

COVER QUOTE: “Let your dreams take flight.”

Today is a Perfect Day for Opening a New Door ~ Ani Dermenjian

Exuding boundless energy, a strong work ethic, and a passion for succeeding in every endeavor she pursues, Ani Dermenjian, a Malibu Douglas Elliman residential realtor, is always optimistic as she develops lasting relationships with the clients and colleagues she professionally serves.

“Everyone calls me a big dreamer,” Ani says enthusiastically. It started with her love for villas, mansions, the ocean, and Malibu, and Ani did what most dream of, turning their passion into a profession. Her ability to keep dreaming and be confident that her hard work will manifest her dreams into reality has played a significant role in her success.

Ani’s philosophy?

“Working as a realtor is all about relationship building, and fortunately, 80 to 90 percent of my business comes from repeat clients or referrals. I think it is important always to be transparent, honest, positive, energetic, and have a win-win mindset. I never say “I can’t” because there’s always a solution, and I find that challenges bring out the best in me,” she said. “Further, I can exceed a client’s expectations by being a responsive, professional communicator who keeps her clients informed through every step of the process and, most importantly, a strong negotiator.”

Ani’s dream was to both live and work in Malibu, and for twenty-eight years, she has served this community as a realtor and a civic leader.

“Malibu has changed me tremendously, and I’m humbled to work around such fabulous people,” Ani said. “When we moved to Malibu in 2001, my husband and I said our beautiful home means nothing to us if we can’t enjoy sharing it with our loved ones. Our philosophy is and will always be, “Mi casa es su casa,” and we’ve opened our home to entertaining, living, and sharing.”

Ani has also opened her heart to serving her community — that she loves — through volunteering in various civic organizations.

She served as the Malibu Association of Realtors president in 2020 amidst the Pandemic. She pivoted quickly to support the organization’s 1,200 members, offering virtual meetings and encouraging them to always remain positive. She closed each email with the phrase, “Stay happy, healthy, and helpful,” to inspire the members with hope during such a difficult time. Despite adverse situations, Ani stays true to her values and is a light of hope to others.

Ani’s leadership during that difficult time led to her being named the 2020 MAR Realtor of the Year, just one of her many professional awards and accolades. In 2021, she was named a Los Angeles Magazine Real Estate All-Star and is in the top 5% of Douglas Elliman agents company-wide. Ani attributes her success to the team behind her — past and present —, her family, and the leadership she has always been grateful to have.

When speaking as the only Keynote speaker at the Women’s Council of Los Angeles & Beverly Hills Luncheon earlier this year, Ani shared her professional goals. “I want to encourage and empower elite women as business leaders to survive and thrive in the real estate business with passion, compassion, humor, and style because I believe we are smart, strong, and resilient.” She also spoke this year as a

panelist at the Real Women in Real Estate event, saying, “Helping others to reach their highest potential fulfills my heart and inspires me to make a difference.”

In Malibu, Ani has also served as an executive board member for the Pepperdine Crest Advisory Board since 2012. She mentors Pepperdine students and recently obtained a conflict resolution mediation certificate from Pepperdine’s Caruso School of Law’s Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution. She has served on the Malibu Business Roundtable for more than two decades, and she has been recognized for her community service and for chairing the Malibu Veterans Day Public ceremony since 2000 by the Malibu Chamber of Commerce — she was the President that same year. In 2011 she was even honored to receive the most distinguished Citizen of the Year Dolphin Award presented by the *Malibu Times*.

From appearing on several TV shows, being invited to numerous organizations as a keynote speaker, and being on panels, she remains humble. Her success, though, has not changed who Ani is — she recognizes where she came from and always stays true to herself.

How It All Began

When Ani was seven years old, her family immigrated from Beirut, Lebanon. She grew up in Montebello with an ideal childhood; her older sister set the bar high and was a fantastic role model, and her three brothers spoiled her yet were very strict. This combination was the perfect balance for reinforcing their love and encouraging her to blossom. Later, Ani met her college sweetheart at CSLA (Cal State LA), to whom she has been married for thirty-two years.

With a strong work ethic and independent mindset, Ani was motivated to earn her own money. She began working at a small boutique clothing store when she was only 15 years old and then worked part-time in an optometry office while attending university to study psychology.

A career in banking followed. Ani began as a teller and then worked her way up into management, which she says “taught [her] discipline, leadership, listening, and how to handle and balance money in addition to the importance of providing exceptional customer service.”

Realizing that she could work for herself, make more money, and follow her dream, Ani segued into the real estate sector.

Starting expansively, Ani first worked in all aspects of residential real estate, from leasing to selling land parcels, homes, and condos.

“Then, I started identifying the client category that best matched my skill set. I actually enjoyed the process of focusing on my professional goals,” she said. “I realized that working with developers was what I enjoyed most - the process from start to finish of selling raw land to the completion of new construction was fascinating.”

Meeting with city officials and Architects led Ani to appreciate Architectural properties, culminating in her position as the Executive Managing Director for the Architectural Division at Douglas Elliman.

