

MEET

# A.D. SMITH

Keller Williams Realty



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**A**sk anyone in the Real Estate industry who has ever met him, and people will tell you that AD Smith is one of the most humble and genuine people in the business. A family man, who gives back to the community in multiple ways, while still striving to make every client feel important.

13 years ago, however, when AD, his wife Kelly, and 1-year old daughter Abby boarded a flight from France back home, leaving a 6-year professional basketball career behind, the path to being the top-selling individual agent in Lane County was far less clear. According to AD, “I knew I wanted a career with flexibility and one where if I succeeded, I could really succeed, and if I failed then it was on me, but I had no idea what that career would be.”

Smith started his career at Keller Williams in 2006, and quickly rose through the ranks to become their highest selling agent. As his career grew, AD became the top-selling individual agent in all of Lane County (Per RMLS Stats 2007-2019). When Smith joined Keller Williams Realty, the market was crashing and hundreds of agents were leaving the field, giving up, and finding other work. Smith, not knowing any different, was able to persevere in what proved to be a challenging market. “I had to learn all the basics from A to Z. While no one would wish a market like we saw from 2006-2010, it very likely helped me build a solid foundation for my Real Estate career.”

Even given his success in Real Estate, AD is likely still best known in the area as a former University of Oregon athlete. Smith led the Duck Men’s Basketball team as captain for three seasons, helping them to the Final Four at the NIT Tournament in 1999, and to the NCAA tournament in 2000. For many basketball fans, AD remains one of their favorite Ducks and one of the few local products to succeed at the higher levels of division 1 basketball. AD still ranks in the top 20 players all-time at Oregon in scoring, rebounding, and 3-pt shooting. After earning an MBA from the Lindquist College of Busi-

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ness in 2000, Smith went on to pursue a 6-year basketball career in Europe.

Before their second daughter, Isabelle, was born, the Smiths decided to come back home to Lane County. Both AD and Kelly grew up in the area and even though they were living in France at the time, the two bought their first home in West Eugene. "My wife's family is from here, and mine as well. I went to high school here and then to Oregon." Lane County is home. The two have planted deep roots here. "It was nice after being gone for six years to come back to family."

Now Family includes AD and Kelly's 3 daughters, Abby, Isabelle, and their 9-year-old, Lizzie. "One of the reasons I chose to go on this path is that flexibility of being in charge of your own schedule. Even if that means I might be busy, I can still block out times for kids' practices. I think two of my big strengths is that I can be extremely efficient and organized. To me, those family items are absolutely every bit as important as any work responsibility I might have. Sure, I have work commitments, and sometimes that means nights and weekends, but it doesn't have to be every night or every weekend. It's a great career when it comes to that." This focus on balance, efficiency and individual attention is what makes AD Smith so appealing to clients. It's also a strategy he employs in all areas of his life. "I've coached all three of my girls on every basketball team they've ever been on, and every soccer team they've ever played on. I feel like I have a balance where my clients know I'm available and not just coaching my kids all the time, and my kids know I'm around. Ten years from now I could strive to be the highest selling REALTOR® in Oregon, but if I wasn't a good Dad and husband, then really, what's the point?"

Aside from coaching his kids, AD and his brother Burdy host a free annual basketball clinic. "When my brother and I were growing up, we were not kids who could afford camps. We struggled to pay for shoes, so any paid camps were out of the question. After being overseas for so long, I had time to think about what I wanted to do when I came back." Since 2006, at the Annual Smith Basketball Clinic, AD, Burdy and friends host 250 kids free of charge at a one-day basketball clinic. Smith doesn't use the clinic as a space to foster or promote his brand knowing that the more focus is on the kids then the more rewarding it will be for everyone. "I think it's a fun clinic and a good community event. It doesn't need to be a marketing tool where I follow up and ask if they know of someone looking to buy a home. I think to do that would lessen the experience for all, myself included." The Smiths have hosted the

clinic for 14 years with well over 3000 total attendees. "We get awesome reviews from parents. I think we have amazing volunteers and that helps us put on a really good event...There's a demand for it, to have a free and quality clinic and my brother is an amazing partner to run it." The event includes 40+ volunteers annually and t-shirts for all the campers. "It's great to not only have my kids take part as campers & counselors but having both my brothers and their families help just makes it that much more special". Burdy's son Luke is one of the top high school players for his age in the state and his daughter is a 5'10 12-year-old point guard.

So how does a guy who succeeded on every team he's ever been on go against the grain and not build a large real estate team for his business? Simple. His support staff led by licensed assistant Jesse Ellis is small and proven, and the support he gets is all behind the scenes. The direct contact and face time are AD's responsibility. "I think a lot of our industry has gone to a more team-based approach...and if you look at the top 10 selling agents over the last few years all except me and maybe one or two other agents, are all teams. What I tell clients is that their system works just as well as mine does. The top agents sell just as many homes as I do but if my clients need something, they will hear directly from me. I think a lot of buyers prefer working with someone that they not only trust, but that they can call or text easily. That's really worked well for me even if it's different than what others are doing in the current market landscape."

basketball career I similarly reflect more on the process and relationships than the wins and losses." Smith may go just a little bit against the grain, but really, he is going back to the way real estate used to be done.

From his humble upbringing with his two brothers, raised by a single mom most of his childhood, to his basketball career, to giving back, and on to parenthood and real estate, Smith puts his heart in to everything he does. He is professional, but there's a unique quality about him that lets you know he is looking out for you. His strengths as team captain at the U of O carried over into his business, and he brings that to the table as a coach and father as well. According to AD, "That strive for balance is ever ongoing but I think it's a worthwhile goal."

Judging from AD's reputation with colleagues and reviews from clients AD seems to be accomplishing those goals. "When my basketball career ended and I hopped on that plane home from Europe for the last time, I didn't know I would have a career in Real Estate. I'm so very thankful it has worked out this way."



It's not his style to take the easy way. That individuality is what helps Smith stand out in an oftentimes cut-throat competitive market.

"I think that I want to do well, but I've found that if I focus on my client's needs first, any of my individual goals will get accomplished. If I were to use a sports analogy, you don't always have control of the outcomes of a championship game, but you can control the day to day process. I think for me that's probably the carry-over."

AD is often remembered as a smart and competitive player on the court, but it wasn't the competition that drove him to a career in real estate, nor what has kept him at the top. "Of course, you always want to try to be at the top of your game. I think in this career the building of relationships and taking care of people is more important than trying to be number one on a sales list. You want to do well in everything you do, but again, not at the expense of the process. When I look back on my



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## A.D. SMITH

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