

# Sister act:

## Local real estate agents

Sisters Bonnie Ferris and Susan Tullington are typical siblings. They share a lifetime of inside jokes, they finish each others sentences, they answer each other's questions with honesty – sometimes tough love. They laugh and giggle and get along like best friends. They still occasionally squabble like schoolkids.

Honestly, Susan says, the best ideas happen when differences collide. Their skyrocketing sales results tell the tale.

The local real estate agents – both work for Samson Properties – are at their best when working together, dividing according to their strengths to market and promote homes in the region, sealing the deals with seamless, fuss-free closings.

“We trust each other,” Bonnie says, noting that’s the duo’s biggest strength of all. “I’m more the creative visionary. Susan’s more the orchestrator.”

Hear in their own words what drives the marketing machine they’ve created, a locale-specific brand that area home buyers and sellers have grown to trust.

Susan Tullington

### Susan Tullington

Age: 59

Studied: engineering at Tulane

At home: New Baltimore

### Finding Fauquier

I worked as a civilian for the Navy for more than a decade. I first came to Virginia – Crystal City – working for the Navy in 1980.

I moved “out” to Reston in '97. That’s still when Reston was considered pretty far “out.” That’s where I married my husband.

We lived in a townhouse, but of course we wanted some land and more room, and a more rural feeling. I first found a place in Haymarket, but the contract fell through.

I guess those things happen for a reason – you have this picture of “my house” in your brain. I found a place in New Baltimore just after that. I knew it was “home” right from the start.

### Know thy neighbor

I remember not long after we moved in, I was home one day. A neighbor who I hadn’t met knocked on my door.

He was standing there with just a doormat held in front of him, otherwise totally naked.

I wasn’t sure what was happening.

Turns out he was in his kitchen, and he’d run out onto his deck to shoo the squirrels off his bird feeder. The door closed behind him, and he locked himself out.

He was buck naked.

He walked over to my place to ask to borrow a hammer. He was going to break his window to get back inside.

I said no, how 'bout a robe and I call a locksmith?

That really broke the ice on meeting the neighbors.

### Get your goat

So, another day I go out to get my paper from the end of the driveway. A neighbor, who I hadn’t met, is walking down the lane and this goat is walking right behind her. She didn’t even know it was there. It was like a stealth goat.

It butted her before I was able to rescue her. I found a dog leash, and put the goat in the dog run and we went off to find the owners.

Stuff like this happens all the time out in the country. Though my sister says it happens to me more often than anybody else.

### The real story on real estate

After we nursed our mom through dementia – she died in 2010 – I was in prison ministry in Goochland. Now that’s a total eye-opener. They know they’ve made mistakes, and the tears they cry are genuine. All I had to do was listen and love.

It plays out in real estate, as it turns out. You listen to someone’s hopes and dreams, be generous and help them fulfill it.

Bonnie started back in real estate in 2012. I joined her in 2013. We went with Samson in 2014. Our brother (Jim Dray) also works for Samson.

Bonnie’s talking about how we can “yell at each other” but really it’s okay because we’re sisters! What she means is, we can be honest with one another. We don’t yell. Not too much.

I’m the analytical side, the slice and dice. Bonnie is more emotional, working with those inner feelings that come out when you’re buying or selling a home.

### Local market

Home sales in Fauquier are typically \$200,000 to \$500,000. Spring is prime home sales time, but a lot of people are looking at 2017 as a huge sales year, no matter what the season.

It’s been a sellers’ market for a while,



Photos by Doug Stroud