

The Built Environment

An Interview with Laura Hines-Pierce, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Hines

EDITORS' NOTE *Laura Hines-Pierce is Co-CEO working side-by-side with Chairman and Co-CEO Jeff Hines to help shape firm-wide strategy and manage key risks. She is a member of the firm's Executive Committee and a member of the Investment Committee. Hines-Pierce joined Hines in 2012 and was responsible for project management of developments and support of new business opportunities in the Midwest and Southeast Regions. She served as Project Manager for River Point, a 1.1 million-square-foot, 52-story office tower and 1.5-acre park located in Chicago's West Loop submarket. Her responsibilities included zoning and entitlement, relationship management with equity partner Ivanhoé Cambridge, budget and schedule oversight, design and construction coordination, financial analysis, leasing and marketing. In 2017, Hines-Pierce worked in the Office of the Chief Investment Officer, focused on several firm-wide initiatives that have helped to refine investment strategy and acquisition efforts. From 2018-2020, she was the firm's Transformation Officer to support strategic and transformative efforts across the business. In addition, Hines-Pierce was part of the grassroots team that established the OneHines Women's Network, leading to the creation of its Diversity, Equity & Inclusion initiative. Prior to joining the firm, she worked for Sotheby's in New York and interned at Eastdil Secured. Hines-Pierce earned a BA in economics and art history from Duke University and an MBA from Harvard University.*



Laura Hines-Pierce

Will you discuss the history of Hines and how the firm has evolved?

Since our founding in 1957, my grandfather, Gerald D. Hines, had a vision to make Hines a leader in quality and innovation in the built environment. Throughout his career, he always championed the power of high-quality real estate because market-leading projects tend to be better long-term investments, and also because they contribute to better cities and a more sustainable world. He liked to "raise the bar" on himself and then watch the industry

follow only to continue the cycle. This entrepreneurial spirit has been instilled for more than six decades and three generations of our family.

From a humble one-man-shop, we started developing office and warehouse buildings, and

then a coterie of small but architecturally significant office buildings that were progressive for the '60s. The breakout moment was in the early '70s with the simultaneous development of One Shell Plaza and The Galleria in Houston. Modeled after Milan's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, the mixed-use development presaged an innovative twist in the future of enclosed shopping centers and was an early predictor that mixed-use would become a golden catalyst for successful cities. One Shell, at 50 stories, was the tallest lightweight concrete building in the world and also provided an early proof point that sustainability would become an imperative in the built environment. That building is still, today, one of the most efficient in its market and competitive set.

In the next two decades, we collaborated with leading architects, such as Philip Johnson, to create design-forward buildings which could



Hines, along with Cresset Wealth Advisors and Levy Family Partners, are developing Brava, a luxury for-rent residential high-rise community in Houston

FIRM BRIEF *Hines (hines.com) is a privately owned global real estate investment firm founded in 1957 with a presence in 285 cities in 28 countries. Hines oversees investment assets under management totaling approximately \$90.3 billion. In addition, Hines provides third-party property-level services to 373 properties totaling 114.2 million square feet. Historically, Hines has developed, redeveloped or acquired approximately 1,530 properties, totaling over 511 million square feet. The firm currently has more than 198 developments underway around the world. With extensive experience in investments across the risk spectrum and all property types, and a foundational commitment to ESG, Hines is one of the largest and most respected real estate organizations in the world.*

also “pencil out.” Proving that spec, multi-tenant buildings could also be elegant, high-functioning architectural contributions to cities was one of my grandad’s greatest achievements.

Unique to Hines, we house a group called Conceptual Construction which is involved in almost every major development we do around the world. They bring the full knowledge, best practices, and risk management of Hines’ 65 years of experience to bear on each project, in partnership with the teams on the ground that have intimate knowledge of that project, site, and strategy. Our experience as a developer and a top-class property manager makes us a better buyer and investor. We know buildings from the inside out and I think this gives us a significant underwriting advantage.

Today, we’re in 285 cities in 28 countries, have \$90.3 billion of investment assets under management and more than 114.2 million square feet of managed assets.

How do you define Hines’ culture and guiding principles?

When my grandfather started Hines, our culture and guiding principles were rooted in integrity, quality, and the entrepreneurial spirit. We still hold these values dear today, as we strive to be the best real estate investor and exceptional partner in the cities and countries where we operate. Our team members are at the center of our passion to be the best, while also having a profound impact in our communities.

How important is innovation to Hines’ success and where is innovation taking place in the firm?

My grandfather was a mechanical engineer with a passion for innovation and efficiency. Energy conservation has always been embedded in our DNA. We even helped the USGBC develop the LEED rating system. Today, we’re laser focused on remaining an ESG leader in the real estate industry, a sector that emits nearly 40 percent of global energy-related carbon emissions.

