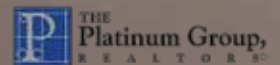


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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Most of you know me as the Publisher of the *Real Producers* magazine, but not many know my past experience prior to this venture. For 25 years I was in Corporate America as a VP for Verizon and later, Dex Media. My entire career was in sales and sales management. I have hired, trained and mentored countless employees over the years and I have often been asked what makes a great hire? What do you look for when hiring? Education, past success, attitude?

I have been through countless meetings and groups trying to identify what really makes this equation work. At one point, we had hired a Boston consulting group to do a full-year study to identify the key markers in what to look for in future hires.

After several million dollars in research, they eventually identified a series of attributes they believed would be the “golden keys” to identifying the best candidates and hiring successful salespeople.

The classic background was identified...education, past success in sales, solid recommendations and finally, passing a “personality profile,” specifically designed for our industry.

In short, did it work? Absolutely not...

This is why the above quote struck me when I was working on this article. I meet with agents every week and every one of us has a unique story and background. No two of us are the same, have the same background or experience. In fact, the divergence and diversity in Real Estate are extraordinary.


Eventually, I came to the realization that the candidates on paper, who looked like perfect hires, great education, past experience, etc. typically failed, or eventually gave up. The one and only determining factor that had any real impact in hiring was the candidate who could not afford to fail. That sounds pretty basic, but it is true. Someone willing to do “whatever it takes” to get the job done, was the key.

That is the key to sales and more importantly, the key to real estate and life. Don't get me wrong, the other indicators do help, but the one underlying feature in an individual is continuous effort! Continuous effort to improve, to learn and the inevitable results will happen!

Have a great month!

**MARK VAN DUREN**


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*Real Producers*



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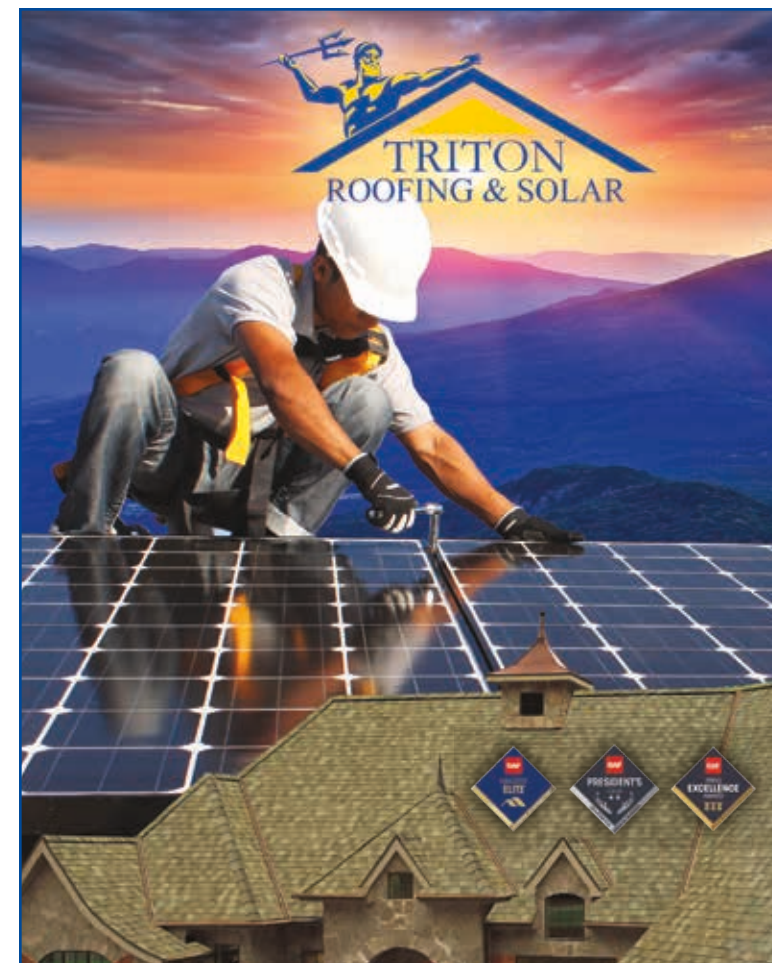
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I am a lifelong Colorado resident. I grew up in Southwest Colorado Springs and graduated from St. Mary's High School, where I met my wife, Missy. We remember when Power's Boulevard was a dirt road and Woodmen Road felt halfway to Denver. What a transformation we have witnessed! Missy and I have been married 31 years and have had the pleasure of raising our family in Colorado Springs. Our daughter Morgan is 24 and works for NBC/Universal in New York City while our son Mike will complete his degree in integrative physiology from CU Boulder in May.

Recently, I was asked about a transformative situation in my life. Quickly my response was that the loss of my father at a young age changed the trajectory of my life. On my next birthday, I will be the same age as my father when he died. That puts into perspective what a young man he was at the time. In the 1980s when Colorado Springs was amid a very difficult economy, my father lost his business. As a

father of six children, this was financially devastating. I witnessed a man being stripped of everything.

On appearance from the outside, yes, we were struggling, but things seemed okay. Unfortunately, behind closed doors, our world was coming apart. I witnessed my father and family being stripped of everything. Ultimately, the stress caused a major heart attack that took his life. As a kid watching the events that proceeded my dad's death, I felt helpless and couldn't do anything to change the situation. At that time, I adopted the attitude of self-reliance and independence. My internal drive told me that I would not be beaten. And at the same time, I developed an awareness of people in need and a calling to serve.

After high school, we moved to San Francisco, where I worked on the Pacific Stock Exchange trading floor and Missy was getting her Bachelor's of Nursing at USF. The opportunity of working on the Equities and Options trading floors taught me that perseverance, dedication and hard work were the keys to success. After the larger earthquake in 1989, we decided to move back to stable ground - Home to Colorado. I took the opportunity to transfer to Denver with Merrill Lynch.

While I loved the speed, energy and excitement of the trading floors, I soon realized that sitting in a cubicle at Merrill Lynch was not for me. So, I obtained my Real Estate License in 1991 and embarked on my residential Real Estate career at Coldwell Banker. Thankfully I had a managing broker that coached, guided and mentored me. I credit my success and longevity in the business to great mentors that I have been fortunate to have along the way.

When we decided to begin a family, we returned to Colorado Springs, where our hearts always have been.

I began my Colorado Springs Real Estate career at Shields Real Estate under the ownership of Cres & Mary Shields. I have had the privilege to work for Bill Hurt and Joe Clement as Managing Brokers who were fantastic mentors, coaches and are great friends to this day. Launching my business in Colorado Springs meant working long hours, open houses every weekend, floor duty, having the goal every day to meet someone new, chasing every potential opportunity, and building lasting relationships with clients.

