

REAL ESTATE

EXECUTIVE

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Vickie Milano of Keller Williams – The Woodlands

'Making Real Estate a Family Affair'



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'Making Real Estate a Family Affair'

By Kate Sullivan-Conlan

Keller Williams Realtor Vickie Milano makes buying and selling homes a family affair. "It's all about family — my own family and the families I work with," says Vickie. "I get to know my clients and their families closely, while helping them through the challenges of moving. By the time we have completed their transaction, I've adopted them for life!"

As Judy Hopkins, broker and co-owner of Keller Williams Realty — The Woodlands, says, "Vickie adores her husband and son, and she has been a devoted and supportive daughter. Her caring and nurturing carry over to her business, where she treats her clients like family. For Vickie, it's not just the sale of a house."

WHAT MAKES AN AWARD-WINNING REALTOR? KNOWLEDGE OF THE MARKET

Vickie has combined her focus on family and a long family involvement in real estate with spot-on marketing expertise to become a top producer and award-winning Realtor.

Vickie has a special commitment to and superior knowledge of The Woodlands and surrounding areas in North Houston. The Woodlands is where Vickie and her family live, work and play, and where her son goes to school, so she knows the vicinity inside and out.

Dan Yardley, of Village Builders, East Shore — The Woodlands, says, "Vickie pioneered the East Shore neighborhood and has become

Vickie loves and adores all of her team members ... and it's mutual! They are (left to right) Tonya Briney, Marketing and Creative Concepts; Matthew Milano, "Husband Extraordinaire"; Vickie; Harold Smith, "Technology Genius"; Kathy Woods, Client Care Manager. In front is Matty Milano, "Apprentice" and team motivator.



PHOTO BY JOE HEILIGER

Vickie brings immense knowledge about The Woodlands and the current market.

— Nicole Boyd, David Weekly Homes

Vickie goes even further and, with her energy and passion, makes the whole process fun. Walt adds: “Vickie works very, very hard, but she is also genuinely having fun. Every well-planned detail and extra little touch shows she has a passion for real estate and a love for the families whose homes she is selling.” Vickie’s service, according to Walt, “is light years ahead of simply putting a sign in the front yard.”

How many Realtors do so much for the families they represent? Geoffrey High, also with Village Builders, sold his Woodlands home and downsized within The Woodlands. “Vickie,” he says, “really listened to what we wanted and showed us five or six homes that were right on target. We picked the perfect home for us, bought it and moved in!” Vickie took care of every loose end, prepared every detail perfectly in advance and came to the closing. Both closings were on the same day and took about 30 minutes.

But that wasn’t all. Vickie, who takes great pleasure in finding creative ways to help her clients, knew that Geoffrey and his wife were tired after a long day of moving, and that they wanted to stay home,

Vickie, Matthew and Matty love spending time together. They managed to find snow during a recent October weekend in Colorado.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MILANO FAMILY



PHOTO BY JOE HELLIGER

Vickie and Matty at Town Green Park in The Woodlands, enjoying Story Book Row.

its number one Realtor, as well as being one of the top Realtors for all Village and Lennar homes throughout North Houston.” Dan tells the story of one family that Vickie worked with who was transferred to The Woodlands. They identified the perfect home and wrote the contract. However, before they could close on the home, their transfer was revoked. Vickie stepped in and bought the house herself. She felt it was a great investment, and if her clients couldn’t purchase the home, she would. Dan says, “In my experience — and I have sold over 5,000 homes — no one else has ever given that level of service and commitment.”

Nicole Boyd, of David Weekly Homes, has had a similar experience in working with Vickie: “Vickie brings immense knowledge about The Woodlands and the current market.”

WHAT MAKES AN AWARD-WINNING REALTOR? SERVICE ABOVE AND BEYOND

Vickie also has the highest level of professionalism in every other aspect of selling and buying homes. She works with her clients to anticipate and handle every factor that could impact the sale of their homes.

