

Real Estate Today

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Integrity & Full Disclosure Is A Core Value in Real Estate

By **JIM SMITH, Realtor®**

If you review the 100-plus “Real Estate Today” columns I have published in this and other publications—the most recent of



which are archived at JimSmithColumns.com—you’ll notice that a recurring concern/theme has been integrity and full disclosure. Last week it was about those deceptive ads by mortgage brokers. The week before

it was about errors on settlement statements. The week before that it was about agent teams which obscure their broker affiliation.

Two years ago this week I was involved in a transaction where the buyer (a licensed agent, but not a Realtor®) and his agent/father (also a non-Realtor) tried to steal a second parcel from my seller by inserting a second legal description into our sales contract after it was countered. Shortly thereafter, the Real Estate Commission voted unanimously (on my complaint) to revoke both their real estate licenses, but the Attorney General’s office is still attempting to enforce that decision due to appeals by the culprits.

So, yes, integrity is a big issue with me.

That’s why I get so hot under the collar during election campaigns when candidates either lie about their opponents or sit happily on the sidelines while “independent” 527 groups do the lying and distorting for them. We probably experience more of this in Colorado than in other states this year, because the Democrats took control of both houses of the Legislature in 2004 and the

national Republican Party has thrown lots of money into these 527 groups to smear Democrats in key races on the theory that negative campaigning may be distasteful when it’s based on lies or when it distorts the truth but, hey, if it gets Republicans back in control, then it’s okay.

Myself, I grew up in an old-line Republican and Episcopalian household. I don’t think Mom and Dad ever voted for a Democrat. But their Republican Party and their Episcopal faith bore no resemblance to the Republican Party and its Christian right controllers of today.

My Dad, whom I consider my mentor, taught me the values of integrity and fair play and generosity by which I live in his honor and memory. The values of his and Mom’s “Grand Old Party” became my values as I, like Dad, became an entrepreneur, an employer, an investor and a taxpayer.

Today, however, those values seem to have been sacrificed by a GOP which has sold its soul to the religious right and adopted the ends-justifies-the-means mentality of Karl Rove.

I still share my Dad’s “Old GOP” values of fiscal conservatism and Christian tolerance, but I don’t see those values in the GOP itself. Perhaps having at least one house of the Congress in Democratic hands will temper the out-of-control situation we see today.

Another Political Endorsement:

Last week I made some endorsements. Here’s another: **Karen Middleton** for State Board of Education, endorsed by both daily newspapers and the Realtor association, even though her opponent is a Realtor.

This Week’s Featured Listing

Open House Today on Lookout Mountain

I have featured this home at 824 Aspen Road before, but today from 11:30 to 1:30 I’m hosting a lavish broker open house (with catered lunch) in this home and I’m inviting my readers to come too! What makes this home so special is its location at the end of a gravel cul-de-sac on the eastern edge of Lookout Mountain. See the website, where I have posted both a virtual and a video tour of this home. There’s also a map link so that you can find it easily. Other features include master suites (one in the walk-out basement) and a great kitchen! **Also open Sat. 1-4.**



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