

Kelly E. Capolino, Realtor, Downing Frye Realty, Inc.

‘Old-fashioned, one-on-one service never goes out of style’

How did you first get into business?

Well, in the 1980s, my father, Robert Capolino, and my grandfather, Sisto Capolino, encouraged me to start my business. I was a woman and minority contractor.

They said you're smart and aggressive so get yourself qualified as a contractor.

That's what I did and years later it led me to renovating the Ann Taylor Shops at Waterside in Naples and I moved here in 1996.

I have a Florida real estate and general contractor's licenses. Choosing real estate over contracting meant I didn't have to manage men and materials!

What are some recent trends you've seen in your industry?

Well, it's been interesting. Most feel Naples is a cash market, however with the low interest rates many money managers advise their clients to finance their property in order to keep their cash in high performing accounts.

What lessons did you learn from the Great Recession?

That is a great question. I learned to be a better steward. ... When an asset, such as real estate is not performing it is time to sell that asset sooner than later.

What's your vision for the future of your business?

Real estate professionals will not be replaced by the Internet. The need for the personalized service and hand-holding customers will remain.

You're not going to buy a home on Amazon and wait for it to be delivered by a drone.

In Naples we are not a cookie-cutter community and people still need us.

What new products or services will you introduce next year?

Actually, old-fashioned, one-on-one service never goes out of style.

We find that the Internet is necessary and electronic communication is necessary.

But that one-on-one touch is very important in the real estate market and we are making an effort to communicate verbally and in person on a regular basis and not only via electronics.

We all need that personal, hand-holding touch.



WHO AM I?

NAME: Kelly E. Capolino

TITLE AND COMPANY: Realtor, Downing Frye Realty, Inc.

YEARS WITH THE COMPANY: 19 years

YEARS IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA: 19 years

NATURE OF BUSINESS: Real estate

EDUCATION: Pace University, NYC

What are some of the challenges you face this year?

The biggest is the election of the next president.

Also, interest rates are low. When will they rise?

And flood insurance rates and federal subsidized programs vs private insurers. That will always be something that might affect the future sales close to the Gulf of Mexico. There may be a day that those rates are so exorbitant it may not be affordable to live near the Gulf.

What trends do you see impacting your industry in the next two to four years?

I think the impact of the moving of retirees to the state of Florida and Southwest Florida will continue.

And as they expand our economy and jobs our number of first-time homebuyers will continue to rise.

How do you expect the Southwest Florida economy to grow?

I see two things.

One is the moving of retirees with big nest eggs coming to Southwest Florida to take advantage of our no income tax state. The other is the growth of tourism. Unless you were born here, every resident in Florida was a visitor at one point or another.

Tourism is growing. The first six months of this year the tourism economic impact was \$1.2 billion in Collier County alone.

And the number of visitors is up 4 percent in the first six months of the year.

What do you look for when recruiting new talent?

For me, I look for passion and I look for them to pay it forward.

And I always mentor and teach business sense and life lessons.

New talent needs to be open to new suggestions. Our employees and affiliates are required to help non-profits with a smile on their face and not as an obligation.

We are happy and blessed to be able to live in Southwest Florida and we need to show it.

What's the most important business lesson you've learned?

The most important thing is to stay true to your gut feeling and business plan.

And don't let others try to guide you to reinvent the wheel.

As you stay true to your gut feeling and your business plan be prepared... it just takes time. Everything good takes time.

What do you enjoy the most about the job?

I love this question. I love working with my clients. Whether my client is a CEO of a major corporation or a first time homebuyer, they deserve the same work ethic and my energy.

I personally would never sell or buy a property I didn't believe in and I will not do unethical business.

What would people be surprised to know about you?

I owned and operated a union-contracting firm in New York City.

It was called Kelly & SJ Capolino Construction. We had 140 plus employees and bid competitively on contracts.

For example, we worked on the World Trade Center doing interior work after the 1994 bombing. The company was based in Brooklyn, New York.

Another thing people might be surprised to know about me is that I ran the Paris Marathon in 2000. What I learned from 26.2 miles? You can do anything if you put your mind to it. ■





KELLY E. CAPOLINO

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DOWNING-FRYE REALTY, INC. • 180 9th Street South, Naples, Florida 34102

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