One of Vickie’s clients, Walt Gothard, who has himself spent over 20 years in marketing and sales management for Texaco and Shell, sold his house for a very good price, even though it was at the end of the selling season and a tight real estate market. Walt says, “The multifaceted marketing plan that Vickie brought us was thorough and impressive,” including “guidance in how to stage our home, information on changing market conditions, marketing aids and, most importantly, leads which were generated from within her network.”

I get to know my clients and their families closely while helping them through the challenges of moving. By the time we have completed their transaction, I’ve adopted them for life!

— Vickie Milano, Keller Williams – The Woodlands



Vickie is consistently recognized for her excellence in sales and client satisfaction. She is seen here with the ownership of Keller Williams — The Woodlands. Left to right are Diane Kink, Diane Flicker, Vickie, Judy Hopkins and Mark Heinrich.

kick back and unpack at a leisurely pace. So Vickie bought them a whole car full of groceries and filled their refrigerator. “She didn’t know what kind of beer I’d like,” remembers Geoffrey, “so she bought me three kinds to make sure she had gotten the one I wanted!” Vickie stayed late that evening, sitting around the kitchen table with boxes everywhere, enjoying barbecue ribs and telling stories with the family.

Vickie’s first real estate transaction set the tone for her approach to serving families. Rod and Janelle Willroth, a couple with Continental Airlines, were relocating to Houston from Guam. They contacted Vickie with a very narrow window to find a home, so together they previewed homes very late into the evening. Rod and Janelle had an early morning flight to Guam the next day, but they were determined to write an offer before they left. Vickie invited them to spend the night in her guest room while she prepared an offer. The next morning at 5 a.m., they signed the contract in their bathrobes while they drank coffee and munched on breakfast. The couple flew back to Guam, confident in their decision. To this day Rod and Janelle still own the home they signed for in their bathrobes and are very dear friends of the Milano family.

Gayle Brand, Vice President and Houston Division Manager of Chicago Title, has been a friend and business associate of Vickie’s for 13 years. “Vickie is willing to do whatever it takes to help a deal come together and facilitate her clients’ dream of owning a home,” says Gayle. “If there is a way to get the deal done, she will find it and make sure everyone leaves the closing satisfied and happy.”

Vickie works very, very hard, but she is also genuinely having fun. Every well-planned detail and extra little touch shows she has a passion for real estate and a love for the families whose homes she is selling.

— Walt Gothard, US Change Manager and Wholesale Process Mgr., Shell Oil

What would Vickie tell new agents about what it takes to be a successful Realtor? Vickie would tell them to buy the national best seller *The Millionaire Real Estate Agent*, by Gary Keller with Dave Jenks and Jay Papasan, for a step-by-step handbook on how to become a successful agent. She would also encourage new agents to get as much education and training in real estate as they can, even before they get started, including finding an experienced mentor. Vickie advises: “New agents need to read about the systems and tools other successful agents implement in their businesses, know and use the technology available, develop a database of their own, manage it efficiently, keep organized and run their business as a business.”

