

# MOBILITY

May 2014



WORLDWIDE ERC  
THE WORKFORCE MOBILITY ASSOCIATION

*A Salute to*

## MOBILITY HEROES

*SPOUSES/PARTNERS STAYING*

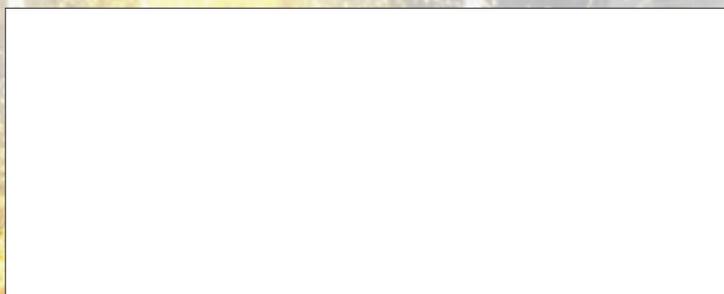
**CAREER-VIABLE**

*EMERGING MARKETS IN*

**CIVETS, EAGLE,  
AND MINT**

**ASSIGNEE  
SAFETY**

*IN UNSTABLE REGIONS*





MOBILITY

**HEROES**

*A tribute to the colleagues, examples, and mentors who have helped us find our way in the industry*

*By Michelle Sandlin, CRP, GMS-T*

**A** wise person once told me that “hero” is a very big word. It is a reserved word, not to be thrown around and used lightly. She was right. It’s huge! That person was JoAnn Royer, CRP, GMS, director of corporate services at Williams Trew Sotheby’s International Realty. She is one of my top “mobility heroes.” She has earned this distinction for always giving so much of herself to her friends and colleagues, for being a patient teacher, for always making the time to share her knowledge and wisdom, for her tireless spirit, and for humbly leading by example.



**JOANN ROYER:  
'I WANT TO HELP'**

I met JoAnn for the first time back in 2009. Before that, we had spoken on the phone a couple of times and really hit it off. As eager as I was to meet her, our visit quickly turned into a discussion about the CRP® exam that I would be

taking in May of that year. JoAnn had passed it the year before, and she explained how arduous studying for the exam had been.

Within days, I received a call from JoAnn. “I want to help you pass the CRP® exam,” she said. JoAnn

basically offered to be my study partner. What she became was my mentor, my friend, my advocate, and in the years that followed, my hero.

I barely knew JoAnn at the time, and I couldn’t believe she was making an offer that was so completely selfless and generous. We scheduled telephone calls a few nights each week for the three months leading up to the exam date. I realized this was a big time commitment for JoAnn, and yet she didn’t want anything in return. She just kept telling me to pay it forward, which I did the following year when another friend was studying for the CRP® exam.

JoAnn says she, too, has received some help along the way. I recently asked her, if she could name only one mobility hero, who that would be? Without hesitation, she chose Karen Greene, vice president

# HERO: HELPFUL, ENTHUSIASTIC, RESPONSIBLE, AND OVERWHELMING

— JOANN ROYER

and director of corporate real estate services at Ebby Halliday Realtors in Dallas–Fort Worth.

“Early in my career, when I moved to William Rigg [Company], Karen Greene was my mentor and taught me basically everything I know. She took me as a newbie and gave me hands-on training, kicked me out of the nest, put me on an airplane, and said go make a presentation. She has remained a longtime friend and is just one of the best in this business. She has worn a lot of hats and has always excelled at everything she has ever done. I am just a really great fan of hers, and I know that I could call her today to ask her advice or assistance, and even though we are competitors, it wouldn’t make a bit of difference.”

When asked if there is anyone else who has influenced her or impacted her career over the years, JoAnn says she has relied on Anne Incorvia, vice president, business development and relocation, at Martha Turner Sotheby’s International Realty.

“She is always very patient, very understanding, and very funny. She and I have been together in several groups for a long time, and now we’re together again at Sotheby’s.”

As someone who has been both mentor and mentee, JoAnn says she values the mentor/mentee relationship as a very important one in this business. “You’re only as good as what you share,” she says.

JoAnn uses an acrostic to list some of the important characteristics and qualities of a hero. “To me, hero is a really big word,” she says. “But if you take it apart, it would be someone who is Helpful, Enthusiastic, Responsible, and overall Overwhelming.”



## STEVE ROGERS: TAKING MENTORING SERIOUSLY

My next mobility hero is Steve Rogers, SCRIP, SGMS, client relations manager at NEI Global Relocation in Omaha, NE. I had known who he was for several

years before formally introducing myself—after all, he is a legendary name in the industry.

I was at a Texas Relocation Network Conference in Dallas several years ago when I finally had the opportunity to meet Steve. Soon thereafter, I was fortunate enough to have his support when I was seeking election to the board of directors of Houston Relocation Professionals.

