

## Commerce Club's merger and relocation honored

In what has resulted in a world-class club for the movers and shakers in Atlanta, the iconic **Commerce Club** moved to 191 Peachtree St. after a landmark merger with the prestigious **One Ninety One Club** in 2010. The new club opened in November 2010.

The vision for relocating the Commerce Club to One Ninety One Peachtree was conceived by **Cousins Properties Inc.** in 2008. **ClubCorp**, the owners of One Ninety One, and the Commerce Club negotiated a deal for a year and a half.

The club is dedicated to developing the leaders of today and tomorrow for the city of Atlanta, and was founded by the city's distinguished business elite, with a purpose to serve Atlanta's corporate, political, cultural and academic community.

While Cousins was supportive of the vision and concept behind the merger, the company had to be flexible and accommodating to both clubs as they negotiated a deal that was favorable for all members.

"The new Commerce Club has successfully incorporated design elements from both former clubs and has been praised as having an aesthetic and functionality that appeals to the cross-section of membership," said Katherine Molyson, development manager at Cousins Properties.

The Commerce Club, located on the 49th floor of Cousin Properties' One Ninety One Peachtree Tower, underwent \$7 million in renovations and boasts a combination of high-tech amenities along with 360-degree views of the city. It features a ballroom with a 200-guest capacity, a multimedia room with a 103-inch flat-screen television and seven state-of-the-art private meeting rooms. It also offers a wine room with availability to secure personalized wine lockers and convenient Touchdown Rooms designed as office-away-from-office spaces.

This project is the Jury Award winner in the **Urban Land Institute Atlanta's** Developments of Excellence awards.

Other major players in the project were **Winter Construction** as contractors, **ClubCorp** as owner, **Rule Joy Trammell + Rubio LLC** as architects and **Troutman Sanders LLP** as the legal team.

The decision to move from the original Five Points location required extensive debate among Commerce Club members and the governing board. It was not an easy decision, but ultimately it was the best one, said Larry Gellerstedt, president and CEO of Cousins. "Anytime you talk about moving a club with a 50-year history, there is going to be some debate. The club's membership has grown by a significant amount since the move, which tells

me that members are very happy with the transition," he said, adding membership currently stands at 1,900 members.

"The Commerce Club was founded in 1960 when Five Points was the absolute center of commerce in Atlanta," said

position as Atlanta's key hub for business and civic leaders for many years to come.

One Ninety One Peachtree, and the merger with the One Ninety One Club, provides a perfect fit for the next phase in the Commerce Club's history."

The Commerce Club served as a meeting place for civic leaders during the early days of the civil rights movement. The agreements and alliances that came out of the meetings held there helped the city of Atlanta to embrace change peacefully and evade racial hostility that other Southern cities experienced, Gellerstedt said.

"No business club means more to Atlanta than the Commerce Club," he said. "The new location preserves the legacy of the Commerce Club and ensures a bright future. The relocation

of such a historic club is a once-in-a-generation event."

With a mission to foster relationships of club members for business and social purposes, to welcome new members, to reach out to existing members and to reinforce the importance of utilizing the club to its fullest potential through participation in member activities and events, the weekly Member Connect luncheons help members socialize.

The achievement of successfully moving the club earned the project ULI Atlanta's Jury Award in its Development of Excellence awards program.

"The awards jury wanted to recognize the Commerce Club for its bold redevelopment preserving the tradition of one of Atlanta's most venerable community hubs," said Fred Perpall, managing director of **The Beck Group**, board member of ULI Atlanta and 2011 ULI Awards Jury member.



SPECIAL/NATHAN KRANBERGER

### The Commerce Club

**Location:** 49th floor, 191 Peachtree St.

**Scope:** Merger of historic club with One Ninety One Club, relocation from Five Points and \$7 million renovation

**Developer:** Cousins Properties Inc.

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**Gellerstedt**  
Cousins  
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Gellerstedt. "Since that time — needless to say — Atlanta has grown significantly and businesses have spread out to locations throughout the metro area. Securing an accessible, convenient and vibrant location is a crucial part of preserving the club's