

For Immediate Release

Fred Thomas, III Announces Retirement

A Journey of Endurance

[West Adams, CA July 17, 2017] Today, Fred Thomas, III announced his official retirement. With less than six months before his sixty-fifth birthday he has decided the time was right to move on to his next journey.

Real Estate Industry

In August 2011, he joined Bank of America as an analyst in their corporate mortgage compliance unit. Due to rightsizing several positions were restructured or eliminated. Rather than seek other opportunities within the bank, Thomas felt the time was right to devote energy on a portfolio of personal projects he had been developing during his working years. Thomas built a successful career in the consumer mortgage sector in the Real Estate industry. Starting in 1985 he joined Shearson Lehman mortgage whose parent was American Express. It was “learning by fire” as fixed mortgage rates were hovering around 19%! After learning the basics of mortgage originations, he became intrigued of the mortgage brokerage role and decided it was a better match to leverage his marketing degrees. He joined a firm headquartered in Torrance as the Vice President and Director of Sales with the goal to put himself on the fastrack of learning the ins and outs of how the business operated. In short time he realized how consumer behavior towards selecting their mortgage originator had taken a positive shift. The door was open for professional mortgage brokers to compete with traditional sources.

In 1987 he launched Professional Realty Mortgage. In addition to consumers

shifting, traditional lenders also saw an opening to grow their business by partnering with mortgage brokers. A key strategy of Professional Realty Mortgage was partnering with funding sources who were local and paid promptly. The word “direct-lending” took on a new meaning and was used as a wedge to marginalize the growth of mortgage brokers. Most direct lenders were banks, Savings & Loan institutions and mortgage bankers. In 1988 there was a financial meltdown and the result was a collapse in that sector or those who relied on deposits to fund their mortgage originations. Real estate professionals were in a scramble to find funding sources for their client’s mortgage needs. Countrywide Credit was established in 1969 and similar to Shearson Lehman were also mortgage bankers whose funding source for mortgage originations was selling the loans on the secondary market. Prior to the meltdown they were despised and not considered a viable player but overnight they became “the only show in town.” During that time Countrywide started a meteoric rise and also recognized the growth potential of legitimate mortgage brokers. In 1990 growing Professional Realty Mortgage demanded attending trade events to develop funding partners. At a trade show in Long Beach, CA Thomas met Angelo Mozilo who was president of Countrywide. He was at the event marketing his company as a funding source for brokers. It was there he introduced him to his new Executive Vice President of Wholesale Lending Rick Cossano. From there a historic relationship was created and our business shifted to African-American clients who were creditworthy but felt they did not have access to firms such as Countrywide. Our business grew and we expanded to a more retail-oriented company that was community based. Unfortunately, our growth was not properly managed and our ability to secure operating capital could not be sustained

so in 1995 we shuttered operations. Due to our relationship, Rick Cossano assisted Fred and Judith to secure employment with Countrywide which helped bridge their financial position. In 2000 Cossano left Countrywide and Fred quickly followed to venture into a new short- term project in the industry: spatial photography. It was during that time that a division of Countrywide known as Countrywide Warehouse Lending ventured off to become a stand-alone company focused on wholesale lending. It was known as IndyMac Bank. Many employees of Countrywide were recruited to join the new company but eventually Countrywide issued a moratorium of employees joining the new company. The Dot-Com era in the 90's had come to a screeching halt but companies like IndyMac were positioned to weather the storm while utilizing technology to fuel their growth. They became one of the first mortgage companies that was also a tech bank. In 2001, Thomas joined IndyMac in their newly created B2B business focused on serving professional Realtors. Countrywide had grown into a darling of the industry and Mozilo was a powerhouse. Several of his children and relatives had joined him as the firm grew. Two sons, Mark and Eric had subsequently joined IndyMac. In 2002 Mark was tasked with leading B2B and part of his restructuring was bringing Fred to join his sales management team. They had met during the Professional Realty Mortgage days when Mark was fresh out of college and part of Countrywide's Wholesale division under Cossano. Under Mozilo, Thomas earned the division's first Regional Manager of the Year award. He quickly advanced to Vice President and as IndyMac morphed and opened up more retail banking branches, he took over as First Vice-President of Retail Lending. Another market shift occurred and in 2005 as it was apparent retail operations were in trouble of increasing market share as home values declined

