

Recent CAI-NJ Honoree Discusses Impact of Cultural Change on Community Association Management

Elaine Warga-Murray, CEO of Regency Management Group, LLC, and a recognized expert in professional condominium, cooperative and homeowner association management, shares insights into the art and science of managing community environments in the wake of changing demographics, attitudes, lifestyles and laws.

HOWELL, NEW JERSEY October 16, 2013 — Cultural changes can pose daunting challenges to those who manage condo complexes and community clubhouses. Dealing daily with issues that range from pet policies and security to fitness equipment and monthly assessments, property management professionals have to be versatile, flexible, and financially astute.

Elaine Warga-Murray, a pioneering woman in the industry and CEO of [Regency Management Group LLC](#), one of the state's premier community management firms, will address the impact of such issues in an Oct. 24 seminar about "The Changing Cultures in Community Environments."

The first woman in New Jersey to found a professional, accredited community management firm, Warga-Murray will share her insights during a two-day conference of the [N.J. Chapter of the Community Associations Institute \(CAI-NJ\)](#) [<http://www.cainj.org/>] at The Revel in Atlantic City. Her audience will include property managers, lifestyle directors and board members of condominiums, adult communities and homeowners' associations with changing cultures.

"As laws and lifestyles change, residents' ages shift younger or older, and attitudes grow more strict or lenient, property management professionals face a constant juggling act," Warga-

Murray said. “They have to work effectively with board members and residents, encourage participation, entertain diverse requests and points of view, orchestrate compromises—and, ultimately, manage the property to ensure that policies, activities, events, equipment and facilities are meeting residents’ changing needs.”

Dual Honors from CAI-NJ

CAI-NJ recently honored Warga-Murray both for her pioneering role in professional property management and for being the first New Jersey woman to earn the national association’s top designation, that of Professional Community Association Manager.

As the first woman PCAM, she has made it a point to seek out and mentor more than 30 other New Jersey women who have gone on to earn that designation and develop “important and meaningful careers in the industry.” Several now own their own property management companies.

“In the 1980s, there just were no women in this field,” Warga-Murray said. “Once I found out I was the first Professional Community Association Manager, I was determined to change that.”

A graduate of Georgian Court University with a degree in English, the Maplewood native also holds two master’s degrees—one from New York University in cinema, and the other from Seton Hall University in school supervision. Warga-Murray’s career has taken what she describes as a “circuitous route” from running a cable video station for a real estate developer to video training and then to establishing her own property and community management company.

She has produced training videos for her industry, as well as a

DVD, “Chaucer at the Mansion,” for academic and historical use and for fund-raising by Georgian Court University, Lakewood. Her other professional designations include Certified Manager of Community Associations and Accredited Management Specialist, and she frequently is called upon to speak in various professional forums and to provide expert testimony in legal cases involving community management issues.

Three Decades of Change

“We’ve seen phenomenal changes in our industry over the last 30 years, not just with the use of technology and increased attention to healthier lifestyles, but also in laws and protocol changes for management associations and planned unit developments,” Warga-Murray said.

She cites, as an example, the manner in which residents pay their monthly association bills. “In the old days, they’d put a check and coupon in the mail or drop the envelope off at the clubhouse,” she said. “Now they do everything electronically, through their own banks or through management company websites — with the expectation of an immediate response.”

Computer and billiards rooms have declined in popularity as communal movie screening rooms and community vegetable gardens have risen. Physical attributes of properties also have changed, “upgraded from the typical patios and siding of a few decades ago to exteriors and landscape architecture with more modern curb appeal.”

Municipal services, too, are changing, as towns stop running buses for seniors, for example, which means that lifestyle directors need to bring voter registration, dog licensing and other local services to the clubhouse.

“There are so many different things that impact how a community culture is formed and how it evolves,” Warga-Murray said.

“Dealing with cultural change as a property manager or lifestyle director requires flexibility and adaptability — service-oriented individuals who enjoy working with diverse groups and finding solutions to managing that change.”

About Regency Management Group LLC

Based in Howell, New Jersey, [Regency Management Group LLC](#) provides residential property management services to approximately 18,000 residential units, located in more than 100 different residential communities in Monmouth, Ocean, Mercer, Middlesex, Essex and Somerset counties, as well as 300,000 square feet of office space in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Regency Management Group also provides consulting services, including preparation of initial budgets and proforma operational guidelines for developers of community association properties, and management audits for community associations and self-managed communities.

About the Community Associations Institute

[The Community Associations Institute](#) is an international organization dedicated to building better communities. CAI provides information, education and resources to all community association stakeholders, including community managers and homeowner leaders.

[The New Jersey chapter of CAI \(CAI-NJ\)](#) is dedicated to enhancing the quality of community association living, through education, legislative advocacy and professional development. CAI-NJ is the second-largest chapter in the United States, with more than 1,700 members. It provides continuous

education and resources to help members stay abreast of current news, laws and issues affecting community associations in the state of New Jersey.