As we look to the future, the two most important trends are ESG and innovation. This includes utilizing disruptive technology and data to dramatically reduce our environmental impact, especially carbon emissions from our 1,500-plus properties. We’re committed to achieving this by incorporating renewable innovations and building methods that will root out carbon emissions entirely.

How do you define your role as Co-CEO and what are your key areas of focus?

I became Co-CEO at a pivotal moment for Hines, the real estate industry, and for my family. Hines recently celebrated our 65th anniversary and during that time, the company had grown into a global investor, developer, and property manager with \$90 billion in assets. We’ve been known for city-defining buildings like Salesforce Tower in San Francisco, One Vanderbilt in New York City, and One Museum Place in Shanghai, but fewer people realize that we’re also an investment manager with logistics, residential, and retail assets. I’m proud to be part of the third generation leading the company that my grandfather founded in 1957 and my father led for the last 30 years. I’d like to think that we are reaching back to our roots with full product diversification and a core commitment to sustainability.

More broadly speaking, it is also a unique time for the real estate industry. The pace of innovation in real estate is finally catching up with other industries, and another one of my primary focuses continues to be positioning Hines at the forefront of those changes.

While I share CEO duties with my father, Jeff Hines, our roles and skillsets are complementary. Dad and I rely on one another for our different perspectives as the world changes. He has led the company over the last 30 years, and I’m focused on the next 30 years and will push the boundaries of how real estate can positively impact people’s lives while retaining our DNA and legacy of quality and integrity.

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How critical is it for Hines to build a diverse and inclusive workforce to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the table when making business decisions?

Our OneHines initiative supports an inclusive culture in which all Hines employees feel valued and have equal opportunity to achieve their maximum potential. With offices in 27 countries around the world and a workforce of more than 4,850 professionals – 40 percent of which are female – we believe that diverse skills and viewpoints make us stronger and better able to serve our investors, partners, clients, and communities. As we continue to grow in the future, our DE&I initiatives remain a huge focus for us and tie into our larger, long-term ESG strategy.

Will you discuss Hines’ commitment and initiatives around ESG?

As a firm, we are taking immediate, ambitious steps to reduce the built environment’s carbon footprint and we’ve set a target of net-zero operational carbon in our building portfolio by 2040. By targeting operational carbon, we aim to reduce emissions through renewable technologies, without purchasing carbon offsets. We have a multi-pronged approach to

net zero and are becoming more concrete with our goals and training our teams to execute the strategies and tactics we’ve been developing around carbon reduction.

While our efforts will continue to evolve and become increasingly more ambitious to align with our net zero goal, they demonstrate that Hines is invested in doing the work and has already begun to make meaningful progress towards a lower carbon future.

What do you see as Hines’ responsibility to support the communities it serves and to be a force for good in society?

Hines has taken significant steps in paving the way to be a force for good in global real estate. We are actively collaborating with the wider real estate industry, and several established industry bodies and new organizations focused on achieving net zero, like ULI.

We are also encouraging collaboration within the industry to address climate change and modeling how other companies can meaningfully follow suit. For example, our Embodied Carbon Reduction Guide, written in partnership with Magnusson Klemencic Associates (MKA), an award-winning structural and civil engineering firm, provides the entire commercial real estate industry with methods to achieve significant reductions in carbon emissions, all in an effort to attempt to collectively lower the built environment’s responsibility for all energy-related carbon emissions generated across the globe.

Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the real estate industry?

We can do better to support and provide opportunities for women across this industry. One of my goals is to close the gender gap in real estate. This is why I am proud to shepherd the OneHines Women’s Network, an internal effort to further focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The goal of this organization is to foster an inclusive culture where Hines employees feel valued and have equal opportunity to achieve their maximum potential. As a woman in the C-suite at Hines, my primary goal is to elevate and hire more female leaders.

What advice do you offer to young people interested in building a career in real estate?

My first piece of advice is to be a good listener. People look to their leaders for cues on how to act in certain situations and it made me realize that I might not have all the answers, but collectively, we can get through anything. I had to take control and be proactive in an uncertain situation, which taught me resilience. Finally, it taught me to express gratitude more frequently, especially for my team. Recognition goes a long way, and it should be reciprocated to anyone interested in making a career in real estate.

However, on a personal level, when I was named as the Co-CEO, I was pregnant with my second child, who was born in April. It’s important for people to know that you can prioritize your career and family in a role like this, and that it’s okay to do both. I hope by the time my children come of age it is not out of the ordinary to see a pregnant CEO successfully lead a firm. ●