

By David Parker

## Innovative Company on a roll

It was at that rather splendid Willow Park Charity Wine Auction back in November that I got chatting with **Gerry Watson**, who told me he and some partners were launching **Keller Williams Realty South**, I waited a couple of months before checking on his progress, and I'm impressed with the impact of the new venture.

Keller Williams is a U.S. franchisee operation based in Austin, Tex. It calls itself a learning company, focused on training, coaching, and consulting its associate partners. It also boasts a significant compensation innovation that allows its realtors to participate in profits they help generate by profit sharing.

After three years vested with the company, those profits continue even after retirement or moving on to another company.

That has already encouraged 40 new and current agents to join the company, working out of its Bannister Road S.E. office. It expects to have 100-plus on staff by the end of this year. Then the plan is for new offices to be opened in the downtown and northwest areas of the city.

Keller Williams has seven partners in Calgary, five realtors and two silent investors, who offer business know-how, but all realtors are taught how to run a business. The top 20 per cent become the board who vote on all company decisions.

A lot of effort goes into training, with Debbie Farrell working as the in-house team leader who is responsible for coaching and consulting. She can draw help and inspiration from Keller Williams University, a rather unique school in Austin funded by royalties. It sends out qualified lecturers to its partner offices who have been teaching in Calgary at no cost to staff, and on a cost-recovery basis to other realtors.