

In calm or crisis- 2016 Portfolio “Manager of the Year” leads with professionalism & grace



Dean Lerner, PCAM accepts 2016 National Portfolio “Manager of the Year” Award.

When fire broke out on the 50th floor of the Hancock Tower last November, Gregory Dean Lerner did not hesitate. Drawing on decades of experience managing association properties, Lerner rallied his board and staff to reassure the residents and help those who lost their homes. After the fire was out, Lerner communicated candidly about what had gone wrong, while making sure the press reported also on the many things that had gone right.

Lerner’s associates have long praised him for his expertise, efficiency, and insistence on best practices, and also for his calm and gentle touch, even when addressing unexpected crises. Responsible for a portfolio of ten association properties with combined annual budgets of \$35.4 million, Dean Lerner is a truly professional Association manager. In November, under the extraordinary pressure of the Hancock Tower fire, Lerner showed what a difference a professional manager can make.

The timing of the fire could hardly have been worse. It was

snowing, and the roads were closed along Chicago’s Magnificent Mile for the Thanksgiving parade. When he learned about the fire, Lerner was in Florida, taking a break from the cold winter of the Windy City

A complex situation quickly became more so. By the time he landed in Chicago at 3 a.m., Lerner had been on the phone for hours, assembling an emergency team to address concerns of frightened residents, talk to the press, and plan restoration work. A bedside candle was the immediate cause of the fire, but other factors had contributed to the crisis, including a possible alarm malfunction and the staff’s failure to call 9-1-1 in a timely manner.

Fortunately, no one was seriously injured, but the building’s reputation—and that of Lerner’s employer, Sudler Property Management Company—was at stake. Lerner managed both the emergency and the ensuing P.R. crisis with his usual grace, arranging for the relocation of the 50th floor residents, and then preparing and presenting a report describing the performance of the building’s safety

systems and the actions taken afterward to retrain staff and residents on handling emergencies.

Even as he responded to these practical concerns and to the press scrutiny that followed, Lerner reached out personally to displaced residents, even cooking and hosting Christmas dinner in his home for owners who were still living in a hotel.

The Hancock crisis was not Lerner’s first experience with fire. Six years earlier and just two blocks away on an exceptionally cold December night, fire broke out at the Plaza on Dewitt, injuring twelve persons, killing one, and damaging half the units in a 46-story building. That fire was more tragic and the restoration took much longer, but Dean Lerner, Association manager for the Plaza, offered the same calm, determined crisis leadership he gave later at the Hancock Tower.

For his professionalism—both in crisis and on ordinary days—we are proud to name Gregory Dean Lerner as the 2016 Portfolio Manager of the Year.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2016 NATIONAL "MANAGER OF THE YEAR" WINNERS!

ON-SITE MANAGER

SCOTT ELLISON

FLYING HORSE HOA
GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO



Front Row (L-R): Lynelle Glysson, Michele Gracia, Scott Ellison, Dean Lerner, Matthew Kopchak, Mary Arnold
Back Row (L-R): Richard Egan, Paige Daniels, Robert Nordlund, Julie Adamen, Janett McMillan, Kurtis Peterson

PORTFOLIO MANAGER

GREGORY DEAN LERNER

SUDLER PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
CHICAGO, IL

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