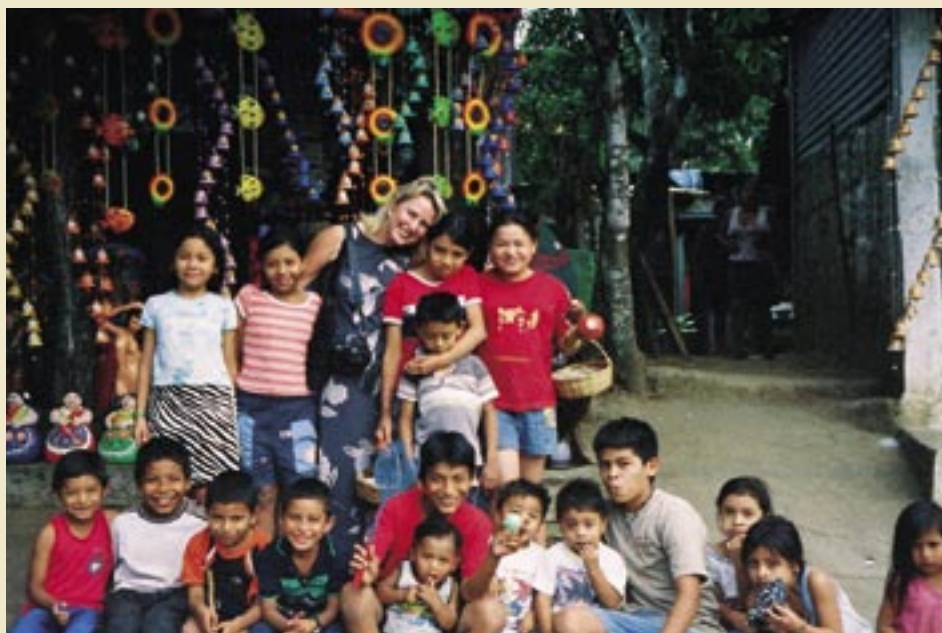
WHAT MAKES AN AWARD-WINNING REALTOR? A DIVERSIFIED BUSINESS PLAN

Vickie does not just help families buy and sell their homes. Her passion extends to helping people secure their financial future by investing in real estate, as she does. Her investors are Woodlands families, friends, out-of-state referrals and others who have seen her strategy and want to learn how to invest as well. Vickie gives them the tools and knowledge to become successful investors, teaching them to choose properties that are in demand and that are good investments in the resale and rental market, while helping them every step of the way. Vickie and Matt have invested in a number of properties; she has helped her father select several great investments, and nearly all of her investors own between two and 10 income-producing rental homes.

“I love to help people build their financial future and diversify their portfolios by investing in real estate along with their 401(k)s, stocks and bonds.”

To celebrate her 30th birthday, Vickie wanted to do something “out of the box.” So, she went to Alaska (on her own) to go salmon fishing! She is seen here with her catch, which she brought back to Houston to cook and serve at her first open house. It made for a great start to a fun real estate career!





Vickie believes in giving back to the community and the world. Everyone is “family” in Vickie’s heart. She is seen here during a trip to Nicaragua that she took with her family and dear friends. They were instantly welcomed by the children in the community. Vickie made sure each and every child was given love and attention.

WHAT MAKES AN AWARD-WINNING REALTOR? THE LOVE AND SUPPORT OF ONE’S FAMILY AND TEAM

Vickie first learned about the world of real estate, with its requirement for determination and follow-through, from her parents. When she was little, her mother and father, who was a journeyman electrician in Bucks County, PA, vacationed in Hawaii and came home determined to move to the Hawaiian Islands. Her mother and father implemented a plan to buy old houses, refurbish them and resell the homes for a profit. They did all the remodeling work themselves, and on the weekends Vickie begged to help, doing odd jobs. Six years later, her parents met their financial goals, sold everything, packed six bags and a frying pan, and moved to Oahu. “I was a real beach bunny,” says Vickie. “I could hop on a bus and spend my Saturdays with my friends, swimming and sunning at all the beautiful Hawaiian beaches.”

Vickie was finishing the 11th grade when her grandmother passed away. She and her family moved back to Pennsylvania into her grandmother’s house — the home that her mother had been raised in. It was a gorgeous old home on the Delaware River that her parents lovingly restored. Her parents turned two of the bedrooms into an efficiency apartment for Vickie, so she could have a taste of independence — in the safety of her own home — while she attended Bucks County Community College.

From college, Vickie joined Continental Airlines as a flight attendant. Soon, Continental became another family in her life. She loved every minute of it — flying into New York, dining at the Plaza, jetting around the world, then returning to Houston. Vickie is not an active flight attendant at this time, but retains her employment and relationship with Continental. She continues her education and training to maintain her credentials and plans to return to flying when Matty, her son, is older. “I love being a part of the Continental

family,” says Vickie.

Her work with Continental paved the way for her career as a Realtor. “Being a flight attendant taught me customer service,” says Vickie. “Every flight was different. Every family had its own needs, and we were trained to meet and exceed their expectations.” Vickie’s husband Matt is a pilot with Continental, and from him she learned to work from a checklist, as pilots do. “Matt and Continental taught me to systematize my processes, an approach that has made my real estate business efficient and effective.”

