

Your Friend for Real Estate

Bobette Fisher

[BY HELEN MITTERNIGHT]

Business after business seemed to cry “uncle” during the pandemic shutdown, but in Charleston, folks have been snatching up homes like they’ve never heard of the coronavirus.

“Everything is hot,” said Bobette Fisher. “We have seen more million-dollar homes going under contract since the beginning of the year than in the history of sales here. Last week, we had 31 homes over \$1 million go on contract. But it’s not just the million-dollar homes. People want whatever’s available.”

Fisher, president of the Charleston Trident Association of Realtors (CTAR), said the COVID-19 crisis brought a

brief dip, but then residential real estate popped right back up. What’s changed is the way people are buying.

“What’s been helpful to people is, we’re focusing more on virtual tours. People are doing 360-degree walkthroughs, and agents are getting on the phone with clients,” she said. “I have sold homes through FaceTime. The demand is there. There are buyers who will purchase homes, sight unseen. They want to be in Charleston. What’s bringing them here are our jobs, our weather and our southern charm.”

The technology may have changed, but the need for hand-holding has not – even if it’s virtual hand-holding.



"The technology does not replace the need for good Realtors to hold their clients' hands through the transaction process. It's a very stressful, emotional business to be in. It's much more than showing pretty houses," Fisher commented.

Fisher grew up in Indiana and lived in Florida, then in New Orleans for a short time, then back to Florida. Along the way, she consulted for two national physician groups. That experience helped prepare her for real estate.

"Working in that 24/7 industry prepared me well to consult with and hand-hold clients, sometimes at odd hours of the night, while they are dealing with the stressful process of buying or selling one of their biggest assets," she noted.

Fisher and her husband moved to Charleston in 2000.

The transition wasn't bump-free, and it fueled her desire to specialize not just in real estate, but in relocations.

"I'm not from Charleston and will never be considered a Charlestonian. I understand what you need when you move into a new community," she said. "People don't always think about what they are going to need after they arrive, like medical services, hair salons or personal services. And that's in addition to learning about all the fun things to do — the restaurants, the stores, that kind of stuff. Also, you have the opportunity to be outside so much here. A lot of times, people get all hung up on their house, but living here is not just about your house. I prepare them for the opportunity to go and have a lot of fun outside. It's fun to help them. Most become dear friends. My slogan is, 'You've got a friend for real estate in Charleston'."

Her experience has led her to help with relocations throughout the Tri-county area, and she likes helping people from all over transition from experiencing Charleston as a charming place to visit to Charleston as home. In the days of coronavirus, they seem even more eager to do that.

"There certainly has been a plethora of people coming from the Northeast, in high-density areas, because they

want to get away from that situation," Fisher said. "You can buy a lot of house here for a million dollars. But we also have people from all different places. We do have people moving in-state from Greenville, or from Charlotte or Atlanta. There are also Midwesterners. I have people from Ohio, Wisconsin, Illinois in the next 30 days."

Fisher may have a lot of million-dollar homes in her portfolio now, but she remembers when Charleston was a very different market.

"Charleston has changed a lot. It has grown tremendously, and I have enjoyed the growth personally. When I first moved here, there was no Starbucks, no Target stores. It was virgin territory. And then Boeing came along,

and there were a lot of changes in services and traffic."

Fisher's ability to help even as the city has grown has led to her becoming only the ninth female to serve as president of CTAR since 1907.

CTAR is affiliated with the National Association of Realtors, the trade association with 1.4 million

members nationwide. The leadership role has kept Fisher busy, but it also has helped satisfy her love of travel — although that love has been curtailed recently by the virus.

"I love to travel. I travel a lot with the Realtors because they always have their meetings at great spots," she said. "I love traveling in Europe — I've been to Portugal and to Italy three times in the past five years and to France twice in three years. I also love traveling anywhere in the country — Chicago, California — even Kiawah for jazz."

Still, she considers Charleston home.

"I love our southern hospitality," she said. "We still have such charm here, and people are quite courteous. There's not a lot of cussing that goes on here. Sometimes I slip, and people look at me like I am less than a lady. I have to be careful with that stuff. And sometimes, you just have to pinch yourself and think, 'What month is this? It's so lovely! Oh my gosh, it's November!' That's Charleston." 🌸

