

REAL ESTATE

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Betty Bezemer
Keller Williams Realty

A Survivor Who Looks for the
Celebration of Life in Each Day

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A Survivor Who Looks for the Celebration of Life in Each Day

By K. Pica Kahn

Betty Bezemer is a survivor. Learning to ride horses when she was just 2, the little cowgirl has always been one to pull herself up by her bootstraps and get on with her life. Surviving breast cancer only served to make her stronger — stronger in her work, stronger in her faith, stronger in her life.

Born and raised in Dallas, she came to her parents late in life. The daughter of a veterinarian for animals both large and small, her father was an inspiration. Her mother she describes as a sweet, gentle soul who was loved by many.

“My dad was a renowned vet. He was one of the first to ever use a portable X-ray machine,” she said. “‘I don’t quit or give up’ was not in his vocabulary.”

Betty’s willingness to share her personal story with the community gives hope to women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

— Michele Ostradnder, Executive Director, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation - Houston Affiliate

Attending SMU for two years, she married her high school sweetheart and was the co-founder of a real estate research firm long before even thinking about becoming a Realtor and long before she was part of Keller Williams Realty Memorial as a top producer.

Betty attributes much of her success to her dynamic team! Betty is pictured here with her husband Willem, Kathy James, Julie Wolf and Gigi Rivera — The “Bez” Team!



PHOTO BY MICHAEL ORTEGA



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Betty and Willem really enjoy being together and share an equal love for horses and nature. They are seen on “Kours Lust” and “Diego”

“We published and analyzed commercial land developments and improved property sales so our clientele were developers, Realtors, architects, investors, title companies, anyone involved in real estate,” she said. “We were the first to do a publication like this. Right out of college, we had this concept to provide consulting information not readily available.”

She soon became the mother of three, all now professionals in the real estate industry themselves.

“My oldest daughter and my son are licensed Realtors plus active in the business my former husband and I founded,” she said. “My younger daughter specializes in real estate industry job searches.”

In 1985 she met Willem Bezemer, and they married in 1988. A design engineer in the institutional/chemical industry, he had come to Dallas to work for an architectural firm.

“Willem had a job offer in D.C., and so we moved to Virginia. I went to work for one of the largest real estate companies in Virginia and started selling residential real estate in 1988. I had never sold before. I had only done analysis and forecasting of real estate trends and sales.”

This childhood equestrian was a success right out of the chute receiving “Rookie of the Year” in 1989 with Long & Foster.

“It was an intense marketplace. Four weeks after becoming licensed,

Betty is more than a professional, she is a friend. She helped me buy my first house. She inspires people around her; she is also a mentor and an inspiration. I don't think anyone could find anyone better to help them find a home, especially for your first home.

— Maria Todd, 104 KRBE Radio, friend and client

I took floor duty on Thanksgiving when no one else wanted to work. I got a call from someone wanting to list a house, which became my first listing. Within three days we had five offers. In Virginia, the buyer's agent presents the offer so we had five people in the living room wanting to present offers directly to the seller. Then the seller decides on a winner. It was crazy! I was new but it was exhilarating. On my second transaction I was a buyer's agent. It was the first listing for the other agent and he said after it was all over, 'I'm so glad you were here. This was my first deal.' I just laughed. As a mom of three, I had learned to 'read between the lines.'

She has a sense of what is hot in the market or at least what will be



Whenever Betty and Willem travel, invariably they head to a destination close to the water. They enjoy all water sports, especially kayaking, sailing, scuba and snorkeling.

hot. Upon relocating to Houston in 1990, she and her husband purchased a small cottage located in the area now known as Rice Military just east of Memorial Park.

“The area had a few townhomes built in the early ’80s and a lot of boarded-up houses. My husband thought the area would come back. When we sold the property, we moved the period 1920s home on some acreage. We then purchased a large lot in the Heights with a 1890s vintage home.

“Prior to becoming licensed, I had done much research and had worked another side of the industry, and I now have a great respect for all of the principles it takes to properly put one transaction together, especially with respect to the fiduciary responsibilities.”