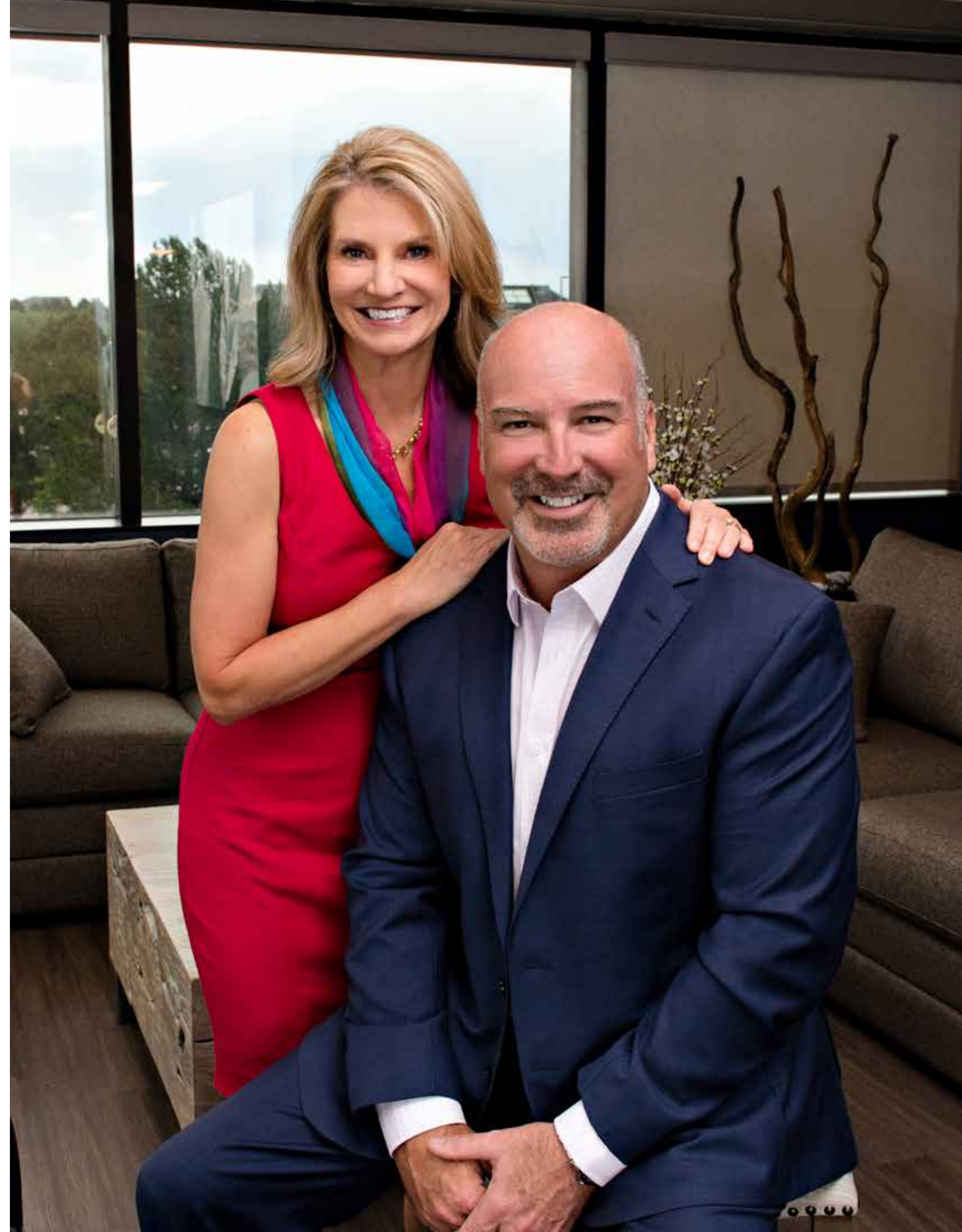
Most of these practices still work today, and when my business is off, I realize, I need to get back to these basics. My work ethic hasn't changed - I

am out the door between 6:30-7:00 every morning and am wrapping up the day about the same time in the evening. To me, this is not a hardship, it is one of my greatest blessings; I LOVE WHAT I DO!

After a career as a cardiac ICU nurse, Missy joined my team and became licensed in 2005. Although we don't deal day-to-day with life and death, the human needs of care and concern in Real Estate are evident daily. Missy brings to the table compassionate care for our clients in communicating, listening and encouraging them through their purchase or sale. We are blessed to have dedicated long-time team members, Rebekah Burley, who has been with our team for 10 years, and Tarema Underwood Riddle, who joined our group five years ago. In a business with quite a bit of turn over, we are fortunate to have such dedicated and loyal team members who share our "Client-First" philosophy.

Over the last 28 years, I have built a business based on personal relationships, specializing in past client repeat and referral business and corporate and Military relocation. We recognize that buying and selling a home can be a

“The energy and collaboration are second to none. We uplift, support and encourage each other to aspire to be our best. We become family...”



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daunting and overwhelming process. We partner with our clients every step of the way, promising to handle the details large and small. Our goal is to serve our clients in such a way that we always represent their best interest. We never refer to our clients as units, deals, transactions or sales. They are people – families and individuals – that are walking through one of the most stressful and emotional life events.

We are grateful to have been a part of their process to find THEIR HOME where they raise their children, gather around their table with friend and family, and rest their heads at the end of a long day. While working with sellers, we are confident that we provide and constantly pursue the newest and most innovative ways to market and promote their home. This is followed up with a commitment to serve and protect their best interest all the way to closing.

As all REALTORS® know, this is an industry that can be more challenging and humbling than any other life experience. There are many lean years. In fact, my early years in Real Estate could be a commercial for Tony Robbins...It was late at night, and I couldn't sleep. I turned the TV on and there was Tony Robbins infomercial selling the "Personal Power" cassette tape series. I spent the last \$200 of credit on my credit card to buy the set. I listened to that series religiously multiple times over. I have lent to friends and co-workers. I have purchased the Robbins CD series and attended many live events. Although Tony Robbins is not the answer for everyone, I encourage all REALTORS® to constantly seek knowledge, encouragement and mentorship. From Miracle Morning to Raving Fans and Secrets of the Millionaire Mind, we are constantly learning and implementing new ways to grow as professionals and individuals. This has been a key to our success.

In 2004, a group of top Real Estate agents from various brokerages across Colorado Springs began brainstorming sessions to discuss local market trends, new technologies in the industry, and how to better serve our clients. From

these mastermind meetings, the idea of The Platinum Group Realtors was birthed. In January 2005, The Platinum Group Realtors opened its doors as a place where like-minded industry leaders collaborate to create a culture where the highest professionalism, ethics and integrity are the standard. It is a collaborative group that meets regularly to share innovative ideas and strategies to best serve our clients and to elevate the Real Estate industry. While there are companies that have "producers" and other companies that are willing to share ideas, it is rare to find the combination of highly productive, established REALTORS® who are eager to share their experience and knowledge with one another for the betterment of their clients and each other. I am fortunate to be surrounded by this amazing and unique group. I have always lived by Jim Rohn's words: "Don't join an easy crowd – go where the expectations are high, the challenge is great, the demands are many and the victory is sweet!" I believe The Platinum Group Realtors embodies this quote.

Over 14 years, it has been so rewarding to see The Platinum Group Realtors grow from eight founding partners to over 70 licensed REALTORS® who share this vision. The energy and collaboration are second to none. We uplift, support and encourage each other to aspire to be our best. We become family...

Missy and I share a philosophy of: To whom much is given, from him much is expected. The Real Estate Industry and community of Colorado Springs have given us so much. We love to enthusiastically serve our community. I have served on the PPAR and RSC Board of Directors, PPAR Grievance Committee and am a major donor to RPAC. As a member of Peak Producers, since its inception, I have been the president, vice president or member of the Board of Directors and absolutely love the collective giving spirit that has impacted organizations such as Keep Colorado Springs Beautiful, Catholic Charities, Springs Rescue Mission and Dream Centers.

Personally, we have served on the Board of Directors of Catholic Charities and we are involved with Springs Rescue Mission – New Life Program, Dream Centers' Mary's Home and COS I Love You. These organizations have a common mission – they serve people who are committed to improving their lives and are seeking a hand up, not a handout. Through these organizations, we have had the pleasure of meeting some of the toughest, most resilient and inspiring people.

It is with gratitude that I look back on the last 28 years for all that life has given me. By far, my greatest blessings have been my incredible clients that have become friends and my peers in the Real Estate industry that have become like family.

Pictures provided by Heidi Mossman with Capture Life Photography. To schedule your own portrait session, please call 303-877-1279.



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Children's Hospital Colorado cuts ribbon  
on region's first pediatric hospital





...and Anschutz Medical Campus, Aurora, KidStreet (designed to provide daily rehabilitation services for infants and children with complex medical needs), Denver, Outpatient and Urgent Care at Uptown, Denver, Orthopedic Care, Centennial, Therapy Care, Parker, Outpatient and Urgent Care, Wheat Ridge, Emergency Care at Parker Adventist Hospital, Outpatient Care, Parker, South Campus, Highlands Ranch, Therapy Care, Highlands Ranch, Therapy Care, Broomfield, CU Specialty Clinic, Broomfield, North Campus, Broomfield, Therapy Care, Pueblo.

