

EPISODE 1046**[INTRODUCTION]**

[0:00:0.0] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to The Real Estate Syndication Show. Whether you are a seasoned investor or building a new real estate business, this is the show for you. Whitney Sewell talks to top experts in the business. Our goal is to help you master real estate syndication.

And now your host, Whitney Sewell.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:01.6] WS: This is your Daily Real Estate Syndication Show. I am your host, Whitney Sewell. It's that time of the week again where my business partner, Sam Rust, takes over the show and interviews our guest. I hope you enjoy the show.

[0:00:10.36] WS: This is your Daily Real Estate Syndication Show. I'm your host, Sam Rust. Joining us today is Whitney Ward. Whitney is a highly driven entrepreneur and founded intuitive management partners, a multi-family advisory and investment management firm that brings niche sector focus to ensure multi-family investors and developers mitigate risk and maximize asset value as president, she oversees and leads all new business development initiatives, acquisitions capital markets and asset management, Whitney. It sounds like you do a little bit of everything. Thanks for joining us on the show today.

[0:01:10.7] WW: Thank you, I do. I have my hands full.

[0:01:14.6] SR: As I was preparing for this, I was looking on your website to cruising around your LinkedIn and just... And you guys do a lot. I won't ever anything that is post-transaction or even pre-transaction on multi-family. So as I was digging though, I noticed you played collegiate basketball at George Mason, and I'm sure that that played a role in your career after that, I was just curious, are there anything that... Any lessons that you pull directly from your time at George Mason, whether it was in school or in the athletic program there, that has aided you in your journey to this point?

[0:01:45.9] WW: First, I just wanna thank you, Sam, for inviting me and Whitney for inviting me

out. So whenever you play sports, especially at the collegian level, but even in high school, you're just competitive, you're driven, you already have a mindset that is accustomed to wins and losses, so I think thinking about my athletic career, it's prepared me to be able to get up every day and go to work and expect there to be some wins and expect there to be some losses and keep it moving. So I think it's perseverance is the biggest thing that you get from playing at the collegiate level, and

[0:02:21.6] SR: You went from college and work for a couple of big corporations, you're in the corporate life, how did you transition into real estate? I find it fascinating to learn what drove somebody to make that change because you work in some fairly renowned reputable organizations, look like your career was heading in the right direction, what caused you to take a left turn as it were...

[0:02:42.7] WW: No, it's funny you say that because when I left, everyone at those careers that I was at, they were shocked because to your point, I was... I would get promoted fast and I was headed up the corporate ladder, but for me, it just came down to listening to podcasts like this one, my first podcast I ever listened to was Clayton Morris, and him and his wife invest in single family rentals in the Midwest, I don't know if they're still doing the podcast, I don't listen as much anymore, but once I started learning about passive income, financial freedom, real estate being an opportunity to get in without really having to go back to school and get a master's and spend all this money and it intrigued me, and so for me, after listening to podcasts and really get in my head in the books, I figured 30 years old, it was the time to take a chance and quit and just see what happens and if... The worst thing that could happen is I have to go back and I already know what that's like, but I don't know what this other entrepreneur roams like, so let me give it a chance.

[0:03:42.4] SR: Well, that's fantastic. It is interesting that story is a common thread, just being exposed to podcasts like this or books or some combination of that, there's so much material out there for people who wanna learn and how to get into real estate, how did you land on multi-family specifically, and then maybe even transitioning into intuitive and what you do there, there's a niche, even within multi-family that you're servicing... Talk about that journey a little bit.

[0:04:06.9] WW: Yeah, so real estate is so broad, I mean, that's what I like about it. You could be in commercial real estate, multi-family residential real estate, you could do buy and hold, you can do long-term holds, you can do fix and flips, and you can do a lot of different things. For me, it was the fact like late Morris did single-family rentals, but for me, I said scalability-wise, multi-family made more sense. And a lot of the big initiatives right now is Bill for rent, but five years ago that

wasn't the language so much, and so when you talk Single-Family Rental is you're thinking, Okay, you get that one single-family home, if you miss a tenant or that tenant can't pay or you have a duplex and one of the tenants can't pay that hit in that vacancy is so significant to the numbers, and I just felt that if I really wanted to scale my business... Yeah, it might take a little longer, but I saw a multi-family as an opportunity to really get in and make some headway. Now, as far as intuitive management goes into a management partners, me and my managing director, we kind of founded this together, she came from the property management side, property management regional management, and prior to moving into my own space, I was a broker in the multi-family space, and so I was on the other side of the transaction, brokering the same deals that we're looking at today, and when we teamed up, it just made sense, we had the skill set, and there's a ton of capital, there's a ton of investors chasing multi-family.

