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Real Estate JOSEPH BARRIOS

Realtors' home-sales data one way to see who's on top

A new year brings a new set of "rankings" from the Tucson Association of Realtors Multiple Listing Service. "Rankings" is too strong a word, really. Queries of the MLS database is more like it. And as such, the "top 10" list can vary, depending on how someone asks the question. People in the business can search the database to see who's in the top 10 and where those people fall on a list of more than 6,000 agents. Some top agents even use the data in their marketing.

While a high ranking may allow for some bragging rights, being No. 1 doesn't necessarily bring in customers, said Jeff Wilhems, who works as marketing manager with his wife, Marsee Wilhems, at ReMax Majestic.

Marsee Wilhems ranked second in 2006 sales volume on the condominium-exclusion list with more than \$56 million. With several associate agents, Wilhems uses several marketing strategies to attract and keep customers, including commercials and incentives for other agents.

"I think at the end of the day, the consumers want to know who will get them the most money in the least amount of time with the least hassle," Jeff Wilhems said. "They couldn't care less who is No. 1."

There's an air of pride, however, as Jeff Wilhems states that his wife is the "No. 1" ReMax agent in Tucson and 64th among more than 120,000 ReMax agents worldwide. The couple have turned it into a motto. Customers are told, "Marsee is not No. 1; you are."

Each MLS ranking can come with a host of caveats. For starters, many of the busiest producers have associate agents working under them. The sale of a condo or a house made by an associate agent is included in the lead agent's tally.

"The trouble with the rankings is it's not true statistics, because you can take one person and have seven people under their name," said Robin Sue Kaiserman, who had the highest volume of noncondo sales last year. "They have their own little company within a company."

Despite a slower market in 2006, Kaiserman had her best year, with more than \$59 million in buyer and seller listings in the MLS.

"I've been doing this through 20 years," she said. "Houses sell in bad markets. You just have to know what to do with them."

Agents also have to filter out the names of people who work for home builders, because they simply act as conduits. They place listings on the MLS but don't actively try to sell houses.

Determining who is first on the list a matter of debate. Volume for Russell Long of Long Realty Co., for example, shows more than \$69 million, a figure that includes condo conversions. When condo conversions are removed from that tally, Long's sales for all other residential classifications are about \$42.6 million.

Larry Bender of Prudential Poothills Real Estate said he wasn't even aware that he was on a top-10 list.

"I just lost interest in it," Bender said. "It's just not something that I track anymore."

Well, not very much. He said he did run his name through the database a few months ago, just to get an idea of where he ranked. He doesn't blame fellow agents for wanting to know how they're doing.

"Who's No. 1? That person won; the rest of us lost. Hey, this is America, right?" Bender said.

AGENT RANKINGS: SALES VOLUME

Top Tucson-area real estate agents in 2006 by sales volume (excludes condos and new homes)

| Rank, name | Company | Sales |
|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Robin Sue Kaiserman | Long Realty | \$59.4 million |
| 2. Marsee Wilhems | ReMax Majestic | \$56.4 million |
| 3. Janell Jellison | Long Realty | \$50.3 million |
| 4. Russell Long | Long Realty | \$42.7 million |
| 5. Brenda O'Brien | Long Realty | \$36.7 million |
| 6. Madeline Friedman | Long Realty | \$35.9 million |
| 7. Andrew Silverstein | ReMax All Executives | \$31.1 million |
| 8. Larry Bender | Prudential | \$28.3 million |
| 9. Nikki Mehalic-Halle | Windermere | \$27.0 million |
| 10. Peter DeLuca | Realty Executives | \$25.5 million* |

* Figures as of Monday.

Rankings exclude the name "Non Member," a catchall that includes agents without subscriptions to the MLS. Figures are based on a report generated Jan. 11 unless noted. Corrections and late listings may alter results.

ALTERNATIVE TOP-10 LISTS

Top real estate agents in 2006 by sales volume (includes new homes, condominiums and single-family homes)

| Rank, name | Listings | Volume | Average |
|--------------------------|----------|----------------|-----------|
| 1. Russell Long | 248 | \$69.1 million | \$278,707 |
| 2. Caroline Auza-May | 325 | \$64.9 million | \$199,614 |
| 3. Robin Sue Kaiserman | 68 | \$59.4 million | \$873,697 |
| 4. Toni Parrish | 216 | \$57.4 million | \$265,856 |
| 5. Marsee Wilhems | 244 | \$56.4 million | \$230,949 |
| 6. Nancy Nist | 350 | \$52.0 million | \$148,503 |
| 7. Janell Jellison | 65 | \$50.3 million | \$774,001 |
| 8. Michelle Jessee | 150 | \$41.6 million | \$277,492 |
| 9. Danny Roth | 175 | \$40.3 million | \$230,563 |
| 10. Vicky Puchi-Saavedra | 154 | \$39.6 million | \$257,106 |

Top real estate agents in 2006 by number of homes sold (excludes condos and new homes)

| Rank, name | Company | Sales |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-------|
| 1. Marsee Wilhems | ReMax Majestic | 243 |
| 2. Tim Baker | ReMax All Executives | 182 |
| 3. Vicky Puchi-Saavedra | Long Realty | 154 |
| 4. Andrew Silverstein | ReMax All Executives | 154 |
| 5. Larry Bender | Prudential | 121 |
| 6. Rocco Racioppo | Realty Executives | 102 |
| 7. Curt Stinson | Realty Executives | 96 |
| 8. Brenda O'Brien | Long Realty | 80 |
| 9. Madeline Friedman | Long Realty | 72 |
| 10. Robin Sue Kaiserman | Long Realty | 68 |

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