The new Briargate hospital has 294,000 “state-of-the-art square feet entirely devoted to kids. That means more kids in southern Colorado get the care they need, faster and closer to home,” according to the organization.

**By the numbers:**

- PEDIATRIC EMERGENCY: 33 Exam rooms, 6 Behavioral health rooms
- CANCER: 8 Private infusion rooms, 4 Infusion bays, 6 Exam rooms
- SURGERY: 8 Operating rooms, 33 Private recovery beds, 5 Extended-stay beds
- HOSPITAL BEDS: (CRITICAL CARE BEDS) 16 PICU (Intensive Care) beds, 50 NICU (Neonatal ICU) beds, 37 Medical surgery beds
- SLEEP: 3 Dedicated sleep study beds, Dedicated space for EMU, EEG
- IMAGING: 5 Imaging types: MRI, CT, Plain film imaging, Ultrasound, Fluoroscopy
- THE FIRST: Pediatric-only hospital in southern Colorado, Pediatric-only emergency department in southern Colorado, Pediatric-only epilepsy monitoring unit in southern Colorado, Pediatric-only operating room suites.

In the June issue of *Real Producers*, we profiled a Doherty High School sophomore, Schafer Reichart, who contracted the flu on January 23 of this year: From the Colorado Springs Gazette, By: Kevin Carmody Mar 11, 2019: “After 45 days in the hospital, Doherty sophomore Schafer Reichart has finally returned home to Colorado Springs.”

“On Jan. 23, Reichart was airlifted to Children’s Hospital in Denver with a life-threatening illness, caused by the flu and a strep infection. He spent days on life support as he underwent respiratory, kidney and heart failure. Gradually, Reichart’s condition improved, and on Friday, he walked out of the hospital.”

This story of an entire family in crisis is relevant to the opening of Children’s Hospital Colorado in Colorado Springs because not only did



Dr. Mike DiStefano, Chief Medical Officer of Children’s Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs

Note: This article represents a new series for *Real Producers*, called “IMPACT!” The focus of this series will be to highlight happenings in the Greater Colorado Springs area that will have an outsized effect, for good or ill on the economy and/or lifestyle as well as the value of our properties in this community.

“The press release reads, in part, ‘the new Children’s Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs, will be the first pediatric-only hospital in southern Colorado.’”

That’s what a children’s hospital is, a hospital devoted solely to kids. Children’s Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs is a brand-new “294,000-square-foot, 111-bed facility that will serve as southern Colorado’s first pediatric-only hospital and provide more than 175,000 kids in southern Colorado and surrounding states with pediatric care closer to home,” according to the organization.

Children’s Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs belongs to the same very large organization that operates a total of 18 health-care facilities of various types throughout the State, including:

- Children’s Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs
- Memorial Hospital Central, Colorado Springs
- Outpatient Care at Briargate
- Therapy Care at Printers Park



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he have to be flown to Denver for care but then the parents had to spend weeks in Denver with their son while he fought for his life and then went into “recovery care.” We speculate that had Children’s been open here, in the Springs, Schaffer would have been taken directly to Briargate rather than having to be flown to Denver. And the parents would have been local, rather than more than an hour away. This is a huge quality of care, quality of life issue for this community. A very big improvement.

*Real Producers* spoke with Dr. Mike DiStefano, Chief Medical Officer of Children’s Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs. A former “Houstonite,” Dr. DiStefano moved to Monument from Denver in May of this year, along with his physician wife and their three children, ages 12, 10 and 8. Distefano met his future Colorado Springs-based wife at Baylor College of Medicine. From school the couple moved to Denver where DiStefano became Medical Director of the ER at Children’s, then Director of Clinical Operations to Associate Section Head, Pediatric Emergency Medicine and now, the very first Chief Medical Officer at Children’s Colorado Springs. What does a Chief Medical Officer do?

“I am the administrative physician. So if you think of it as you think of company executives, you have a chief financial officer and a chief executive officer. In medicine, we have a chief medical officer which is a physician who partners with a chief nursing officer and we kind of help as the organization makes decisions. I help with those medical decisions to kind of help align how do we want to position ourselves from a medical standpoint. I’m a liaison for all of the medical professionals not only here locally in our hospital but also in the community. So I try to be externally facing as well as trying to represent those needs of the community physicians, making sure that we’re aligning internally and externally.”

DiStefano continues, “It’s nice we’re not a huge hospital. We’re not a 400-bed hospital, we’re a 111-bed hospital. And so it allows us to have formed some of those re-

lationships that can take a long time to form up in an institution that’s very large. So it’s been about as wonderful as I could probably anticipate.”

Asked what one of the major impacts is of having a facility like this in Colorado Springs, DiStefano says, “A good example and I’m biased because I’m an E.R. doc is that we have an ER that is fully staffed by pediatric emergency medicine physicians which is totally new to the community. That sort of physician. There have been some that have kind of floated in and out of the community but to have it 24 hours a day seven days a week is something new and for us in emergency medicine; it’s being a pediatrician first. We’re pediatricians that then end up getting trained for an additional three years in emergency medicine, rather than emergency medicine where you get trained; and they do really good things, but they get trained on all age groups, right? And they do really good things for all age groups. It’s that 5 percent that we truly know kids a little bit differently and in a way that I think somebody who goes through general training just doesn’t get it.”

“So you know it helps one identify some of the rarer things, so you get a quicker diagnosis. It actually limits tests for families which I think they don’t necessarily appreciate all the time. So decreasing the exposure to radiology, decreasing the number of needle sticks, that kind of thing. Having that expertise and knowledge that

we didn’t have previously (in Colorado Springs). We’re gonna have dedicated pediatric radiologists. They’ll be reading all of our films for the city which we haven’t had in the past.”

“This whole building was built from the perspective of children which is different than any other building. As you walk through it you’ll see things that are truly architecturally built for kids but then on the medical side, we have anything and everything you would need for any baby or young adult. We go from less than a kilogram and weight to adult-size patients.”



some specialists aren’t used to seeing those diseases. And so you can go up into the 20s with some of those patients and we try to transition them at some point. But it’s not as black and white as you would think. So we definitely believe 14 and we are the resource for the city and for the region. Anything above that I think we are an option and sometimes we are the only option. If you have a chronic medical pediatric medical condition, you should really be seen here at Children’s.”

**“What’s the hospital’s core mission?”**

**“Our goal is to keep care local for kids, and we’re already seeing that.”**

*Real Producers* thanks Dr. DiStefano for speaking with us after a nine-hour shift in Children’s ER unit — amazingly, he looked none the worse for the wear. He was generous with his time and information and we look forward to visiting with him again in the future for a “progress report.” Incidentally, the hospital is already far ahead than they had initially projected in community acceptance and “patient census,” in other words, patients. We would also like to thank Sarah Davis, Communications and Media Relations, Southern Colorado, (and fellow Hoosier) for arranging for our time with Dr. DiStefano, photos, press releases and directions to the front door of the new hospital. We got lost anyway, but that’s not her fault!

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V A N D U R E N

““ *My life has been a collage of experiences. Put them all together and it creates a portrait of who I am, what I stand for and the experiences that I bring to the table.*

“I am sorry honey, what did you say?”

“I said, you HAVE to be home from your business trip before I go into labor!”

“I absolutely will be, I promise!”

“We have three kids under 6 and no family here, I NEED YOU HOME for this, I can’t do it all alone!”

Yes, that was me, Sheryl Van Duren and a discussion with my husband, Mark, on the birth of our fourth child. I have had a life packed with experiences, trials, travel and of course, kids and family!

I was born in Toledo, Ohio. My dad was no stranger to hard work, as he and my mom got married while he was still in graduate school. To pay for school and a family, he shoveled iron ore onto a great lake’s freighter named the “Edmond Fitzgerald,” a freighter that would later sink in a massive storm on the Great Lakes and be memorialized in the song by Gordon Lightfoot.

As a dedicated worker, husband and father, he worked for Eli Lilly and became a very successful executive. My father has been my mentor, teaching me all the values I hold dear...hard work, dedication, honesty and integrity.

