

## THE SIMONE SISTERS: FOLLOWING DAD'S PATH IN REAL ESTATE

STOYR AND PHOTOGRAPH BY RYAN DEFFENBAUGH

**S**isters Patricia and Joanna Simone are the third generation to work in the family business, the major, metro New York real estate firm Simone Development Cos.

On any given workday in the Bronx office of Simone Development, you'd likely find all three generations of the real estate family hard at work.

There's Patricia and Joanna's father, CEO and president Joseph Simone, and the company chairman, their grandfather, Pat Simone, 91 and still coming in daily. The company owns and manages more than 5 million square feet of commercial, health care and industrial space in the tristate region.

The Simone office is on the penthouse level of 1250 Waters Place, a nine-floor building that is one of two medical office towers in Hutchinson Metro Center, the company's most significant development to date.

In a conversation with WAG from a conference room adorned with renderings of the company's latest projects, the two Simone sisters described the 42-acre medical office complex as an example of the company's ingenuity and vision. At a time in the early 2000s when few developers took interest in the Bronx, Joseph Simone saw in the 1970s state psychiatric center the possibility for a sprawling, modern Class A medical office space.

"Our father is a visionary," says Patricia Simone. "He has a gift and we're fortunate to be able to learn and watch him."

The two sisters are no longer just learning and watching. Patricia has been working for the family company a decade, Joanna for seven years. In that



Joanna Simone, left, with sister Patricia Simone at the Simone Development Cos. headquarters in the Bronx.

time, they have climbed the corporate ladder and guided projects with serious effect on the New York metro real estate market.

The company's recent Westchester projects include opening a full renovation of the Boyce Thompson Center, an 85,000-square-foot mixed use medical complex that brought doctor's offices, restaurants and a Starbucks coffee shop to a formerly abandoned brick research institute in Yonkers last year. In 2015, the company opened the county's first new Westchester Avenue office building in 25 years: a four-story, 85,000-square-foot medical office for Westmed, part of the company's revitalization of the Purchase Professional Park.

"In addition to health care development and having that niche, we really specialize in public-private partnerships and figuring out how to get things done that benefit the community," Patricia says.

She has risen from a college intern in the company to president of Simone Management Group. Joanna is the company's vice president of leasing and property management operations.

As two of three sisters in the family, they say working together hasn't changed their relationship. All three sisters have always been close. Patricia is quick to say. But working together has added a new dynamic.

"I wouldn't trade it for the world," Joanna says. "Nothing is like sitting in a conference room and all having each other's back. No one even has to know, I can just look at my sister and know that she is there and she gets it."

The sisters followed different paths to the family business. Both were raised in Harrison and described being introduced to the real estate business at a young age. They'd ride along with their father to check on properties or track the progress of construction.

Patricia, the youngest of the three Simone sisters, was interested in a career in her family's industry almost immediately.

"As a child growing up, she was always following my dad around, watching everything," says Joanna. "She was a cute little kid, in that sense, who wanted to help out."

Patricia completed multiple real estate internships while studying at Emory University in Atlanta. She was working at Simone Development's headquarters, then in New Rochelle, within two weeks of her college graduation in 2008.