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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEREDA Inducts Four Exceptional Individuals to Honorary Board as Directors Emeritus



*MEREDA's 2022 Director Emeritus Honorees:
Larry Wold, Renee Lewis, Dana Totman, and Drew Swenson*

PORTLAND, Maine -- On November 3, 2022, the Maine Real Estate and Development Association (MEREDA) inducted four exceptional individuals to their Honorary Board as Directors Emeritus. The MEREDA Board of Directors established the Honorary Board in 2003 as a way to recognize an exclusive group of individuals who, during their careers, have made significant contributions to MEREDA and to Maine's commercial real estate industry. The induction ceremony took place during MEREDA's 37th Anniversary Gala at Ocean Gateway in Portland.

MEREDA's Board outlined the following criteria for individuals to be nominated to the title of Director Emeritus: nominees must have previously served as an officer of MEREDA or a member of its Board of Directors; they must be active and well-recognized in Maine's commercial real estate industry; and they must have made significant contributions to MEREDA and Maine's commercial real estate industry throughout their careers. This year's Directors Emeritus Honorees include **Drew E. Swenson, Dana Totman, Larry Wold, and Renee Lewis.**

“Since 1985, MEREDA has been promoting opportunities that help our communities and our State thrive,” says MEREDA President Craig Young. “Reflecting on 37 years of MEREDA also means reflecting on 37 years of exceptional member volunteerism and engagement. Our four Directors Emeritus Honorees are outstanding examples of this kind of contribution; all have made an indelible mark on Maine’s real estate industry and have had a big impact on MEREDA and its mission to promote responsible development.”

Drew E. Swenson, with his company Swenson & Co., has developed, managed, and financed numerous real estate projects in Maine, and overseen property and asset management for various partners and clients throughout the United States. Drew has been a CPA for over 38 years, working with KPMG, Berry Dunn, and now with FTS US. Inc. where he is Managing Director of a New York City based boutique private equity tax firm. Drew’s work specializes in Qualified Opportunity Zones, REITs, and other real estate development and tax services.

In addition to acting as a trustee, director, officer, and board member serving numerous civic and charitable activities, Drew was one of the founding members of MEREDA. He has given his time to the Association as a treasurer, director, and past president. Drew received MEREDA’s Robert B. Patterson Jr.’s Founders’ Award in 2005.

Dana Totman was the President and CEO of Avesta Housing for 22 years, and retired this past summer. Prior to his work with Avesta, Dana served as the Deputy Director of the Maine State Housing Authority, and as the Executive Director of the Coastal Economic Development Corporation in Bath, Maine.

In addition to previously serving on MEREDA’s Board of Directors for 16 years, Dana served on many community boards, including the United Way of Greater Portland, the Outdoor Sports Institute, Northern New England Housing Investment Fund, Maine Affordable Housing Coalition, the Interagency Task Force on Homelessness Council, the Bath Chamber of Commerce, Maine Community Action Association, and Midcoast Health Services.

Dana served on MEREDA’s Executive Committee as a Vice President from 2007-2010 and was also recognized with MEREDA’s Robert B. Patterson, Jr. Founders’ Award in 2013 for his contributions to the real estate industry and to MEREDA. Dana’s immense knowledge and expertise in real estate, particularly low-income and workforce housing, has significantly benefited MEREDA and its mission.

Larry Wold is President in Maine for TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank®. Larry has over 37 years of commercial lending experience in Maine. Prior to his current position, he served as TD Bank's Executive Vice President of Commercial Lending, Southern Maine Region. Larry joined the company in 1991 as a Commercial Loan Officer when it was Peoples Heritage Bank. He began his banking career in 1985 as a Management Trainee for Casco Northern Bank.

Larry is an active member of the community. He currently serves on the Boards of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Portland Regional Chamber, Maine & Company, the Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges and a Trustee of Maine Audubon. He is past President of the Maine Real Estate Development Association and a past Board member of The Maine International Trade Center and Friends of Casco Bay. He has been involved in the southern Maine fundraising community for many years.

Renee Lewis is a Principal and Managing Partner at Bloomfield Capital, a direct lender and investor in middle market commercial real estate debt and equity around the country. She joined the firm through its merger with VAR Capital Advisors, a boutique real estate diligence and advisory firm she founded. Renee leads the underwriting department at Bloomfield and plays an active role in debt purchases and the oversight of asset management. Prior to forming VAR, Renee was a Principal and Managing Director at Hudson Realty Capital LLC for nearly 10 years where her roles included spearheading due diligence, asset management, and distressed debt acquisitions. Renee also founded Questor, a due diligence and consulting firm based in Portland that provided services to major institutional and government clients, in the 1990s.

Committed to building businesses and communities in Maine, Renee is currently a Commissioner of MaineHousing, a board member at the Olympia Snowe Women's Leadership Institute, and a member of the board of advisors to the Saco River Theater. She previously served as a board member, president, and co-chair of the capital campaign for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Maine, a board member and chair of Avesta, and a board member and president of MEREDA, as well as other area organizations. A graduate of Duke University, she is an acknowledged industry leader and has been named a "Woman of Influence" by Real Estate New York three times.

MEREDA congratulates these four extraordinary members, and thanks every volunteer whose contributions of time and talent make the association's continued success possible.