...





and a year and a half later we were married. Mark started his career with GTE (later Verizon) and we joked it stood for “Get transferred everywhere” and wow, was that true! We started our journey in Indiana, bought our first house, a cute rancher that we purchased for \$100,000 and had our first child, Jacob. Mark was doing quite well and I was a human resources manager for a medium-sized business. My time in HR really developed my skills in listening and counseling employees. Looking back, my life has been full of experiences like this that would prepare me for my future in Real Estate.

Mark was promoted, transferred, and we moved to Dallas, Texas. It was common that he would depart for the new job some months before me and I would stay behind to get the house ready to sell, then we would pack up and move. I was eight months pregnant during this move so between working, raising an 18-month-old and getting a house sold was a big challenge. I was alone, as Mark was in Dallas and my family was four hours away. It was just one more experience that I look back on, that, again, was getting me ready for my future. Nothing in life is wasted!

We loved Dallas; the weather was a real change from the cold winters of Indiana. We stayed in Dallas for four years and developed a lot of lifelong friends. We welcomed our second child, Holly, while we were in Texas. Life was great, I had become a stay at home mom raising our children and taking care of the home. It really was a fun time, but I just wasn't fulfilled! I had to do MORE! Something, anything!

You will laugh at this one, but I took a job with the local school as a crossing guard! During this time, I also dabbled in “Southern Living At Home” parties and selling educational books. These were more for my “social life” than anything else, but it got me out of the house making friends and learning how to be a great communicator.

Once again, we received a promotion and with that came a transfer to another state. It was a big opportunity, but also a life change. The company asked us to

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My mom was a classic “Leave It To Beaver” wife and stay-at-home mother. Caring for my younger brother and me, dinner was always ready, the house was perfect and she was always dressed to the nines and put together. She has a real talent for decorating, design and class. These are her gifts to me that I would utilize throughout my life. I am also proud to say my parents have been married for 55 years and still very much in love!

We moved to Indiana for my father's career at Eli Lilly and we moved several additional times growing up. My parents insisted I work from a young age and I will never forget working the summer of my 7th-grade year, “detasseling corn,” all the bugs, heat and sweat were unbearable, but the pay was good. Later, I worked on the production line at Eli Lilly boxing products. In no way a “glamorous” job, but it taught me what it meant to be on time and a dedicated worker.

I later graduated from Ball State University and after I graduated from college met my husband, Mark,



move to Seattle, Washington! Oh, the weather! Neither of us had ever been to the Northwest and really only knew of Seattle from what we saw on the Tom Hanks movie, “Sleepless in Seattle.”

We took the job, sight unseen and once again, Mark headed off while I stayed behind with the kids and sold the house. The REALTOR® we used was the same REALTOR® we had purchased with four years before. She was terrific and she had made a big impression on me. She was a “luxury” agent, although at that time we were NOT in the luxury price. Here was this REALTOR®, who really listened and gave us the time we needed. We really felt special and not just a commission check.

Seattle really turned out to be one of our greatest adventures. Yes, the weather was challenging, but for the eight weeks of summer, there is no place like it! We camped, hiked and explored. It was a different adventure each weekend. Mark was doing great, we had a beautiful place to call home with two children with another one on the way. It was here that I got a different perspective on what an agent is NOT to do. We worked with a gentleman who should not have been a REALTOR®. He didn't listen, didn't properly search in the correct areas of town, didn't have his facts right, you name it, it didn't happen.

Finally, one weekend, Mark went out on his own and found our new home. This was before Zillow and the internet. I realized that if I ever went into real estate, my business would look very different than his.

One evening Mark came home from work while we were in

•••



••• Seattle, sat me down and said, “You know how you have always wanted to move south?” I said, YES! Desperately thinking we were going back to Texas or perhaps, Florida! Then his answer came, “Well, my dear, we are moving south again!” I squealed and jumped! Where, where? Then, the shoe dropped, “Well, we are moving south, to Portland, Oregon!” Was he kidding me? Four hours south doesn’t count in my book! I laugh now, as he had done so very well as it was yet another big promotion for us. The problem was, I was pregnant AGAIN with our third child and I just knew what was coming! We were in Seattle for a brief 18 months and we welcomed our third child, Matthew, at

the tail end of our time there. Sleepless in Seattle, it was!

Once again, Mark headed off to his new position and I was again left at home but now with two under the age of 6 and a newborn. So, again, I cared for the kids, got the house ready and sold, all while Mark was in Portland. Don’t get me wrong, Mark did come home on the weekends for this move, but during the week, I was a single parent. It really taught me organization, scheduling and prioritizing the things that just had to be done. Skills that are so critical in my business every day.

We bought a wonderful home overlooking the Willamette Valley, high up on a hill. The misty mornings there were absolutely breathtaking! The official “End of the Oregon Trail” was visible from our front porch, down in the valley. In Oregon, like Seattle, we hiked, explored and again, had yet another adventure. We decided to “round out” the family by having our fourth child and “Grand Finale.”

While I was pregnant, Mark again came home with news. We were moving, but this time to the opposite coast! He was promoted to vice president of the newly merged “Verizon” and we would be based in Philadelphia. Wow! What a change! Going from Indiana, Texas, Seattle, Portland and now, Philly, talk about a culture shock! Still a stay at home mom and wife, Mark once again packed up and headed out to Philly. This time was different, as he had made it clear he had to come home EVERY weekend to be with us! I was seven months pregnant with our last and had three other children under 7 at home. It was really a lot to even think about, as we really had few close friends and absolutely no family in Oregon to help me out. Mark would depart every Monday morning at 6am, fly across the country and then work all week in Philly. Every Friday at 4pm, he would fly back, land at 1am Saturday with a three-hour time change every week to be with us for a brief day and a half.

I had made it crystal clear HE HAD TO BE HOME when I went into labor! I didn’t have any backup, no choice and I needed HIM! My due date was imminent and Mark was in Philly, he ASSURED me he would indeed be home and BEFORE I went into labor! He landed in Portland and got home at 1am. Sure enough, I went into labor at 4am! A three-hour cushion! What a relief! We welcomed our “grand finale,” Hannah, in November 2000.

We moved just before Christmas that year. I orchestrated the REALTOR®, the sale, the movers and packed up all the odds and ends with four kids, one being a toddler and a 5-week-old baby! There was a LOT more to deal with, after four kids and years of belongings! We had decided to build a new home in Philly and the new house would not be ready for a month after we relocated. When we flew out of Portland, we felt like we were literally homeless. With the old home sold and gone and the new one not ready, we were indeed homeless. We spent Christmas that year with Mark’s family in Chicago and I stayed with my mother-in-law for three weeks until our new home was complete. It’s still all a blur, but it came off without a hitch!

After we settled in Philly, we did encounter culture shock. If you have never lived on the east coast, it is quite different. In no way bad, just different. Being “outsiders,” it was hard to make close friends, but after a while, we made some of the best friendships of our lives. We explored NYC, Philly, all the history the east coast has to offer.

Living on the east coast in the early 2000s was heart-wrenching. I remember it like it was yesterday...I got a strange call from my mother-in-law saying a plane had just flown into a building in NYC. At the time, I had just dropped the kids off at school and thought it was just a bad accident. I called Mark and he was very busy and also brushed it off. Then it came flooding in as to what had indeed happened. That was Monday, September

11, 2001. The city shut down all the bridges and Mark closed his offices. I immediately went back to get the kids from school and we all were home glued to the TV.

Fast-forward four years and Mark was offered a job in Denver, Colorado, with Dex Media.

The old story starts all over again. Now with four kids, very happy and settled in Philly, we set out for the next leg to this adventure. This time, however, I was NOT pregnant but we did have a dog, named Daisy, added to our clan. With four kids, a dog and all the stuff a family accumulates, I again cared for the sale, and move.

We selected Castle Rock, CO, and moved into an existing home in Castle Pines Village. We fell in love with the pine trees, mountains and beautiful sunsets. Immediately we started “renovating” the entire home. I guess you could call us “Chip and Joanne” of the early 2000s as we tore that house apart and made it ours. Mark and I worked in tandem on this one and the finished product was breathtaking.

