



Mary Cella at the Brentwood home that launched her long career in real estate.

## Taking the Plunge

FIRST SALES

by Laura Graesser

Mary Cella, **Coldwell Banker Gundaker**

In 1979, Mary Cella had just moved back to St. Louis from the East Coast and began a new career as a realtor. Not knowing many people in the city after her time away, Cella searched out connections by going to open houses and ‘for sale by owners,’ where she met a young couple trying to sell their home in Brentwood.

“When they didn’t sell their house on their own, they called me because they liked

me—I had just talked to them and gave them suggestions instead of telling them they couldn’t do it,” Cella says.

She jumped at the chance to sell the home, making last-minute trips over to the three-bed, one-bath property on Rosalie Avenue to prep it for showings. “When the homeowners would forget to make their bed, I’d load my two young kids into the car and run over there to tidy up the house,” Cella remembers.

Sold quickly for around \$40,000, the first sale got Cella hooked on real estate. “It was my first real venture into the business and sales world, and I was delighted that it did what it was supposed to do. It’s a tried-and-true process and it just worked.”

*Real estate agents always remember their first sale, whether it was three or 32 years ago, and whether the price was \$40,000 or \$2.1 million. We asked a handful of them to recall the highs and lows of their initial forays into the business.*

