

BUILDING WEALTH AND OPPORTUNITY FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

Creating a more harmonious and equitable society through real estate

When Nene Matey-Keke was growing up in South Minneapolis in the late 1970s and 80s, he often opened the front door and looked out on a world marked by stark divisions of privilege and poverty; of opportunity and adversity; and his future hanging in the balance.

Raised by a father who emigrated from Ghana and a mother from southern Missouri, Matey-Keke saw Minneapolis and its racial divisions with a fresh, outsider's perspective. He watched his parents struggle in contrast to the relative privileges enjoyed by white classmates and their families. The division was a lesson for Matey-Keke, a Minneapolis native who founded RNR Realty International in 2004 with a commitment to addressing disparities and working to bridge one of the largest racial wealth gaps in the country. Early on, he came to understand that building wealth depended on two essential components: education and homeownership.

"Wealth is the great equalizer," Matey-Keke realized. "And the most common path to wealth is real estate." Soon, he was immersed in studying for his real estate license. Putting it to use right away, he bought a duplex. The home needed some work, but he didn't have the skills or cash to do the renovations. So, he volunteered to help remodel a basement with an acquaintance who was skilled in construction. He did it for free but was paid in something far more valuable than cash—knowledge.

After he upgraded his own duplex, word spread among his network. He began charging for his



Nene Matey-Keke, RNR Realty

services and built a construction company from the ground up. The real estate business grew, too.

A staunch believer in the value of education, Matey-Keke has earned 25 designations and certifications, including ABR, AHWD, CIPS, and HDEF. He says the driving force behind his thirst for learning is a desire to strengthen his knowledge of the real estate industry.

"It's been my career of choice for the majority of my life, and I love every minute of it," said Matey-Keke. "There are a lot of benefits that come from understanding real estate in its entirety. In order to be considered one of the best, you have to be knowledgeable."

To Matey-Keke, real estate has always been about more than transactions and profits. Homeownership provides more than shelter, it is a source of stability and wealth that can benefit generations of people, build stronger communities, and pave the way for a more equitable and just society.

"I want my legacy to be a catalyst that brings us to a more harmonious society," Matey-Keke said. "I want to help create opportunities for those who want a better life, not just those who have exposure and access through connections and inheritance. If you have the intelligence and energy and drive, you should have the opportunity to obtain the quality of life that you want."

NENE'S TOP 5 ESSENTIAL DESIGNATIONS FOR YOUR CAREER

Matey-Keke advises Realtors® to focus on these five indispensable designations.

Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR)

This foundational designation trains you to become more sensitive to what clients want and deliver for them—ethically and responsibly.

At Home with Diversity (AHWD)

This designation helps Realtors® to become adept at cross-cultural communication to cater to unique needs and interests of clients from a range of ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Certified International Property Specialist (CIPS)

Earning this designation prepares you to meet the needs of clients from all over the world and help smooth their transition to living and thriving in a new country. You'll also be trained to help American residents invest in overseas properties.

Learn more about NAR's Designations and Certifications at www.nar.realtor/education/designations-and-certifications

Certified Negotiation Expert (CNE)

This designation gives you the skill to understand the psychology of buying, the art of persuasion, the importance of planning, and the ability to know when to collaborate on a negotiation, and when to competitively bargain.

NOTE: This certification is offered by the Real Estate Negotiation Institute. It is not affiliated with the National Association of Realtors (NAR).

Housing Development Finance Professional (HDFP)

As a Realtor®, you are entrusted to help clients buy appropriately based on their income and financing. With an HDFP, you'll learn financial analysis techniques for long-term investment planning of affordable single and multi-family housing.

NOTE: This certification is offered by the National Development Council. It is not affiliated with NAR.