Mark finally left corporate America and after years in Castle Rock and we moved to Colorado Springs where Mark started publishing magazines. With my kids all grown up, a son-in-law, Daniel, added to the family and two beautiful grandbabies (Malachi and Lucy) that rounded out the bunch, I finally had the time to think about what I wanted to do when my job as a stay at home mother came to a close and my nest became empty.

People are my passion...finding a place to call home is my passion and sharing in the excitement of “where I live” is a passion. Why not put all these together and chase my dream of becoming a REALTOR®? After much prayer and discussion, I decided to pursue my dream.

My first three years I worked with Camellia Coray, who is a wonderful mentor and friend. I learned the keys to being an outstanding agent and what it was like to work on a solid team, a team who encouraged and built each other up on a daily basis. She reinforced that real estate is never about the money, but about doing what’s right for the client. I have also had the opportunity of being a solo agent with The Cutting Edge, Realtors and have gleaned from

*I am here to help, to guide and council my clients in the decision that’s best for them. After all, it should be a new adventure and I, for one, can tell you a lifetime of those experiences!*

some of the top agents in town and what makes them successful. The “Why” behind what motivates and makes them tick.

My life has been a collage of experiences. Put them all together and it creates a portrait of who I am, what I stand for and the experiences that I bring to the table. Looking back, I can see the “why” behind all of my experiences in moving. I love listening to my people, helping guide them in fulfilling their dreams and creating new memories. What makes me uniquely suited as an agent is, I have walked in my clients’ shoes. I know the hardships first hand, in buying/selling and all the things that absolutely have to happen to make it to the end.

To buy or sell a home is a huge investment in time and resources. Most people have numerous memories and an emotional connection to their home, while others are trying to imagine creating those future memories in a new home. I am here to help, to guide and council my clients in the decision that’s best for them. After all, it should be a new adventure and I, for one, can tell you a lifetime of those experiences!

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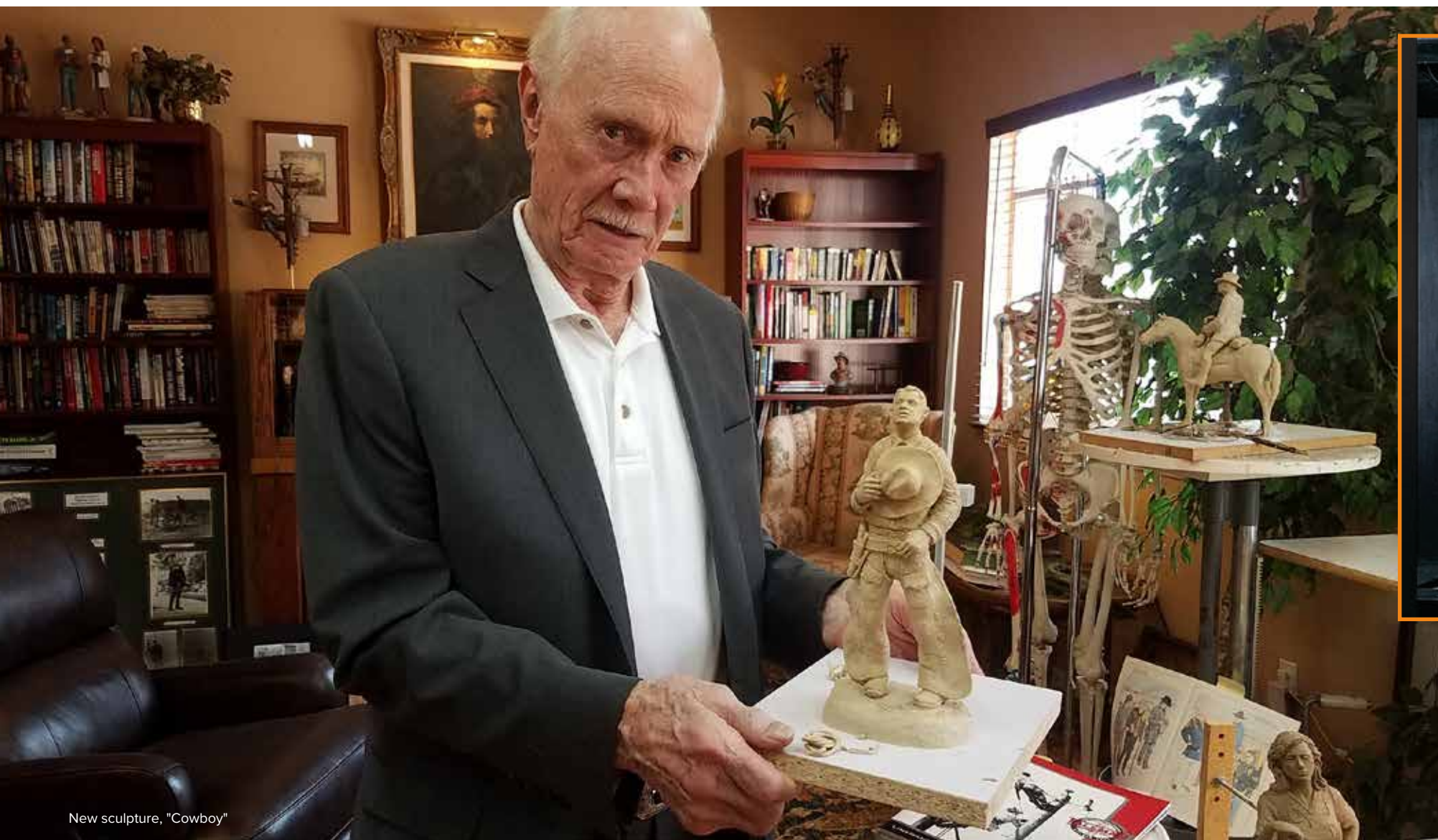
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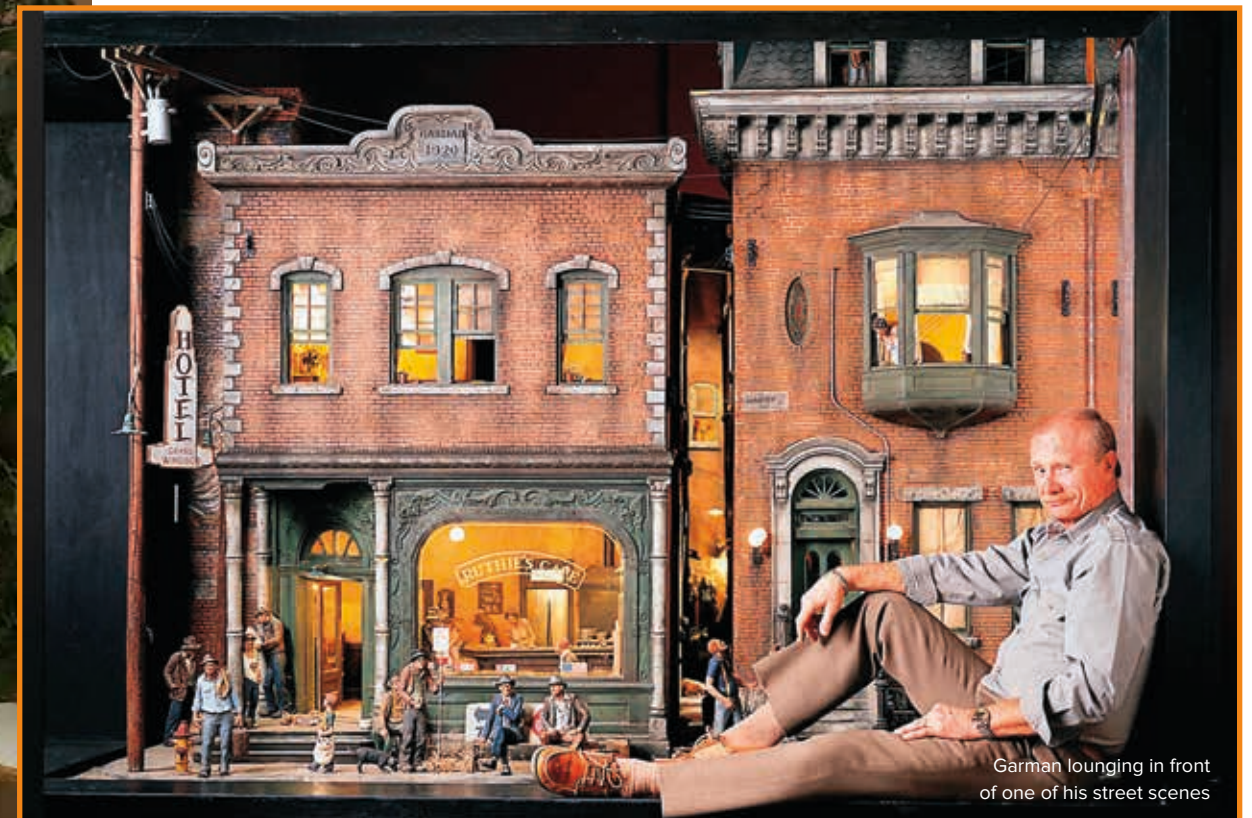


