



Leading the way as an entrepreneur

By Danielle VandenBrink
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KINGSTON - Being a single mother, property manager and entrepreneur doesn't appear to faze Helen Senis.

The Kingston resident has recently taken on a new task, adding to years of experience in the local housing industry.

Senis' entrepreneurial drive began early.

At age 14, she began saving money, and, at age 21, she bought her first income property after she graduated from Queen's University.

"I guess I always envisioned myself as a landlord," she said. "It was a way to generate income without necessarily having to go to work every day and still make a good return on your investment."



Kingston business owner Helen Senis said she hopes to inspire others to become an entrepreneur. Danielle VandenBrink/The Whig-Standard

Throughout her career, Senis has worked in the banking industry, real estate and as a developer.

She has also raised three children.

Recently, Senis has launched a home inspection business, under the North America-wide Buyer's Choice Home Inspections.

Senis said she was motivated to become a residential and commercial inspector — certified under the Professional Home and Property Inspectors of Canada — based on the push by real estate, insurance and legal sectors to better assess risk through home inspections.

She pointed to the steep decline in the United States housing market in the past five years.

“Many people were extending their credit,” she said. “Mortgage portfolios became a risk for financial institutions.”

Banks, insurance companies and law firms began using home inspections as a way to more accurately assess market value of residential and commercial properties, she said.

“That means that home inspectors can assume some of the liability,” she said. “(Home inspectors) examine the property in detail, and instead of providing subjective information, they are providing factual information on the structure.”

Currently, Ontario does not require certification to become a home inspector.

However, Senis said training and certification was important to her when she launched her business.

Senis said she has also felt welcome as a woman in a male-dominated field.

“The people I meet realize I may be a woman in a male-dominated industry, but I have the experience and qualifications,” she said. “I don't think that success in any industry is dictated by gender. There are many successful woman in Canada that are in male-dominated industries and their success isn't defined by gender.”

Senis said she hopes to motivate others, especially woman, to pursue a career as an entrepreneur.

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