

Professional Standards Update--Denial of Equal Professional Service

On a Saturday morning, REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B, a salesperson affiliated with REALTOR® A, answered a call from Prospect C, a recent college graduate who was moving into the city to take his first teaching job at Northwest High School. Prospect C was married, had two young children, and was a veteran.

After qualifying Prospect C for a three-bedroom home in the \$180,000 range, REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B described available properties near Northwest High School and set up appointments to show houses to Prospect C. That afternoon, REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B showed Prospect C and his wife three houses in neighborhoods near the high school.

On Monday, at a faculty meeting, Prospect C met Prospect D, who was also moving into the city to take a teaching position at the same high school and who was also in the market for a home. Prospect D was married with two young children and was also a veteran.

Prospect C told Prospect D of REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B's knowledge of the market and VA financing and how helpful he had been. Prospect D called REALTOR® A's office that afternoon and asked for REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B.

REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B met Prospect D and determined Prospect D was also qualified for the \$180,000 range. Prospect D told REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B that he was also a new teacher at Northwest High School and had been referred by Prospect C. Prospect D was black.

REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B showed Prospect D houses in several neighborhoods undergoing racial transition but did not show Prospect D homes in neighborhoods near the high school.

Prospect D asked about houses closer to Northwest High School. REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B replied that he had no knowledge of any homes in that area for which Prospect D could qualify. The next day, Prospect D, while visiting Prospect C, related his problems in finding a home near the high school and learned that REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B had shown Prospect C several homes near the high school. Prospect D filed a complaint with the Board of REALTORS® claiming that REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B had discriminated against him and his family by not offering equal professional services.

The complaint was reviewed by the Grievance Committee. REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B was charged with an alleged violation of Article 10, and the complaint was referred to a Hearing Panel of the Board's Professional Standards Committee for hearing.

At the hearing, REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B admitted that he did not use the same efforts to show Prospect D properties in neighborhoods near the high school as he did with Prospect C because he felt Prospect D and his family would feel more comfortable living in a racially integrated neighborhood.

The Hearing Panel found REALTOR-ASSOCIATE® B in violation of Article 10 of the Code of Ethics.