

Louise Carroll Speaks With *The Glass Hammer* About Public Service Career, New Professional Chapter and Family Influences

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Featured in *The Glass Hammer*'s "Voices of Experience" series, Louise Carroll shared the skill set she developed and leveraged during her distinguished 20-year career in public service – and which continues to serve her as a partner in Katten's Real Estate practice. Following her tenure as commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), Louise joined Katten in March.

"People need to feel you're hearing them and you're answering truthfully on what you can deliver," Louise told *The Glass Hammer*. "That skill set has served me in every situation – whether negotiating a deal, talking to politicians at the federal, state and city level, or calming passionate constituents."

In a profile that touched on the trajectory of her career and the individual traits that have facilitated her professional achievements, *The Glass Hammer* threw the spotlight on Louise's long history with New York City. Over the course of her legal career with the city, Louise served for nearly 15 years in HPD and ultimately worked her way up to leading the department. Appointed as HPD commissioner in May 2019, Louise managed over 1 billion dollars in city and federal funds to finance one of the most significant and complex affordable housing plans in the country.

Sharing her passion for working in the affordable housing space, Louise recalled meeting with tenants in connection with a Times Square building renovation in which HPD was a government partner. She explained that the benefits for the tenants were both tangible and intangible, as they had been provided with an affordable and safe living arrangement but also had received a boost in confidence and hope for their current and future situations. And as Louise now looks at affordable housing developments in several locations across New York City, she is reminded of her work with HPD.

"When I look at all those massive buildings on Riverside Drive, or Hudson Yards, all along the Greenpoint waterfront, I can say, 'This is my building, this is my building, this is my building,'" Louise told *The Glass Hammer*. "I have managed to put low-income tenants and families in some amazing buildings throughout the city, next to good schools and great access to transit. It took a great deal of work – drafting and revising legislation – to make these projects happen. This industry can be so complex, because there are so many different players and different laws, that just finding a way to do it over and over was both amazing and fun."

Looking back at her pre-Katten interactions with Kenneth Lore and Martin Siroka, both partners in the firm's Real Estate practice, Louise explained that she met her current colleagues while working together on several mixed-income housing developments. As HPD commissioner, she worked directly with the Katten attorneys on complex real estate deals with a combination of low-income housing tax credits, tax-exempt bonds and other innovative financing structures. Louise noted that with every deal involving Katten, "we improved the status quo by making new changes that accommodated the private lenders in a better way."

"There are often cookie cutter deals in city government, but that was not the work we were doing together," she told *The Glass Hammer*. "Instead, we tackled the intricacies of laws to figure out how to make them work best for every stakeholder involved in the project. Finding solutions to those incredibly complex problems was personally gratifying and provided housing to so many communities."

And as her tenure as HPD commissioner was winding down, Louise wanted to find a role in which she could continue to make an impact in affordable housing projects. "I knew that finding a job that could compare was not going to be easy, but this role with Katten offered me the opportunity to work on affordable housing projects in the way that I love, and to contribute to the firm's widely renowned practice," she said.

As she has moved through her career, Louise's relatives and family life have played a significant role in her approach to work. Crediting her grandmother for inspiring her deal-making mentality of advancing and finishing projects, Louise explained that she learned at a young age that "you have to do the best you can" with every task – no matter if you are a leader or just a member of a team, and no matter whether the task is big or small. Likewise, Louise noted that when she became a new mom while her legal career was rising, she would make it home for bedtime and then start working again afterward, knowing it was important to her professional advancement.

"We all have adversity in some way," she told *The Glass Hammer*. "There are real issues, such as childcare. There are also times and places to address it, and how we handle our adversity is as important as the adversity we face."

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