



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

# Retired Notary Diane Siebolts: Finding New Passions

I grew up in Victoria and attended Oak Bay High School and Sprott Shaw Business College.

You could say I was born to the real estate business because my father was a contractor and real estate developer. In 1970 I moved to New Jersey and began working in the real estate field in property management and then as a licensed Realtor.

I returned to Victoria in 1976 and obtained my BC real estate licence and my agent's licence.

After managing Realty World offices in Victoria, Parksville, and Nanaimo, I started Golden West Realty in Parksville with my partner Tony Baker, who passed away in 1985.

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My Parksville Realty World office was awarded Office of the Year for Canada and third in North America.



*With grandbaby Ocean Baker, asleep at last!*

Golden West was consistently first in volume in the area. In 1986 I was elected President of the Vancouver Island Real Estate Board and a Director of the BC Real Estate Association.

The year 1987 was one of change for me. I sold my real estate company, moved to the Okanagan to be with my now-husband Peter, and made application to The Society to become a Notary. A number of Notaries I knew influenced my decision: Pat Moore of Duncan, Rick Evans and Frank Ney of Nanaimo, and Larry Rourke and Daryl McLane, who both had been Realtors in my office in Parksville.

After years in the real estate business, I had learned that my strengths lay in handling the paperwork and training—and that my passion was real estate law. Becoming a Notary seemed a good fit.

While taking the course, I started Professional Success Systems, doing training seminars and consulting for real estate boards and individual companies. I continued to do that for several years after becoming a Notary until the demands of my practice made it difficult to set aside the time.

I obtained my Notary commission in 1989 for Summerland and was the recipient of the Dr. Bernard W. Hoeter Award for achieving the highest overall marks in the Statutory Examinations that year. At the Installation Luncheon,



*With Peter's cousin Manfred, floating down the Rhine*

Dr. Hoeter commented to me that it was a shame I was not going to be working in a larger community. Oddly, the fact that I practised in a small town became the most satisfying aspect of my business.

Most real estate companies in Summerland did not have full-time management. I was able to combine my old career with my new, and became the unofficial manager to a great many Realtors. My door was always open to them and, in return, my office handled the vast majority of their business.

I had a motto for my real estate company: "The best form of advertising is simply to be very good." I carried that over to my Notary practice. In a small community, if you are good, the news travels fast and if you are bad, it travels even faster. My clients rewarded us with loyalty, thank yous, and more business than we could handle. I truly felt a part of the Notaries' Trusted Tradition, which was confirmed when the Municipality awarded us the contract to do all the work for the Summerland sewer project.

After selling my practice to Gary Richardson in 1999, I continued as a Roving Notary for a year, but chose not to renew my licence because we had found our home in California. I filled-in the following Summer for Greg Litwin's mat-leave conveyancers.

Our move to Kelowna announced my final retirement. Peter, who had worked with me in my practice, had already retired when Gary took over.

So now this workaholic plays as hard as she worked. My new passion is golf. We are members of Shadow Ridge Golf Club in Kelowna during the Summers and Blythe Golf Course in the California desert in the Winter. We purchased a small home at Rancho Ventana on the 15th fairway of the golf course, 6 miles from town on a beautiful mesa.

Blythe is conveniently located halfway between Palm Springs and Phoenix. We have a Pleasureway van for the trip south and for golf and side trips throughout the year. We have also travelled to Hawaii, Mexico, and

Europe. Our most recent trip was to Germany last Fall to visit Peter's family and hometown.

Of course the workaholic in a person does not completely die. I have been **very** involved in our homeowner associations, both in Kelowna and California. Our first home in Kelowna was a condo complex on the lake. I took on the president's duties and did the research to launch a lawsuit against the developer. It was gratifying to have two legal opinions agree with my assessment of the situation. The case was subsequently settled in favour of the homeowners. We have since moved to a much quieter and more established gated community.

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Our homeowner association in California has gone through major growing pains—over 100 new owners in one year—and I have been a director for the past 3 years. I have become—surprise?—the unofficial real estate specialist of the development. I could write a book on the misconceptions people have about strata ownership and the mistakes they make buying property in a foreign country. Perhaps that will be my next project.

I also keep busy with a private mortgage portfolio. Some of the most amusing and frustrating moments of my practice were sending documents to clients out of country. We would send samples, put stickies on to show them where to sign, and alas the documents still came back wrong. We often joked we would have to mail our secretary along with the documents—to get them properly completed.

Now that I am in the USA 6 months of the year, I have first-hand experience about what happens to the documents at the other end. After several rather comical attempts, I have found a Notary who will allow me to give her the BC Land Title rules and even use a black pen.

What is important? Enjoying your life and the people in it. Having no children of my own, I now get to enjoy the 3 grandchildren that Peter has—and 1 great grandchild. I also have a new step-granddaughter, Baker.

I set a goal many years ago to retire at an earlier age than my father, who was 49. He is now 86 and still enjoying life and travelling. I sold my practice at the age of 47 and now, at the ripe old age of 56, life couldn't get much better.

Thanks, Dad, for being a great role model! ▲

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*With sister Ellen (right) at golf tournament in Armstrong, BC*