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New sculpture, "Cowboy"



Garman lounging in front of one of his street scenes

# What **IS** It?

DO YOU BELIEVE IN **MAGIC?**

*MICHAEL GARMAN, "AMERICA'S STORYTELLER SCULPTOR" AND CREATOR OF THE EPIC MAGIC TOWN, GOING STRONG AT 80...EVEN HE'S AMAZED.*



By Robert O'Brien, Real Producers Reporter

About a year and a half or so ago, Michael Garman assumed he was dying. Then he got a call. It was from the UCSD Medical Center, San Diego.

Flashback to about 10 years ago and Garman got some disturbing news. "The Mayo Clinic gave me two years to live. I had lung disease and pulmonary hypertension." While the sculptor lived well past the two-year prediction, his health continued to deteriorate. Roughly two years ago, mostly wheelchair-bound and needing oxygen, he bought a burial plot in Manitou Springs and moved to Newport Beach (CA) to be near his daughter. Apparently, it helped to be at sea level, presumably because there's more oxygen at sea level than at over 6,000 feet in Colorado Springs.

Garman researched his disease and "found out that in San Diego the UCSD Medical Center was the gold standard hub of my rather rare malady and I got into their program." After he said he "signed up for their program," he says he went on with his (deteriorating) life and almost forgot about the program. Then, he says, "I got that call." They informed Michael that he needed to get into pre-op for surgery "in about two weeks." About 18 months ago, the artist endured both lung and heart surgery, including a quadruple bypass. Within three days, he says he was "walking upstairs. And doing just great. (I) feel I'm getting much better now." Garman commented

that before the surgery he never would have had the stamina to give the tour and be on his feet for over two hours during our interview, spanning the first and third floors of his building in Old Colorado City.

**“  
The fact that we were  
interviewing a living,  
breathing Michael Garman  
is, in his opinion, ‘one of  
those cliché miracles.’**

From the August 11, 2008 edition of the *Colorado Springs Gazette*: "It's official: Michael Garman Productions to close." The article explained: "The 70-year-old flew into Colorado Springs from Germany on Monday for a press conference to make official what fans of his work have been talking about for a week: Michael Garman Productions will stop making reproductions of Garman's sculptures at the end of this year, and the gallery in Old Colorado City will close once the remaining inventory is sold — probably in spring or early summer 2009. Garman said his health is the problem. He was diagnosed with congestive heart failure, and doctors have given him only a couple of years to live. It's time, he said, to focus on other things." ●●●

“

**Well, now we know ‘the rest of the story,’ as radio’s Paul Harvey used to say. Michael Garman is alive and well and working harder than ever as an artist and entrepreneur.**

”

... The overall character of Magic Town, Garman’s “magical masterpiece” is a reflection of his love of “the common man (and woman).” The setting is nostalgic, with red brick facades, tenements, alleyways and common people doing common things. A milkman, a short-order cook, a woman in a shabby apartment combing her hair at her vanity, people out on fire escapes. All of this is a reflection of the artist’s own famously vagabond lifestyle as a young man.

From his website (<https://www.michaelgarman.com/about/>): “In 1959 (he was 21), Michael Garman hitchhiked into Mexico with \$35 in his pocket and his Nikon camera for what he thought would be a two-week sojourn. When his money ran out, he would charm his way into a restaurant, offering to sweep the floor or



2018: Sculpting Priaire Rose

something for a bit to eat or a drink. More often than not, the owner would give him a meal and a place to sleep. No one I asked hired me, but everyone fed me.”

He hitchhiked his way further south through Central and South America. Two years later, he had traveled all the way to Santiago, Chile, where he talked his way for free into the School of Fine Arts. It was here that he discovered his talent for sculpting. “I would sculpt my characters, street people, vendors and such,” Michael Garman relates, “and the school would fire them for free. Then I would go door to door and sell them for \$5 or \$10.”

So when you visit Magic Town, you may better understand the “look” of the red brick buildings, prolific alleyways and ordinary people in a kind of tattered-dismal world...tenement buildings, alleyways and people dressed in hand-me-downs, when taking into consideration this “world” in part comes from not only Garman’s wanderings in South America mid-20th century but also cities such as Dallas, San Francisco and Philadelphia in the 1960s and ‘70s, including Colorado Springs. Cities just beginning the transition from turn-of-the-century brick and stone to the “international” wave; steel and glass. In Magic Town, you see cities and people in a three-dimensional time capsule, all from the mind and memories and talent of an artist who had first-hand experience with all of it, worldwide.

“I don’t have that long to do this; I have to hustle to get it done.” This is Michael Garman during the tour of Magic Town, both celebrating the fact that he has been given a kind of reprieve at what had seemed inevitable a little more than a year ago



