



**EVELYN A. REEVES**  
**16th President, NAREB**  
**Los Angeles, CA**

### ***Reflections***

NAREB has been like a metronome in America, constantly beating out the rhythm of ***Democracy in Housing*** for all Americans, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin; while at the same time, some of our members have been victims of visible and subtle acts of Fair Housing abuse. Even though the Fair Housing Act was designed to eradicate discrimination in the sale and rental of housing stock, there are still “miles to go before we sleep.”

Throughout the housing industry, women have persevered in every aspect: sales; marketing; construction; property management; insurance; mortgage lending; appraisal along with residential and commercial development. We have endured both racial and gender bias which I personally experienced. I chose, however, never to give up despite the early rejections I encountered when first entering the real estate industry.

As time went on, it became evident that the corporate world was intimidated by Black professionals. It also was a time that the doors of opportunity were easier to open for Black women to step into the corporate environment than it was for Black men. Most of us who were blessed with the opportunity to pursue our dreams and go forward, never forgot from whence we came nor whose shoulders we stood upon that made it possible for us to be there.

When I applied for NAR membership many years ago, my membership was denied because of color. The rejection did not make me bitter, it made me better. I chose to never apply for membership again, but vowed to become a stronger, more successful, real estate professional as a NAREB Realtist. The rest is history.

Over the years, there were three, very strong role models within NAREB who left an indelible mark on my NAREB life: Marguerite Smith (Dayton, OH), Bea Reed (Washington, DC) and Katrina Henry (Philadelphia, PA). These dynamic women were my “sheroes” and provided me with unconditional support.

One of my greatest moments occurred in 1990, when I was presented with the opportunity to testify before the 101<sup>st</sup> United States Congress in Washington, DC. Not only was I full of pride as a Black woman, but also as a Black professional woman in Real Estate leading and representing the greatest minority trade association in America...the National Association of Real Estate Brokers. I do not need to remind you that we are an organization that has ALWAYS focused on paving the way for all citizens to be decently housed so that future generations can enjoy the value and the benefits of homeownership.

Today's young Realtist women are smart, strong and enthusiastic. My primary advice to them is not only to strive for success, but also to achieve it with integrity. Never compromise the mission for the money. If you treat people with dignity and respect and provide professional service, your mission to succeed will come with financial benefits.

\*\*\*\*\*