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The Hendersons: Merging Family Values and Professional Success

By: Kate Richardson



Real estate success for the Hendersons, of London, Ontario, is a family affair. John, Penny and Ashley Henderson together form one of London's Top Sales Teams, providing over 25 years of satisfied service within the London-St. Thomas Real Estate Board. Daughter Ashley, once the youngest realtor in the London Board, is now a seasoned Broker. And, since all the Hendersons believe in treating clients like family, their lucky customers become a part of the Henderson success story.

For Penny, real estate was a family affair from the beginning. Her sister, Joy Dover, a successful realtor in British Columbia, recognized that Penny's warm, outgoing, and enthusiastic personality was a natural fit, and encouraged Penny to venture into the world of professional real estate. In the early 1980s, after moving to Ontario from British Columbia where she had been an emergency dispatcher for the RCMP, Penny decided to take up her sister's challenge. In 1987, Penny

obtained her Ontario Real Estate License.

John, a career RCMP officer, met Penny when he was posted to British Columbia more than 35 years ago. But it wasn't until 1997, when John was planning for retirement, that he followed Penny into the field of real estate and obtained his Ontario Real Estate Licence. It was a natural fit. He has always enjoyed working with people, and gained his insight into real estate from one of the best in the business - his wife! "Every day, this business gives me the opportunity to meet interesting people from all walks of life, and to guide them towards making the right choice when buying or selling a home," John says. "It's rewarding to have people

place their trust in your judgement and be totally satisfied with their final decision."

After finishing high school, Ashley, now 26 years old, told her parents she was interested in a real estate career. John and Penny encouraged their daughter to discover more about the

business by enrolling in the licensing process. To their delight, Ashley "aced" all her required exams, and immediately forged ahead in the business. As both parents and business partners, John and Penny are delighted with the feedback from Ashley's clients that their daughter is "a breath of fresh air," energetic, upbeat and knowledgeable. And when Penny and John take time off together, they like knowing that their business is in good hands. "Whenever we are on vacation Ashley is always there to guide our clients," Penny says. "It's comforting because she's doing the business the same way that John and I do, and she treats people the same way, too."

The Hendersons all work with RE/MAX Centre City Realty Inc.

Penny joined RE/MAX in 1993 and has been an award winning REALTOR® ever since. Year after year Penny has been the recipient of numerous RE/MAX Sales awards as well as the coveted “Hall of Fame” award. John has been with the company for thirteen years and has established himself as one of the most energetic, respected and committed realtors in the business. Ashley, now a licensed Broker is in her 6th year with RE/MAX is definitely a rising star. “RE/MAX agents have access to a world-wide referral system, which allows us to service our clients anywhere in the country,” John explains. “Consumers today know the importance of professional representation when buying or selling a house, and that’s why they are attracted to RE/MAX. Plus, the brand recognition is great. Everyone knows the RE/MAX balloon!” With over 75 percent of their business coming from referrals, and a large portion involving corporate relocations, the Hendersons appreciate the up-to-date in-service training programs available through direct satellite programming, and the strong administrative team available to support their business.

The focus on family is an integral part of the service the Hendersons offer their clients. Penny says she listens closely to clients, understands their needs, and works on building a relationship that will allow her to find the ideal solution for them. “There is no greater satisfaction than to see the excitement in the faces of a family who have found their ‘perfect home,’” says Penny. Sometimes the solution actually means discouraging a purchase or listing! For instance, a couple recently approached Penny to list their house and help them purchase a condominium. After many conversations, Penny realized that they loved their home, but wanted a maintenance-free lifestyle. Penny advised them to stay put and “condo-ize” their home by purchasing maintenance services. The couple was

delighted - and Penny was out of a listing! But, she insists, the couple was selling their home for the wrong reasons. “I’m not talking myself out of business,” she emphasizes. “The business will come back tenfold when you treat people the right way.”

As a team, the Hendersons split their business equally between listing homes for clients, and acting for them



as a buyer agent. They list a variety of properties in price ranges from \$80,000 to \$1,000,000. Strong supporters of the Children’s Miracle Network, the Hendersons donate a portion of every sale to this cause. Penny, John and Ashley have also become specialists in representing several custom builders. They have recently sold out in one complex of new homes, and are already talking to another builder to help sell a new phase of homes. “New home sales in the London area have skyrocketed over the past few years,” John explains. “It’s an exciting time to be involved in new construction, and our creative sides enjoy being part of the process from the ground up.” Penny adds, “New home buyers need someone who understands construction, can explain the product, provide guidance about house plans

and possible changes, and promote the builder. Builders also need someone who has time for open houses. And with our team approach, we always have someone available!”

The Hendersons use a variety of marketing techniques, including extensive syndicated Internet websites, professional photos and Virtual Tours of their listings, colour advertisements in

a variety of print media publications, realtor luncheons, and agent open houses. They maintain a website, www.callthehendersons.com, and publish a colour newsletter titled, “Hello from the Hendersons!”

Penny and John have also taken on the maintenance of a directory that combines their experience with the RCMP, their focus on family, and their real estate skills. The “Old Boys and Girls Club” is a directory of retired RCMP officers and their spouses who are practising real estate across Canada. These agents have personal insight into the challenges of frequent relocations during their tenure with a police force. “It’s a referral network,” Penny explains, “These agents have an inside track on what an RCMP family goes through when transferring, always having to

have resale uppermost in their minds. We maintain the list and keep in touch with agents. It's almost like family."

Even when the Hendersons take time for recreation or vacation, it's usually family-focused. John, an avid lifelong hockey fan, coached both Ashley's and son TJ's hockey teams, from the time they were five years old until they hung up their skates at 18. John himself still plays today, on a 'Huff & Puff' over 55 team. Recently, Penny and John have discovered the beauty of Belize in Central America where they have built a vacation home. Penny is fiercely proud of her own children, and likes to point out that they have both graduated from the Royal Conservatory of Music with their Grade 8 piano, as well as playing hockey! John and Penny love to spend time with their granddaughter, Rileigh-Marie attending all her basketball games, horseback riding lessons and gymnastics. "To keep life balanced and in perspective, it's important to schedule time off for your family and yourself," Penny explains. "A busy person needs to be good at managing time, including personal time."

Looking at the Henderson team from

the outside may make the real estate business look easy. But Penny offers the following advice to new people entering the business. "It's the advice I give my own kids. When you start out, you need to do the basics, like knocking on doors and making phone calls. Building a good client base and keeping in touch with them will be the foundation for your future success." Penny also emphasizes the importance of staying current with information about the real estate industry. She approves of the new mandatory credit system of continuing education for realtors.

It's clear that the Hendersons enjoy their ideal combination of family and professional life. "Over the next decade, I look forward to seeing the family business continue to grow and flourish with the input, energy and new ideas brought to the dinner table by all of



us," Penny says. Who knows maybe in the next 6 or 7 years our granddaughter Rileigh Marie may be the new addition to our family team! "Our success can be directly attributed to the family morals and ethics our parents instilled in us years ago, our efforts to live by them every day, and always ensuring we treat our clients the same way."



The Hendersons

Penny, John and Ashley

RE/MAX Centre City Realty Inc.

675 Adelaide St. N

London, ON N5Y 2L4

Phone: 519-667-1800

Cell: 519-851-9974 (John)

519-851-9973 (Penny)

519-619-9976 (Ashley)

Toll Free: 1-888-857-7725

Fax: 519-850-7242

Fax: 519-850-7242

Web: www.callthehendersons.com

E: callthehendersons@rogers.com