

## Turning Tragedy Into Positive Action

November 20, 2014



IRVINE, CA—One of **Joan Marcus-Colvin**'s initiatives as the new president of the **Building Industry Association—Orange County Chapter** strikes close to her heart. The SVP of sales, marketing and design for the **New Home Co.** recently lost her husband to a cycling/auto accident, and it has spurred her to fight for better, safer streets in Orange County.

As GlobeSt.com [reported earlier this week](#), Marcus-Colvin was just installed at BIA/OC/s new president, along with the incoming executive committee and board of directors. GlobeSt.com caught up with her to talk about her new role and the initiatives she's promoting.

**GlobeSt.com:** *What are your plans and goals in this new role?*

**Marcus-Colvin:** I'm really going to focus on my platform—those three very specific areas. The organization is in such a healthy position with membership and financial stability that we really need to get to work with the issues that our membership finds important. That was part of the selection of those three platform issues we have.

**GlobeSt.com:** *Can you elaborate on those issues?*

**Marcus-Colvin:** The first is **Complete Streets** and sustainable communities. I lost my husband five months to the date today. He was an accomplished mountain biker, riding a fairly treacherous part of Pacific Coast Highway, and he was hit and killed. I wanted to figure out a way of tying that into something positive, so I immediately became an advocate of Laguna Beach and pleaded with the City Council to start doing something with cycling and pedestrian safety. I'm happy to say that five months later we've seen some pretty good improvement. It gave me the impetus to connect it some way to being a homebuilder and part of an organization. It has to make sense to builders. We came up with Complete Streets, a California initiative that dictates that any city that goes through a general plan amendment has to adopt the initiatives that reside in Complete Streets. One of those is the idea of creating roadways that are equally safe for pedestrians, cyclists, people with disabilities and motorists. At least it gives us the point of discussion and hopefully engages cities as they move on their projects. L.A. is going through this right now—there's tons of press on the redesign of their streets to incorporate more cycling and a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

Women in **homebuilding** is my second initiative. Being a woman in this business for 25 years, I know that our industry was really founded by fathers and sons building houses together. When women entered the business, it was through a more creative field like marketing and creative design. Our industry is a little slow in promoting women in influential positions. My goal is to hold the first BIA/OC women's leadership conference in 2015. The idea is to motivate, engage and hopefully help women thrive and be excited to remain in this business and to engage executives across our industry. There are plenty of men in our industry that get it as well. Especially in our business, women make up the majority of decision-makers in purchasing a home.

The third initiative is **Next Gen**. From a very personal point of view, I've been watching this demographic these last five years in our company. We have a group of 30- to 40-something-year-olds who are highly talented and motivated, and we **Baby Boomers** are not retiring and getting out of the way as fast as we once were. So I think there will be a slip-up if we're not careful, and my idea is to create a series of roundtables and other C-suite executives at the table with the Next Gens and see what they want—which is of course growth opportunities and title changes and promotions.

***GlobeSt.com:** How does your role with BIA/OC mesh with your responsibilities at the New Home Co.?*

***Marcus-Colvin:*** I would not have been able to take on the position without the full support of our leadership here. **Larry Webb**, our CEO, has been very supportive of my getting involved with the BIA, and the relationships and friendships I've made have been helpful for the company, too. This happens over and over. It's more visibility for the company, and since my role is to be the brand manager of our company, that only assists in achieving our goals. We want to continue to attract the best in the business to work here, and what I do with BIA will help that as well.

***GlobeSt.com:** What do you see as the connection between the multifamily and single-family residential-building industries?*

***Marcus-Colvin:*** In recent years, with changing demographics and economic times where we've seen this influx and need for more **multifamily apartment**-building activities, many of our members have seen the crossover in their own careers in going from single family to multifamily. There's an understanding between the two sectors, and I want to foster that conversation at BIA. We have people from both sides of the business coming together; otherwise we wouldn't normally be running in the same circles. It's very positive. Now that single-family is down, apartments are way up. But both are going to be a little more stable going forward.

[http://www.globest.com/news/12\\_992/orangecounty/development/Turning-Tragedy-Into-Positive-Action-352746.html?pg=1](http://www.globest.com/news/12_992/orangecounty/development/Turning-Tragedy-Into-Positive-Action-352746.html?pg=1)