She is also a relocation specialist. Joining Keller Williams in 1992 after working for a small company, she became intrigued with the Keller Williams philosophy.

“After the first few months, I began to realize this concept assisted established agents and those new to the industry in each office. I understood that this would help everyone to grow in the marketplace. It is like networking with a heart. You don’t find that in every firm.”

She works closely with her clients, many of whom have become friends.

“Betty knows the market and our needs but most of all is fun to work with,” said Charles Berg and Ron Lopes, clients. “We bought my first house with Betty; now we are looking for our fifth ... all with Betty! She just does not stop till we are happy. We love Betty and her team; they know exactly what we want. Betty has it all, but her laugh makes it memorable. Betty has an infectious enthusiasm

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— Charles Berg and Ron Lopes, clients

for Houston and its neighborhoods.”

Maria Todd of 104 KRBE Radio, friend and client, couldn’t agree more. “Betty is more than a professional, she is a friend. She helped me buy my first house. She inspires people around her and she is also a mentor and an inspiration. I don’t think anyone could find anyone better to help them find a home, especially for their first home.”

She continues to share her knowledge with others.

“What can I say about Betty, what an outstanding, awesome lady,” said Rosie Golfberger, owner of SeaVents. “Her extraordinary dedication to her friends and colleagues, her commitment to help others is incredible! She shares her ideas and thoughts, her experience, her time. Betty’s inner strength and spirituality transcends the ordinary. She is a mentor, a teacher, a friend.”

People are so pleased with her performance that they often return to her when they want a new home.

“I chose Betty to list my townhouse because I knew she would take me through the process step-by-step, as this was my first home sale,” said Diane Pulos, Pilates Plus. “I also knew that she would calm my nerves and not proceed with anything unless she was assured that I understood and was comfortable with everything pertaining to the sale of my home. Betty was a great support throughout the entire transaction.”

Betty attributes her success in part to her parents. From her entrepreneurial father she learned her strong work ethic.

“He was well respected and was intent on doing the right thing,” she said. “He also watched his budget. My mother was brilliant. She went to college at the age of 16 but quit when she almost died in a car crash. My mother grounded me. I am so grateful for what my parents instilled in me. I have always respected my mother and tried to emulate my dad. My family was and is so important to me and through them I saw that I could have it all!”

Although she had it all, in 1997, she found herself with a little something extra. She was diagnosed with breast cancer. Being the fighter that she is, she was determined not to let this ruin her life. When first told of her diagnosis, she was stunned, shocked and breathless. Oddly, few knew it. Betty now uses that energy and spirit to help others.

Betty continues to work to eradicate breast cancer and is involved in the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer “Race for the Cure” committee and is now a Komen Lifetime Member.

“I have been privileged to be involved with that effort that started in Dallas. After going through my cancer experience I wanted to give something back, so I joined the Komen education committee.”

“The mission of the Komen Houston Affiliate is to educate people about breast cancer as a life-threatening disease through research, education, screening and treatment. We could not do this work without all of our wonderful volunteers, like Betty, who give their time, energy and passion to help ensure that every woman has access to life-saving breast cancer education, screening and treatment. Betty’s willingness to share her personal story with the community gives hope to women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer,” said Michele Ostradnder, Executive Director of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. “She has become a champion for the cause and has given hope and

inspiration to others.”

“Two years ago my sister was diagnosed with breast cancer,” said Jose Campos. “The first person I called was Betty, who immediately started my sister and myself on a journey that ultimately led us to a place where we learned what is most important in our lives. Betty and my sister talked and Betty described exactly what feelings my sister was going through. Betty told her that she might be angry, sad, scared, but that was OK.”

“It has been a long two years to get to this point, and Betty has been there all the way, always an inspiration.”

Betty explains that they all went through it together as a family. “I am alive because of my husband and my kids. It is the power of God and the power of love that pulled me through. My dad taught me to never give up. He showed me that you can always find a blessing no matter what is dealt you.”

Betty was honored by her company at the annual Keller Williams International Conference in California with the first “Bob Carter Inspiration Award” for Keller Williams International. She was the first recipient of this award, setting the example for those who followed.