Serving together with Steve on the board of HRP for the past four years, I have observed and admired his strategic thought leadership, his commitment to the organization and the industry, his analytical prowess, and the personal way in which he addressed the other board members. He was instrumental in leading specific initiatives that enabled HRP to raise the bar as an organization and significantly position it for future growth.

Over the years, Steve says, he has been asked to mentor newcomers to the industry, and he takes this responsibility very seriously:

“I have encouraged newcomers to explore the industry, beyond their own role and company, on how relocation can be a career—not a stop along the way to something else. The value in being a mentor is that you’re accepted as a role model. It encourages you to always be at your best and *show* how it is done, not *tell* how it is done.”

Steve says as he looks back over his career in the mobility industry, the top people who have influenced and inspired him include Cris Collie, Jack Clark, and Larry Gersch.

He singles out “Cris for his leadership qualities and ability to reach consensus with diverse interests without confrontation; Jack for taking a chance on me when I was new and for openly sharing his ideas; Larry for his integrity and always providing a sounding board to all my ideas, good and bad.”

Steve feels it would be impossible to pick only one or two names as a mobility hero.

“All of the people I look up to have many of the same traits,” he says. “They include integrity, professionalism, knowledge, and a yearning to learn. They have been leaders in their organizations and respect all points of view on a subject or issue.”

Steve believes now is a great time to be in the mobility industry because of opportunity. “Our industry is maturing, yet the need for new ideas and new innovations in a truly global mobility world have never been greater,” he says. “Ideas can have an impact, and results can be achieved on a regular basis.”



### **PEGGY SMITH: THE POWER OF LISTENING**

My third mobility hero is Peggy Smith, SCRP, SGMS-T, president and CEO of Worldwide ERC®. She impressed me with three very simple things.

First is her commanding presence the moment she sets foot on a stage, but she still manages to speak as if she is having a one-on-one conversation with you.

Second is her approach to her position and the heavy responsibility that comes with being the leader of Worldwide ERC®. In a sense, she gave the organization back to its members by conducting a “listening tour” to find out what members wanted, and she looked for ways to improve member engagement and benefits. That listening resulted in the implementation of new initiatives, and a new Worldwide ERC® seemed to emerge with the same contagious excitement and energy that Peggy embodies.

Third—and this is a big one—is that she took the time to include *me* in that “listening tour.” Although we had never met, all I had to do was ask her if I could be a part of it, and boom, I was in!

To be a good leader, you definitely have to be a good listener.



### **DIANE CONTANT: LIVING THE MOBILITY LIFE**

There are many unsung heroes in mobility. One of my personal favorites is Diane Contant, GMS, global mobility manager at Bristow Group, Inc., Houston. I have known her for many years, but it wasn't until recently that she told me the compelling story of her life as an accompanying spouse.

Diane followed her husband to various locations all over the world in the days before relocation support services for employees and their families were the norm. During many years as an accompanying spouse, Diane learned that there were many common

aspects and critical resources that she needed in order for her family to be able to settle into life in different countries. Building on her personal experiences, Diane took the knowledge and experiences she gained during her life as an accompanying spouse and translated that into a very successful career in global human resources.

Diane has lived the mobility life and understands it from the inside and out. As such, she continues to vehemently champion the support services needed for internationally relocated employees and their families. She refers to accompanying spouses as the warriors and soldiers who go out there and rip their families out of their comfort zones to follow an opportunity for their spouse. If you asked Diane, she would surely tell you that these are the real mobility heroes.

### **UNIQUE BLEND OF SKILLS**

Peggy Smith shines the spotlight on the traits she feels characterize the heroes in our profession today:

“I define a hero as someone who displays courage and tenacity in the face of a challenge and is willing to work hard for the betterment of a greater good—and our industry is full of them! Over the course of my career, I've had the pleasure of witnessing plenty of mobility heroes in action. They possess a unique blend of skills in areas that cross what are traditionally very distinct ‘left- or right-brained’ lines. They possess a command of complex economic, legal, and technical knowledge, yet they also have the ability to connect with people on a purely emotional level. They are both pragmatic and empathetic. Frequently asked to do more with less, they are adaptable and resourceful. They know how to get things done, even when forging into new geographic or cultural territory. Every day, mobility professionals contribute substantially to companies' strategic and competitive business goals, while supporting employees and families in what can be one of the most stressful times in their lives.

“I'm very proud to be a part of this industry and to stand beside so many truly heroic professionals.” *M*

---

*Michelle Sandlin, CRP, GMS-T, is vice president/director of communications and marketing for Chicago Title and 2014 president of Houston Relocation Professionals. She can be reached at +1 281 831 3112 or via email at michelle.sandlin@me.com.*