

oklahoma edition

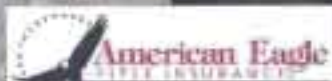
BROKER ★ ASSOCIATE

magazine™



Greg Roberts

broker/associate of the month



America's Trade Publication for the Real Estate Professional

029-OKL 2008 Issue 1 \$5.95 U.S. www.gotoBAM.com

POSTED
U.S. Postage
PAID
Tucson, AZ
Post No. #1021

also inside

It's a New Year,
Stop Driving
Yourself Crazy

REALTORS® Respond
Talk of the Town



broker/associate
of the month

Roberts' Rules of Order

by John Machay • photography by Huntington Photography

J.S. Bryan once said, "Many men can make a fortune but very few can build a family." Greg Roberts is among those very few. At 35 years old, the Edmond/Oklahoma City-based real estate professional has accomplished what most active professionals only dream of achieving: maintaining his balance on the delicate tightrope that divides work and family. "I've experienced an evolution over the past five or six years," says Greg, whose RE/MAX-headquartered team handles home sales in northwest Oklahoma City, Edmond, Yukon and Deer Creek. "I've made a real commitment to try and keep my family as my focus, and to not allow my business to run my family. So, where I used to put in 60 or 70 hour weeks, I've now narrowed it down to a legitimate 40 hour week."

That's not to say putting the brakes on overtime has slowed down Greg's career. While scores of overzealous real estate professionals struggle to stay afloat amid floundering national sales, the sales leader has actually seen his numbers go up in recent months—by a whopping 20 percent. "It's worked out really well," Greg says. "This year, the entire country is in a down market, but my business is up considerably. I will close more transactions this year than ever before, my clients are happier than ever before and the statistics for the Greg Roberts Team are fantastic." In an industry that generally equates aggressiveness with success, Greg's flourishing "less is more" approach hasn't gone unnoticed by his peers. RE/MAX co-owner Betty LeJeune, who's worked with Greg for seven years, says her curiosity was more than piqued when she first caught wind of the Oklahoma native's rising sales figures. "I noticed that his numbers had gone up significantly, and I thought it was some new technique or something really different he was doing in terms of how he was selling," Betty says. "So I asked him, 'What is it that you've done differently?' He thought a while and said, 'You know,

I've given more time to my family.' That was it." While Greg's seemingly clandestine reply might have left most people scratching their heads, Betty says she understands why the unorthodox approach has thrust him to the head of the pack. "What I got out of that was maybe when you take time off to focus on other things, like family, it's easier to really direct your focus on work when you're working," she says. "Time is money, so when you devote less time into something, you're going to use it to your best advantage." But Greg believes his waters of success run a bit deeper than that.

"When I'm with people, I'm definitely more involved than I used to be and I have a clearer frame of mind," he says. "But there's definitely more to it. Taking back some of the time spent working doesn't mean you have to sacrifice the work ethic, which I think is a big part of it. I'm still very accessible to people; I always return phone calls; and I really work hard to make every customer feel like they're my only customer." Although pulling off such a feat might sound like no small task, Greg attributes his knack for endearing customers to making each feel like the center of his attention by first helping to trim down his or her house hunting regimen.

"I tell new agents all the time that you don't need to drop everything you're doing to go show a house the minute somebody calls," he says. "You need to first interview the customer and make sure that they can buy the house; second, make sure the house fits their needs; and third, never leave the dinner table to rush out the door for a customer you don't even know. It sends a message to your family that you value a complete stranger more than you value them. Do this too often and you may be returning to an empty house." By first obtaining a firm grasp on a customer's needs, Greg

says, an agent avoids wasting time for both parties—which the customer will appreciate in the end. “You will easily eliminate a lot of wasted time if you ask the right questions,” Greg says. “I really think that approach has been perceived well. Customers have families too. They understand and rarely get upset when scheduling a time that can work for everyone. In fact, they seem to respect it more in the end. They also respect the fact that my family time is important to me.”

For proof of Greg’s conviction, one needn’t look any further than Oklahoma City resident Johnnie Gasaway, who recently listed her father’s home with the top-selling agent. “Not only did we get the house sold, but I felt like we gained a friend as well,” she says. Johnnie’s sentiment has become all too familiar to Greg, who says he develops strong kinships with most of his customers. “I really do consider each of my customers to be friends,” he says. “Knowing that you have taken a person’s trust and converted it into a success story is a great feeling. I treat everyone with the same respect and consideration that I would want to be treated with. It really isn’t about selling features within a house, like granite countertops or nice light fixtures, it’s about helping each client understand what their needs are and finding a home that fits both emotionally and physically.”

Admittedly, Greg—who shares his name with onetime Tampa Bay Buccaneer Greg Roberts, a former University of Oklahoma football star—hasn’t always been the top-selling family guy he’s known as today. With a degree in education under his belt, Greg initially set his sights on becoming a schoolteacher. “I’ve always loved kids, and I thought teaching was going to be my calling,” Greg says.