[0:05:27.7] WW: Why not bring our expertise and kind of capture all aspects of it, so that's... Kind of that transition and how that happened.

[0:05:35.2] SR: No, intuitive seems to be a combination of a couple of different services. You have, on one side, you talk a lot about property management and property level statistics and reporting, but then you also have this asset management piece. So how do you describe what intuitive provides for an owner?

[0:05:52.7] WW: Right now, I love it. So if you're in the multi-family space, you're coming to us, unless it's something heavy in the construction space, that's the only hat we don't wear, and that's eventually gonna be where we shift to as well, so right now we're working with a big Midwest developer and doing some punch list due diligence items for them, and so what we like to do is if you're an investor in the multi-family space and you're buying an asset, there's that aspect of due diligence that you're gonna need, unless you have boots on the ground already doing it, for you, we're that team that you would come to to verify your underwriting assumptions, your due diligence, if you have the deal under contract and you need that property management perspective, the asset management perspective. That's where we come in to play. And so the fact that we also are looking to acquire... It kinda ties it all in. So for us, we're our own in-house team, but for third party for investors that maybe they just bring the equity, the capital market side in the asset management, but they need that property management level, I...

[0:06:53.5] WW: You're gonna come to us because honestly, we can project whatever returns we want, but you're only as good as your property management team when it comes down to it, and

so that's kind of how we collaborate, and I think, like I said, being niche-focused is important because it kind of like if you needed a new surgery, you're gonna go to a new doctor, you're not gonna go to a hand doctor, you're gonna go to a professional that specializes in something niche, and that's what we're focused on, it keeps us busy, but it also touches what we do touches every aspect of the multi-family space anyway.

[0:07:23.8] SR: Some of our listeners might not be super familiar with the difference between asset management and property management. How do you describe that?

[0:07:31.2] WW: In simple terms, I would say asset management for what I do is more focused on the capital markets, underwriting setting benchmarks, the numbers side, and then property management is more coincide initiatives, ensuring that we have the right team in the right place from a maintenance than leasing perspective. And more of the day-to-day leasing, so you got the asset management that's gonna underwrite deal in the capital markets, ensuring that the asset can perform from a numbers standpoint, and then you have the property management side that executes whatever that asset management comes up with.

[0:08:05.8] SR: You mentioned building a team, and as we've grown our portfolio over the last couple of years, nothing is more indicative of the performance of a property as the leasing manager who is taking the lead on site, you guys as a third party manager in doing some of your own in-house, you have a lot of experience, I would imagine, in hiring for those roles, what do you look for in a good community manager?

[0:08:28.3] WW: Yeah, someone that obviously has kind of done it before from a community, our portfolio, we're smaller, right now, we're not as large as some of the big players out here that can take risk and may be hiring a community manager that might be their first time managing... I wouldn't suggest that we look for experience, we look for someone local nearby the property that's familiar with the market and just someone that's hungry, that's willing to learn, willing to grow, because we have the benefit for new hires to see growth a lot of times larger portfolio companies don't have that room for growth, they've already established more of their regional team and their corporate teams, and as we grow, we have that ability, and so that's what we're looking for. We're looking for someone with that hunger, that sort of entrepreneurial mindset to kinda grow and expand their career, and usually it works now, do

[0:09:18.1] SR: You have any special ways of compensating or rewarding folks who are... What

you just described, they take initiative. They have that entrepreneurial mindset.

[0:09:26.8] WW: Yeah, obviously on-site, there might be different KPIS or reach a disease, maybe there's a little bonus, but for us right now, it's more that the growth in the opportunity comes with obviously what work you put in as a community manager, but then our ability to say, Okay, well, we see you shining, we want you to oversee a couple of different portfolios, now you're not on-site doing the day-to-day, you're not overseeing the on-site team, so that's more our initiative and value proposition to hires, but... And then obviously, like I said, on-site, there's different KPI goals and that drive different bonuses depending on the property.

[0:10:07.4] SR: You've seen a lot of real estate transactions, that's one of the fun things as a broker, I would imagine, is you get to walk a ton of different properties, you get to see the acquisition or the disposition side, depending on who you're representing, and then obviously is with intuitive, you guys are involved in a lot of different deals. In your opinion, what's the hardest part of pulling together a multi-family deal.

[0:10:26.6] WW: It depends, newer investors tend to have more trouble finding the equity, incredible partners to even acquire a deal, if I was putting on my broker hat, the first thing a broker is gonna wanna know is who's your team? And have they done this before? Kind of thing. So I've seen that be the biggest struggle, I would say, honestly, I deal structure, putting together the right team members, getting the equity structuring the deal, that's what I've seen as being in the biggest challenge.

