CAMPAIGN SPEECH

FOR

STEPHEN MERKLE

Hello everyone and thank you all for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today. I appreciate that I may be the one keeping you from the bar, so I’ll be brief! I am proud to be a part of the Ohio Association of Realtors. The organization acts as an anchor and guiding light to our industry and as I look back on the leaders who have guided me for the past twenty years, I am honored and humbled to have been nominated for Treasurer. Although I believe the other candidates are very well qualified for this position, I am offering my extensive experience and knowledge of this business, my services, and my genuine interest and enthusiasm for all aspects of real estate to serve all of you as Treasurer of this fine community. Rather than go on about all the details of my career, I have provided each one of you with a copy of my brochure. Feel free to read it (**If you want to be funny, you can say**) and don’t worry-there won’t be a test later! (**Wait for the laugh**)

What I will say, though, is that I virtually grew up in this business. I was raised in real estate. (**If you want, you can say**) It’s been said that some people wish they were born with a silver spoon in their mouths. I was born with a contract **(lease?)** in my hands! I literally grew up in real estate and at 14 years old, started my career in the family business where I learned the ropes at an early age. I began from the bottom up, building a strong foundation, first by working in administration, where I learned the details of what it takes to run a business. At the age of 18, I earned my real estate license, and by the time I was 23, I qualified for my broker’s license.

Jim Rohn, author of **How to Lead an Extraordinary Life** once said, "A good objective of leadership is to help those who are doing poorly to do well and to help those who are doing well to do even better.” To me, that is at the core of any really effective leader. Our industry has seen its ups and downs over the past few years and we're blessed to be experiencing a recent resurgence in our business, but the one constant in the ever-changing Real Estate world is our association. To me, the OAR is there for us in good as well as challenging times, all with the goal of encouraging our peak performance.

The leadership of the OAR also has a mandate to maintain its stance against challenges that threaten our productivity and viability. The recent sales tax proposal on services including real estate is just one example of a potential negative challenge to our livelihoods. While we've seen a reprieve from the House, with a substitute bill being introduced, the fight is not over. It’s up to us as leaders to continue to mobilize and encourage our members to share their concerns with their representatives as we will be doing in our conversations with them at the legislative reception at the statehouse.

We live in a fast paced age when global incidents and economic uncertainty have a potentially profound impact on our daily lives and I believe that in order to maintain relevance in this rapidly changing world, organizations like the OAR have a special mandate to provide the most modern and resourceful context for all of its members, while respecting the heritage and history that brought us all into the real estate sector. As a real estate educator, I am encouraged to meet “new entrepreneurs” as they enter our industry. They bring with them enthusiasm and an impatience that can inspire all of us!! At the same time, our mandate is to harness that energy for the good of the industry, our clients and this organization. In order for that outreach and guidance to have the most impact, the officers of this or any organization must be at the “top of their game.” I believe that I am the most qualified candidate for the office of Treasurer. My lifelong passion for this industry along with my skills and my appreciation of new and modern ways to connect and forge strong bonds in business demonstrate that I am **YOUR** candidate. As Treasurer, I will do my best to contribute my skills to increase member participation while dedicating myself to being fiscally vigilant as our organization becomes more viable and successful from now well into the future. The Ohio Association of Realtors is **YOUR** organization. As **YOUR** Treasurer, it is my intention that our team provides strength, guidance and success for all!

Thank you very much!