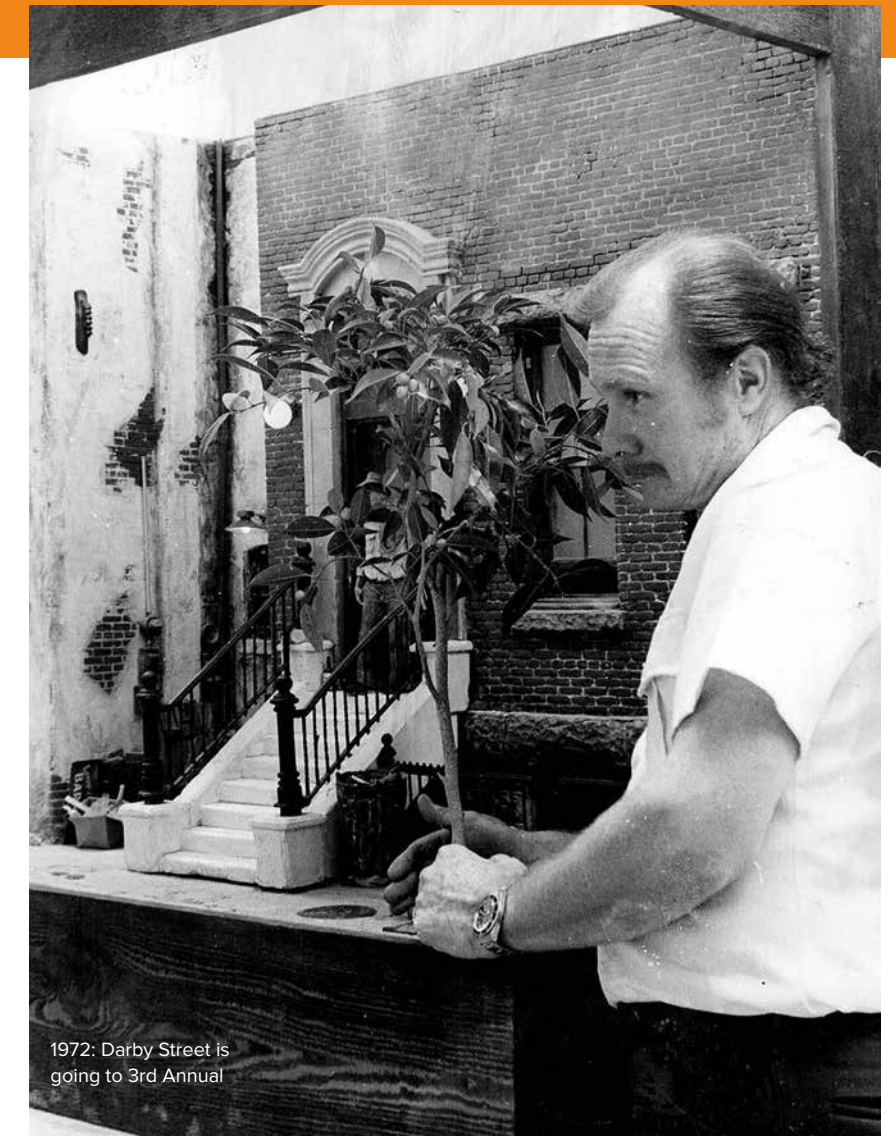
Gallery Exterior

(his imminent demise) and lamenting what he perceives as less time than he would like to “complete” his project. As he gives the tour, he is constantly spotting things he’d like to change or improve or add-to. Not only is he once again carving new sculptures for the exhibit (and for his own enjoyment) but he has a major new ambition to dramatically upgrade the technological backbone of his miniature city. He wants to add new micro-spots to better illuminate the sculpted masterpieces populating his Town. Lighting overall in this exhibit is subdued so that the eye is drawn to the sculptures and the scenes in the windows and doorways. To the tricks created by mirrors cleverly embedded throughout.

But Michael is never satisfied. Super 8 movie loops evolved into VHS tape to now digital. He wants his digital scenes and people (augmenting, not replacing the sculpted and molded pieces) to eventually be 3D holograms. But still, at its essence, this incredible creation called Magic Town is populated by figures conceived by Garman’s imagination and then they literally become his friends. His “hearts neighborhood.”

“Ultimately,” the artist explains as he is talking about the other things he wishes to do with his creation, “is I listen to them. I do what they want me to do.” He is referring to the characters he started creating as a child with pipe cleaners, using those bendable fuzzy wires to create miniature “friends” in scenes he would flesh out with objects he would make and play with. This shaped the rest of his life. The artist claims most of what he does in his creative process is spontaneous and occurs in short bursts. “I’m really not good at long-term thinking,” he says. That is hard to grasp when you look at the body of his work, especially a creation that is still growing and changing after nearly 40 years.

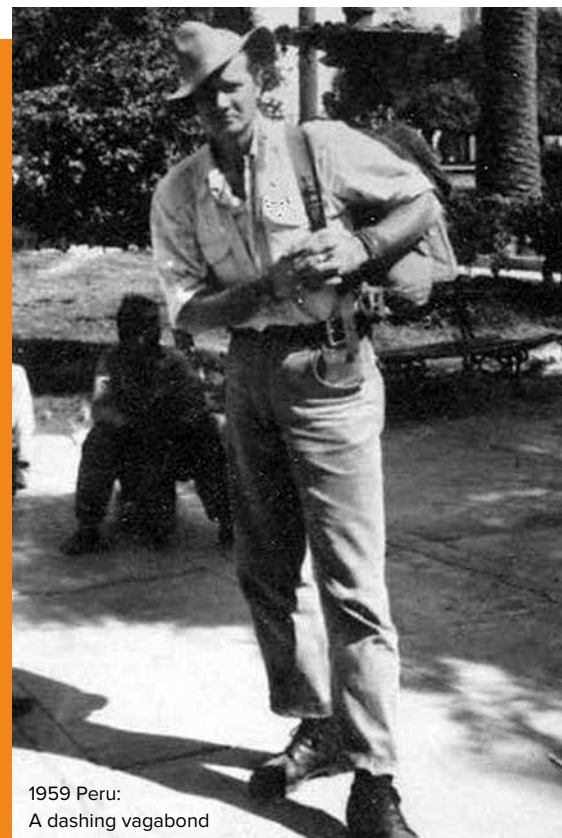
In referring to the further “magical elements” Garman has in mind for Magic Town, the artist jokes that “It’s going to get to the point where we’re going to have to ask people to sign a release, so if they faint we’re not liable.” Clearly, this newly-mint-



1972: Darby Street is going to 3rd Annual

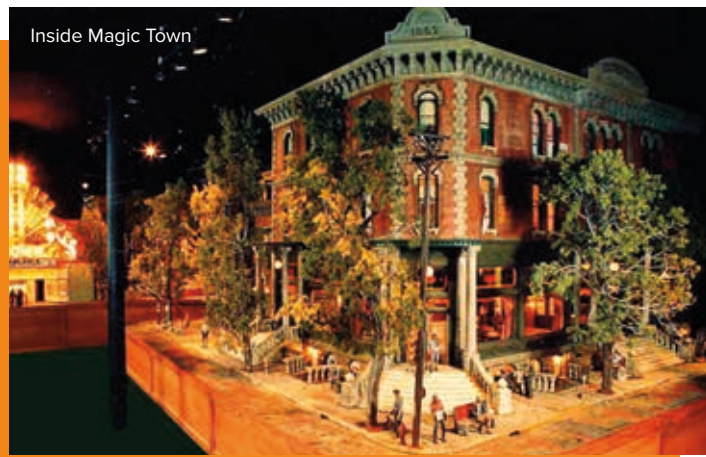
ed octogenarian has a lot of new surprises up his sleeve. He clearly enjoys interacting with patrons of the massive exhibit in 1/6 scale. “I sometimes come down here 10 times a day.”

Garman revealed that “I don’t like the art world, I don’t like artists. I don’t like museums.” Surprising words from a world-renowned artist-sculptor. What Garman is referring to, broadly speaking, is the “elitism” he sees dominating the world of original art. “I don’t do commissions. Never have, never will.” He is egalitarian in his philosophy that his art should be available to everyone at an affordable price. His entire enterprise is devoted to hand-finished, hand-painted reproductions. He tells the story of a doctor in New Jersey who wanted to buy what was then a one-of-a-kind scene (in a shadow box), only to learn Garman had produced six reproductions of it. The doctor told him, “I’d be ashamed to display this in my home knowing there was more than one.” This infuriated the artist who adds, “I called him a son-of-a-b\*tch. How would you like it if John Steinbeck sold the original manuscript of Cannery Row to William Randolph Hearst? You would never get to read it. And that is anti-art.” The artist’s proletarian sensibilities in both his art and his desire to share that art is probably the biggest reason Magic Town exists, as well as his art being affordable and thus on display in homes throughout the world. Garman sees his hand-finished pieces as akin to publishing; books, magazine, movies everyone can enjoy affordably. He has spent a lifetime going against type; “Art isn’t real estate,” he fumes.



1959 Peru: A dashing vagabond

Inside Magic Town



**ABOUT MAGIC TOWN**

According to the Magic Town website (<https://www.michaelgarman.com/magic-town/>):

Michael Garman began constructing Magic Town in 1975 and has been adding on to it ever since. He describes it as a “gritty Americana.” He blends humor and honesty to portray a world as familiar as any big-city neighborhood, and as fantastical as “It’s a Small World” by Walt Disney.

“

**Michael Garman’s Magic Town is a 3,000 square-foot miniature city that combines hundreds of intricately detailed sculptures and cityscapes with magical elements to create one of the world’s truly unique attractions.**

”

“It’s a gigantic playground for the mind,” says its creator, Michael Garman. “Part carnival, part dollhouse, part sculpture.” This 3,000-square-foot miniature city was inspired by Garman’s own experiences as a vagabond in the 1950s and ‘60s. “These are snapshots of my time in Buenos Aires, Santiago, San Francisco, Dallas, and Philadelphia,” Garman explains. “It took me over a million dollars and parts of four decades to pull it from my mind and get the thing built.”

