

# Most Influential Lenders in L.A. County



**H**AVING the right lender on your side may be one of the most important aspects of a business' development. It can be the difference between a simple infusion of cash vs. genuinely preparing your organization with the right resources, capital and advice to take it to the next level.

Fortunately, there are some truly outstanding professionals making up the Los Angeles lending landscape. We've listed 23 of them here, along with some basic information about their careers, talents and some relevant recent projects they've been involved with.

*Congratulations to the trailblazing professionals who made this list and thank you for your contributions to the local business community's success!*



## MOST INFLUENTIAL LENDERS

**Steve Fried and Ronnie Gul**

Principals  
Mesa West Capital



**Years practicing:** Fried - 9; Gul - 9  
**Years with current firm:** Fried - 9; Gul - 9  
**Education:** Fried - Yeshiva University and UCLA;  
Gul - UCLA

Headquartered in Los Angeles with offices in New York, Mesa West Capital is a privately held portfolio lender with an established debt platform, primarily providing non-recourse first mortgage loans for value added or transitional properties throughout the United States.

Steve Fried and Ronnie Gul both joined Mesa West in 2005 shortly after it was formed and were named principals in 2010. Led by the duo of Fried and Gul, Mesa West's west coast originations team is responsible for originating, underwriting, structuring and closing first mortgage debt for acquisitions and recapitalizations of commercial office, retail, industrial, hospitality and multifamily projects and/or notes secured by those assets throughout the western United States. Under their combined leadership, their team has deployed more than \$3.5 billion in first mortgage debt in the past nine years.

Testament to the duo's expertise, Mesa West has

outperformed the NCREIF Property Income Index every year since 2004 and has produced impressive returns for the company and its investors during one of the worst economic downturns in history. As a result, Mesa West was named the specialty lender of the year by the Mortgage Bankers Association in 2012 and has attained remarkable success in its recent fund raising efforts, exceeding its goals for the company's last two funds.

Among Fried's most notable transactions is the deployment of one of the largest financings in Orange County in 2013 -- \$55 million in first mortgage debt for the refinancing and repositioning of a 376,000 Class A office building in Newport Beach last March. He was also responsible for an \$85 million first mortgage loan for the acquisition of a recently completed 302,000-square-foot, 20-story office building in the Galleria submarket of Houston last September.

Among Gul's most notable recent transactions is a \$220 million first mortgage loan to refinance a 14-story, 480,400 square-foot, trophy office building in Burbank, in December of 2013. The transaction was one of the largest loans MWC has originated.

**Jeri Harman**

Founder & Partner  
Avante Mezzanine Partners



**Years practicing:** 30 plus  
**Years with current firm:** 5  
**Education:** University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee and UC Berkeley

Jeri Harman is a Founder and Partner of Avante Mezzanine Partners. She has more than 30 years of financing experience, involving well over \$1 billion in aggregate transactions. Prior to founding Avante, Harman started-up and led Los Angeles offices for both American Capital and Allied Capital, where she was also a member of Allied's Investment Committee.

Harman and her firm specialize in providing junior capital to lower middle market companies. Avante's capital is flexible with the ability to provide mezzanine debt, unitranche debt, and equity capital depending on the situation and needs of the business.

Under Harman's stewardship, Avante invests in lower middle market companies, which it defines as companies earning between \$3-15 million of EBITDA. Avante invests in companies across a variety of industries such as business services, specialty manufacturing, and aerospace/defense. Avante targets both sponsored and non-sponsored opportunities and deploys \$5-20 million of capital per investment. Additionally, as a woman-owned fund, one of Avante's areas of interest, although not exclusive focus, is providing capital to women and minority-owned companies. In 2013, Avante reviewed 595 deals, completed 7 investments, and deployed \$81 million of capital. Avante's investments spanned a variety of industries including specialty manufacturing, education, and business services.



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