“I went through three surgeries and reconstruction, six months of chemo and five weeks of radiation, and I only missed three days of work throughout the whole thing. I was bald all of ’98, making me the *bald* top listing agent. I always say I lost my hair but not my head and heart!”

She (Betty) just does not stop till we are happy. We love Betty and her team; they know exactly what we want. Betty has it all, but her laugh makes it memorable. Betty has an infectious enthusiasm for Houston and its neighborhoods.

— Charles Berg and Ron Lopes, clients

Keller Williams was instrumental in her recovery. Treating her like a member of the family, they had a big surprise for her. Betty was told that she would be unable to eat shellfish (which she loves) while going through chemotherapy, so the Keller Williams team decided to do something special.

“One night my husband called me at work and said we would just eat leftovers for dinner ... fine with me! Imagine my surprise when I walked in and there was a candlelit dinner with stone crab and key lime pie from Joe’s Stone Crab, a wonderful restaurant in Miami specializing in seafood. My Keller Williams team ordered this delicious dinner flown in one week before I was to start chemo. I will never forget that! This



Betty is most passionate about her family! This family portrait was taken at her youngest daughter’s (Rebecca’s) wedding. In this photo are Betty’s husband, children and their spouses and grandchildren, and the rest of her extended family.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BEZEMER FAMILY

is so typical of my Keller Williams family.”

Keller Williams agents are known for their generosity. After Hurricane Katrina, many from KW (including Betty) were at a conference in Austin with KW agents from all over North America.

“In a room of 350, a speaker told us that 75 percent of the Gulf Coast had been destroyed by wind and water. We were told that many of our fellow Realtors would no longer have a way to make a living, homes or clothes for that matter. By 5:00 p.m. that afternoon, over \$365,000 had been raised by the Keller Williams agents sitting in that room.

“Our office adopted three families from the Gulf Coast, assigning them to one contact person to help them with whatever they needed. By that time, Keller Williams had raised over \$4 million and are continuing to raise funds! They were instrumental in making sure that agents from the Gulf Coast states were given immediate licenses to practice here.

“Keller Williams did so much. We just asked our agents in the affected area for their bank account numbers and then deposited money directly into their accounts. The Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC) gave them a license and allowed them to update their educational requirements. We are proactive. Each office took on someone personally so everyone that was involved in loss through Katrina had someone there to help. We paid tuition for their children’s schools. We even assisted them with down payments for them to purchase a vehicle. Keller Williams did everything they could to relieve the initial pain that one feels when they do not have the means to provide for their families.”

Betty finds time to play as well.

Betty and her husband Willem are avid horse enthusiasts. They also enjoy scuba diving and snorkeling. Betty started photography and pen and ink drawing after her breast cancer experience. Betty believes in living life to the fullest and she puts the same kind of gusto into both work and play.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL ORTEGA



Betty Bezemer is truly one of a kind! She is respected for her spirit and tenacity and is a survivor in every sense of the word! She takes pride and honor in her work and truly cares about each and every one of her clients!

Two years ago, my sister was diagnosed with breast cancer. The first person I called was Betty, who immediately started my sister and myself on a journey that ultimately led us to a place where we learned what is important in our lives.

— Jose Campos

“We are consultants, not salespeople! With the right attitude and work ethic, the rewards are wonderful!

“As passionate as I am about work, I am even more passionate about my family. When I hear the laughter of my kids and grandkids, their giggles, it means everything to me.

“Make time for your family and loved ones. You can’t manage the time you are given in life; you can only manage your thoughts and how you act. Each day brings an opportunity for celebration. Expect it and it unfolds.

“This philosophy has helped me through my darkest hours. I remember when I was diagnosed, I was terrified. My husband was holding my hand when the doctor told us. My husband said, ‘Remember, I fell in love with your brain and now we are going to find out what kind of person you really are.’ He was saying, I know you have true grit and this will pull you through.”

And it has. ■

She offers this advice to others starting out in the real estate industry:

1. Spend two hours generating leads each day.
2. Put your systems into place and follow a plan.
3. Surround yourself with great team partners who contribute, share and support.
4. Constantly reinvent your business plan and philosophy.

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