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Greater Philadelphia Real Estate Hall of Fame Announces 2026 Inductees

Four Industry Legends Join an Exclusive Honor Reserved for the Region's Most Influential Leaders

Philadelphia, Pa. — February 18, 2026 — The Greater Philadelphia Real Estate Hall of Fame announced the four inductees who will comprise its 2026 class — an honor reserved for industry legends whose distinguished careers span decades and whose work has left a lasting imprint on the region.

The 2026 inductees are: Willard G. "Bill" Rouse III, founder of Rouse & Associates and Liberty Property Trust, honored posthumously; Marc B. Kaplin, founding principal of Kaplin Stewart; Lehigh Valley Industrial Park (LVIP); and Gerard H. "Jerry" Sweeney, President and CEO of Brandywine Realty Trust.

Established to recognize exceptional achievement in commercial real estate, the Greater Philadelphia Real Estate Hall of Fame honors those whose careers reflect both professional excellence and a deep commitment to community. The 2026 inductees will be formally recognized at an induction ceremony on October 22, 2026.

"This Hall of Fame was created to recognize the rare leader whose influence defines an era," said **Trish Michell**, **Director Business Development LF Driscoll** "Each of these inductees earned this honor over decades of leadership, vision, and commitment to the region. Their collective impact on Philadelphia, the Lehigh Valley, and South Jersey is extraordinary."

2026 Inductees

Willard G. Rouse III, (Posthumous Honor)
Reimagining cities through visionary development

Willard G. "Bill" Rouse was a pioneering developer whose work reshaped Philadelphia's skyline and helped redefine modern mixed-use redevelopment. A leader in large-scale urban projects, Rouse played an instrumental role in revitalizing Center City by integrating office, retail, hospitality, and civic space into a single building, notably breaking the "gentlemen's agreement" height limit to build One and Two Liberty Place. His work restored confidence in downtown investment at pivotal moments in the city's history and his approach to public-private partnership and placemaking influenced not only Philadelphia's skyline, but urban development

strategies nationwide. Rouse also left an indelible mark on Philadelphia's suburbs, developing the Great Valley Corporate Center and industrial buildings throughout South Jersey. A dedicated civic leader, Rouse spearheaded the development of the Pennsylvania Convention Center and the Kimmel Center for Performing Arts, among other notable projects. He died in May 2003 at the age of 60.

"Bill Rouse fundamentally changed how Philadelphia thought about urban redevelopment," ***Mike Hines, vice chairman of CBRE's Capital Markets and Institutional Properties team in Philadelphia and Board Member of the Greater Philadelphia Real Estate Hall of Fame****. "His work proved that visionary real estate could restore cities and redefine their future."*

Marc B. Kaplin, Kaplin Stewart

The legal architect behind the region's defining deals

Marc B. Kaplin is one of Greater Philadelphia's most accomplished real estate attorneys, serving as trusted counsel on many of the region's most significant transactions. As a founding partner of Kaplin Stewart Meloff Reiter & Stein, Kaplin built a practice defined by sophisticated deal-making, integrity, and deep market insight. He brought strategic clarity and stability to complex land use, zoning, and development challenges across Philadelphia and the Lehigh Valley. Kaplin's work spans homebuilding and the ownership and development of shopping centers, office buildings, apartment communities, and retail destinations — projects that have quietly become part of the daily landscape for millions throughout the region. By navigating the intersection of legal precision and business reality, Kaplin has been a powerful force in helping shape the region's real estate ecosystem and leaving a lasting impact. Kaplin is also a committed community leader, serving on the Executive Committee of the Anti-Defamation League's Philadelphia Region Board and supporting organizations including Hogs and Honey Foundation for Kids.

"Marc Kaplin has been the quiet force behind many of the region's most consequential real estate projects," ***said Jim Petrucci, Board Member of the Greater Philadelphia Real Estate Hall of Fame and President of J.G. Petrucci Company, Inc****. "His ability to balance legal precision with business goals has strengthened the entire market."*

Lehigh Valley Industrial Park (LVIP)

Building the Lehigh Valley's industrial legacy

Lehigh Valley Industrial Park is one of the most influential industrial real estate owners and developers in the Northeast, playing a defining role in transforming the Lehigh Valley into a nationally recognized logistics, distribution, and manufacturing hub. As a nonprofit economic development corporation established in 1959, LVIP has spent decades making disciplined investments with generational impact, significantly stimulating economic activity across the region. LVIP has developed industrial space essential to global supply chains, driving massive job creation and long-term economic growth while cementing the Lehigh Valley's position as a critical engine of regional and national commerce. Since its inception, LVIP has developed seven industrial parks totaling millions of square feet that have attracted more than 500 companies and 25,000 jobs, generating private investment exceeding $2.5 billion in support of its mission to create jobs, expand the regional tax base, and diversify the local economy. For the past 21 years, LVIP has concentrated on the redevelopment of 1,000 acres of the former Bethlehem Steel plant in South Bethlehem, a project that alone has attracted 38 companies, 4,600 jobs, and $1.25 billion in private investment.

"LVIP doesn't just develop industrial real estate but has helped define an entire regional economy," ***said Kate Durso, a partner at Fitzpatrick, Lentz & Bubba and Board Member of the Greater Philadelphia Real Estate Hall.*** *"Their long-term vision positioned the Lehigh Valley on the national stage."*

Gerard H. Sweeney, President and CEO, Brandywine Realty Trust

Steady leadership shaping the region's growth

Gerard H. "Jerry" Sweeney is a highly respected commercial real estate leader whose career helped shape institutional investment, development strategy, and advisory services across Greater Philadelphia. As President and CEO of Brandywine Realty Trust, Sweeney has guided complex transactions and long-term portfolio strategies that strengthened key growth corridors, including the transformative Schuylkill Yards and Cira Centre developments in University City, Philadelphia's Central Business District and highly desirable suburban markets such as Radnor. Beyond his development impact, Sweeney is widely recognized for his tireless civic work with a range of organizations including Schuylkill River Development Corp. Center City District Foundation, the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority and now leads the Market East Advisory Group, a group of 62 business and civic leaders responsible for revitalizing one of Philadelphia's key commercial corridors. He serves on the boards of several other Philadelphia-based organizations and has mentored generations of real estate leaders.

"Jerry Sweeney's influence is measured not just in landmark projects, but in the people and teams he helped develop along the way," ***said Matt Marshall, principal at Avison Young and Board Member of the Greater Philadelphia Real Estate Hall of Fame****. "His leadership elevated our local market, national office developments, and continues to leave an impact on Philadelphia. Jerry is a great ambassador for the economic potential of the region."*

As part of their induction, each inductee will designate a charitable organization to receive a donation in their honor, reinforcing the organization's commitment to philanthropy and community impact.

The 2026 **Greater Philadelphia Real Estate Hall of Fame** induction ceremony will take place on **Thursday, October 22, 2026, at Philadelphia Country Club in Gladwyne, Pa.**, convening real estate and business leaders for an evening of recognition and celebration.

Past inductees and additional event and sponsorship details available at www.gphillyhof.org.

About the Greater Philadelphia Real Estate Hall of Fame

Established in 2024 as a 501(c)(3), the Greater Philadelphia Real Estate Hall of Fame recognizes individuals and organizations whose professional achievements and community involvement have made a lasting contribution to the advancement of the Greater Philadelphia region. Induction is reserved for those whose careers reflect exceptional leadership, enduring impact, and service to the industry and community.