Ani has worked with builders for over twenty-five years, witnessing how her hard work ethic, cultivation of amicable relationships, and exceeding clients’ expectations have blossomed within her expert niche. She takes pride in providing exceptional service. Her commitment is apparent in that she

genuinely goes far beyond what is expected of her, especially for her existing, loyal, and appreciative clients.

Ani's Secrets to Success

Clearly, hard work, tenacity, and exemplary customer service have paid off for Ani. However, she also takes time to pursue her other interests, especially retail shopping and traveling with her family to exotic islands and ski destinations. She excitedly anticipates a forthcoming trip to South Africa, where she will run a marathon.

And, of course, Ani revels in being a proud mom to her two active boys and spending time with her husband, friends, and family.

“My greatest accomplishment in life is our two boys,” Ani shared, adding, “We were married for 20 years before having our miracles - Christopher, who is 12, and Alexander, who is 11.

So, how does Ani juggle being a very involved mom, a highly sought-after realtor, and an engaged civic contributor?

“Living a balanced life makes me very happy,” Ani said.

Her secret: Time management, the right team, and support from her three boys.

She notes that time is the most valuable commodity of our lives, stating, “We must eliminate distractions and negativity.”

“I finally learned I am in control of my day,” Ani said. “Like Jim Rohn said, ‘Either you run the day or the day runs you.’”

Another strategy - she plans things out. Or, rather, plots her future actions out in an annual pie chart and business plan.

“Every New Year’s Day, I ask myself what I want to accomplish in the forthcoming year,” she said. “Then, I formulate a pie chart dividing my time between family, real estate, volunteering, mentoring, volunteering at my sons’ school, Our Lady of Malibu, Malibu Association of Realtors Board, and chairing the Malibu Veteran’s Day Public Ceremony for 22 years.”

She also is very involved in the local Armenian Association, where she hosted events for over a hundred individuals. More recently, Ani started the Health and Wellness Committee to address the importance of health and wellness in an industry that is often a roller coaster of high successes punctuated by periodic downturns.

Ani’s strongest and most influential mentor? Her mother, whom she characterizes as her “forever role model, even now from Heaven.”

“My mother taught me to have a never-give-up attitude despite any difficulties or challenges,” Ani said. “My mother ceaselessly counted her blessings, was always grateful, and had strong faith values: her joy was always helping and giving to her children, family friends, church neighbors, and never failed to always be patient, courageous, and positive.”

As Ani runs the race of life, she also runs marathons, another one of her life passions.

“The 2021 LA Marathon was one of my most memorable experiences,” Ani said. “It was my 10th consecutive marathon, the one I trained for most. I wanted to be *my very best ever*.”

However, the night before the race, Ani tripped over her dogs in the kitchen and landed hard on her knees on a stone floor.

“I had to go to Urgent Care, and it looked bleak.” The doctor said to her, “Good news, bad news: although nothing is broken or fractured, the only way you can complete a marathon tomorrow would be by car as you need to elevate your legs and ice your knees for the next three weeks.”

Undaunted, Ani participated in the marathon.

“Despite the obstacles, I completed the marathon ~ that goes to show that where there’s a will, there’s a way,” she said. Her desire to be a role model for her boys was a driving force behind her inability to give up. “There will always be challenges in life, and it’s up to every person to decide if they want to quit or want to give it their very best.”

Ani’s message: Always embrace a win or learn mindset because success is learning, improving, and progressing every day.

When people get to know Ani, they find her to be hardworking and diligent. Still, she is also gifted with the ability to use humor in difficult situations while persevering during negotiations and addressing whatever obstacles might present themselves in a real estate transaction.

Another of Ani’s mottos: Stay positive. Work hard. Make it happen.

Ani does not strive to be perfect; she simply gives her best every day — that is the mindset she reminds herself of daily. One of her most valuable characteristics is that after twenty-eight years in the business, Ani looks forward to waking up every single day, feeling grateful that she loves what she does. Her clients' reviews are a testimony of her commitment to her profession.

“Ani Dermenjian was reputed to be a superb realtor. In a terribly difficult context, she proved to be vastly more - her unceasing efforts and ultimate achievements in selling our home of 25 years were spectacular. She went far beyond anything one could rationally expect in every aspect of her work,” One appreciative client said. “She was not just supremely capable and professionally excellent, she compassionately rose above the worst obstacles. She simply amazed us as much as she benefited us. Ani was a godsend.”

How does Ani sum up her life and her professional philosophies?

“As Oprah Winfrey once said. “Passion is energy. Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you.” Ani added, “Whatever your passion and your dream is, “Just Follow It” and remember to enjoy the journey to the fullest, and, along the way, always count your blessings.”

And, don’t forget that pie chart and setting goals to achieve your highest aspirations, she added.

“I’m living my dream every day; I am present and grateful for the sunrises, the sunsets, the sounds of the ocean, hiking, and being outdoors I get to witness every day. I count my blessings, and in

return, I fulfill my heart with gratitude and then pass that along to everyone I encounter daily and on every level. I think my smile speaks louder than words.

“Come to Malibu, where dreams come true ~ mine did.”

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