

## CENTRAL VIRGINIA'S BUSINESS LEADERS

## All in the Family

United Property Associates celebrates its 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a successful transition to the second generation of ownership.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Anita Loonam, CMCA, AMS, PCAM, Executive Vice President - Association Management Division; Debra G. Young, Owner, President and CEO; Bernie Grablowsky, Ph.D., PCAM, Owner and Chairman of the Board; Helene Grablowsky, Owner; and Dana Jenkins, RAM, Director - Rentals Division.

Ranked among iPropertyManagement.com's 2023 list of top companies in Virginia Beach, United Property Associates (UPA) manages approximately 45,000 units in 525 properties throughout Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina. Many of those rental homes and associations have worked with the family-owned, predominantly women-led organization for more than 20 years.

Founders Bernie and Helene Grablowsky credit the firm's incredible longevity in an extremely competitive market to their hands-on service approach.

"We're neighbors serving neighbors and have a vital interest in the success of every property and community we serve," says Bernie. "We strategically expand only into those areas where we can build a significant local presence."

When they founded UPA in 1978, the Grablowskys focused on leveraging their wide-ranging relationships with builders by buying and building apartments for developers. By 1986, their portfolio expanded to several hundred units. When developers began introducing higher density communities, and local governments put the onus on developers to provide necessary services, UPA stepped up to provide day-to-day management.

In 2009, the Grablowskys' daughter, Debra G. Young approached them about stepping in to help the business. Young's background in marketing, management, and Corporate America as well as shared family values made her a good fit for UPA, joining an impressive

team of experienced executives. Fourteen years later, she is now the president and CEO. UPA promises that clients will work with a professional group of people who act with integrity and are organized and reliable.

"Whether working with an individual rental homeowner or a city-sized community, our goal has always been to maintain and improve the value of our client's properties," says Young. "We care for each property as if it were our own. We bring each to its fullest potential at a lower cost because we have a loyal and dedicated staff, enhanced technologies, efficient operations, and strong relationships with local vendors."

### Serving the Family Legacy

As a locally owned and operated business, UPA offers high-touch service. Even during the COVID-19-related shutdown, the company responded quickly by supporting work-from-home options and novel solutions, eliminating lapses in vital services.

"Our family name is tied to this business, so we strongly believe in doing what we can to satisfy the boards and owners," says Young.

The staff, too, is part of the extended UPA family. "The management team has an open door policy and includes us in the decision-making," says Dana Jenkins, director of UPA's rentals division. "They maintain a diverse and inclusive workforce and give each employee opportunities for growth."

"Our people-focused business model is a rarity in our industry," adds Anita Loonam, executive vice president of the association management division. "UPA's employee-to-property ratio is four times lower than the industry standard. Happier employees doing satisfying work means an unsurpassed level of service to owners."



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