

TOP AGENT

MAGAZINE



*Donna
Burton*

Donna Burton

by Michelle Llamas

It is this earnest dedication that has taken her to new heights of success. She has consistently been a member of the Multi-Million Dollar Club and garnered an incredible amount of respect in her field and there doesn't seem to be any stopping this work horse agent.

After several years in the industry, Donna chose to obtain her Broker's license and venture out on her own. She started her company, RealtyLink, Inc. She embarked on this adventure to start a company based on the solid work ethic and values she thought should be a part of every transaction. RealtyLink, Inc is a full service company that handles all its client's real estate needs. Specifically, Donna is at the helm of the company and will go anywhere and go the extra mile to ensure her client's total satisfaction. "I have the drive to do what is necessary to make anything work," affirms Donna. "I can always count on myself to get the job done!" She shares that the mission of RealtyLink, Inc is to be each and every client's "link to real estate" and to do so with integrity. "If you do everything in an honest and forthright manner, you won't have to worry about looking over your shoulder," she affirms.

Through her company, she is also recruiting dedicated agents who are driven to succeed and believe in the same core values of integrity, hard work and dedication. She jokes, "in short, I want agents just like me!" In this industry, Donna adds, problems cannot be put off until tomorrow and an agent has to be aware of what is going on in the market. "I will never get rich being a broker," she laughs. "I have been on the other side for too long as an agent. I know how hard they work for their clients. That is why I give my agents better splits than the average company. I will never ask an agent to do anything I wouldn't do myself. As an agent, you have to be brave and go against tradition—think outside the box. Above all, do your job with professionalism and compassion." In dealing with foreclosures, Donna has worked with many people that are in tough predicaments, she does her best to understand their point of view.

However, even with Donna's new title of Broker, she will never stop being an agent in her own right and handling her own properties. She has no desire to cease doing what she loves to do. Her customers come from all walks of life and all parts of Metro Atlanta and the surrounding cities. Her expertise and warm, caring personality have garnered her many loyal customers/clients over the years. With regards to the price range of homes she works with, she just smiles and says, "I have kissed a lot of frogs in my lifetime! It makes no difference to me if the home's price is below a hundred thousand or in the millions. I don't treat the customers any differently and I give each home the attention it deserves."



The first thing anyone notices about Donna Burton is that she exudes passion in her field. Real estate is more than just a career to her, it is a lifestyle. "I'll tell you what I love most about what I do," Donna says. "I love my work! Each and every house I walk into has a personality and I enjoy getting to know all of them. If you don't love homes, you can't sell them." The warm and affable agent shares that each listing she takes becomes a part of the family. In fact, she has a very novel approach to her business. "My listings are like my children and I take excellent care of them," she says with a chuckle. "I keep temporarily adopting more 'children'." After all, she shares, "if you don't list, you don't last" in this industry.

Your Link to Real Estate

photography by Tracy Willis

In order to shoulder the heavy workload she thrives under, Donna works exhausting hours. It isn't unusual for the driven agent to work over twelve hours in a day, seven days a week. "Most people would think I am crazy," Donna laughs. "No one loves to work these insane hours. I never used to enjoy going to work until I found my niche in real estate. When you love what you do, the work is easy." Now she enjoys getting up in the morning and looks forward to each and every task she has to accomplish. She looks forward to the day's challenges and finding a way to battle through any tough situation. "What I hate most about my profession now is the fact that there are not enough hours in a day!"

According to Donna, the first challenge is obtaining the listing. However, the work does not stop there. New challenges arise in marketing the home, showing it and finding a buyer. "Just because you get a contract, it does not mean your job is over. Any number of issues can crop up while a home is under contract. An agent has to be alert and ready with a solution to any problem that occurs." Even when the chips are down, she refuses to admit defeat. To Donna Burton, there is no such thing. "I don't stop working. I get back in my car and drive. I go back and market some more to drum up more interest in a property."

A stellar agent must possess ample amounts of patience and fortitude, these are qualities Donna has in spades, in fact the challenges only fire her up and motivate her to keep plugging away. "I get to see new properties and get to know their personalities, acquire the listing, sit down at the closing table and do it all over again each and every time. I love the entire process and I love making it go as smoothly as possible for each and every one of my clients." Her marketing strategies are based on face to face marketing. She rarely takes out print ads because most of her listings sell by the time the ad prints and prefers to go right to the source of potential buyers for her listings: other agents. She employs her website and several e-mails that she sends directly to other agents. "Everywhere I go I am talking about my listings, through networking and word of mouth I am able to find buyers." As a result of her many years in the local market, she has developed a vast array of contacts and she takes the time to keep in touch with her sphere of influence.

Born as the only child to two extraordinary parents, Donna spent her early years in Virginia. "It was kind of like that old TV show Green Acres," Donna chuckles. "My dad was a country boy and my mom loved the city. So eventually, my dad gave in and we moved to Cincinnati, Ohio."



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Donna transferred to Atlanta with her husband and two children in 1985. There she worked in a variety of industries including new construction contracting and various sales positions. Even then, she was drawn to properties and developed a love for homes. “I remember taking the kids to softball or baseball practice and I would take the long way just so I could look at the houses that were for sale,” she shares. Her family at the time encouraged her to get into real estate. She put her whole heart and soul into her future career. She worked and went to school until she obtained her license. She was able to work and maintain her household while perfecting her new career. However, shortly after beginning her career, she was forced to slow down as a result of family obligations.

What followed was a dark period in Donna’s life, and after a divorce, she found herself on her own. “I was feeling sorry for myself,” she recalls. “But real estate gave me my confidence back. I returned to what I knew and loved and I was able to become successful on my own. Real estate saved me, I firmly believe that. For Christmas, I was able to give both of my children trips to Hawaii. We traveled together and had a wonderful time.”

Even while on vacation, her cell phone and laptop are not very far away. “In Hawaii, I was still on eastern time. I would get up and make calls at 4:30 in the morning,” Donna says with a smile. “The only difference is that I got to work on the beach!” Occasionally, this self professed workaholic lets herself unplug for the weekend when she visits cities like New York or New Orleans on vacation. In addition to her two children, Sean and Tasia, Donna’s best friend is a Seal Point Siamese cat. “He is my assistant,” she says fondly of the affectionate feline.

“I am so happy with the choices I have made to get to this point,” shares Donna. “Things can always be better than they are now but I consider myself blessed in what I have accomplished. I know there is always a way to get through the tough slumps in the business.” Her daughter, Tasia Burton has been Donna’s Office Manager for the past two years and her son, Sean Burton has recently joined the team as Sales Associate making a total of 5 agents and growing! Her future plans for RealtyLink, Inc. include taking the company national. “I intend to shoot for the moon.” Donna chuckles. “Real estate will always be my profession and I am looking forward to leaving a legacy.”