

# Shirley Zeitlin

Zeitlin & Co.

Shirley Zeitlin has been helping homeowners for more than 40 years.

As a Realtor and chief executive officer of Zeitlin & Co., she describes her primary role as providing "visionary leadership to my management team, support staff and associates."

Zeitlin started her brokerage in 1979 with six agents. It now has 115 agents, three local offices and ranks 10th in the Nashville market. In 2009, her firm had nearly \$253 million in sales.

She was the first female president of the Tennessee

Association of Realtors and has held a variety of positions with the Nashville Board of Realtors.

Zeitlin also is heavily involved in her community, serving as a board member for Saint Thomas Health Services, the Nashville Symphony, Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, Nashville Downtown Partnership and the Arts and Business Council of Greater Nashville.

She is also a director for publicly traded O'Charley's, on the advisory board for Regions Bank and is past chairman for the Nashville branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

Her pearl of wisdom for other women professionals: "Be the best you can be and always do the right thing."



*How has the recession affected your business? We're still dealing with it. I didn't deal with it early enough. Last year was really a painful year. We started doing what I think most companies have done, which is cutting costs without hampering client services. We've also looked at new sources of revenue, because you just can't keep expecting that everything will get back to where it was before.*

*On building a strong team: I've been very conscious about attracting young people so that we have a good cross-section, and that we're not just becoming an old company. It's good to be old as far as experience and reputation. But sometimes, it's not good if all your people are old. One of the things that I've found the most rewarding is to see people grow and go to another level of performance. Our executive vice president started out as a receptionist about 20 years ago.*

*On being a trailblazer in her industry: I was one of the first women on the board of the Chamber of Commerce, and I've had a lot of opportunities like that. Sometimes people ask, "Was it difficult to break into business as a woman early on?" Actually, it was really a tremendous advantage for me. I've been very blessed to have a lot of wonderful opportunities. I think I was in a good place at a good time.*

