

DEKALB GOLD PHOENIX • 25 YEARS IN THE MILLION-DOLLAR CLUB

Broker ensures property is just right

By Ray Glier
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Bill Jessee has a motto. It goes with him everywhere as the mental calling card he never loses, a creed he never has to stop and think about.

"Never sell or lease something I wouldn't buy or lease myself."

Twenty-five years as a million-dollar broker have taught the 60-year-old Jessee not to sell junk. After all, if he puts a client into property that loses value or wasn't worth the price in the first place, the 911 call is going to go out to him.

"Whatever you put the prospective buyer or seller in, you have to get them out of it one of these days," Jessee said. "And if you put them in a piece of property that doesn't make sense, or if it is overpriced, you may never get them out of it."

Jessee is receiving the Gold Phoenix Award from the DeKalb Board of Realtors for 25 years of \$1 million or more in sales.

It is holding fast to his creed that has helped him become a consistent player in both the commercial and residential fields in Atlanta.

Eunice Tsai of Georgia International Properties Inc. in Chamblee took the state real estate pre-licensing course Jessee taught at DeKalb Community College (now Georgia Perimeter College). She said Jessee's biggest lesson was not shoving a customer into property that didn't fit just to make a sale.

"If you didn't want to buy it, don't sell it, that's what he always told us," Tsai said. "He has a higher ethical standard than most people in the business."

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Bill Jessee
Jessee & Associates Inc.

Jessee, who established **Jessee & Associates Inc.** in 1972, said the keys to success are in the details. He is meticulous with contracts and fine print, which makes sense because he has a law degree from The University of Georgia.

"We used to laugh at him and call him a contract nut because he was very careful legally," Tsai said. "We learned from him about that. It was very important."

The details can make a commercial real estate broker sweat and lose patience. It's not like turning residential property. Bureaucratic tangles can make a mess of a commercial deal and string it out for months and months.

"Most of the commercial real estate deals have (an inspection period) between 120 and 180 days, ... which means they have to look at the deal that long to make sure it will work," said Jessee, who considers the entire metro

area his territory, although his office is in Buford. "You could have a deal you have worked on for a year before you find out you're going to close. And you could lose it at the 11th hour because the inspection could not turn out."

"You're dealing with people in industry, you're dealing with people in different governmental entities on zoning issues and utility issues and different things," he said. "You've got to learn to have patience and how to make these deals work."

Jessee, who was born in Hattiesburg, Miss., and raised in Atlanta, has his outlets to deal with the demands of all the details of commercial real estate.

He likes to hunt pheasant and enjoys

pistol-shooting competitions at a local range.

Jessee also has managed to keep his family close. One of his two daughters works with him in his office and he calls her "my right hand."

Anyone who gets into the business, Jessee said, better use two hands for the heavy lifting because commercial real estate is not a breeze.

"It's going to take at least two years to get going and make a living," he said. "If they can't subsist for two years, don't even think about getting into it, because you can't rush commercial deals."

"If there is a problem, you have to solve it. You are a facilitator. You have to put it all together make it happen."



Bill Jessee: The million-dollar agent says the keys to success are in the details.

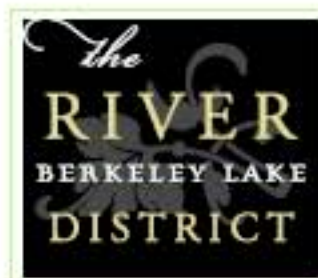
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