Kentucky real estate firm cuts ties with Realtor after racist Facebook comment about Duke University

A Kentucky real estate brokerage swiftly severed ties with a Realtor on Friday after the woman posted racist comments on a Duke University Facebook page under a post welcoming incoming freshmen that included a photo featuring an ethnically diverse array of students.

The comment by Realtor Julie Stratton Middleton, until Friday an independent contractor with Kentucky Select Properties in Louisville, received immediate backlash from other Facebook users, including several who identified her contact information and former employer by name.

“1 white male in the whole bunch! Pathetic!!!” wrote Middleton in the since-deleted message, scattered among dozens of otherwise benign comments congratulating the incoming class of 2022 in a post published on The Duke University Facebook page March 29. “Took my son there to visit 6 years ago. Never saw a white kid on campus!!! It’s like the United Nations!”

In a screenshot posted by another Facebook user, Middleton appears to have written a comment saying she attended Duke and loved it, but also that “so many friends of mine have kids that have perfect scores and GPAs and can’t get in anywhere because they are admitting so many foreigners. Reverse discrimination!!!”

On Friday, Kentucky Select Properties Managing Broker and Partner Jay Gulick posted an apology on the company’s own Facebook page, distancing the firm from Middleton and strongly disavowing the woman’s views, which he characterized as “racist” and “offensive.”

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”I have spoken to the offending agent and will be dealing with this matter internally,” wrote Gulick in the post. “I have also made it clear to the entire company that if other people share these abhorrent views on social media they need to find another company for which to work. Kentucky Select Properties does not condone racism or discrimination in any form.”

Gulick responded to an email by Inman on Tuesday, confirming that Middleton was no longer employed by Kentucky Select Properties. He had no further statement.

A call to a number believed to be Middleton’s was not immediately returned, and since the backlash on Friday her Facebook page has been deactivated. A story in Louisville Business First reported that a cell number associated with the Realtor appears to have been disconnected.

The moves come following several racially–tinged controversies in real estate over the last several years, and as real estate leaders attempt to navigate diversity in their ranks.

See Gulick’s full Facebook post below:

“This morning I was alerted to a Facebook comment made by one of our independent contractor agents that I found racist, offensive and incredibly disappointing. The post does not in any way reflect the values or business practices of Kentucky Select Properties.

I have spoken to the offending agent and will be dealing with this matter internally. I have also made it clear to the entire company that if other people share these abhorrent views on social media they need to find another company for which to work. Kentucky Select Properties does not condone racism or discrimination in any form.

I was blindsided by this post but I am not blind to the fact that racism and implicit bias is present in our society.

I apologize on behalf of our company to all of you who have been offended or angered by this agent's comments. We will work hard to earn back your trust."

Email Jotham Sederstrom

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