



▶▶ behind the brokerage

SUZANNE Z KAYKAS

REAL ESTATE, LLC

Suzanne Kaykas grew up in New York. In the mid-'70s she came to Lorane, Oregon, following in the footsteps of two sisters (she has four sisters); one was living in Lorane and working in organic farming. Starting farm work was about as far from working in Manhattan as Kaykas could imagine.

“Being in Oregon was like being in the wild west. I went from drinking Yoo-Hoo to milking a goat!” After years of living in a big city, the shock of nature all around was quite the eye-opener for Kaykas. She learned sustainable living, organic gardening, and appreciating the beauty of the State. “During that time I became very aware of my surroundings, and involved in the push to end the use of dioxins.” Kaykas organized protest marches and benefit shows to raise money to bring the issue to a public and federal level.

Involvement in the organization of music events and promotion and marketing of artists lead Kaykas to follow her dreams and passions in music. She quickly became a music manager, sound engineer and promoter for a band and venue in the area, just as The Hult Center was opening, rock and roll and middle-of-the-road entertainers were not a priority on the list to come to The Hult Center (Fine Arts was the agenda). Kaykas was responsible for the very first rock show there, Chuck Berry in 1982, and from selling out two shows she was able to prove what a viable investment it was for the city and area. This led to her promoting entertainers from Tony Bennett, Sade, Joe Cocker,

Huey Lewis and the News, George Strait, and everything in between. “It’s been a long road for me as far as being a woman in the workplace.” Kaykas worked for 20 years, mostly out of her home, procuring, managing, organizing and promoting music entertainers, while raising her two boys and participating in their school and sports. She got her real estate license in 1991 and did both careers simultaneously for ten years before going full time as a Principal Broker. When Kaykas worked in music at the time it was unusual for a woman to be in a powerful role like what she served in, she says that she was often mistaken as a house manager or caterer. It was a high-stakes industry and thanks to her sharp eye for marketing and her analytical approach she was able to get far. She has applied those same strategies to real estate and it gives her a unique approach and perspective.

“Real estate was appealing to me because it was an equal-opportunity employer for self-motivators. I had always been self-employed. I wasn’t sure if I could apply what I had learned in the music industry to real estate. At the time, market values of a property was based more on the feeling of value vs analytics and strategy. I wasn’t sure that residential would be where I ended up. I am a bottom-line individual. But I saw very quickly that not only was my approach to business important for residential, but I adore working with people through challenges. Now my business encompasses Residential, Commercial and Investment Properties. My clients are part of my family of friends and they make up the com-

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munity that I cherish to be part of and live in. That is an amazing gift of being a REALTOR®. Being able to have relationships with people for 30 years now, for three generations, it's a life-affirming quality that I can't imagine any other way."

In 2002, Kaykas started her own independent brokerage. She recalls how the internet at the time was leveling the playing field for small businesses and firms. Before this time, owning a franchise was more beneficial for the client. The internet changed all that.

Kaykas got a license as a mortgage broker and did that simultaneously for 14 years until when the recession and changes in the industry made it time challenging to do both effectively. So she went back to being a Real Estate Broker only, continuing the one on one, relationships.

Kaykas is not driven by the ambition to be the best, just to do her best. She is thankful for conflict resolution skills learned early in the music business and from music icons like Harry Belafonte. Running her own brokerage she decided that she didn't want to be a manager, she worked better on her own and at her own pace. The exception?

"About a year and a half ago my youngest son, Uriah, got licensed and came to work with me. The mentoring part of it was such an opportunity for both of us at this point in our lives. And if I have any grandchildren who also are interested in the future, I would make an exception for them as well!" Kaykas' son isn't just following her footsteps in real estate, but he is involved in music as well. Uriah has a degree in Audio Engineering, is a musician and is involved in recording. Her older son, Jascha, is involved in marketing and analytics, he went to Wittier College and just left five years at Mozilla as CMO to be President of Lytics in PDX.

Kaykas may not have her thumb on the pulse of the entertainment industry any longer, but that doesn't mean she isn't still heavily involved in the community. Through the years, some of the charities and nonprofits she supports include Food For Lane County, graffiti removal, Meals on Wheels, The Red Cross, social justice events, mental illness education and resources, housing and food inequality.



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Family photo: Jascha (son), Rebecca (daughter-in-law), Suzanne and Simone, Sophia, Julien (Grandchildren) Uriah (Son).



The rest of Kaykas' family lives in California, New York and Seattle, which has made the pandemic feel very real for her. "We are all putting our best foot forward; however, when you are making decisions that are so huge such as [real estate] it's hard to know right now how the future will look." This pandemic uncertainty has given clients and Brokers an extra level of anxiety in an already stressful process with many variables, but Kaykas believes it is the quality of your actions in handling such a situation that will determine how we come out on the other side.

What bothers her most is that she can't be as physically present with her clients as she would like to be. "The pandemic has highlighted some of the housing and food inequalities in our communities and there are so many sub-issues, and rightly so, now taking center stage. So the pandemic has changed what I do, what we all do now." She muses on how technology has risen to meet the challenges, and how fortunate she is for her oldest son who is at the forefront of innovation.

"When I started in real estate there was no internet. So talk about evolution. Human beings are very innovative and we have a wonderful spirit, and we find solutions for what's next. It's how we roll! I know so many of my real estate colleagues are trying to find solutions for the best possible scenario. So whatever comes out of this it's all going to be incorporated. I don't think it will be just one thing."

Kaykas loves her family, friends, loves her career and loves where she lives. She spends a lot of time hiking at Spencer's Butte and Mt. Pisgah. She jokes about how at the beginning of the pandemic she put up signs about social distancing on trails before the city took initiative.

"Going down one lane has never been something that's worked for me. I need to be involved in a lot of things and flexible in a lot of areas, to try and meet the needs that are there."

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