



Doug Meharg, President of Century 21 Armour Real Estate, presents top sales representative Sylvia Houghton with a painting to honor her accomplishment of being the top seller for Century 21 in North America for 1983. Mrs. Houghton sold \$15 million worth of real estate.

Sylvia Houghton Tops \$15 million

Century 21 Armour Real Estate owner Doug Meharg is "very happy" to have Sylvia Houghton on his sales staff.

And no wonder. After a relatively short period of 40 months, the wife and mother of two, has become the top producing Century 21 agent in North America.

Mrs. Houghton sold \$15 million worth of real estate in 1983. That was more than any of the other 70,000 individual agents in the Century 21 chain in North America could accrue. She was the first Canadian ever to claim that honor.

Mr. Meharg made the announcement at a Century 21 awards presentation at the Renaissance Hotel on Jan. 20.

"No one else, in any office anywhere in Canada, has achieved this honor," Mr. Meharg told sales agents at the reception. "I'm glad you're with us, Sylvia," he concluded with a laugh, as the crowd clapped in approval.

Mrs. Houghton was awarded a painting as a tribute to her accomplishment.

"I'm ecstatic," she declared in an interview this week. According to Mrs. Houghton, she's especially pleased about winning because the top agents are usually from California or Alaska, where, in relation to Markham, the population, and the volume of sales are much higher.

Mrs. Houghton said selling real estate is something she always wanted to do. A Markham resident for 11 years,

Mrs. Houghton first tried her hand at teaching, and then selling life insurance. However, real estate has always been in the back of her mind. After her two sons grew older, she decided to "phase out of life insurance" and try a career in real estate at Century 21.

"I couldn't be more pleased," said Mrs. Houghton. "It's a lot like teaching — you cater to all types of people. Everyday is different, and no two deals are the same."

Mrs. Houghton has obviously found her niche, points out Mr. Meharg, whose Markham office was the top seller in Canada last year. In 1981, she was the top agent in Ontario. In 1982, she became the best in Canada. Since her introduction to real estate just over three years ago, she has had a sales volume of \$34 million.

How does she do it? "I don't know," she said. "I just keep on working. You can't stop."

Mrs. Houghton emphasized the real estate business is not easy work. "It's definitely a full-time job," she said. "Not a part-time. Not even close to it."

Her typical day begins at 8:30 a.m., and often doesn't end until 11:00 p.m.

According to Mr. Meharg, Mrs. Houghton has a "willingness to commit herself" completely in her work, a quality that not all agents can afford to have.

"She has a goal," explained Mr. Meharg. "She knows what she wants."

Century 21 tops Canada

For the second year in a row, Markham's Century 21 Armour Real Estate Office is number one in Canada.

Defeating 400 other Century 21 locations in 1983, the office won by a narrow margin of sales.

"We won because of the smallest deal," said Markham Century 21 President Doug Meharg to sales agents at an awards presentation at the Renaissance Hotel on Jan. 20.

"Six-hundred dollars put us over the top," he exclaimed. Awards were given to agents in the million and multi-million dollar sales categories.

Mr. Meharg, who founded Markham's Century 21 Armour Real Estate seven years ago, said that 26 agents brought in a total sales volume of approximately 75 million dollars in Markham and Unionville. Markham alone produced three-quarters of the sales.

One sales agent, Sylvia Houghton, sold \$15 million in 1983, while 12 other agents also sold in the multi-million dollar category.

Markham's Century 21 has been steadily increasing sales in the 1980's. In 1981, it proved to be the top producing office in Ontario, then became the top office in Canada in both 1982 and 1983. An office in Vancouver was the second highest producing agency last year.

"In my opinion, we've got a great team," said Mr. Meharg, explaining the office's success. "We have a great training course, and agents are upgraded quarterly during the year."

Mr. Meharg said new sales agents take a one-week program to learn Century 21's "success plan." He also attributes some of his company's success to the familiar "gold jacket" that is worn by the sales agents.

"It's a walking billboard," said Mr. Meharg. "People who don't know me come up to me all the time and talk to me about real estate," he said with a laugh.

The Century 21 image, explained Mr. Meharg, is international.

"Television advertising helps a lot," he said. "Advertising on Buffalo stations overflows into Canada."

Mr. Meharg noted he is not aware of the sales statistics of other Markham real estate agencies, but admits that "we have had the largest share of the Markham market since January 1983."

Real estate in Unionville is also developing so rapidly that a new Century 21 office is scheduled to open there, added Mr. Meharg.

Despite the Canadian success of the Markham Century 21, they have a long way to go before becoming the top producing office in North America. In 1983, an office in Anchorage, Alaska claimed that honours four times as much the Markham branch. Markham finished 12th in North America.

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