

DON COPELAND

Written by H. K. Wilson

them a better return. As a result, I did a lot of 1031 exchanges. That's still where my niche is. When my dad sold his practice in 2018, I became an independent broker and continued to help clients with their real estate needs. I do everything from property management, to buy/sell, to 1031 exchanges — whatever someone may need. If someone has a residential property, I will co-list it and manage the transaction, but my focus is on commercial properties.”

Working in the family business, Don says his dad instilled in him the practice of putting customers first. “He always made sure we were looking out for people in every aspect of their financial wellbeing. Just because something might make them money doesn't necessarily mean it's the right investment. He taught me to really look to solve the question of what is the right investment for the individual client.”

Don continues this legacy of service by helping his clients sell real estate and exchange it into a commercial investment that is tax deferred. He has helped

clients buy and sell properties nationwide, and has put together limited partnerships so multiple investors could purchase large commercial properties. He not only manages and sells properties locally, but he often consults on transactions outside of California in collaboration with his network of professionals from coast to coast. “With a 1031, a lot of things are time sensitive, so having a hand on that is very crucial. Over the years, I've gotten to know a lot of brokers nationwide, and they are constantly sending me potential properties for my investors to buy. Moving out of residential property management to a triple-net commercial property where the tenant takes care of the property is very appealing to a lot of people. Unfortunately, triple net is getting hard to find in California, so being able to find opportunities nationwide is a key aspect of my business.”

Met Don Copeland, broker/owner of Don Copeland Real Estate. Don is a Redlands native who played football at San Diego State University while earning his bachelor's degree in public administration. “I was looking to get into government work,” he recalls, “but at the time, my dad was an accountant and had a need for his clients to have a trusted and thorough real estate advisor. I got my real estate broker's license and moved to Yucaipa to work with my dad.”

That was the beginning of Don's 17-plus-year real estate career specializing in the strategic transition of investments from residential to commercial real estate. “A lot of our clients were family businesses, and my job was to move their real estate from single family rentals to larger commercial properties to give



In 2009, Don obtained his MBA from the University of Redlands, adding further to his expertise. Whether a client is preparing for retirement, has depleted all of the depreciation on their houses or small commercial properties, or simply wants to increase cash flow, Don is skilled at guiding them to more lucrative options. “I always want to sit and talk with a client to get a real understanding of what they're trying to achieve with their real estate investments. Do they want it to be income when they retire, or supplemental income while they're still working? Then I can help them find the property that is appropriate to what they are looking for. I look at their whole financial picture to see how the real estate side can help them achieve their goals and improve their overall financial wellbeing.”

Throughout his career, Don has built trust based upon results, and his business is driven entirely by word of mouth. “I envision that clients will want to be turning over their properties about every seven years, so I maintain contact with them. They're always happy with the outcome, since they're getting the best possible revenue with regard to tax savings and increased cash flow.”

A client from Microdyne Plastics, Inc., stated: “Don has a strong grasp and understanding of commercial properties, purchases and building investment partnerships. His experience in contracts and property

management is a great asset to have when looking for more than a broker, but a real estate partner.”

Don met his wife in college, and the two have been married for 20 years. Their two daughters are involved in numerous academic and sports activities, and their youngest is also an actress. He says that these days, much of his free time is spent supporting their interests, but he looks forward to going back to coaching football in the future. He previously coached at two of his alma maters, Yucaipa High School and University of Redlands. He says, “I really enjoyed the educational aspect of teaching and helping young kids to develop.”

Don says he wants to be known as a consulting broker rather than a transactional one. “For me, it's not just about buying or selling, but how that investment is adding value to your life. I'm not in it for getting the commission and being done. I'm looking to build relationships and to be a resource for people to improve their circumstances in life.”

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