

The Top Corporate Finance Executives in Dallas

We honor the money gurus who keep North Texas companies in the black.

[by Steve Garmhausen](#)

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Winner - Most Innovative Finance Team

Gina Norris
Stratford Land

Back in the early 1990s, Gina Norris was pondering whether to relocate to Chicago for the bank that employed her or to stay in Dallas and look for another job.

“A CFO I knew back then told me something wise,” she says. “He said, ‘It’s good to get repotted once in a while.’”

That openness to try new things has kept life interesting for Norris, who eventually jumped from the bank world to the world of real estate. In June of 2010, she joined real estate investment firm Stratford Land as president of its lending division.

That’s a bold move for someone with a long career behind her. “After 25 years in business, you are expected to stay settled,” says Norris.

Stratford invests in and lends on land, generally in Sunbelt states. A typical investment is \$10 million and up, for 200 to 5,000 acres where the end use would be a mixed-use project, single-family homes, or a master-planned community. A typical loan is \$3 million to \$20 million.

Norris’ new position brought her back to her roots in lending: Early in her career, she spent 18 years as a corporate banker for First Chicago Corp. and Bank One Corp. She jumped into real estate in 2000 as managing director at Crow Holdings, a private firm that invests in real estate on behalf of the Trammell Crow family and its investment partners.

At the same time, investing in land, as Stratford Land does, is something banks often shy away from. But Norris says she’s been happy to step out of her comfort zone. “I’m really glad I got repotted,” she says.