

# [REAL TALK]

## LAURA MACDONALD

coldwell banker gundaker

by tony di martino

**LAURA MACDONALD WAS A STAY-AT-HOME MOM** with two kids, looking for a way to supplement the household income. Like many other women in her situation, she decided to get a real estate license. Unlike them, she moved more than \$2 million in property her first year on the job. Today, she heads her own team at Coldwell Banker Gundaker of Town & Country.

“ I was working as a waitress when Gordon Gundaker came in and said, **You need to get into real estate.** Other people in the business had said the same thing to me, but I didn't take it seriously until I ruptured a disk carrying a heavy tray. I met with Carole Mulina of Coldwell Banker Gundaker's Ballwin-Chesterfield office, and the rest is history. **I was Rookie of the Year right out of the gate.** That was 20 years ago, and I still love it.

My first sale was to my in-laws. You'd think it would be a slam-dunk, but it was so challenging I had to pull in another agent to help me! **I was green and had no self-confidence.** But I learned fast. I sold a lot of homes my first year, but I did it the hard way—mostly FHA deals with an average sale price of \$65,000.

My waitressing experience proved invaluable when I went into real estate. Waitressing is service-oriented, relationship-driven, and teaches you to multitask amid constant distractions. I still carry those tools with me.

The market crashed at the same time I was going through a bitter divorce. Talk about baptism by fire! **My dad was a huge inspiration when it came to dealing with hard times.** He was a banking exec when the savings and loan industry fell apart in the 80's. He suffered major financial reversals, but handled it with dignity and strength.

During the downturn, I revamped my business plan and revamped my marketing strategy. **Now I represent every price point, from first-time homebuyers in South County at \$129,000 to the luxury market.** We've maintained a nice momentum ever since.

**I tell it like it is.** Clients don't want to hear their house is overpriced or needs a major overhaul, but it's better to be honest from the start. **It's too late to pick up the pieces afterward.** ❧❧❧



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