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Dorothy Rolater
photo by Chris Johnson

Small Town Realtor Achieves Big City Success!

By Jackie Beynaerts

HOW DOES A SMALL TOWN REALTOR go from selling mainly farms and ranches to big businesses and hot residential listings? Well, as they say in the business, "It's all about location, location, location." And Dorothy Rolater had just that, plus a lot of hard work and determination.

Being in the right place at the right time, wasn't hard. The right location was Frisco, and Mrs. Rolater was born and raised in this very town. Needless to say, she has watched and helped it grow. She even sold the property for Frisco's first drive-in restaurant, known then as the Royal Drive-In. Around town she has sold many 500-acre tracts, including the property that now is Stonebriar Ranch. One smaller property was the historic home on Oak St. in the downtown district. She restored the residence, lived in it for several years and then sold and resold it a total of three times. She also ventured north to sell

1800 acres of land in Tioga, Texas, home to Gene Autry, a popular Western film actor.

Being a realtor runs in Mrs. Rolater's family. Her father had his office in Frisco where City Hall is now, and Mrs. Rolater was quick to follow in his footsteps. Straight out of high school she received her real estate license. At that time, there was only one test to take, but not having any formal training made it harder to get started. She has since taken every real estate course she could find, and of her three grown children, two have a real estate license of their own.

"It's a lot easier now for people just getting into the business," observed Mrs. Rolater. "When I started out, I had to hustle all of my information on properties. I would hang out at the courthouse searching land deeds and gathering information two or three days a week. If you made a mistake, you were sure to never make it again."

As well as being in the real estate business, when she was younger, Mrs. Rolater was also a model for a dress company. In a work related injury, she broke her ankle and visited Dr. Erwin Pink for medical care. She ended up staying and working for him as an administrative assistant for five years. A few years later, a car accident would ultimately lead to needing both her hips replaced. Through it all, she kept up her real estate license.

As of October 27, 2005, Mrs. Rolater has been in the real estate business for 50 years and has attained many milestones along the way. She was the first woman to own a real estate office in Frisco, Rolater Realtors. She was also the first woman to join the Frisco Chamber of Commerce, and as the second woman to join the Collin County Board of Realtors, she later became president during 1971 and 1973. In 1980 she moved her office to where Collin County Realty remains today.

The biggest difference from the early days to now is the size of Frisco. Mrs. Rolater's transactions were primarily farm properties when the population was close to 2,000 people as compared to its present day 82,000-plus residents.

"I am so happy the way Frisco has grown, it's grown in a first-class manner, and I'm so glad I am here to see it," said Mrs. Rolater.

In addition to being an active member in the Rotary Club and Frisco Heritage Association, Mrs. Rolater claims there isn't much time for hobbies, and with surgery pending on both of her knees, she cannot do as much as she'd like. But ask any of her three sons or grandson and they will tell you her hobby has to be shopping!

The only thing Dorothy Rolater has failed at in the real estate industry is retiring. She has a loyal list of clients who keep calling wanting her to buy and sell their property, and she just can't turn the offers down. Now after over 50 years in the business, she has decided to just keep working as long as she can. After all, she's doing what she loves.

Jackie Beynaerts is a freelance writer living in Plano.