

# Safety First

Helping REALTORS® understand inherent dangers of profession still priority for NAR's Past President

BY DAN ECKLES

NVAR Communications Director

Chris Polychron made REALTOR® safety a priority during his tenure as NAR President in 2015. He is still passionate about the issue. That was evident when he spoke on the subject at the Rocky Mountain Region XI Conference last month in Colorado Springs, CO.

Polychron was in his final months as NAR President-Elect when news broke nationally of the murder of Arkansas REALTOR® Beverly Carter. That tragedy was a trigger for Polychron's safety agenda as president.



Polychron

"You may remember, Beverly Carter was killed during my tenure," Polychron said to a group of roughly 300 in attendance. "I had the family come and talk one day and when they were done, there was not a dry eye in the crowd. I had to speak that day too and anyone who was there will tell you I couldn't finish my speech. I'd never been so emotional and I made a pledge that I'd try to make a focus of REALTOR® safety."

Polychron asked all of those attending the conference at the Broadmoor resort to take the REALTOR® safety pledge. He encouraged each state association to implement a state safety task force. He also asked REALTORS® and associations to open their offices as Safe Harbor venues. Additionally, Polychron advanced the idea to have client and agent ID forms filled out and on file during the housing search and transaction process.

Safety has emerged as a top priority for NAR. The nation's largest trade association has dedicated an entire section on its website to the cause: NAR. Realtor/Safety. After sharing stories of REALTORS® from California and New Mexico who had terrifying experiences



with criminals, Polychron preached that REALTORS® are an essential piece of the American Dream and their safety should never be jeopardized.

"All of us like to help the first-time homebuyer and promote the American dream of owning a home," he said. "That dream cannot and will not be threatened by fear (for REALTORS®). I want us to be sure that never happens."

Polychron shared the safety forum with Bill Masters, a veteran in the security services business. Masters told conference goers to invest in the book "The Gift of Fear." He stressed the gift of fear is something that's with you all the time, and when it strikes, people should listen to it.

Masters told the REALTORS® in attendance that when the 'gift of fear' rears its head, often the best thing anyone can do is run. The majority of Masters' presentation was about common sense safety tips. He pointed out the importance of reacting quickly and without hesitation

"In order to stop an attack on personal safety, you must react within two seconds," Masters said, adding that most of the time when security measures fail, running away is the best op-

tion. Masters said calling 911 is important, but should often be a secondary measure. Getting away immediately from a threat is most important and calling 911 is secondary to that. Masters highlighted one scenario from the REALTOR® world. He said it can be a good idea to host an Open House in a two-man team rather than going it alone. But he stressed the importance of still trusting your gut in those situations and not to take more risks with your personal safety just because you brought a partner along.

"You'll never stop attacks," Masters said. "They'll always occur. In almost all attacks, there was pre-attack surveillance by the attacker. Understand that, and make attackers think you're part of a big organization. Take pictures with the police and make them visible on your website. Show would-be attackers you are concerned about security. Portray a strong personal image. Make attackers move on to something else ... Remember the gift of fear. Remember to react within two seconds and remember to show a strong persona."

To learn more about REALTOR® safety, remember to check out: [www.nar.realtor/topics/realtor-safety](http://www.nar.realtor/topics/realtor-safety).