

Finding Home

Working with Rena Spangler

BY ELLEN DONKER

When Molly Gise and Roosevelt Bowman were living in their first Maplewood home, they took note of a letter they received from realtor Rena Spangler. She had just moved to their street and wanted to introduce herself to the neighbors. Gise says, “I always thought that was cool, like, [a] very old school way to just sort of announce who you are.”

As their family grew, and they wanted a home with more room, Spangler’s letter came to mind. Gise asked her for help and before long they were visiting open houses. That was in 2016, and although they didn’t make a move until 2020, when they were a family of four, Gise says, “It really helped us define what we were really looking for and what we were willing to spend.”

On the list were items such as a guest room for her mother who frequently visits from Oklahoma, good backyard play space for the kids, a roomy two-car garage, and a half bathroom on the first floor. Although they didn’t need the house to have the latest updates, they still wanted a home that was functional and didn’t require immediate updates.

Over the years, Gise and Spangler stayed in close contact, visiting different homes on the market. Gise says, “Something I really loved about her was that she’s been doing this for so long, and she’s lived in the area for so long. She knew everything. She knew the story behind every house and when she didn’t know it, she found out.”

When it came to deciding where to settle, Gise says, “My husband and I disagreed a lot about what neighborhood because I wanted to stay in Maplewood. I wanted to stay close to town



Roosevelt Bowman and Molly Gise with children Will and Mary. Gise calls this the Goldilocks house because it was neither too big nor too small. It was just right.

and he really wanted to move to one of those big ranch style houses in Newstead. He liked that it was kind of isolated.... And I’m a stay-at-home mom and I liked being closer to civilization in town because I’m running kids to playdates and parks and preschools.”

When a house came on the market on De Hart Road near Orchard Park, Gise was excited to see it. She says, “I’ve been going to this park since Will [their 7-year-old son], was like 1. It was my favorite park. I always thought it must be so nice to live on this street.” But for Bowman, even though the location offered him an easy walk to the train, Gise says, “It took a lot of convincing...because he didn’t know the neighborhood.”

Gise called it the Goldilocks house because unlike other homes they had considered, it was neither too big nor too small. At five bedrooms and two and a half baths, it was just right. And it featured a front porch that Gise had always dreamed of having and, of course, the park.

Even though the open house took

place on a cold and rainy January day, it attracted a large crowd. Spangler constructed a very strong offer for Gise and Bowman, knowing they’d be competing against multiple bidders. When their offer was accepted, they had to move quickly to put their current house on the market. Gise says, “I have two little kids full time and I thought nothing could be more stressful than this, right?”

Of course, weeks later as transactions for both houses were at critical stages, COVID became a reality. Gise says, “I remember thinking, I can’t believe we did this. This was the worst idea ever. Everybody’s snuggled safe and quarantined in their houses. And we’re packing.” Amid the changing protocols in real estate and society when so much was unknown about the virus, she says, Spangler “was a calming presence in an insane time.”

Gise is grateful that the buyers and sellers on both houses worked together so well. She says, “Everybody had the same motivation to close the deals, which Rena knew the whole time.”



Realtor Rena Spangler worked with the Bowman/Gise family to find the right house for them.

Relieved that they moved before the real estate market got even crazier, Gise says, “I thought we were doing the worst possible thing at the worst possible time. But in the end, it was the best thing we could have done.” She concludes, “I’m really glad that Rena sent her letter.”

“Whether reaching out to a new neighbor with a handwritten note or using Compass’s high tech tools to sell a home, there’s no substitute for being an aggressive advocate for my clients,” says Spangler. “It’s all about fostering and maintaining a one-on-one relationship from start to finish; that’s what made working with Molly and Roosevelt so rewarding.” 