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Commercial real estate dynamo Michelle Marie Zere has passed at 56

Michelle Marie Zere, a dynamic professional in the Long Island commercial real estate industry, passed away on Palm Sunday, April 2. She was 56.

A force in the commercial real estate industry for more than 35 years, Zere headed up business development for her family-owned brokerage firm Zere Real Estate Services, where she specialized in sales and leasing. Zere grew up in the business founded by her mom Marie Zere, forging long-lasting relationships with landlords and property owners, businesses and non-profit organizations that were instrumental in her company's success.

A seasoned world traveler, her family says Michelle Zere travelled to the Soviet Union at a young age and was the only person to get a Soviet citizen out of the Soviet Union through marriage under the communist system before glasnost.

Zere was an expert in real estate marketing and advertising. After graduating from the University of California at Santa Barbara, Zere returned home to New York to serve as national advertising director for Grid Magazine, working with prominent real estate portfolio owners and developers, such as the Rockefeller Group, Tishman Speyer, Silverstein Properties, and several others. She also served as

advertising director for Real Estate New York and worked with its sister publication Real Estate Forum, bringing in major clients that included the Wall Street Journal, Time Warner, AT&T, UPS, Deutsche Bank, Trump Organization, Toll Brothers, and many more.

As advertising manager for the New York Post, Zere developed and edited weekly pull-out sections highlighting available residential and commercial properties throughout New York City, the Northeast and Florida. She also served as operations director for the Long Island Builders Institute, working directly with its membership and worked on legislation for the National Association of Home Builders in Washington, D.C. and the New York State Builders Association in Albany.

Zere was also passionate about politics and an enthusiastic supporter of former President Donald Trump.

In a Facebook posting announcing Michelle's passing, her brother David Zere said: "She was a champion for America and a powerhouse and a pillar of our family."

News of Zere's sudden death sent shockwaves through the Long Island real estate industry.

"It's shocking. She was such an amazing



Michelle Marie Zere

dynamo," said Len Shapiro, a Long Island commercial property owner and frequent Zere client. "I've worked with Michelle forever and I've known Marie since 1978. We go back a long way. Michelle always had great ideas, she cared so much about people. If you had a problem and something was wrong, she was the first person

that would jump and come to the rescue. There's nobody like her. She was just an amazing, wonderful person."

Family friend and fellow broker Don Catalano said: "Michelle was a vibrant part of the Zere Dynasty, effervescent, witty and honest. She was one of those people you greatly looked forward to talking with at an event, along with her mom Marie, and brothers David and Michael. She was a hardworking businesswoman who will be greatly missed in the commercial real estate community."

Zere is survived by her mother Marie Zere, and her brothers Michael and David.

Visitation will take place at the Branch Funeral Home at 190 E. Main St. in Smithtown from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, April 7. A celebration of life service at the Branch Funeral Home will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 8, followed by interment at Smithtown Cemetery at 64 North Country Road.

The Zere family asked all who attend to wear bright colors and hats to help celebrate Michelle's life. In lieu of flowers, the family request that donations can be made to: Donald J. Trump MAGA 2024 or the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

- DAVID WINZELBERG