



BUSINESS beat

Written by Resident Robert Leninger

"We don't know how to begin to thank you for all you did to help us in selling our home. You went above and beyond as a Realtor to assist us in every way, making the experience as easy as possible for us. During the process, we felt that you were more than just our Realtor, but also a friend, and we continue to feel that way. Thank you for everything you have done. We appreciate all of your excellent customer service, friendly attitude, and hard work." -JAIME & SHANE

I receive lots of mail at my CharmCity-Robert realty business at Real Estate Professionals. But, it's always a delightful surprise to receive such a letter. After all, I just did for Jaime and Shane what I do for all of my clients—provide them with the best customer service possible. I guess it's something that was ingrained in my consciousness by growing up in a family business—a business that's still going strong more than 60 years after my parents started it.

My Pennsylvania-born parents had a chicken business, first in Pennsylvania and then in Delaware. On their first vacation as a family, they took my three sisters to South Florida. My father fell in love with the place, and the family and the business moved to the more tropical climate. After a rough start, they established a farm/retail store that sold fresh poultry and eggs. I came along a while later, and as soon as I could walk, I worked on the farm and behind the counter. My parents' philosophy was always to provide the best possible products and customer service and to always do "the right thing." It worked for them—that business is an institution in Hollywood, Florida. And, it's something I've adhered to my entire adult working life.

My first "real" job was at a Miami-based Savings and Loan. I started as a teller and moved up the ladder to Vice President. My 11 years there provided a wonderful learning experience, allowing me to combine my customer service skills with new knowledge of finances, lending products, and home ownership. When the S&L market collapsed, I started my own business—an engraved stationery store in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Again, hard work, innovation, and putting my customers first helped it to be very successful. I nurtured and expanded it from 1989 until I sold the business in 2003. It's still in operation, too.

After moving to Baltimore in 2003, I became a Realtor. Since that time, I've grown my real estate business with my proven philosophy—putting people first and just doing the right thing. I'm honored that my Broker has asked me to give seminars to other REP agents on proper business ethics, marketing procedures, customer service, and other topics.

My long list of satisfied clients means a lot to me, and I'm very thankful for the constant referrals I receive from these folks. Sellers know that their listing is in good,

caring hands, and that I take full advantage of all marketing venues. All of my listings feature their own dedicated Internet web page with virtual tours, photo albums, and more. And, when I'm working with home buyers, I make sure they are familiar with all of their choices—from neighborhoods to financing—and assist and guide them every step of the way towards settlement and after. I still have clients who've kept in touch with me for years after their move. And, my clients know that whenever they need to talk to me, they get me, not an assistant or secretary.

"Thanks for being the swellest agent ever! Your good advice and good humor were invaluable during the whole process of buying and selling!" - STACEY & GEOFF

As long as I keep receiving unsolicited letters of thanks from my clients, I know I'm doing the right thing. It's a challenging time in the real estate business, as we all know. But, the right agent can make all the difference!