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Meet the Neighbors! The Musical Loretta Edmonds

By The Editors
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Essential New York

Welcome to the latest installment of [our ongoing interview series](#), Meet the Neighbors! Loretta Edmonds, a vice-president at Essential New York, has been selling real estate in New York for more than two decades, and she knows every neighborhood like it were her beloved Upper West Side. She loves all her clients but has a soft spot for artists and entertainers, having been one herself, and even winning an award from the Screen Actors Guild for her volunteer work.

Where do you live?

I live on the West Side near the Hudson. I can walk to Lincoln Center and stroll on the river promenade. When I first moved here I had an unobstructed view of the river and could see all the way down to the Statue of Liberty. Much of that view is gone now because of new buildings, but I still have a fine river view and can see the sunset and cruise ships. The river changes color constantly and I love to look at it. It's very calming and I'm fortunate to be so close to it.

How is work these days? What is your latest deal?

I'm very busy now. There are many people seeking homes. There is a sense of caution, but I think buyers are beginning to have more confidence. My latest sale is a huge one-bedroom with a terrace and southern exposure at Lincoln Towers.

What was the best meal you've ever eaten in New York?

That's impossible to answer because I've had so many! Unfortunately many of my favorite restaurants have closed but there are always new ones opening. When I find one that I like I tend to be a faithful patron. I have a dinner date tomorrow at a new place and perhaps that will be my new favorite. It's called Bistro Cassis.

What was your first apartment like?

It was a large one-bedroom on 57th Street. It faced walls but I didn't care. I was happy there. And the rent was only \$450.

What is your recession war story?

I have two. I was selling a *pied-a-terre* to a couple who live in the suburbs. Their offer was accepted. The contract was drawn up and the day they received it—before they signed—the husband lost his job. They were embarrassed but everyone understood that they couldn't go through with the purchase.

Also, a young couple I know bought a three-bedroom apartment for \$1.5 million before selling their two-bedroom in a building with extremely high maintenance. Three months after they closed on the apartment, the husband lost his job, they couldn't find a buyer for the two-bedroom and the wife also lost her job. Thank goodness they're doing better now, but it was a rough time for them.

How do you get around town?

Various ways. Walking, taking a taxi, riding on a bus. When I have time, I like to take a bus and look out of the window. I see things I never noticed before, even though I may have travelled that street or avenue a hundred times.

What is your favorite building in the city?

It's hard to name one. Here are a few: The Empire State Building—when I first came to New York I went to the observation deck every night for a week. The city was a fairyland all lit up with thousands of lights. Radio City Music Hall, because I sang there when I first came to New York. The Rockefeller Center buildings, with their wonderful murals in the lobbies and the miles of shops underneath. The Woolworth Building, the Chrysler Building, the Beresford.

If you weren't a broker, what would you be?

What I have been all my life, a musician and a singer.

What is your dream home?

I have two, a house by the ocean and an apartment near the river. Luckily, I already have one of them.

You just won the lottery. What store do you stop by and what do you buy?

The nearest supermarket, where I buy tons of food to stock all the soup kitchens for the homeless.

If there was one thing you could change about New York, what would it be?

I wish we still had some of the wonderful buildings that were torn down like Penn Station and others I've seen photos of, such as the Hippodrome, the Singer Building, the Gillender Building, the old Waldorf Astoria Hotel and the Savoy Plaza Hotel.