

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

# 2019 Skyline Awards, Developer of the Year: Kevin Daniels

Congratulations to Kevin Daniels, president of Daniels Real Estate, for his Developer of the Year award

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By his own admission, Kevin Daniels doesn't do the conventional or easy stuff.

“Our development focus is on community building and it's the complex projects that we are really interested in pursuing,” says *Seattle Business* magazine's Skyline Awards Developer of the Year. “We are not merchant builders, nor infill developers, but rather take a long-term civic view of our projects, which makes us different than many others in our industry.”

Daniels Real Estate's (DRE's) portfolio of projects would seem to validate that, from Seattle's Union Station and the former Sears building turned Starbucks Center in Sodo to The Mark, now known as the F5 Tower.

Next up is another project involving a vintage property presenting contemporary challenges — the renovation of the former St. Edward seminary, now a state-park property, into a park lodge and conference center. The first phase — restoration of the exterior facade, protecting the building from the elements, and selective demolition — is close to completion, with the next phase to be launched this fall. “Like all adaptive-reuse projects, the historic building is full of surprises that keep us on our toes but it's going to be a beautiful lodge for all to enjoy,” Daniels says.

Daniels traces his fascination with historic buildings to his youth in a small, rural railroad town in Nampa, Idaho. “I remember going to the train station to see the steam engine when it visited our town,” he says. “That led to my interest in the rehabilitation of Seattle's Union Station and down the path of where we are today.” The Kevin and Mary Daniels Fund recently awarded a \$100,000 grant to the city of Nampa for downtown restoration.

Daniels, a board member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, says there will be more opportunities to find new uses for older properties. “Iconic buildings become obsolete eventually and need to be repurposed or restored,” he says. “If we are smart and committed to sustainability and preservation, it should never end.”

But with those opportunities will come challenges. “It's the most difficult time in my career,” he says. “While our economy is the envy of the country, it has caused local stress for our public institutions and how they react or haven't reacted to the economic boom. Our profession is very dependent on government and the ensuing stress has made our job much more difficult. Permitting used to take 18 months from concept to start of construction for the type of projects we work on. Now it's four to five years, if you are lucky.”

Daniels says he will be spending more of his own time on endeavors not related to real estate, but his firm “will continue to look for those opportunities where our team can add value and meet our community building goals. The DRE team will continue to seek catalytic projects.”