



Dennis of Hunt Mortgage: Honored to manage a dedicated team

June 23, 2015 - Spotlights

Name: Tracy Dennis

Title: Managing Director/Head of Transaction Management & Counsel

Company Name: Hunt Mortgage Group

What year did you start your career in commercial real estate: 1996

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What recent project or transaction are you most proud of?

I have been at Hunt Mortgage Group for only three months, yet have been able to touch every part of the process of closing a loan, while working on special projects as well. I am a new addition to a long-standing mortgage lending company with new ownership, so there is a lot of excitement about growing the business. I was a practicing attorney for many years closing real estate finance transactions, in addition to working at an investment bank in the good times and the not-so-good years. Coming to Hunt has been an exciting next step because there is a well-established infrastructure with people who are open and invigorated about the future. I am honored to manage a team of five transaction managers who have been in the business for years and are extremely dedicated to their deals and their colleagues.

What has been your experience with having a mentor or being a mentor yourself?

I was a very fortunate young attorney, having been mentored by a generous law firm partner who appreciated how hard I worked and always supported me, be it the quality of my assignments, the time he took to teach me all aspects of closing a commercial real estate loan, the trust he showed in me by having me work with his clients directly from day one, and the honest feedback he always gave me in order to make me a better lawyer. One of my favorite memories occurred when I was a first year attorney. I had taken what an attorney on the other side of the deal told me as gospel and when I repeated the conversation to my mentor, he marched me to the law library (those were the pre-Google days), opened Martindale-Hubbell (the White Pages for lawyers), and showed me that the person I had been speaking to was a mere second year associate. "Tracy" he said to me "I know you think that everyone knows more than you but I assure you they don't. You're a smart person and a good attorney and I promise you - if YOU don't understand what they are saying, then 9 times out of 10, THEY don't understand what they are saying." I have taken that lesson with me throughout my career and have imparted it to all new attorneys I have mentored. He invested in me, and I like to think I keep paying it forward.

Who or what has been the strongest influence on your career and why?

I have been extremely fortunate in my career to have mostly been surrounded by people who encouraged and supported me. My mentor in law firm life who I described above not only taught me how to be a real lawyer, but allowed me to fly while reminding me I could always come home.

What is the first thing you do when you arrive in the office in the morning?

After dropping off my bags in my office, I tend to head straight to the kitchen and put together my breakfast of frozen blueberries mixed into plain yogurt. I call it my breakfast parfait and it starts my day off on a refreshing note while logging in and organizing my emails.

What time management strategies do you find to be the most effective for you?

I am the queen of the to-do lists and the to-do ASAP lists. Most days I make a dent in them, but I have to see the items in front of me and be able to jot down notes, update, and most importantly, cross things off the lists.

What is the best advice you have received and who was it from?

As a typical Type A personality, I have always been a perfectionist and put myself under a lot of pressure. After not handling something well, I was beating myself up about it and my mother said to me: "You're not perfect so get off that pedestal and join the rest of us." Life changing.

List 3 women that you would like to have drinks / dinner with and where would you go?

Golda Meir who lead a country in crisis at a time when it was truly a man's world.

Maureen Dowd who I consider a hard charging/take no prisoner critical thinker.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg. I remember her nomination speech in 1992. She was refined, eloquent, sincere, and inspirational.

I would ask my husband to barbecue for us, get some good wine, and ask them questions all night.

What is your favorite quote?

"I have never let my schooling interfere with my education." Mark Twain

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I remember watching Judith Light in the sitcom "Who's the Boss" and thinking that I wanted to do something so I could wear a business suit and carry a briefcase like she did. I sure got my wish!