



Global Real Estate Summit 2019



Christopher Merrill

Co-Founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Harrison Street Real Estate Capital

Christopher Merrill is the Co-Founder, Chairman and CEO of Harrison Street, a real assets investment management firm he co-founded in 2005 that has completed approximately \$24 billion in transactional volume and currently has more than \$19 billion in AUM. Mr. Merrill is currently the largest individual shareholder and serves as Chairman of the Board and the Investment and Executive Committees of the Company. The firm was an innovator and early adopter of a focused investment strategy around the education, healthcare and storage segments of the real estate market (launching nine closed-end funds as well as industry leading open-end funds). In 2018, Mr. Merrill sold 75 percent of the firm to the Colliers International Group (CIGI) in order to create long-term stability and an orderly succession of the business to key employees. More than 300 investors (\$12 billion) participate in Harrison Street funds including US, European and Asian Pension Funds, Corporate Plans, Insurance Companies, Endowments, Foundations and family offices. The firm has main offices in Chicago and London.

Prior to co-founding Harrison Street, Mr. Merrill was a Partner, owner and Managing Director of a large US pension fund advisory firm where he developed the firm's presence in Europe, creating the first ever real estate funds exclusively targeting the markets of Central Europe. This initial fund was one of the top 10 performing global funds during vintage years 1996-2000, as noted by Preqin.

Mr. Merrill has appeared on television and in numerous real estate journals as well speaking engagements regarding real asset investing. Over the years, *National Real Estate Investor Magazine* has named him one of the "10 To Watch" leaders in the industry, PERE nominated him as one of the top real estate executives in North America, *Real Estate Forum* named him one of "Chicago's Real Estate Icons," and he was included as one of "Crain's 40 under 40." In 2018, Mr. Merrill was one of the finalists for PERE's North American Industry figure of the year.

Mr. Merrill is a member of the NAREIM Board of Directors, Pension Real Estate Association (PREA), The Real Estate Advisory Board of two Chicago based family offices (Gore Creek and Kinship Capital), The Board of the First Tee of Greater Chicago, Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago (Facilities Committee), Chicago Botanic Garden (Financial Committee), The Economic Club of Chicago, the Chicago Commonwealth Club and the Young Presidents Organization (YPO). Mr. Merrill is also an active angel investor in many early stage companies. Mr. Merrill earned his M.B.A. in the evening from the CASS school of business in London, England.