

Decode alphabet soup, find realtors' specialties

To the uninitiated, it may well be alphabet soup.

But to real estate professionals, letters like CRE, RNMI and SIOR designate training and competency in specialty areas of the business.

"Many people are surprised to learn how many of our members specialize in real estate services other than home sales," said Mary M. Arlinghaus, president of the Birmingham-Bloomfield Board of Realtors.

"We would like community residents to be aware of what specialties are available so when special real estate needs arise, such as investment, property

management or counseling, they can best choose a real estate professional who best will meet those needs," Arlinghaus said.

The National Association of Realtors offers memberships in seven affiliated institutes, societies and councils.

Each group awards specialty designations that recognize a member's advanced education and experience in a particular field.

The Commercial Investment Real Estate Institute, the newest of association affiliates, was established in 1990. Prior to that, it was called the Commercial Investment Council and was housed

with the National Marketing Institute.

CREI enhances the professional competence of persons involved in commercial investment real estate and offers the Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) designation.

The Realtors National Marketing Institute (RNMI), founded in 1923, is comprised of two independent councils — the Real Estate Brokerage Council and the Residential Sales Council.

Their purpose is to promote professionalism and competency through education in sales and marketing, and real estate brokerage management.

Professional designations offered are CRB, certified real estate brokerage manager, and CRS, certified residential specialist.

Members of the Realtors Land Institute specialize in such areas as subdivision development, real estate marketing, foreign investment, urban and investment land, farms and ranches, commercial and development properties and residential sales.

Established in 1944 as a trade association for urban and rural real estate practitioners, RLI offers the designation of Accredited Land Consultant (ALC).

The Councilors of Real Estate (CRE) was formed in 1954 to en-

hance the quality of advice available to the public on property matters. CRE members offer independent advice and guidance on a fee basis.

The Institute of Real Estate Management, established in 1933 to advance professionalism in property management, awards several designations.

They include Certified Property Manager (CPM), Accredited Management Organization (AMO) to management firms and Accredited Residential Manager (ARM) to on-site managers.

The Society of Industrial and Office Realtors was established in

1941 for individuals specializing in all phases of industrial and office real estate activity.

An international organization, SIOR offers educational courses in marketing and the SIOR and Professional Real Estate Executive (PRE) designations.

The Women's Council of Realtors, founded in 1938, provides a referral network, programs and systems for personal and career growth.

WCR offers the Leadership Training Graduate (LTG) designation and Referral and Relocation Certification (RRC).

Brokers are liable for discriminatory acts of its agents

I am a real estate broker and am concerned about my potential liability for discriminatory acts of my agents, even though the owner/manager had not condoned the discriminatory acts and, in fact, had a history of working against housing discrimination.



ROBERT M. MEISNER
According to the Seventh Circuit of the Federal Court,

you do have something to be concerned about in that it affirmed an award of compensatory damages against a sole shareholder and manager of a real estate brokerage office for the discriminatory acts of his agent, even though the owner/manager had not condoned the discriminatory acts and, in fact, had a history of working against housing discrimination.

The court basically determined that a principal cannot free itself of liability under anti-discrimination laws by

delegating its duty not to discriminate and, indeed, the broker was liable even though it had specifically instructed its agents not to discriminate. Moreover, the court reasoned that the agent's contracts, calling them independent contractors, made no difference since they were deemed the broker's agent bound to follow the broker's policies and to take day to day supervision from the broker.

I am buying a home and was promised that the septic system would be connected to a

sewer line in the near future. I relied on the listing broker to review the purchase agreement and now find that there is no likelihood that a sewer will be coming in in the near future. I have already signed the purchase agreement but have not closed. What can I do?

First, you should appreciate that the broker that was assisting you was an agent of the seller and that, in any event, the broker is not a substitute for retaining a competent attorney to review your purchase agreement before you sign it.

Most people seek advice from an attorney, if at all, before the closing, but do not seek a lawyer's input at the most important time, that is, during the negotiation stage concerning the terms and conditions of the purchase agreement.

You may well have recourse against the seller and broker for misrepresentations and/or breach of contract depending upon what the listing ticket said and/or what representations were made in the purchase agreement by the seller and/or broker. Better late than

never, you should consult with a competent attorney as soon as possible.

Robert M. Meisner is a Birmingham attorney concentrating his practice in the areas of condominiums, real estate and corporate law. You are invited to submit topics you would like to see discussed in this column by writing Robert M. Meisner at 30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 467, Bingham Farms 48025. This column provides general information and should not be construed as legal opinion.

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