2018’s Most Powerful People in Residential Real Estate

By Margaret Daisley and Alison Rogers • 09/28/18 10:00am

Masayoshi Son, Adi Tatarko, Warren Buffett, Kamala Harris and Ben Caballero. Kaitlyn Flanagan for Observer

Richard Florida. Lorene Bridgman

If a person’s home is their castle, then the 59 people we chose to profile for our 2018 Residential Real Estate Power List are the castle-builders, the castle-keepers, the castle-owners—in short, the most influential and powerful people currently shaping the U.S. residential real estate industry.

Of course we looked to hard numbers to identify the biggest, the most prolific, and the richest. But while diving into this sprawling industry worth some $31.8 trillion, some themes emerged. A crucial issue of the day is the affordable housing crisis, and some of our power players are working tirelessly to address it. Sustainability has also become an, um...evergreen issue, and plenty of our subjects spend their days in that arena.

We included some who consider themselves disrupters, and those who are funding them, as well as researchers and academics, media who stoke our collective interest in homes and what we do with them, and people introducing new brokerage models, or taking brokers’ multiple listings services platforms to a whole new level. Pull them altogether and you get a true power list—the people (listed in alphabetical order) most defiantly driving the industry forward in 2018.

Richard Florida: Urban Studies Theorist, Author, Professor

Richard Florida’s bestseller The Rise of the Creative Class (2002) launched the urban studies theorist and professor’s new career as a guru. He now advises governments and companies around the world on how to plan cities that attract the creatives who, in turn, attract venture capital. Florida’s the reason many cities are turning streets into pedestrian- (and chair-) friendly plazas. MIT named him the world’s most influential thought leader in 2013. He’s on Fast Company’s Most Creative People list. TIME said his Twitter account was (in 2011) among the 140 most influential in the world. But some view him as a champion of gentrification and fueler of urban inequality. So he wrote a new book, which some call his mea culpa, to address it: The New Urban Crisis: How Our Cities Are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class — And What We Can Do About It.