Because of Continental, Vickie moved to Houston in 1985 and immediately decided she wanted to buy a house in The Woodlands. Her parents were concerned that their daughter, a young, single woman, was biting off too much. So Vickie promised them that she would earn her real estate license and when it was time for her to move again, she would

sell the house herself.

Ann Selman is the Realtor who assisted Vickie in the purchase of her first home and became part of Vickie’s extended family. After Ann showed the house to Vickie and her then-fiancé, Matt, Ann went home and told her husband, “I just showed a house to Ken and Barbie — they were so cute!”

Seven years later Ann became Vickie’s real estate mentor after Vickie had completed training at Champions School of Real Estate. Vickie and Ann worked together as a team, joining Wilona Dyson, the original founding broker of Keller Williams Realty — The Woodlands. Ann is proud of Vickie’s success. “Vickie has good people skills. She’s almost too good to be true. But Vickie IS that sweet to everyone, to her customers and everyone she meets along the way.” Vickie feels a strong bond with Ann and Wilona. “They changed my life by encouraging me in real estate; I love them and hope that I can do the same for others.” Vickie adds, “Ann gave me great advice. She said, ‘Don’t let real estate take away your precious family time because the kids just grow up too fast.’”

For a couple of years after Vickie and Matt married, she continued to fly while building her real estate business. Their son, Matty, was born shortly thereafter, and Vickie grounded herself from part-time flying so she could focus on real estate yet also be at home, close to her family. “Real estate is now one of my many passions. I love being a mom, a wife, a daughter and a Realtor in

I love to help people build their financial future and diversify their portfolios by investing in real estate along with their 401(k)s, stocks and bonds.

— Vickie Milano, Keller Williams — The Woodlands

my community. What could be better?" says Vickie. "Yesterday, Matty fell off the monkey bars at school, and I was able to be there for him!" While she has her ABR, GRI and Luxury Home Marketing real estate credentials, Vickie says she is proudest of her "MRS" and "MOM" titles.

"Someone once said," muses Vickie, "behind all successful real estate agents is a loving and supportive family. Matt and Matty understand that other families count on my service and guidance to help them during their move." Vickie adds, "My 'boys' are always there to help Mom. My husband is so mechanical and brilliant, he can fix anything, and Matty loves to jump in and help the same way I used to help my parents." Vickie

gives an example: "Recently, a tree branch fell through the roof of an investor's home. I coordinated repairs and reported the damage while Matt and Matty rushed over with the necessary tools to make sure the damage was minimized. It's always a pleasure when my family can help others."

Vickie's working family is her team at Keller Williams Realty. Kathy Woods is her client care manager extraordinaire. She tirelessly coordinates the follow-ups, keeps the transactions on track, orders any needed repairs, updates listings and photos, and provides the warm fuzzies — all with a smile. She even helps with Matty's homework if needed! Tanya Briney handles the staging of their properties, making sure everything looks great and is ready for showings. She is also



PHOTO BY HAROLD SMITH

phenomenal with brainstorming marketing plans and coming up with creative concepts. Behind the scenes, keeping all of the systems and processes well organized and productive, is Harold Smith, Vickie's "Technology Genius." Whenever Vickie has an idea, she presents it to Harold, who then becomes responsible for making sure it gets implemented. He manages the technical aspects behind her business, such as Vickie's website and marketing programs. He lovingly designed the wrap for her bright red VW convertible bug, nicknamed the "Vickswagon," that Vickie zips around The Woodlands in on pretty sunny days.

Vickie would be lost without the love and support from her

extended family; it is the most important key to Vickie's success. She wraps it up: "I couldn't do it; I couldn't even get up in the morning without the support of my family and friends. We are all working for the same common goal — taking care of our clients and one another."

Vickie is on top of the market and in touch with her clients' needs. She expertly markets her properties and diversifies her business, while thriving on the love and support of her families. Vickie keeps it fun and keeps her sights trained firmly on her priorities — her family and her faith. "I'm all about working hard and staying focused. At the end of the day, when I put my head on my pillow, I know I did the best I could for all my families and clients." ■

Vickie Milano

"On Top of The Market, In Touch With Your Needs"

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