

# NYC Real Estate's Biggest Broker Moves of 2019

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## These were the biggest broker comings and goings of 2019

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Merger of JLL and HFF had a major impact on the market



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By

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While brokers didn't have to worry about any big firms unexpectedly shuttering this year, a mega merger and the allure of shiny and new largely drove agent movement in 2019.

On the commercial side, JLL's \$2 billion acquisition of HFF predictably led to several JLL brokers to decamp for other firms. Some of the bigger names included Anthony Ledesma, who is now at Hodges Ward Elliott, and Aaron Appel, who along with former JLL colleagues launched AKS Capital Partners.

Compass continued to scoop up brokers on the residential side, even as the firm faced tough questions in light of the downward spiral of fellow SoftBank-backed company WeWork. The firm nabbed big names this year including Corcoran's Charlie Attias, Brown Harris Stevens' Rachel Glazer and CORE's Jim St. Andre. On the flip side, Keith Copley left Compass in 2019 to return to Douglas Elliman, saying he wanted to go back to a "real real estate company."

**Here are the biggest broker jumps of 2019:**

**Commercial:**

**Hotel specialist Michele Mahl checks in at JLL**



Michele Mahl (Credit: LinkedIn)

Mahl joined JLL's hotels team in April, coming to the firm from Newmark Knight Frank, where she had worked in the lodging capital markets group. She focuses on selling full-service and resort hotels at JLL and reports to the firm's co-head of hotel capital markets in the Americas Jeffrey Davis. She has been involved with more than \$65 billion worth of deals throughout her career and was part of the hotels team at Eastdil Secured before joining Newmark.

## Greg Corbin leaves Besen for Rosewood



Greg Corbin and Aaron Jungreis (Credit: iStock)

Corbin took his team from Besen & Associates to Aaron Jungreis' Rosewood Realty Group in June. He joined the brokerage as executive managing director and took brokers Aaron Kline, Brandon Serota and Chaya Milworn with him to his new firm. Jungreis told *TRD* he was excited that Rosewood would get to take advantage of Corbin's ability to handle properties in bankruptcy, as he has sold about 12 such properties worth \$135 million over the past few years.

## The JLL-HFF merger fallout takes Mo Beler and Anthony Ledesma...



Mo Beler and Anthony Ledesma (Credit: LinkedIn)

Anthony Ledesma and Mo Beler were two of the many brokers who left JLL following its massive \$2 billion merger with HFF. Beler led JLL's New York City investment sales division, and Ledesma was a member of his team. However, the plan after the merger was to have HFF teams take over the capital markets business, and those HFF executives did not want JLL's top teams to stick around, sources told *TRD*.

Ledesma landed at Hodges Ward Elliott after leaving JLL, while Beler launched a boutique real estate advisory firm called Beler Advisory Group in September, according to his LinkedIn page. Beler had been with JLL since 2017, when he came over from the Innovo Group.

**...and Aaron Appel, Keith Kurland, Jonathan Schwartz and Adam Schwartz**



Aaron Appel and Jonathan Schwartz

The highest profile departure from JLL following the merger was Aaron Appel, head of the firm's debt arm. He left over the summer with his team members Keith Kurland, Jonathan Schwartz and Adam Schwartz to launch their own firm called AKS Capital Partners.

Appel's team spent about five years with JLL and arranged more than \$40 billion for the brokerage in that time period. There was speculation soon after the announcement of the HFF merger that he would be terminated, but he denied that was the case. His departure was reportedly a mutual one based on differences in style and approach.

Some industry sources said that Appel's departure was rougher than it seemed and came in the wake of internal friction at the company. However, Appel himself told *TRD* that he was content with what happened to him and his team after JLL acquired HFF.

"The merger is great for us, and we wish JLL and HFF the best of luck," he said.

### **Peter Hennessy heads to Savills**



Savills vice chairman Peter Hennessy

Hennessy joined Savills as a vice chairman in December. He had previously worked at major brokerages including JLL, Cassidy Turley and Cushman & Wakefield, but he was fired from Cushman in 2018 after clashing with executives over cost-cutting measures ahead of the firm's public offering. He worked at nonprofits until his noncompete clause with Cushman expired earlier in 2019. He plans to focus on government and private-sector clients in his role at Savills.

