

# Debbie Martorano named COAR's 2021 REALTOR of the year.

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By Liam O'Kennedy

**D**ebbie Martorano was at a real estate conference in Las Vegas last year when COVID-19 began to grip the country.

By the time she arrived home to Bend, the city was in its initial stages of pandemic response.

“The day after we got back, everything shut down,” Martorano said. “It was a ghost town.”

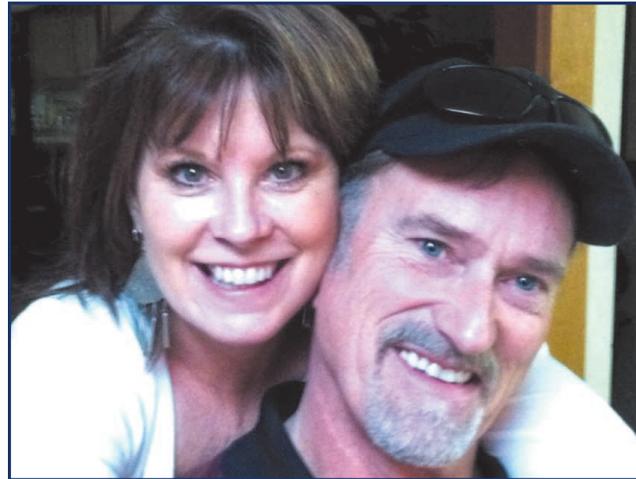
The RE/MAX real estate office where she worked as an agent transitioned its staff to working from home. As the housing market slowed temporarily, Martorano began reaching out to her clients.

“I spent the first month calling every client I’ve ever had, just asking, ‘How are you doing? Is there anything I can do for you?’” she said.

Corinne Bettesworth, Managing Principal Broker at RE/MAX and longtime friend of Martorano, described Martorano as a deeply caring individual.

“She’s honestly one of the greatest humans I’ve ever known in my life,” Bettesworth said. “Her clients aren’t just another person in her database. They become her family and she takes extremely good care of them.”

Martorano’s spirit of selflessness hasn’t gone unnoticed in the real estate community. The Central Oregon Association of REALTORS (COAR) will present her with their REALTOR



of the Year award at the 2021 EnCOAR awards on June 7.

Martorano is currently a committee member for the Grievance and Professional Standards committees at COAR. She also volunteers with The Giving Plate in Bend, and with The American Red Cross.

“Without giving back to that community that’s given so much to me, I wouldn’t be who I am today,” Martorano said. “I would say that if you’re not taking care of the people you are surrounded with everyday at work and your community, why else would you do this?”

Martorano got her start in the real estate business 30 years ago at Frank Ruegg Real Estate. She later worked for realtor Steve Scott. “He was an excellent mentor and I learned so much from him,” Martorano said. “He is the reason that I am the real estate broker I am today.”

Louie Hoffman, principal broker at John L. Scott Real Estate in Bend and COAR’s

president for 2021, has been a friend and colleague of Martorano for 30 years.

“She has been a real positive force in any office that she’s worked in,” Hoffman said.

Martorano is also a strong advocate for her clients and the values that govern ethical real estate transactions, Hoffman said.

“You don’t want to butt heads with Debbie,” Hoffman said. “She’s got more love in her than anybody, but if she’s got something she stands for, she stands for it.”

As the real estate market accelerated to a frenzied pace last year, Martorano had to work harder than ever for her clients. “I’ve seen frustration. I’ve seen tears. I’ve seen buyers go, ‘That’s it. We’re done.’ It’s a really tough time to buy a house,” she said. “I want it to get back to normal real estate so bad. Take your time, fall in love. Watching the look on their face when you’re handing them the keys for the first time is what gives me so much joy. Helping them with that next chapter in their life is a journey that is so fun to be a part of.”

