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ATG's Mary Fran Gill: Practice makes perfect in CRE!

February 20, 2015 | Bianca Herron | [PRINT ARTICLE](#) | [EMAIL THIS ARTICLE](#)



Mary Fran Gill

Mary Fran Gill started working for ATG, in their commercial title department, her first summer out of college. With her undergrad degree in public relations, real estate clearly wasn't on Gill's radar. Despite that, over time ATG started giving her more and more responsibility, and Gill found that she enjoyed real estate—and was eager to learn more about the industry. Gill's hard work and persistence paid off, as she now manages their auction company, Auctions by ATG. Everything surely happens for a reason!

"There are so many aspects to the real estate business," Gill said, operations manager of Auctions by ATG. "It's challenging, yet always changing and evolving. It's hard to get bored in this industry, there is always something new to learn, someone new to meet or a new strategy to plot and execute."

"For example, we're in a period in the auction business where it's not just about distressed properties and a bank, or other owners trying to clear their books as soon as possible of an under performing asset. Mainstream assets, so called luxury properties (like golf courses) and other unique

assets are once again coming to auction because of the distinct advantages the process brings. That's good for the industry altogether as it broadens the opportunities and changes the perspectives of those involved."

It's that excitement, the steady evolution of the industry that keeps it exciting for Gill. She's also excited about two golf courses that ATG has for sale in their upcoming auctions.

"I think golf courses are exciting because there are so many possibilities for the land," Gill said. "Whether a buyer keeps it as a golf course or develops the land, it's always fun to check up on the progress down the road. We have sold two golf courses in the past which is impressive because the golf course marketing is a tricky one."

ATG also has a very unique property, the South Bend Brewing Association Building in South Bend, Indiana. "It's a historic building, built in the early 1900s, transitioned in and out of Prohibition, and some say was even a hideout for Al Capone. It's an asset with many great possibilities for an investor with a vision."

Now that the real estate market is starting to rebound, for the first half of the year, Gill thinks people are going to be more aggressive.

"We already have people calling us weekly, asking about what we are getting in, and what will be in our upcoming auctions," she said. "As I mentioned previously, we expect that the makeup of our auctions, as well as across the auction sector, will be much less focused on



Gill at a Goldie Scholar breakfast.

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distressed properties, and more on traditional auction scenarios where sellers are looking to capitalize on date certain sales. An auction also allows for an accelerated marketing process and enables the market to help set price and other benefits.”

Customer service plays an important part at ATG, and Gill pointed out that it is what sets them apart from other companies. “We treat every client the same no matter how large their buying power or how small of an asset they want to auction. We take pride in getting to know our clients and making the auction platform accessible for the general public.”



Gill noted that finding the balance and the things that keep her sane can be hard in real estate. “In this business, you are supposed to be available 24/7. At some point you have to step away for a little bit and enjoy life outside of work. I love to travel, spend time with family and friends, golf and cook. Winter is hard in Chicago, I really miss being on the golf course and being outdoors.”

That goes hand in hand with her daily habit—conversing with her mom at least once a day! “Whether it’s an email, text or phone conversation we talk just about every day. She has been a great advocate and supporter throughout

Gill outside of the Neuschwanstein Castle in Schwangau, my career.”

Germany.

Her favorite movie currently is *Guardians of the Galaxy*,

“It’s a hilarious movie and the soundtrack is great!”

Currently, Gill is also pursuing a Master of Science in Real Estate at Roosevelt University. “I guess it is real estate related, but I am very passionate about furthering my education. I also purchased my first home last year and completed a renovation, it was a busy year.”

Reflecting back on 2014, the biggest lesson Gill said she has learned is to go with the flow and roll with the punches.

“Real estate is full of surprises and you have to be able to adapt. I am a planner and somewhat Type A so that has been an adjustment. If something doesn’t go as planned, you have to come up with plan B. Anyone in real estate knows you have to be quick on your feet to thrive in this business, but it takes practice.”

Although Gill has been in the industry six years, she has both learned and accomplished much in her short career. If she could give her novice-self advice having just entered the industry, Gill said she’d advise to not be afraid to network and seek out mentors.

“When you are starting out and everyone seems older, wiser and more accomplished it is easy to feel inferior and shy away from people,” she said. “It’s important to make relationships and ask for help and advice. Building relationships in real estate is very important, and for the most part a lot of people are willing to help and give their advice along the way. I was very lucky that I had people take me under their wing throughout my career.”



Here’s Gill cooking a turkey, yum!

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