Magic Town consists of the Magic Town exhibit fronted by a gallery of reproductions for purchase. Each is hand-painted and finished by an artist working for the studio.

Magic Town is located at 2418 W Colorado Ave. (corner of 24th Street across from Bancroft Park) in Old Colorado City, Colorado Springs. Contact the web site for hours and admission pricing, but we can tell you it’s very reasonable starting at \$5 for an adult ticket and it goes down from there, including kids under 6 free.

Thanks to Mary Koehler, Public Relations Director for Michael Garman Productions, for her patient assistance in setting up our interview with Mr. Garman and staying with us throughout. Ms. Koehler, we learned, worked with Garman on an autobiography which has not yet been published. We think that book should get into print sooner rather than later so the artist can go on a book tour and recount his amazing life, still “a work in progress.”

*Note: The “What IS It?” series is designed to highlight unique features of the Pikes Peak area. REALTORS® don’t just sell homes, they sell the community experience. We hope this series acts as either new information or a reminder of some of what makes the Greater Colorado Springs area so very special.*

...

All of the sculptures are reproduced right on the Magic Town premises in the basement. By the way, most are cast in “casting cement” called Hydrocal®; more delicate pieces are cast in a polyester resin, both from rubber molds, then finished, painted, and then an “extra” finishing touch invented by Garman to add a three-dimensional look to the piece after it is painted (“distressing”).

Original pieces can be repurposed, such as the famous figure of a man hawking newspapers. The studio will create a one-of-a-kind miniature newspaper with a front-page picture of a house just purchased by a client of a REALTOR®. “Read All About It!” With a plaque, it becomes a unique, one-of-a-kind housewarming gift from the REALTOR® (check with the gallery for more information).



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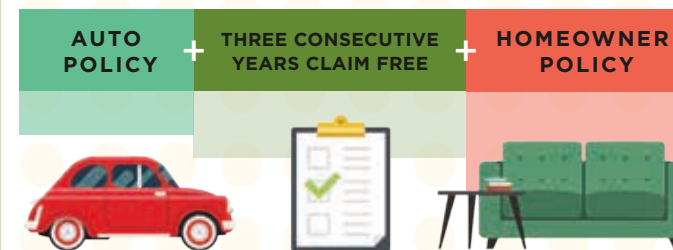
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# DEMAND AND SUPPLY AND INTEREST RATES ARE THE ANSWER. What is the question?



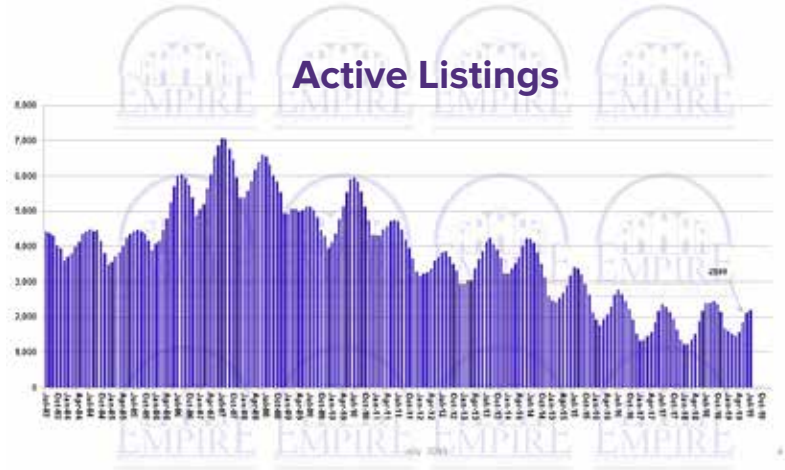
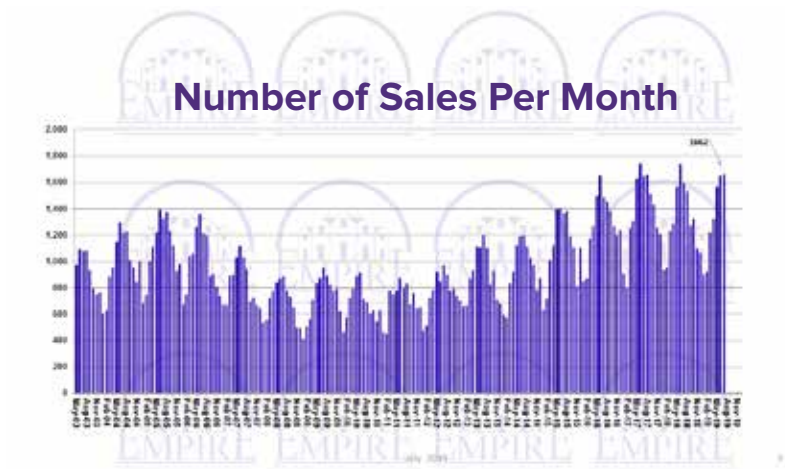
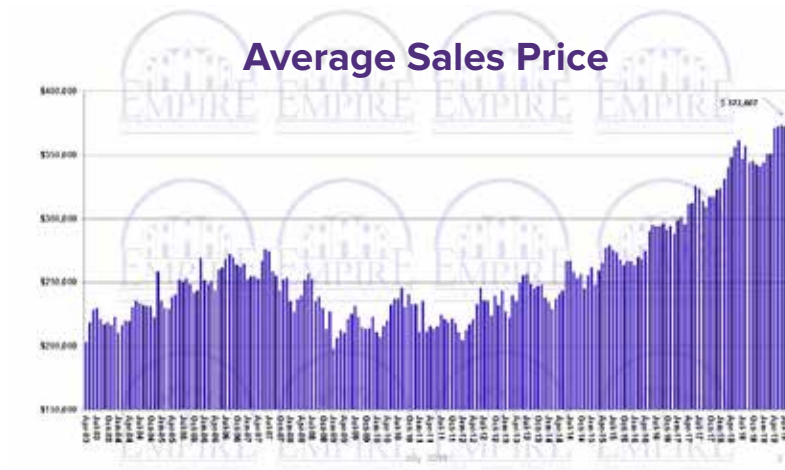
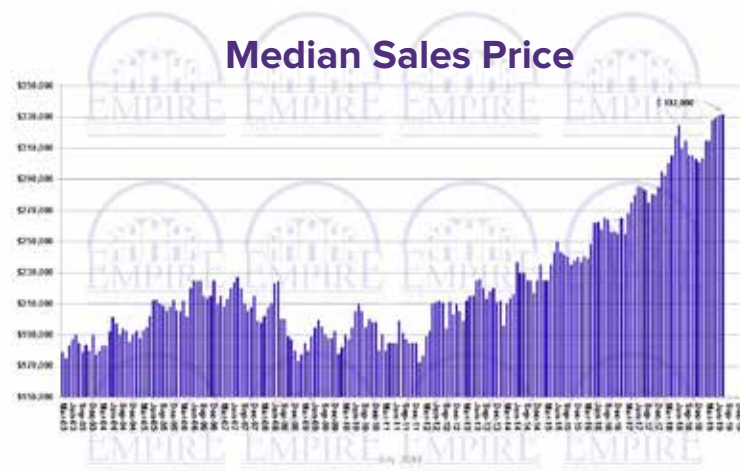
By **Bill McAfee**, President Empire Title of Colorado Springs, LLC

The Front Range market continues to set records. The month of July set a record Median sales price of \$332,000. (See slide #1) Average price was the second highest of record at \$372,607. Demand is still incredibly strong with 1,662 homes sold in July, which is the third best in history. (See Slide #2) Demand is truly a factor driving this market - but what about supply?

Active listings for the month of July was 2,199. This is down 8% from July of 2018; however, it is up 79% from the low of 1,229 in February of 2018. (See slide #3) The third factor driving this market is low interest rates.

Interest rates for the month of July was 3.75% (See slide #5) This is just .35% higher than 3.4%, which is the lowest Freddie Mac 30 Year mortgages have ever been. This rate gives buyers a tremendous amount of purchasing power, even though house prices continue to increase.

So the question is, what keeps this market driving ahead at the current pace? The answer is high demand, low supply and incredible low interest rates.





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