



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Dec. 31, 2009
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REALTORS Honor Nine Individuals for Special Achievements

BELLEVUE, Wash. (Dec. 31, 2009) -- Nine individuals received special awards from the Seattle King County REALTORS® for distinctive achievements during 2009. The annual recognition coincided with the installation of the 2010 leadership team.

The award recipients were:

Jason WatabeREALTOR of the Year
J. Lennox Scott REALTOR Champion
Brenda Courtade REALTOR Cultural Awareness
Kristen Greenlaw REALTOR Achievement
Catherine ClaytonAffiliate of the Year
Claudia WicksInstructor of the Year
Bob Richards and Dave ParemskiREALTOR Community Service
Vernon Cook Governmental Affairs Volunteer of the Year

SKCR honored **Vernon Cook** as Governmental Affairs Volunteer of the Year in recognition of service spanning more than two decades. Among his volunteer activities, he serves on panels to interview candidates running for public office, and is a consistent participant in the REALTORS' annual visits to Olympia during "legislative hill day." Cook, a Realtor with Loyal Realty, Inc. in Seattle, has maintained perfect attendance at association committee meetings.

"Vernon's active involvement in SKCR's governmental and public affairs activities, together with his dependable support of RPAC (REALTORS® Political Action Committee) exemplifies his deep commitment to the Association," said D'Ann Jackson in presenting Cook with the "Volunteer of the Year" award. Cook has been a real estate professional for the past 50 years, switching from his original career as a civil engineer with the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

Two colleagues from the Issaquah office Windermere Real Estate shared SKCR's Community Service Award, which recognizes significant contributions through charitable, volunteer or leadership activities. **Bob Richards** and **Dave Paremski** were honored for their multi-year food drive they have conducted on behalf of Issaquah Food Bank. Their dedicated efforts have netted an estimated 85,000 pounds of food over the past 21 years.

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Richards, a Seattle native who has lived in Issaquah since 1982, has been a real estate professional since 1983. He joined Windermere in 1998 and currently holds professional designations as an Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR) and Certified Residential Specialist (CRS).

Paremski, the assistant manager and an associate broker at Windermere's Issaquah office, was a top-producing agent at another brokerage and member of its Hall of Fame prior to joining Windermere in 1998. In addition to the ABR and CRS designations, he is an Accredited Seller's Representative and is E-Pro Certified.

Claudia Wicks, an industry speaker, writer, Internet innovator and trainer known for delivering actionable instruction, was recognized as SKCR's "Instructor of the Year." Her 30 years of experience as a nationally acclaimed broker, agent, blogger and instructor has reached thousands of agents in the U.S. and Canada. Since 2008, she has taught more than two dozen classes and seminars for SKCR. Wicks is the co-founder of Real Estate Base Camp, a training, coaching and consulting business, and author of the recently published book, *Make the Move — How to Move Your Real Estate Business Online.*"

"Affiliate of the Year" honors went to **Catherine Clayton** of Pacific Northwest Title. She has been a member of SKCR's First Citizen Committee for more than a decade and has chaired one of the event's sub-committees for several years. Along with her volunteer support, she has served the industry as a certified clock hour instructor and escrow and title expert for 23 years, during which she developed a reputation for responsive, personalized service. She helped open PNWT's North End office in 1994 and currently serves as its North King County marketing manager.

The 2009 REALTOR Achievement award went to **Kristen Greenlaw** for exemplary service to the association. Among her activities she served as vice president of Governmental Affairs, director of Washington REALTORS, a state RPAC trustee and RPAC whip, a newly created position with responsibilities for major donor fundraising efforts throughout the state. Earlier in the year, she became SKCR's first-ever participant in the National Association of REALTORS' (NAR) Leadership Academy, a selective program for 30 individuals from around the country. Greenlaw is affiliated with Windermere Northeast in Kirkland and will serve as president-elect of SKCR during 2010.

Brenda Courtade received the REALTOR Cultural Awareness Award in recognition of outstanding efforts to broaden understanding and cooperation among all cultures in the increasingly diverse real estate industry. A member of SKCR's board of directors, she was the founding president of the Washington Chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals (NAHREP) in 2007-2008. The 19-year veteran of the real estate profession has earned numerous awards from Prudential Northwest Realty Associates, where she is a top producer in its Bellevue office. She is also a member of this state's chapter of the Asian Real Estate Association of America.

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The REALTOR Champion award recipient for 2009 is **J. Lennox Scott**, chairman and CEO of John L. Scott Real Estate. The citation recognized his advocacy for federal policies to improve the health and vitality of the real estate market, and his leadership and involvement with other NAR concerns. Sen. Patty Murray described his efforts to expand and extend the Home Buyer Tax Credit program as “critical,” and a “great example of how Realtors and Congress can work together on policies that will make a true impact in strengthening the housing market.” The third generation chairman of the brokerage that bears his grandfather’s name is a perennial entrant on REALTOR Magazine’s list of “25 most influential people in real estate.”

Jason Watabe was singled out for REALTOR of the Year accolades for his extraordinary service to SKCR over the past three years, and for his groundbreaking work in forging international real estate relationships on behalf of the association. During 2009, Watabe, who was born in Japan, served as the NAR president’s liaison to all four of Japan’s national real estate associations. In addition to chairing SKCR’s International Real Estate Council and 2008 president of SKCR, he serves as president of the Washington Chapter of the Asian Real Estate Association of America.

In February 2010, Watabe will lead a U.S. delegation to Kobe, Japan to participate in the 50th anniversary of the National Federation of Real Estate Transaction Associations (NFRETA), which consists of 47 real estate transaction associations, each representing a prefecture in Japan. He started his real estate career in 1983 and is currently affiliated with the Mercer Island office of John L. Scott, Inc.

The Seattle-King County Association of REALTORS[®], with 6,000-plus members, is a local board of the National Association of REALTORS[®] (NAR). Its members participate in matters at all levels of government that affect private property rights, housing supplies, affordability and homeownership opportunities. Membership is voluntary, and only members may use the term REALTOR[®], which is a licensed collective trademark.

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