### **Eastdil brokers jumped ship...**



Brett Siegel, Jean Celestin, and Evan Layne with Newmark Knight Frank offices at 125 Park Avenue  
(Credit: LinkedIn and Google Maps)

Newmark Knight Frank poached a trio of young Eastdil Secured brokers — Brett Siegel, Evan Layne and Jean Celestin — in August to lead the firm’s investment sales division. At Eastdil, Siegel and Lane had worked together on trophy office sales while Celestin focused on multifamily deals. Siegel had worked on ABC’s \$1.2 billion sale of its Upper West Side campus to Silverstein Properties. Layne, alongside Siegel, worked on Invesco Real Estate’s \$203 million sale of 130 Prince Street, and HNA Group’s sale of a stake in 245 Park Avenue last year to SL Green for nearly \$150 million.

The brokers are now overseeing a Newmark team that includes legacy players like David Noonan, Brian Ezratty and Ron Solarz, and they will work side-by-side with Newmark’s mortgage team, led by Jordan Roeschlaub and Dustin Stolly.

### **And another big name jumped to Eastdil.**

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From left: Will Silverman, Eastdil Secured's office at 40 West 57th Street, and Roy March (Credit: Hodges Ward Elliott and Google Maps)

Eastdil Secured may have lost its aforementioned young trio this year, but they did pick up Will Silverman from Hodges Ward Elliott, where he led the firm's New York investment sales division. Silverman works as a managing director at the firm, and he will focus on joint ventures and real estate sales. His prior deals include the \$284 million sale of 1 QPS Tower in Long Island City.

**Residential:**

**Charlie Attias heads from Corcoran to Compass**





Charlie Attias (Credit: Getty Images)

Longtime Corcoran broker Charlie Attias left the firm for Compass in early September. He is known for representing international buyers and speaks four languages, and he closed \$91 million in sales last year. He has done work at famed addresses like the Plaza Private Residences.

**Keith Copley leaves Compass for Douglas Elliman**



Keith Copley (Credit: Compass)

Keith Copley, along with his teammates Gavin Shiminski and Stephanie Trujillo, rejoined Fredrik Eklund and John Gomes' Douglas Elliman team in July. Copley focuses on Soho and the West Village, and he told *TRD* he wanted to go back to Elliman because of its reputation and marketing department, along with the chance to join the Eklund Gomes team.

Copley was previously a Pinnacle Club Award winner from 2014 to 2016 at Elliman, but he joined Compass in 2016, which he referred to as a "shiny new toy." However, he eventually realized it was not the right fit.

"The last two years at Compass have been a learning experience, and it just wasn't for me," he said. "I just wanted to go back to a real real estate company that has been established."

### **Rachel Glazer leaves Brown Harris Stevens for Compass**



Rachel Glazer (Credit: BHS)

Compass hired Brown Harris Stevens' top Downtown broker Rachel Glazer following its recent \$370 million round of fundraising. Glazer and her team of four are working out of the company's office at 110 Fifth Avenue.

Glazer consistently sold between \$80 million and \$100 million per year at BHS and had been with the firm for 12 years. She said she was attracted to Compass' marketing resources and the chance to work on new developments at the SoftBank-backed company.

She brought her teammates Douglas Bellitto, Bridget Little, Cassie Glover and Ilana Lee with her.

### **Mike Fabbri joins Ryan Serhant's team at Nest Seekers**



Ryan Serhant and Mike Fabbri (Credit: Getty Images)

Mike Fabbri left the Corcoran Group for famed broker Ryan Serhant's team at Nest Seekers International at the beginning of the year. He previously worked at Douglas Elliman and Compass and started out as a digital strategist before becoming an agent. He has focused on Manhattan resales for the bulk of his career and sold about \$15 million worth of real estate last year.

"Ryan told me, 'Let's double that. Let's triple that,'" Fabbri told *TRD*. "And I believe him. It was one of those opportunities I couldn't turn down."

### **Jim St. Andre leaves CORE for Compass**



Jim St. Andre

Luxury townhouse specialist Jim St. Andre also joined the Compass team in 2019 following four years at CORE. He sold \$210 million worth of real estate in 2018, including a \$15.75 million townhouse at 317 West 11th Street.

St. Andre had spent more than 10 years at Peter McCuen's eponymous boutique firm before joining CORE and played soccer professionally prior to starting his real estate career.

"I had a remarkable experience at CORE," he told *TRD*. "But the opportunity at Compass was very compelling, and I felt like it was the right time to make a transition from where I was."

### **Brian Meier goes from Corcoran to Christie's**



Kate and Brian Meier

Meier was one of Corcoran's top-producing agents when he and his 11-person team (which includes his wife, Kate) left for Christie's in November. He told *TRD* he was not looking to make a change, but the international presence and connections to the art world he would enjoy at Christie's ultimately convinced him to make the move. He had been with Corcoran since 2015, and his team — rebranded as Meier Estates and Ventures — closed \$112.6 million in sales for the firm last year.

## COMPANIES AND PEOPLE

[Compass](#)>

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