

# BANKER & TRADESMAN

THE FINANCIAL SERVICES AND REAL ESTATE WEEKLY FOR MASSACHUSETTS

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## IN PERSON

# Training Top Talent

BY JIM MORRISON | BANKER & TRADESMAN STAFF

Nora Lynch Smith had over 15 years of real estate sales experience working for small and large firms before she bought Landmark Real Estate in South Natick a few years ago. The firm moved this summer to Washington Street in Wellesley, which is the geographic center of their target market, but her agents spend more time in the surrounding communities they serve. Smith is a big believer that Realtor training and designations combined with hyperlocal market knowledge and high-level customer service are the key to being successful in the Greater Wellesley region.



### Nora Lynch Smith

Title: Principal, Broker Landmark Realty

Age: 51

Experience: 19 years

**Q:** Are you originally from Boston?

**A:** I grew up in St. Petersburg, Florida, and came to Boston to go to Boston College and majored in economics and Germanic studies. My senior year at BC I took the class and got my real estate salesperson's license when I was 21. I was looking to get into sales, but I wasn't from this area and didn't have a lot of contacts, so to take a job with no salary didn't make sense. I took a job at BayBank working on the modification of commercial loans in the late '80s and early '90s. It was interesting. I ended up moving back to Florida and had some back surgery and was doing medical transcription and thinking of going to nursing school but eventually came back here. Later, after I'd had a child and was living in South Natick, my mentor Sue McDonough – who is still my mentor – was running an office and I started working with them. I later worked for Coldwell Banker and William Raveis and then I had the great opportunity to buy Landmark from Ellen Sonis, who still works here. She started it in the early 2000s and wanted to segue.

**Q:** Does this area attract independent offices?

**A:** For us, it's just a regional location because from Wellesley you can service a lot of towns in all directions. Westwood, Dedham, Sherborn, Dover, Natick, all great markets. It lends itself to have an office here. Now that we're settled, I'm more focused on networking and reaching out to agents who would like to join us. Growth is always a good thing.

**Q:** What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?

**A:** I'm probably more private than most people think. I also like to be creative and I love photography. Since we moved to a larger property (our second move in Sherborn) nine years ago, we have had between seven to 20 chickens at different times. The number ranges because we have learned a lot about predators, securing their housing and whether or not to free range during the day.

**Q:** How do you compete with the big national brokerages on technology?

**A:** There's a social media component to the GRI designation and so many tools available to us and they're constantly changing. It's fun and creative. Also, I think going back to the basics, like postcards and direct mail, are key. That's something we focus on as well. It's important. Just doing something different than the competition. I believe in having nice feature sheets and nice presentation. The tools are all there for us in terms of marketing and education, if we take advantage of our local and national boards. Realtor.com has a great home search app. We can overcome that technology hurdle. We're a boutique firm with roots in the community we serve. And we're aware of what's happening there and we give back to our communities. All real estate is local.

I stress education. I really believe in using the tools that are already there. You can go onto MLS and there's a wealth of information there. I believe in taking advantage of classes [offered by MAR and GBREB, among others]. I have two more classes to take to get my GRI, which is a nice designation to have. It's good for me to still be out there in the trenches. I also enjoy helping other people grow. I want to reimburse people for getting their GAR designation. It's important to stay on top of the business, law and ethics.

**Q:** What do you like to do when you're not working?

**A:** I'm really working all the time. One thing I did do recently: I was so proud of myself for taking a couple of days off and going to see my son at college in California for parents' weekend. I also took some time off this past year and went on a cruise with a friend of mine, who is also a broker. We went to the Greek Islands on a small ship with 148 passengers. We explored the islands and the ones I loved were the ones I'd never heard of. I'm normally averse to travel, so it was outside my comfort zone, but it was a last-minute thing. I'd like to do something like that every year. I'm also really enjoying watching my daughter play soccer. It's great to be able to watch her games. I also like to work out. It's fun.



SMITH'S FIVE FAVORITE BREEDS OF CHICKEN SHE'S RAISED:

1 Buff Orpington

2 Silkie

3 Frizzle

4 Rhode Island Red

5 Araucana