However, while he might have lacked the girth of his namesake, Greg soon found that his fervor for winning was every bit as strong as any professional athlete—and far too overpowering to keep him confined within the walls of a classroom. “I am competitive by nature; I want to be the best,” says

Greg, an accomplished racquetball player. “God has given me many tools to succeed. He didn’t give me a 6-foot 7-inch frame and light feet, so I guess he didn’t want me playing in the NFL. But he did give me a passion to succeed and a desire to please.” Believing he’d found an outlet for his competitive drive in real estate, Greg hit the field running—logging in excruciatingly long hours while his family watched from the sidelines. “It just never seemed to be enough,” Greg says. “No matter how much I sold, I had to keep going. I was obsessed with success in real estate.” But after spending the first half of his career as a “hard-working, somewhat arrogant kid who thought I could conquer the real estate world,” Greg says, he decided it was time to rewrite his playbook. “I was blinded by what success really was,” Greg says. “One

day I just came to the realization that it’s not all about the money, and that selling homes does not make a person successful in the grand scheme of things. I don’t need a big house or a fancy car. It doesn’t do any good to drive a big Mercedes if you can’t pull it into the driveway without your kids greeting you at the door. For me, that’s what it’s really about—the love I have for my kids. I wanted to win, but I decided that winning in real estate shouldn’t mean giving up God time or family time, which are very important. So I started working hard to schedule real estate activities around family activities—not the other way around.”

Almost immediately, Greg began reaping the rewards spawned by his shift of focus. “My family has responded in so many ways,” he says. “The kids’ grades are near perfect, they are confident and proud that they are first. My wife loves the fact that we can live an almost normal life and still flourish in an abnormal industry.” Furthermore, Greg found that trading in his long hours for family time didn’t mean giving up his craving for victory. Transferring his self-described obsession for success from one playing field to another, Greg began investing some of his newfound time into coaching baseball for his 10-year-old son, Austin, and basketball for his 8-year-old daughter, Gracen. A third child, Lauren, 6, is “excited to play basketball soon,” Greg says.

“I am competitive by nature, whether I am playing in a racquetball tournament, coaching a Little League team or listing a house,” he says. “I realized that by coaching, I could still find a way to be a mentor to children without being in the classroom with them. And I got to be involved in my kids’ lives. Since I changed my work schedule, I don’t think I’ve ever missed a ball game for one of my kids.” While an enhanced family life was exactly what he was expecting, Greg was surprised to find that the reconfiguration of his priorities also gave birth to a completely unexpected benefit. “Interestingly enough, it was that point in my career when things





Greg with daughters Gracen and Lauren.

hospitality seems to stem from his sincere gratitude for his clients' roles in helping to make him a success.

"The repeated business I get from the hundreds of families I've been privileged enough to help is humbling," he says. "Every time I get a call from one of my past customers or someone they have referred to me, I get chills. It is the single greatest compliment they can give me." Greg's successful balancing act has also resulted in bolstered support from his work front, where his peers are always ready to help provide the level of customer satisfaction that's become synonymous with the Greg Roberts Team, he says. "My office staff and my broker are there anytime I need them," Greg says. "Being a part of an office that cares about its people has been instrumental in my development." Still, all the James Bond-like gadgetry, repeat business and staff support would mean nothing if it wasn't for who Greg believes to be his most valuable ally: his wife, Kelsey.

"Kelsey has really helped my business grow," Greg says of his wife, who's also a licensed real estate professional. "She's far more efficient and organized than I am. Although she's not a part of the everyday sales, she is most definitely a part of the everyday work. Without her in the background, I never could have done what I've been able to do." Not content to rest on the laurels of his achievements, Greg—who says he subscribes the adage, "Knowledge is power"—compensates for his abridged schedule by making an enthusiastic effort to stay on top of the latest market trends and financing options. "It is important for me to be the information source when people have a question," he says. "I see this industry as gateway for me to help people make decisions that are financially sound and emotionally satisfying, and I am honored that people trust me enough to allow me to guide them through such an important decision.

"For me, it's no longer about conquering the real estate world," Greg continues. "Today it is about providing sound advice, building relationships and becoming a part of my customers' lives. I am truly blessed to be in a position where I can accomplish so much." ★

Greg Roberts

Phone: 405-751-4848

Toll Free: 800-299-5615

E-mail: gregroberts@coxinet.net

Web site: www.gregrobertsteam.com



started turning around," he remembers. "Not only did my work hours start going down, but my sales volume went up and my client satisfaction went through the roof." But he didn't do it alone. Greg shares at least part of the credit for his successful time management with something previous generations of real estate agents didn't have at their disposal: technology.

"When I first started, every time my pager would go off I'd stop my car and drop 25 cents into the payphone," he says. "But when the payphone went up to 35 cents per call, I decided that maybe it was time to get myself a cell phone. Now technology is advanced enough to where I've got e-mail running directly into my phone: I can check e-mail from wherever I am; I can send e-mail out; and I can review settlement statements while waiting in line somewhere. I can pretty much run my entire office with the technology that I have in my car or on my phone." Such modern innovations have become essential in today's market, Greg says, as the demands of customers have evolved right along with the tools of the trade. "Instant gratification is so important for today's customers," he says. "In fact, they expect it and demand it. And we have to be accommodating to their needs." While many professionals see meeting those needs as a necessity for making a sale, Greg's