[0:10:54.5] SR: So that equity piece, certainly, I think it's easier today than maybe it's ever been in uni, both being on the younger side, we haven't experienced maybe as many parts of the cycle of somebody's been in real estate 40 years. I've talked to some grizzled veterans who talk about how hard it was to raise capital and the savings and loan crisis, and for us, it's tempting to look back and go, Well, why wasn't everybody buying real estate then it's like, Well, 'cause nobody wanted to buy real estate, to beg, most literally, to get dollars in the door, as we're talking about property management companies, we utilize third party property management at Life Bridge capital, a lot of folks in the space do, there's a lot of different flavors out there, there's large, your Gray Stones, your amps your national brands, then you have more of your mom and pop operators and everything in between as an owner because you own assets, what would you look for in a good third-party property management? You have your own, so you would use yourself, I would imagine, but if you're going into a new market or you're looking to maybe make a new partnership, what are

some of the key things that you're looking for if you're buying 70s Class C value-add type product.

[0:11:58.8] WW: And I would say even with my own team in-house, we would still hire a third party if we were in a different market, we're looking at some stuff in the Tennessee market, and we're not as... We don't have the infrastructure there, but... So I would definitely look for a local team, a lot of people look for a team that has done... Like a company that has done deal similar to what they're looking for, but I don't necessarily think you have to look for some... And it's like, Okay, ABC property management has managed S units like I look more at the individual team members to see what their experience is, because I think, first of all, every management company has started at zero at some point, and I think you could be overlooking some talent that might be more cost-effective, might actually be hungrier, so you might execute on your deal better, so I would look more specifically at who's gonna be overseeing the onsite teams and how that structure is within the property management, what systems are they using, how is their operations structure from, let's say, everything's virtual, but we have a covid crisis again, God forbid, and you have to go to a more...

[0:13:10.0] WW: What's that strategy? Where is your operational manual? How is that done? What does that look like? So I dig into that more specifically, and that might be because we had to build all that and you put it and think about that, but you really wanna think about what happens when things get kind of uncomfortable or get wrestled a little bit, and what is that company looking to do when that happens, 'cause it's not about if, it's about when... When is something bad? It didn't happen. So that's what I would look for.

[0:13:38.1] SR: Do you have a pet system that you just love how you guys have implemented, it could be something really granular or something a little bit more macro, but anything that you just love about how you guys do business in any particular part of your company?

[0:13:50.8] WW: We streamline mostly like everything, our communication with each other as well as just how we track our deals, track our closings, everything is streamlined, to the point where if I'm in the market, I can pull up my app and upload some notes, and that same note goes to my team members, and we can do a control of who has that. For me, those systems are very important, 'cause as you're pursuing deals and brokers are sending you different deals, it can get kind of hectic. Right now, there's a lot of deals flowing through the market, and if you don't have those streamlined systems, you can get disorganized. For me, organization is very important, so our systems are the things I'm most proud of.

a communication tool that you've used to streamline specifically, I know internally, we use Slack, we all see as a son on a couple of those type of workflow tools. What do you guys utilize in your business... Monday dot com, we really like that, and I've gotten real fancy with that to the point where I don't work for Monday dot com, but you can get alerts and there's a good that works.

[0:14:55.7] WW: And it's very intuitive and easy to use, but basic systems, like we use Google Drive, we do a lot of Google Video, RealPage we use for our software, so we really like them because they have continued from a software and statistical standpoint to improve. And I really think they're kind of beaten out the competition when it comes to analytics and different property management specific items.

[0:15:20.9] SR: No, that's fantastic, I appreciate you sharing that. One of the things as I was poking around your bio and your company's website, you talk in a couple of different places about disposition, and I think in our business, we're always forward-facing for us, it's always about the next deal, but eventually deals come to an end and we've disposed to an asset this year, we may dispose another one or two before the end of the calendar year, curious for what you do on a disposition, what are some of your tips and tricks there when you're at the end of the deal life cycle.

