

Real estate agent of the year advances goals of women



**DAVID
PARKER**

In today's market where there seems to be lots of investment money around but few properties for sale, it's not easy for commercial realtors to get listings. But Karen Barry certainly gets her share and, with her team at Royal LePage Commercial, has been very successful in finding the right buyers.

An associate vice-president on the investment side of the business, she was ranked the No. 1 salesperson for 2004 and was recognized as the BOMA Agent of the Year at its 2005 gala dinner.

A skilled presenter and public speaker and an expert marketer/negotiator, after graduating from York University she began her career by marketing new homes for developers with a Toronto-based advertising agency.

Moving into the commercial real estate sector 15 years ago, she came to Calgary and trained with Colliers International before joining Royal LePage. As part of her career growth she became a fully accredited appraiser with the Appraisal Institute of Canada — one of only a few commercial realtors with that designation, which she says adds credibility with clients.

Barry and her team of a coordinator/marketer and an analyst have an impressive number of completed office and retail sales to their credit. They include shopping centres such as Shawnee Station, Hawkwood Village and Glenman Square as well as office properties such as 744 4th Avenue, Westmount Building, Stuart Olsen Centre and the Centennial Building.

Along with John Cardiff of Brascan, she sold the Fourth & Fourth office tower and, with Warren Libert Scott of her office, is about to close on the sale of the Indian Friendship Centre.

We shared a tasty shawarma and drank great Lebanese coffee at Shawarma Station on 10th Street NW, one of her favourite eating spots, as this



Dean Bicknell, Calgary Herald
Karen Barry of Royal LePage Commercial is helping launch a Calgary chapter of Commercial Real Estate Women.

great promoter wanted me to see the building next door, at 233 10th St. NW, which she had just sold to the owners of the building we were eating in.

She shared that she had two more downtown offices under contract, but I wanted to learn more about her most recent investment opportunity, Symons Valley Ranch.

At 144th Avenue and Symons Valley Road NW, it has long been a recreational treasure in this city. Encompassing just over 12.5 hectares of mixed-use land just outside city limits, it's hosted a ton of barbecue functions in the past and is currently a well-used corporate event facility.

The site includes a large banquet/dance hall, rodeo grounds, baseball diamond, restaurant and an RV park.

I would like to think it will remain as an entertainment attraction, but the surrounding lands are being gobbled up for residential estates, so I would not be surprised to see new development there.

Barry is a busy lady — although she did find time recently to backpack around Vietnam and Thailand — but she has committed spare time to helping start a Calgary chapter of Commercial Real Estate Women, a North American organization to promote the advancement of women in real estate.

Marion DeSouza of First Canadian Title has accepted the role as first president of CREW Calgary, and Barry has agreed, along with Pamela Ryan of GWL Realty Advisors, to chair a special inaugural event next month.

Barry is also extending her expertise into regional sales, working on a Regina transac-

tion right now, so she won't be slowing down any.

I applaud the many events in this city that benefit the less fortunate. Clients of the Mustard Seed and Calgary Drop-In Centre are in for a sweet treat after Penny Lane Entertainment sets a Guinness World Record. Its Alberta Centennial cake measuring 9.1 metres by 4.6 metres and holding 25,000 candles — the record to date is 12.4 m — will be donated to the organizations after a cake cutting ceremony at the Chicago Chop House on Sept. 1.

It's going to take a lot of garnishing, so Paul Vickers and his staff are looking for help from cake decorators, artists and students interested in creating unique centennial designs.

For the second consecutive year, Calgary event company e-mc² has won a major entertainment production award at the International Special Events Society Esprit Awards. CEO Jocelyn Flanagan was on stage at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel in Los Angeles to accept recognition for the work her company did for the AIDS Calgary Awareness Association annual fundraiser.

Also making the trip to the winners' podium was Lori Bodkin, managing director of Table Talk, which won the award for social event planning under \$50,000 US for its transformation of the Fairmont Banff Springs into a modern setting for a fabulous wedding.

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