

## Lifetime Achievement Award: Bill Kaplan

*The following comments recognizing Bill Kaplan's tremendous range of achievements and contributions to the senior living profession throughout a career spanning 30 years were made by David Schless, President of the American Seniors Housing Association.*

It is my distinct honor to present Bill Kaplan, Cofounder and Chairman of Senior Lifestyle, with the ASHA Lifetime Achievement Award. Today, we honor Bill for his noteworthy contributions to ASHA, spanning more than two decades, and also for his outstanding contributions to our profession.

He is in every sense of the word a true ambassador for seniors housing. His exemplary leadership and unwavering commitment to ASHA from its inception make him exceptionally worthy of this lifetime achievement award.

His career in seniors housing is one that most of us would agree defines entrepreneurship. Bill started from Ground Zero. He had a vision and a passion for real estate and understood early on the potential of seniors housing. Through sheer will and determination, he built one of the industry's largest and most successful enterprises.

Bill began his career in food service and in the early 1970s made the move to commercial real estate. After 14 years that, among other things, included responsibility for 16 luxury condo conversions, Bill saw firsthand the need for high-quality rental housing for seniors. With this opportunity as his inspiration, Bill decided to strike out on his own to develop a senior living community on Chicago's Lakeshore Drive.

In the fall of 1986, Bill's new company, Senior Lifestyle Corporation, broke ground on the Breakers of Edgewater Beach, a \$50-million, 476-unit, full-service senior living community. Although it took more than three years to reach full capacity, Bill and his partner, Jim Klutznick, did not stop there. Senior Lifestyle grew through a combination of development and acquisition, and by 1997 the company was recognized as the eighth-largest operator in the United States, managing 6,000 units.

Over the years, Senior Lifestyle has continued to grow, and I know firsthand how proud Bill is of the 10,000 team members that work for Senior Lifestyle.

One of the very unique attributes of Senior Lifestyle is its deep involvement in the development and operation of both market rate and affordable senior housing and services. In the mid-1990s, Bill was approached by legendary Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley to build affordable housing with services. Bill responded to the call, and a public-private partnership was built between the City of Chicago and Senior Lifestyle to open two 86-unit affordable seniors housing properties with services.

Senior Suites Chicago Corporation, as the partnership was called, today serves over 2,000 seniors in 24 locations throughout the Chicagoland market. Each Senior Suites property is financed through a combination of investments from the private sector through the sale of low-income housing tax credits coupled with assistance from local state and federal resources.

From its inception, the Senior Suites division has been fully occupied, most with waiting lists within 90 days of opening. Senior Suites rents are set at very affordable levels based on median income, and what makes the communities particularly unique is the ability to provide services with little or no extra cost to the residents, including one meal per day five days a week, monthly housekeeping, wellness and activities, and scheduled transportation.

Let me say a few words about what Bill's leadership has meant to ASHA over the past two decades. In 2001, under the leadership of Bill, ASHA successfully separated from the National Multi-Family Housing Council, which had created ASHA 10 years earlier.

Bill assumed the position of ASHA chairman in 2002, and during his tenure he provided steady leadership and pushed for new ways for us to improve our services and grow our membership.

Bill very much leads by example. We can always count on Senior Lifestyle to participate in our research studies, and Bill has always understood the connection between our advocacy program and a very healthy seniors housing political action committee.

I have always believed that ASHA's DNA was created and shaped by the very best developers and operators in our profession, men and women who, above all else, were devoted to providing high-quality housing and services and to providing a great place for their employees to work.

Suffice it to say, Bill Kaplan's career exemplifies these very traits. Bill, I believe I speak for all of us today when I say that we are indebted to you for your many contributions to the industry over the past 30 years. Please join me in congratulating Bill Kaplan on receiving this very well-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award.