

Jerry Sardone: intrepid Realtor has no plans for retirement

BY ELIZABETH STINETTE

Jerry Sardone walked into a real estate office to find a home in Vienna when the agent he was meeting made a life-changing comment: "You're in the wrong business." Sardone had worked as a policeman in Montgomery County, Md., then as a private investigator, and while he excelled at both jobs they weren't the right fit. If Sardone would become a real estate agent, the agent said, he would pay for the education.

Fifty years later, Jerry Sardone Realty is a Route 7 landmark that has served generations of Loudoun residents.

"We had such good luck," Sardone said. "It was like making instant coffee—we just never stopped."

Soon after Sardone got his real estate license, he decided to open his own firm in Sterling in 1968. He bought a 1942 farmhouse that had previously been a palm reader's establishment. His timing was perfect. Route 7 was just expanding from a two-lane highway, and in the decades to come, Loudoun's growth would be exponential.

Sardone got to both see and shape the county's growth, chairing the Dulles Greenway Committee for three-and-a-half years, serving on the boards of multiple Loudoun realty committees and expanding his farmhouse so it could accommodate six tenants as well as his own office of up to 45 agents. In the midst of all this, he coached the Madeira School's squash team and raised six children with his wife and business partner, Fay.

In 1992, Sardone was granted the award of achievement for outstanding contributions to the advancement and preservation of the cultural heritage of Loudoun County by the Loudoun Preservation Society.

Sardone Realty has helped transform the Loudoun community. "I sold Sterling Ford the land where it's located," Sardone says of the Ford dealership off Route 7. "I feel like I have sold almost every house in some of these neighborhoods, at least once."



Jerry Sardone

He can tell you from memory the history of each one of the houses on Sterling Boulevard and how he watched them being built. He is a busy man, always with a story to tell of the days before Loudoun was what it is now.

Still helping people in the community, Sardone most recently focused his charitable efforts on the Marine Corps' Toys for Tots program and the well-known Wounded Warriors program. He starts each day with a big smile, unshakable optimism and unwavering dedication to every client he works with, and he has no plans on stopping any time soon.

As the years have passed, this real estate professional's life has evolved as well. As the Internet becomes the stan-

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dard resource for most homebuyers, Sardone is re-inventing how he markets himself, utilizing email, e-newsletters and even trying his hand in social media marketing.

While contracts may have ballooned from one single-sided page to 16, Sardone loves tackling the ever-shifting challenges of the real estate business and talking to aspiring homebuyers. He believes the customer service basics he learned 50 years ago still apply today.

"I don't care if it's a million-dollar house or a \$1,600 rental," Sardone said. "You have to treat people like they're gold."

He is optimistic about the housing market in the near future. After weathering multiple recessions, Sardone believes that the new tax cuts will encourage younger "dual-income-no-kids" couples to buy instead of rent within the next four years.

And as far as he knows, Sardone intends to be there for them. At 83 years old, he has no plans for retirement and has already served some Loudoun families for three generations. In his free time, Sardone enjoys playing golf and visiting his 16 grandchildren—one of whom is working at a real estate firm in southern Virginia.

"I've never found this business to be hard," Sardone said. "I've loved doing it."