has always had a reputation for a very active and ambitious agenda in Trenton, developing legislation that promotes and protects the interests of the membership. I would be remiss if I didn’t at least mention NJBA’s historical “Fix the Hammer” campaign, especially with Joe Riggs and others in the room who were intimately involved in that campaign.

In response to an economic downturn in the 90’s, we developed and coordinated an effort involving a half dozen major legislative initiatives; the two most critical being the enactment of NJ’s Residential Site Standards Law and the 1st Permit Extension Act.

That campaign became a rally cry to engage and unify the members, saving jobs and companies, alike. We loaded a massive broken hammer onto a flat-bed truck and marched on Trenton with hundreds of members. We mailed thousands of broken hammers to policymakers to send the message. This agenda provided the economic stimulus throughout the state when it was desperately needed.

Over the years, NJBA – under the guidance of our Builder Officers, has been a true leader on the development and advancement of many critical legislative initiatives that have dramatically impacted the RE industry. Bear with me as I highlight a few of the more impactful initiatives.

In 1994 NJBA led the re-write of the then almost century old Mechanic’s Lien Law, replacing it with a new “Construction Lien Law” which outlined a clear and specific process as it relates to the “residential” construction lien.

In 1995 litigation prompted us to draft the New Residential Construction Off-Site Conditions Disclosure Act, requiring municipalities to keep lists of
certain “off-site conditions” that could potentially affect the value of newly constructed residential real estate.

In **2007**, in response to the deepest and most protracted RE downturn, we worked with our colleagues to reinvigorate the second generation of the **Permit Extension Act** which became law **in 2008**; followed by a series of extensions - in **2010, 2012, 2014** and – at the behest of our immediate Past President Dwight Pittenger, we successfully lobbied for one last extension in **2015** - limited to 1 year in the 9 most Superstorm-Sandy impacted counties.

In **2009**, under the leadership of then President Steve Patron, NJBA drafted the **Age-Restricted Conversion Law** which authorized the conversion of approved senior housing projects into market-rate housing, resulting in the development of hundreds or thousands of housing units.

In **2010**, after almost 15 years of lobbying, the **Time of Application bill** was signed into law. Drafted in 1996 by Counsel Bob Washburn and then CEO Pat O’Keefe, this made clear that applications submitted to the municipality would be reviewed based on the rules in place at the time of the submission.

That’s when I first met Ted and we joined forces to move it across the finish line. We recently joined forces again as NJBA, NAIOP and ICSC filed a joint amicus brief to preserve the protections established under that law. Thanks to Bob Washburn and Meryl Gonchar for their cooperative efforts on the brief.

In **2013**, NJBA working closely with the League of Municipalities, was successful in promoting amendments to the **Local Redevelopment and Housing Law** that codified case law to make redevelopment a more politically viable tool to spur economic development. Thanks to Bob Goldsmith, Rob Beckleman, Mike Bruno, Ann Babineau, Anthony DellaPella – all of whom were instrumental in the development of that initiative.

And in **2013** and **2015**, NJBA and our Environmental Counsel, Mike Gross, Paul Schneider and Steve Dalton worked cooperatively with the DEP…to draft and successfully advance legislation to twice extend the statewide **“Water Quality Planning Act”**.

This is just a sampling of NJBA’s advocacy work promoting legislation designed to enhance the policy framework under with the housing sector operates. Also of paramount importance is the work that NJBA does to oppose legislation
that would set policy detrimental to the building industry and the home buying public. In the interest of time, I won’t go through that voluminous list, suffice it to say those victories have been many and significant for the RE industry.

**Looking Forward….**

In November, we elect a new Governor as well as the 218th NJ Legislature. Notwithstanding the election results, I believe that the message of the real estate industry needs to be one of cooperation. We need to continue our work together to ensure that our voices are heard in Trenton so that this industry remains the economic engine putting people back to work, while delivering decent, safe & affordable places for people to live.

I thank the Kislak Real Estate Institute and Peter Reinhart for this recognition, on behalf of NJBA’s Officers, its entire membership, and especially the incredibly hard-working and talented staff at the NJBA.