

TOP AGENT MAGAZINE



Karen Arbutine

Looking back it seems like destiny that Karen Arbutine, leader of one of RE/MAX Central Realty's top-ranked teams, became a REALTOR® at all. Attracted to Florida for its climate and lifestyle, Karen moved from Pennsylvania to

attend St. Petersburg College in Clearwater and realized the locale was compatible with her sunny outlook, on par with what most would expect from a native Southerner.

While in school, Karen rented a home with her roommate and at just 19, saw the value to home ownership. "I told my roommate that with what we were paying in rent, we should look into buying," explained Karen, not knowing that first transaction would plant a seed in her mind that would alter the course of her future. Karen developed a rapport with her agent during the purchase of the first of many properties she would acquire for personal or investment use and was decidedly intrigued. "I liked everything I heard. I thought it would be a fantastic and fun career." Ultimately though, Karen decided to wait to make the leap, until her timing was just right.

In 2000, that time came for Karen. With decades of experience managing her own properties, Karen began her real estate career, working first for Beazer Homes where she sold new homes and then Watson Realty Corporation before gaining the expertise necessary to transfer to RE/MAX Central Realty. "I always aspired to RE/MAX because they're an international icon synonymous with excellence. When the opportunity to join their ranks arose, I knew it would symbolize big things in my career."

Indeed, at RE/MAX Karen's client base began to grow in size and scope, with her market share expanding to include homes all over the spectrum, from mid range to luxury and a bevy of commercial properties. As her business grew, so did her team, which now includes five agents and a marketing specialist. "Once I began to put my marketing strategies into place, I saw my business explode," said Karen. "I didn't want to take on more clients than I could effectively serve alone so I started a

team. The group I have now is wonderful. They are all capable, trustworthy, knowledgeable and personal. We work well together because we share core values and a vision of satisfying the client above all else."

Karen makes a point of evolving along with the market, gaining certifications and expertise in different areas of the market as the need arises. "There are processes specific to each niche but there's also a common thread and that's getting to help people, getting to see their face as they find a buyer for the asking price or above or walk into that perfect home after looking at 50 different properties. That's what I find most rewarding—the looks on my client's faces during those big moments."

Karen had the distinction of seeing one facial expression that likely took the cake— that of the client whose home she sold for an impressive \$8.2 million, a record for a single family home in Seminole County. "Selling a multimillion dollar home isn't much different from selling a home in the lower six figures in a lot of ways," said Karen. "We put just as much effort in marketing and advertising and provide the same personal attention. But there is a sense of humility in being trusted with such a large transaction. The trust placed in me and my team is truly priceless."

Though her business is on the fast track, Karen remains refreshingly down to earth and focused. "I love this business because I can connect with people. I get to be a part of their lives and do right by them. I believe firmly in doing the right thing when nobody's looking." Asked about her plans now that the whole industry is looking, Karen laughed. "I am just going to keep growing personally and professionally and treating others how I want to be treated. It's served me well so far."

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RE/MAX Central Realty

Phone: 407-928-3788/Toll Free: 1-888-727-7778

Email: karbutine@getorlandorealestate.com

Website: www.getorlandorealestate.com