

AE Newsletter - November 3, 2021

Aloha Everyone:

The announcement has been made and it is OFFICIAL I am retiring on December 31, 2021 as the Association Executive for the Kaua`i Board of REALTORS®. It has been 42 years and 7 months to date that I have worked in the REALTOR® Organization.

I'm sure many of you have seen me throughout your real estate career. I was hired in April 1974 by Robert Klaesson to be the Secretary of the Kaua`i Board of REALTORS® with Jean Sato at the helm. Five years into the job, Jean Sato resigned as the Association Executive to be a REALTOR®. The Association started to look for a new Association Executive when Mike Curtis told me to take the job. It was only 5 years into the business, everything was new and now Mike is asking me to run the Association. I hesitantly told Mike Curtis that I would temporarily take the job. Well it's been 37 years and I'm still the Association Executive in training. In this position, it feels like you're always in training with the fast pace changes and adapting to internal and external factors like economy, natural disasters, housing market crash, and the notorious COVID 19.

Starting as the Secretary to the Association Executive (AE) or what was known as the EO (Executive Officer). We've gone through title changes from ED, EO, AE, CEO and most recently CSEO (Chief Staff Executive Officer). Too many title changes to remember what followed your name let alone what the association has done for its membership and the community.

Let's start my journey..... if any of you have seen the history of HIS, I've lived that. When I was hired, there were no computers. Things were done in the old fashioned way. Faxing your listing to agents was the daily update that you now get online. Imagine how many rolls of fax paper agents used. Once a month the agents would submit their handwritten or typed listing information onto index cards. Kaua`i Vacation Rentals had the prettiest card with a hibiscus embedded on their listing card. These were called camera cards. Yes, they were exactly what it's called. We'd collect the cards and I'd pack it in a box, take it to the airport and about 2 weeks later a book containing a snapshot of the card information was mailed to each brokerage. Eventually shipping was too costly and the agents would stop by to pick up the books for their office. This was the only time the agents would stop by the office. That's how important these books were. They were outdated, but highly sought after "Confidential" material.

We graduated soon thereafter to the thermal paper printers that worked like a fax machine. I was still responsible to type the information from the cards into the MLS system for the agents. Property listings at that time were minimum to say the least. Listings were now distributed faster and were circulated to all MLS subscribers. Information was as current as they could get. Fast forward to today, agents are adding their own listing information into the MLS system within minutes and property information is now published on various website portals for the entire world to see. There were many struggles getting to the point where HIS became a profitable corporation owned by two shareholder REALTOR® Boards Kauaʻi and Hawaii Island (Hilo) and we all survived not only system changes, but changes in Directors and CEO's. If my memory serves me correctly I've seen more than 4 CEO and/or AE changes in each of the following organizations: Hawaii Information Services, Hawaii Association of REALTORS®, REALTORS® Association of Maui, Hawaii Island REALTORS® and West Hawaii REALTORS®. Kauaʻi seemed to be the most stable organization with my tenure in the business.

The Standard Forms that are now available electronically via LoneWolf were in paper format that we sold from the office. One of the most significant changes was the Purchase Contract which was known as the DROA (Deposit, Receipt, Offer, Acceptance). It was a two page document, today it is over 14 pages long with lots of addendum attachments. Booklets were printed on NCR paper where the agent would write a contract on the hood of their car and simply give a copy to the client/customer on the spot. With technology in the forefront of the industry, the agents are now able to complete the forms online and send an electronic copy to the client/customer. On the spot technology.

Education was simple. There were no CE requirements. Today, the requirements for all agents to renew their license is 20 hours either online, by classroom participation or electronically. In 2015 NAR mandated a Code of Ethics course for all REALTOR® members. Agents can now take a Code of Ethics Training that counts towards their CE requirements. Two for the price of one.

We continue to provide education not only for our REALTOR® members, but for the public as well. Here's a few topics that we recently posted on the KBR YouTube channel: Zoning 101 and the Role of the Planning Commissioner; Understanding how a bill becomes an Ordinance; Climate Change; First Time Homebuyers and more.

Visibility was and continues to be the key to improve the REALTOR® image/brand. As Chair of the Public Relations Committee Al Paterson and his committee decorated a float for the Kamehameha Day Parade. That was the first and only parade that we did. Rowena Cobb and her committee assisted several elderly families do simple home repairs (cleaning their yards, painting, fixing screens, etc.)

After all, we are in the housing business. KBR participated in a statewide beach clean in partnership with the Hawaii Association of REALTORS® titled “Lokahi” under HAR President Doug Sodatani. With Chair Joan Maeda, we started a school supply drive. The first event was held at various malls and store fronts. It was a lot of small items and hard to pack and distribute. The following year, we changed our collection of supplies to be purchased by the organization. I remember picking up supplies and one of the boxes of folder paper slid off the truck and Toni and I were collecting hundreds (if not thousands) sheets of paper alongside PuaKea Golf Course. Our conference room was filled with school supplies that were distributed to the public middle and high school PCNC's for distribution. Simplifying things even better than before, KBR has worked in partnership with the Kukui Grove Shopping Center in their distribution by funding their project. We still help in funding, packing and distributing the school supplies in partnership with the Kukui Grove Shopping Center.

Partnering with the Contractors Association of Kaua`i, KBR was able to provide a display at the Contracts Expo that highlighted a community vision by students of Kapaa Elementary School. The display was made out of cardboard boxes and presented by the students themselves. KBR was also able to provide education sessions at the Expo on various housing issues like the 2050 cesspool conversion as well as the ARU and ADU zoning changes.

The Contractors Association was not the only partnership that we had, we hosted Political Forums with the Contractors and the Chamber of Commerce bringing housing to the forefront. We presented “Barriers to Housing Affordability” using NAR grant money as well as the “Revitalization of Rice Street”. We provided over \$77,000 in NAR REALTOR® Relief Funds to help families immediately following the 2018 floods.

I can't stress how much information I have received from the REALTOR® organization that I continue to share with other organizations throughout Kaua`i. Always keeping the members at the forefront of the transaction and to be recognized as an organization helping the community.

I have had the opportunity to sit on the Open Space Commission (not as a REALTOR® member, but at the time a resident of Lihue); I have served on the Chamber GAC as a voting member; I have served as one of the initial Board members on the Revitalization of Rice Street; I currently serve on the Lihue Cemetery Board of Directors. Many doors have opened and I have taken every opportunity possible to reflect a positive image of the REALTOR®.

My career has not ended, my journey in a new direction is off and running. I have started conversations with members in the Kalaheo Community. I will be working closely with Nani using some of the available NAR grants to create a viable and vibrant Kalaheo Community.

It's hard to wrap up 42 years of experience in a letter. But it's been a great journey.

Sincerely,

Karen Ono