[0:15:49.8] WW: So for intuitive management partners, we're focused in, like you've mentioned earlier, multi-family advisory and investment management, so what that means for us is like on the disposition side, so my company is a licensed brokerage firm in Georgia, and in Mario, we have helped investors sell their asset and that preparation to sell is where I'm really talking about... So for example, I'm working a deal that I've been working, it's only 24 units, and then Maryland, I've worked this deal since April of last year, the owner had probably, I'd say 80% of the residents weren't paying... They were passed on rent, the management company wasn't performing, they were overcharging for different things, they weren't attending to maintenance issues, so we had to come in, initially, the ownership wanted us to come in and take over a property management, but we're based in Atlanta, Georgia. It's 24 units, we just didn't have the infrastructure to do that, and it was gonna cost the ownership too much, but we were able to advise them on a maintenance strategy that would take them virtual, which limited their property management company from their full service support to only collecting rents would save money at the end and allowed us to transition and sell the asset, and so we're out to finally close at the end of July, but it's been a long road.

[0:17:08.9] WW: But that's the kind of stuff that we do. So being able to have that brokerage background and then have my business partner with her property management background, it allows us to kinda get in on a lot of assets early on and take a peek under the books and really advise on how to move that deal from owning to this position.

[0:17:28.7] SR: What's your favorite part of real estate?

[0:17:30.8] WW: My favorite, that's a really good question, because there's so many days where you're just pulling your hair out and you're like, What a... But you still wake up because you really like it, but it's like, Well, what do I really... Like for me, the thing I didn't like about corporate was there as a selling, but in real estate, there's no ceiling. I like the fact that I wake up and through obviously relationships and networking, there's no ceiling to where you could go, and I need that, I need that freedom, that flexibility, and I obviously love the potential, unlimited income you can make in real estate. So I think for me, it's like I gotta be free, I have to have new sealing, and so that's probably my favorite.

[0:18:10.9] SR: That's excellent, but I think sometimes it's important to step back and kinda distill on why am I doing this and why do I enjoy it as much as I do? There's certain aspects of it, the paperwork side that can be a little tire Summit times, but the deal-making and the endless possibilities, like you just said, the freedom that comes with working in real estate is something not to take lightly, especially for you with the background in that corporate culture, it's gotta be night and day difference. Now, what advice would you give to somebody who's just starting out, you've touched just about everything in real estate, you started out on the brokerage side, you've been on the service and you're an owner, you've done at all for somebody who's looking to break into multi-family investing, what advice would you give

[0:18:50.5] WW: Those challenging thing has been, I came into this space with no real connections, like I self-educated, self-taught myself a lot, probably 95% of what I know today, and then as I got later in my career, I started meeting the right people to put me in the right place is to enable me to scale faster, I'm not gonna see here and get a mentor, 'cause I think that everyone says that and I don't really know what that means. So you can get a mentor. Right, and they could charge and use some crazy... And you don't even know if they're mentoring you, right, it's like what I would do is get an accountability partner or accountability coach and someone that you can tell your goals too, and they're gonna hold you to those goals because I think on your own... And I'm

self-motivated, I play a sport, and so a law is driven naturally, but I think you're not perfect, there's always something you're slacking on if you don't have someone that's holding you accountable and that... So I would think getting an accountability partner early on in the business, someone you trust, someone that's...

[0:19:51.3] WW: I don't even believe they necessarily have to do what you're doing, but someone that's driven... Like you, that can hold you accountable to your goals.

[0:19:58.6] SR: Whitney, as we're getting close to wrapping up here. What's the number one thing that's contributed to your success... We've talked about a couple of different things, your background in college athletics that drive for success while acknowledging the failure is certainly a possible outcome, but what are some things or maybe the number one thing that's contributed to your success up to this point.

[0:20:17.5] WW: The e-be honest with you, it's probably been God, because I have no family that has done this before, right, so I've had to navigate and kind of figure things out on my own, and I failed a lot, and I think the reason I'm still in the business and it's still going is because of God, and then probably me after that, just being able to keep fighting and get up every day when things get challenging and really be creative and figure out what it is that I need to be doing to succeed and reach my goals, so not to sound so tacky or whatever, but yeah, I would say the two things. Well, before we let you go with me, where can people find out more about Intuitive management and contact you if they have further questions? Yeah, so you can check out the website, www.IntuitiveManagementPartners.com. And then also find me on LinkedIn, it's just Whitney Ward, we're also on Facebook and Instagram, so I'm pretty sure... You can find us pretty easily.

[0:21:15.6] SR: Excellent, well, thanks for taking some time out of your busy schedule. Whitney, thank you to our listeners for joining us on another episode of the real estate syndication show. Have a great day.

[0:21:25.6] ANNOUNCER: Thank you for listening to The Real Estate Syndication Show, brought to you by Life Bridge Capital. Life Bridge Capital works with investors nationwide to invest in real estate while also donating 50% of its profits to assist parents who are committing to adoption, Life Bridge Capital, making a difference one investor and one child at a time. Connect online at www.lifebridgecapital.com for free material and videos to further your success.