

# Wahlberg entertains at General Session

**Movie star shares insights on career, business ventures, family during discussion at NAR Annual**

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**B**OSTON — The National Association of REALTORS® did not disappoint in bringing in a big name for its General Session during its annual conference earlier this month. Acclaimed movie star, commercial real estate investor and restaurant owner Mark Wahlberg was the guest speaker during a 1-on-1 sit-down interview with NAR President Elizabeth Mendenhall. More than 6,000 REALTORS® took in the event as Wahlberg shared insights from his professional and personal life.

The crowd was also introduced to NAR’s five Good Neighbor award winners as well as each state’s REALTOR® of the Year, a parade of real estate talent that included Nevada honoree, 2018 NVR President Heidi Kasama.

Olympic swimming standout Michael Phelps was a hit when he spoke at General session during NAR annual in Chicago a year ago and Wahlberg was definitely the star of the show Saturday afternoon (Nov. 3) at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. Wahlberg, a Boston native and accomplished entrepreneur, is acutely aware of real estate and its impacts on his various business ventures.

“When I think about what the (Boston) Seaport has been over the last 15 years, I just think wow,” said Wahlberg, alluding to the growth of Boston’s harbor area. “Real estate is something I’m really interested in so if anyone has got any great ideas, don’t be afraid to talk to me later.”

In addition to his acting career, another key area of focus for Wahlberg is expanding the Wahlburgers restaurant chain that he co-owns. He said that endeavor alone has taught him a lot about real estate.

“Our business is really thriving in middle America,” Wahlberg said. “But



**Mark Wahlberg talks** about the influence of real estate on his restaurant business during a conversation Nov. 3 with NAR President Elizabeth Mendenhall.

if we want to be in New York, I’ve learned the hard way that we have to be in tourist areas with a lot of foot traffic. I have some great partners. We’re doing a lot of different things and being hyper aggressive in how we’re growing and building the business.”

Wahlberg said he’d like to open 200 more Wahlburgers restaurants and potentially own the real estate for those restaurants. He’d also like to own his own movie studio – “just like in real estate, the value is in owning it,” he quipped.

The 47-year-old said his gift is not lacking for motivation, noting there is plenty of time to enjoy the fruits of your labor later. He said he leaves no stone unturned and added that because of

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his success he’s been fortunate to come across all types of people from all walks of life.

“I’m not afraid to pick the phone and cold call somebody, kind of like REALTORS®. I’ve never met a REALTOR® who isn’t aggressive,” said Wahlberg, who told the crowd he’s got a nephew that just got his real estate license.

“There’s a lot of competition out there. Obviously, it’s about really making your clients feel like you’ve got their back and you have to work harder than everybody else. Heck, I want to get my real estate license. Watch out. I’ll be

stealing all your clients, performing all my old songs, doing whatever it takes to get your clients.”

The comments left the REALTOR® crowd with lots of laughs, but they also spoke to Wahlberg’s competitive nature. Not long after the real estate jokes, Mendenhall asked Wahlberg what challenges him most.

“At the end of the day, you still have to convince the person you’re working with to do what you want them to do,” he said. “That’s the constant challenge, but I’m just so driven. There’s nothing better than that feeling of completion. Even the smallest victory feels good. That’s what makes you say, what’s the next thing?”

Another big part of Wahlberg’s life is giving back. He’s a huge proponent of Boys & Girls Clubs across the country. Boys & Girls Clubs of America are the lead charity for NAR as well.

“There are many great causes out there, but when I know there are kids growing up out there in neighborhoods like mine who might not get a chance to get an education, that’s where I want to help,” he said. “There are kids in public schools. My school didn’t even have a gym. I wanted to be an athlete. The only other way out was being a cop or a crook and I figured out real quick that being a crook didn’t pay off. I think we have to clean up our own backyards and clean up our communities first.”

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— **Mark Wahlberg**

joking with NAR members during a Q&A at NAR annual’s General Session