



## **Earl Krakower**

Realtor Coldwell Banker Prime Properties

*"We can achieve anything we want to achieve, but first we must have the courage to believe we can achieve it."  
Tony Gordon*

Having spent most of his adult life in Rochester, NY in a successful career as a Professor of Chemistry at RIT, Earl Krakower is, with his wife Esther, one of the most successful and foremost realtors in the region. What makes his story so interesting, though, is that he entered the real estate market at the age of 57.

Earl says he had his turning point in an instant, one morning back in 1996. Here's how he describes it:

***"I knew mentally that as good as everything was, and although I could have stayed at RIT for the rest of my life, I knew that a change may be welcome. It was just something instinctive in my body that told me that even though I had a stable and prosperous position for 30 years, it might be fun to have a change away from the natural progression."***

***And so, instead of continuing on that natural progression, Earl left Rochester Institute of Technology for a new career. It was his desire for a challenge, and his respect and admiration for the***

***many entrepreneurial risks that his wife had taken over the years (risks that had paid off) that prompted him to go to work for her.***

Earl and Esther both grew up in Montreal, Canada. Earl pursued his undergraduate degree at McGill University in Montreal, and in 1960 moved to Vancouver, British Columbia to earn his PhD at the University of British Columbia at the age of 23. He says he was on the verge of accepting a job offer there, an offer that had been made to him a mere day after he received his doctorate, when a last minute phone call at 7:00 AM from the Dean of Science at RIT changed everything. A gut instinct that he should accept the position, as well as the convenient fact that he'd be moving closer to family on the East Coast, prompted Earl to accept the offer and make the move to Rochester.

Though he initially only intended to stay with RIT for five to ten years, his work there was successful enough to win him a tenured position that he held for thirty years. When he walked away from his secure and prosperous position to join a market in which he had no practical experience, Earl was head of his department, and had the opportunity to become a dean at another school.

Earl describes his turning point as more of a "natural evolution" in his family life rather than something motivated entirely by professional concerns. When he and Esther first moved to Rochester in September of 1966 and were looking for their first home, Esther realized that she had a talent for real estate and decided to move on it. As Earl's career as a professor at RIT developed, so too did Esther's business. And over time, she moved from a standard self-employed realtor to the Broker/Owner of Coldwell Banker.

From his work at RIT, Earl knew he had a talent for recruiting faculty members who became excellent employees for the university. He felt that his success there had some commonality with Esther's brokerage business: she recruited people to sell houses, very often from the same places that Earl found his recruits.

It was an incredible risk to be sure, but as Earl himself put it, he felt he had accomplished everything he could at RIT, and so he felt no guilt in taking his retirement. He mentions fondly that the faculty there were very supportive of his decision and he couldn't have been more delighted with the transition, even when he experienced a moment that would be horrifying to most individuals:

"At RIT, I was a tenured professor with a guaranteed salary and absolutely no stress if I didn't want the stress. Here, I woke up unemployed... and I absolutely welcomed the challenge."

His willingness, even longing, to take risks and profit from them is one of the three key things to which Earl attributes his success.

The second is that he's a very goal-oriented person. When he first went to work for the university as an assistant professor, Earl says he had certain ideas in mind about what he wanted to achieve, and he always set concrete goals. By sticking to them, he found that he received his tenure a full two years before he was scheduled to. Similarly, when he first entered the real estate market, **he set himself annual volume goals and never failed to meet them.**

The third, and perhaps the most important, is that he had a huge number of contacts in the community, not only from his work at RIT, but also from community work. Coming into the real estate business, he knew that **exercising a large sphere of influence is critical to success**, and so he has always been careful to maintain these contacts and call upon them when needed.

Not surprisingly, Earl says he has had no second thoughts about his change of career. While his position at the university was very secure, he says it was also very challenging. He compared this degree of challenge with his wife's entrepreneurial risk-taking and realized that in the 44 years married to one another, all the risks they had ever taken together had paid off. And so, he came to the game with all the optimism he needed to get him through trying

times. As far as Earl is concerned, the biggest success story is when two people who are married to one another can work together for such a long period of time.

Now at age 69 when asked whether or not he plans to retire, Earl offers in one statement the final word on just how he's managed not just one, but two amazingly successful careers over the course of his life:

**"I'll probably keep doing this until the day I die," he says. "I just enjoy the challenge that much."**

Author's Note:

On May 9, 2010, Earl Krakower passed away peacefully surrounded by loved ones. Earl touched his family, friends and the Rochester community with his kind heart and sense of humor. He will be greatly missed.