



Staging for Success

D CORWYN JACKSON'S COMPASSIONATE PASSION FOR STYLE

D Corwyn Jackson knows this well. “I’ve always been around nice things,” says Jackson, who was raised in a nice home in a nice part of Connecticut—which, you may have heard, is a pretty nice state. Jackson is a really nice guy, too—and that’s why, after the gay Nutmeg Stater moved to Boston in the late ’70s to study political science at Northeastern University, he embarked on a career to help other people access the same privilege and potential he enjoyed growing up.

Over the years, that career has taken many forms. For one thing, Jackson has worked extensively with social service

organizations to put roofs over the heads of people in recovery programs, survivors of domestic violence and other folks who face barriers to finding stable and secure housing of their own. And more recently, as a home staging consultant, he works with clients to maximize the utility of their living environment for their lifestyle—as well as to prepare a home for the most profitable sale possible.

“I wanted to make a difference,” Jackson says. “I’ve always been in a field of advocacy, working to help people.”

He entered the housing world while still in college, working in

the mortgage department of a Boston-area bank. As the years went on, he came to understand the power of housing justice as a larger vehicle to social reform. There’s the intrinsic emotional value of having a room to call your own, of course. In addition, though, building home equity or simply being able to maintain a steady address can have a transformative impact on individuals and communities who have been systematically marginalized.

“Putting housing first is important,” Jackson says, “because once someone is housed, they can rest.” And once they can rest, he says, they’ll be in the

physical and figurative position and place to start tackling the challenges ahead.

Jackson’s career took him in various directions, but homes were always at the heart of his work. He was housing coordinator at the landmark South End nonprofit Victory Programs, helping to place homeless clients in reliable housing so they could make strides in managing their substance use disorders. He worked with the Stone House in Roxbury, a refuge where survivors of domestic violence recover from the past and start to rebuild their plans for the future. He led efforts at the Organization for

New Equality, a Back Bay-based outfit that purchased foreclosed properties and made them available to first-time homebuyers in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

All along the way, Jackson also employed his knack for logic-based design and smart aesthetics. He'd furnish and style units to set tenants up for success as soon as they walked in the door. He was even tapped by WCVB-TV 5 to help renovate the Dimock Community Health Center's Askia Academy, a group home for men in recovery. Meanwhile, in his personal life, Jackson found that friends and neighbors were tapping him more and more often for advice on their own interiors. He could envision spaces in ways that others could not, and this stood out. It was also, he realized, the root of a business.

So today, he runs Home Staging by Corwyn & Associates, offering a suite of services.

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For starters, Jackson teaches clients how to make their space work best for them—something that has become even more important after the pandemic, when the rise of remote work has made even more of life revolve around the home. Besides improving the overall look and feel, Jackson might, say, transform a mudroom into a much-needed home office, or help telecommuters stage their background for Zoom conferences. (His quick-and-easy trick? Decorative, folding screens. They're a sophisticated touch that simultaneously adds

personality and preserves the privacy of your living area.)

When it's time to sell your house, meanwhile, Jackson is a guy you want on your side. He regularly attends open houses to keep in touch with what buyers are looking for, and uses that intel to inform how he stages homes to stand out in a hot market. (Still holding on to overstuffed furniture in your living room? Replace it, Jackson says, or house hunters will assume that you haven't renovated anything else since that now-dated style was in fashion.)

At the end of the day, though, Jackson always comes back to the social service-oriented mission that got him interested in housing to begin with. That's why he still works with Roxbury Community College to offer virtual training resources around home staging and design, sharing his expertise so that others can elevate their environments—or prepare them for maximum purchase appeal—through the utilization of lighting and color, DIY projects and more.

What's his secret? It all boils down to an innate ability to connect with his surroundings. “It's hard to explain, but when I walk into a room, I can feel the challenges in the space,” Jackson says. More importantly, it seems, he also feels the solutions. [x]

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