

the importance of professionalism

BY ANN HANNAH



It has been said that the only constant in life is change, and throughout the 38 years that I have worked as a Realtor I have seen many positive changes in my profession. The one of which I am most proud though, is the collective increase in Greater Toronto Realtors' level of professionalism.

With an average of more than 90,000 transactions taking place annually across the Greater Toronto Area in recent years, the importance of professionalism in real estate can't be emphasized strongly enough – it directly affects thousands of GTA residents each year.

It is for this reason that professionalism remains the Toronto Real Estate Board's focus, especially during a year in which I am fortunate to represent Greater Toronto Realtors as TREB's president.

By offering efficient technology tools and precise market statistics, TREB has played a key role in helping Greater Toronto Realtors provide insightful, up-to-the-minute information to serve your needs as you buy, sell and lease property throughout the GTA.

The continuing education courses that our association offers also support our efforts to raise the bar of professionalism. Your Realtor is required to complete 24 continuing education credits every two years, and many of us go well beyond this requirement, in order to stay up-to-date on trends and issues that can affect your transactions.

Many of the services we access to serve your needs also function as part of a coordinated effort among local, provincial and national associations.

Lobbying is one example of this coordination. While TREB represents your interests on municipal issues like the unfair Toronto Land Transfer Tax, the Ontario Real Estate Association advocates for homeowners on provincial issues like rebates for home energy efficiency upgrades and the Canadian Real Estate Association champions the consumer perspective on national issues such as the RRSP Homebuyers' Plan.

This network of cooperation extends as well to the profession's regulatory body, the Real Estate Council of Ontario, which helps to keep Realtors apprised of new legislative requirements and offers you a channel to forward any concerns or questions.

You also play a key role in helping Realtors provide the professional service that every consumer deserves whether buying or selling. And, for buyers, it starts when you sign a Buyer Representation Agreement. A B.R.A. will help communicate your needs and expectations clearly with your Realtor.

If you are considering making a foray into this year's fall real estate market, I encourage you to begin by gathering information on the process of buying, selling or leasing a property. TREB's consumer website, (TorontoRealEstateBoard.com), serves an excellent resource in this regard. Through this website you can access statistical updates on the market, information on government programs that may assist you, explanations of commonly used real estate forms, neighbourhood profiles and much more.

As with most major undertakings, solid preparation and guidance from a professional Realtor will help pave a clear path for a successful transaction.



Ann Hannah is the President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 34,000 Realtors in the Greater Toronto Area.