

A STUDY
of
AWARENESS OF THE OREGON FAIR HOUSING LAW
and
A SAMPLING
of
ATTITUDES TOWARD INTEGRATED NEIGHBORHOOD LIVING

League of Women Voters of Portland
308 Senator Building
Portland, Oregon

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CASE STUDY

Mr. X., a Portland resident, is college trained and holds a responsible position. He also operates a small private business. He owns a home in an older neighborhood. As his income increased and his savings grew, Mr. X., with Mrs. X. and their daughter, began to look for a home in a better neighborhood. Several appointments were made by telephone during 1960 to see homes advertised for sale by real estate brokers.

Upon arrival at the home the sales person suggested they could find something more suitable elsewhere. On a number of occasions when they stopped by an advertised "open house" they were told by the salesman in charge that there was a "deal" on the house and it could not be shown.

After many rebuffs and unpleasant encounters they were referred to a real estate sales person who wanted to help them find a home they liked. Mr. X. had drive by a house advertised for sale on Ainsworth Avenue. The sales person made arrangements with the listing broker, Mr. D., to show the house and received permission to cooperate in the event a sale was made.

The X. family saw the house early one evening, liked it and wanted to buy at full price, just under \$25,000. They would have the down payment two days hence and the sales person agreed to make an appointment with Mr. D. to close the deal at that time. After arriving home the sales person called Mr. D. to report what had transpired and to make the appointment for him to accept the offer from Mr. and Mrs. X. Mr. D. had talked that evening with the owner who, he said, was very anxious for an offer. Mr. D. suggested that the clients be brought to his office that evening--he would gladly accept a note for the down payment.

One half hour later the sales person and the clients arrived at Mr. D's office. The look on Mr. D's face when he saw the buyers warned the sales person that Mr. and Mrs. X. might not be able to consummate the purchase. Mr. D., however, recovered quickly, was courteous, drew up the papers, and said the offer would be submitted to the seller the following morning.

The next afternoon the sales person called to find out if the offer had been presented to the seller. The office secretary reported that the house had been taken off the market, Mr. D. was not available to talk on the telephone, and for further information the sales manager could be called.

Within the week, Mr. D's "For Sale" sign appeared on the same Ainsworth Avenue property.

Mr. X. felt that this was a clear case of discrimination. Yet, he was reluctant to file a complaint with the Civil Rights Division of the State Government, fearful that his private business venture might be jeopardized.

Mr. and Mrs. X. are Negroes.

PROPERTY VALUES

For many years it was generally assumed that property values depreciated when minority groups, particularly Negroes, moved into a previously all-white neighborhood. This opinion was held by some of the nation's most respected housing economists and perpetuated by two factors: The low quality of housing occupied by some Negroes, and real estate literature which played a role in shaping policies of brokers, builders and lending agencies. Scientific studies conducted during the last decade showed that