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WOMEN'S LIB

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Real County Blog
Corcoran
Jeanette

"I am not," Jeannette Corcoran states flatly, "a women's libber." But she's talking of terminology, not fact.

Jeanette is a real estate saleswoman, one of the best in the area, top across Canada for her company last year. And she's not ready to concede that a man is a better sales person or that her male colleagues should be paid more just because they are men.

Women's lib? "Well, when you put it like that," Jeannette admits, "you've got me there."

There is a long way from where she started, a quiet, conventional childhood in Nice in the south of France. She went to school in the shelter of a convent, graduated and six weeks later married. She travelled with her husband, William, to live in England. Two sons were born. The family moved to Canada.

They lived in Oakville and Jeannette managed a big home and the children and played bridge and golf and served on various committees.

And then one day, about six and a half years ago, when her sons were 15 and 21, she stopped her car in front of a real estate office, went inside and asked for a job.

"My first week I sold a house. I've never stopped."

There is a certain satisfaction. "I had never thought of myself as ambitious but I suppose I am. Once I was working I wanted to go right to the top."

She had a job with another company but A.E. LePage is the largest in Canada and she decided she wanted to work for them. The only saleswoman in the Port Credit office had to leave because of illness. Jeanette went out and sold six of their listings. And then she went to see the vice president.

"I told him he needed me to sell the homes and men couldn't sell." She shakes her head. "When I left his office my knees were shaking. I thought, 'My gosh Jeannette, you've got a lot of nerve.'"

Three months later he called and offered her a job.

She started there in April, 1971 and made enough in commissions the rest of that year to attain a certain level of sales achievement. Last year she was named top sales person for A.E. LePage offices across Canada.

"I think of myself as a professional," Jeannette says. "There are too many women in real estate willing to work only hard enough to buy the broadloom.

"I feel that I'm earning the same sort of salary as a lawyer and I should give the same sort of service."

She describes herself as "very organized", is up at 7 a.m. each day, gets the two cats and the Irish setters settled and is in the office by 9 a.m. The morning is usually spent doing desk work, making phone calls, arranging her listings book. She shows homes in the afternoons, a few evenings and some weekends.

"But I don't show too many homes. I try to relate to my clients, find out what kind of people they are and what they would like to live. I always try to sell something I would like. It is difficult for me, for instance, to sell a very dirty home.

"You must be sincere. If you're not it comes out sooner or later."

She's quiet for a while, considering.

"I look after my clients. I do a lot for them. I can tell them where to go for tiles and counter tops, how much it will cost to put in a fireplace.

"I always buy something for every client I sell a home to. If I don't know their decor I'll send them flowers.

"I get a lot of come-back business now because I'm established. I work hard and I enjoy my work."

Is she sorry that she didn't start all this earlier?

She fingers the amber-coloured bracelets at her wrist. "No I don't think I was ready earlier. I believe in cycles in my life.

"And this suits me now. I plan to stay working."

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