sharply and the mortgage meltdown officially started. Thomas left IndyMac in 2006 and in 2007 while vacationing in Aruba received a call for a fledgling real estate brokerage in Glendale called Clarity One Mortgage. They were one of many companies who grew in the early 2000's as consumer appetite was fueled by a product created by IndyMac which offered the borrower four payment options for their mortgage. It was called the 12-Mat. The demand was historic and companies had a difficult time in keeping up. Many saw originations as the ticket to their riches. Unfortunately, even though the door was open a good number of them were operating without proper licensing. That was the case at Clarity One and the owner who was a Zambian national knew about Indy Mac and their reputation as a company built from corporate discipline and that was the reason his personnel chief contacted Fred. Even though IndyMac had been shuttered by regulators it was early in the meltdown and those like Clarity One was looking to strike magic. That was not the reality as Thomas would up joining a company that did not quickly adjust to market conditions. Worse, the majority of originators were not licensed and that presented a major conflict for him as he was the Broker of Record. The result was instead of attempting to rebuild a company with appropriate staff, it was better to close up shop.

The mortgage meltdown was historic. Many like Thomas grew up on the origination side of the business. He saw the meltdown as an opportunity to diversify his skill-set and pursued new opportunities created from it. Foreclosures took on new dimensions so he joined Lender's Processing Service that specialized in property preservation. Coincidentally, part of the portfolio that he managed was IndyMac's which had grown to 42,000 properties. He was there several years before eventually joining Bank of America.

Early Years

Prior to launching his finance career in Real Estate Thomas focused on professional marketing assignments. He had gone back to school to secure his undergraduate degrees. In the late 70's Los Angeles was awarded the 1984 Olympic games. Los Angeles Southwest College was bidding for a training facility for swimming competition. The school established a public office focused on being the source of information regarding the site process. Thomas was one of Professor Donald Greene's top marketing students. He introduced Fred to then school president Walter McIntosh who selected him to serve as manager of the office. It was through McIntosh and Greene that he met the distinguished Herman Hill who was a well-known corporate marketing figure. He also became one of Fred's network of mentors. A pivotal event occurred in late 1978 as Fred was able to coordinate Peter Ueberroth coming to Southwest College to discuss the school's prospect of being selected. It was there he also met Priscilla Florence who was the Director of Human Resources for the fledgling Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC) that Ueberroth headed. The United States boycotted the 1980 games hosted by the Soviet Union (Russia) thus the prospects of the '84 games became more tenuous. The office eventually closed so after nailing his Associate of Arts degree he returned to University of Redlands to complete his Bachelor of Science degree. Through Hill he connected with Marjorie Everett who was president and managing owner of Hollywood Park Race Track. In 1979 Thomas was able to secure the coveted position as Marketing Coordinator at the race track. It was through Florence who connected Thomas with Charles Cale who would become Vice President of Sports for the LAOOC. Cale also owned several thoroughbred horses who raced during the Hollywood Park seasons. Part of the personnel strategy in building professional staff to operate the games was using Olympians as sports managers or

technical experts. They were to be partnered with professional managers called sports coordinators tasked with developing the administrative documentation or plans to operate the respective sports. Florence knew Thomas might be a good fit since he had the academic qualification as well as the prestige of working in sports marketing at Hollywood Park. In 1983 Thomas joined the permanent staff of LAOOC as Sports Coordinator and eventually Community Relations Officer wrapping up tenure in early 1985. It was at this point when staff had the opportunity to partner with corporate sponsors of the games in securing future employment. Through American Express, Thomas found Shearson Lehman.

Now that he is retired and not restricted to the rigors of full-time employment he has jumped into writing, traveling and photography as well as a few spot marketing assignments. He has maintained his Real Estate Broker's License. For nearly forty-four years Thomas and his wife Judith have been residents of the West Adams community in Los Angeles. Through the years they have been active in many community projects working with political leaders at the State and local level. He and Judith are certified Docents for the State of California Recreation and Parks division from their work with Allensworth State Historic Park. During Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's tenure, he completed a stint as a Commissioner in the Housing Division for the City of Los Angeles. Other notable achievements include being involved with Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas and the creation of Los Angeles' first Little League, Inc. franchise in an urban market where he started as a volunteer coach and rose to president of the league. In addition, Thomas is active with his church Bryant Temple AME in Leimert Park where he serves as chairperson of the media ministry. They have four adult children and one grandson.

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