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High Profile: Carol Pugh

Pugh named local 'Realtor of the Year'

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Carol Pugh, an associate broker with Prudential Sigmund-McLean & Associates Realtors in Beckley, was named the local Realtor of the Year by the Beckley Board of Realtors during a recent ceremony at the Raleigh County Armory Civic Center.

"There are really so many people deserving of this award," Pugh said. "I was really humbled and honored to receive it."

Pugh, who also won the award in 1999, will now be Beckley's representative for the state Realtor of the Year award.

Pugh was also recognized for her achievements in sales during the ceremony.

"I guess you could say that I've come a long way from the time I started in the real estate industry," she said.

Pugh's story begins in 1954, when she was born the second of seven children.

"I grew up in Syracuse, N.Y.," she said. "We grew up with very strong family values. Dad just adored being with his children."

Pugh said she was raised in a small, modest four-bedroom house.

"I shared a bedroom with my two sisters," she said. "We definitely were not rich, but we had a great life that centered around family."

Pugh said after graduating from high school in New York, she planned to attend Syracuse University.

"My dad was transferred and my family moved to Alabama, so instead of going to Syracuse University, I moved with them and attended the University of Alabama," Pugh recalled.

While attending business school there, she met Emmett Pugh of Beckley, who would go on to become mayor of his hometown.

"We moved to Beckley in 1973," Carol Pugh said. "I was a young bride and somewhat shell-

shocked at the different lifestyle here, compared to New York."

Pugh said there were no malls then and not many different places to eat out.

"The first time my mother visited Beckley, she wondered what I was doing here," she said.

"I guess she was concerned if I was going to be able to handle the big difference in lifestyles."

Pugh said she thought of Beckley as the perfect place to start a family.

"First Charlie was born, then Julie and then Michael," she said. "I was a stay-at-home mom and volunteer at the elementary school my children attended. I was in PTO, a homeroom mother and all the other things young moms do."

By 1989, Pugh began thinking about having her own career.

"I started thinking about money for my children's college education and how the family could use some extra money," she said.

Pugh had taken a real estate course at the old Beckley College in the 1970s, so it was her first choice when it came to new jobs.

"I like meeting new people and think of myself as a people person," she said. "I felt a career in real estate would be best for me, so I took another real estate course."

She said the only company with any interest in hiring her was Sigmund-McLean-Hunt & Associates.

"Phil Payne worked there and Mike Hunt was another big influence," she said. "I started as a young, naive housewife and they helped me. Bill Sigmund and Bob McLean gave me a wonderful opportunity, trained me well, and I can't imagine working anywhere else."

Hunt passed away a few years ago, Pugh said.

"He was a dear friend, like a brother, and I truly miss him," she said.

Pugh has seen in all during her career in real estate.

Pugh sold her first home 16 years ago.

"I have since sold that same home two more times," she said.

One of her first listings was a funeral home.

"One of the first experiences I had showing a property for sale was a funeral home," she said. "It was kind of weird showing the potential buyer around the crematory and the other areas of the funeral home."

Pugh has been with Sigmund-McLean since she started in the real estate industry. She has been named Prudential's top agent for the past five years.

"Everyone works well together there," she said. "They have been in the same location for over 40 years. We are all one big family and I love working with every one of them."

She loves the company so much that last year she became a partial owner.

"I bought into the company this year," she said.

Today, at age 51, Pugh is considered one of the top real estate professionals in the state. She was appointed to the West Virginia Real Estate Commission in 2003 by then-Gov. Bob Wise and still serves as secretary.

Pugh is the president of the Beckley Board of Realtors; past chairman of the Beckley Junior Woman's Club; past president of the Phymosia Garden Club; and is on the National Board of Directors for the Association of Real Estate License Law Officials. She also holds the CRS and GRI designations, which are coveted in the real estate industry, and has earned many other achievement goals and awards.

"It's funny that some of the children at the elementary school my kids went to when I was a homeroom mom and a stay-at-home mother are now buying homes from me," she said. "I guess I have come full circle."

Pugh also helps train new agents.

"I always tell new agents that real estate is the only business that you pay for a course, pay some fees and dues, and you walk in with a multimillion-dollar inventory with the potential to make good money on your first day of work," Pugh said. "Now, more than ever, there are lots of seasoned real estate agents in the Beckley market, as well as many new agents."

Pugh said the national real estate boom is great, but she never follows trends.

"Real estate in the Beckley area is booming," she said. "I think many people and businesses want to be a part of that growth."

Pugh is known for working with upper-scale, high-priced homes and properties.

"My favorite is selling a new home to a young couple just starting out," she said. "Sometimes these homes sell for as little as \$50,000, but to see the emotions of those buying their first home is the best feeling in the world. It is the best reward."

Pugh said the job brings many rewards.

"Real estate is a wonderful profession," she said. "Every day is different, bringing with it a new adventure. It's an exciting time to be in real estate."

Still, Pugh says her biggest accomplishment is family.

Her oldest son, Charlie, is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and has served as a fighter pilot in Iraq. Her daughter, Julie, is a property manager in Columbia, S.C., and her youngest son, Michael, is in the management program with 84 Lumber in Beaver.

"I am very proud of my children," she said. "They are all very good people."

Pugh said her mother, brothers and sisters still get together each year for a family reunion.

"We are always saying that Daddy would have loved this," she said.