



Celebrities In Real Estate: Scott McGillivray

The HGTV mainstay discusses his journey into home renovations and television

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As the host of *Income Property*, a judge on *All American Handyman* and Canada's *Handyman Challenge*, and a series regular or guest contributor on a growing roster of other shows on both the Canadian and U.S. HGTV and DIY networks, Scott McGillivray has become an increasingly ubiquitous presence on home-renovation television. And it's little wonder why. McGillivray's combination of casual, rugged charisma and plain-spoken real estate acumen makes him a perfect avatar for both networks.

But McGillivray's expertise extends well beyond his appearances on HGTV and DIY. His monthly 'Dollars and Sense' feature in *Style at Home* magazine picks up where his 2014 book, *How to Add Value to Your Home*, left off, offering advice for homeowners on how to put their money to work and save on home expenses, and he's been tapped as a keynote speaker for home shows and corporate events across the U.S. and Canada.

We talked to McGillivray about how he first got into real estate and how he parlayed his

experience in the industry into a prolific television career.

How did you first get into the real estate business?

McGillivray: I was in university when I decided to get in the income property business. I saw how much my landlord was making off of me and my roommates each month, and I figured, why can't I do that? So I used the last of my student loan for a down payment on a cheap house. But of course, being a student, I didn't have any cash left to do repairs or fixes. I had to figure out how to do it all myself. Over the next few years, I got my contractor's license, fixed up houses and invested in more rental properties. After that, there was no looking back.

When did you transition into television?

McGillivray: I had done a few commercials and things over the years, so I had gotten to know a few people in the business. One day I was talking to a producer about my rental property business, and she thought it might make an interesting show. So I developed the idea for Income Property, which was really just putting my real life on camera. Fortunately, my methods resonated with people and we went on to do more than 150 episodes.

Do you remember what your first on-air experience was like?

McGillivray: I remember my first day shooting a renovation show very well. It was called From the Ground Up with Debbie Travis. I was hired to do some construction work but didn't know anything about renovation shows. I was kind of overwhelmed by all the cameras and people. A woman walked up to me and said, "Hello, what do you do?" I said I was there to do some construction. She said, "Great, I'm here to do some design." Thinking I could build some kind of camaraderie, I said, "Well we should stick together because I heard the host is a real nightmare." To which she said, "Nice to meet you, I'm Debbie Travis."

What is one of the most memorable moments of your television career?

McGillivray: I've done more than 200 episodes of television, so there are plenty of great moments worth remembering. Probably the best was shooting Moving the McGillivrays with my wife and children. We had camera crews follow us as we built our dream home. It was an experience!

I've also done a lot of work with Habitat for Humanity, which has been incredibly rewarding. Last year we worked with former president Jimmy Carter and the Carter Work Project to build 150 homes. It was an incredible initiative to be a part of.

What do you love about sharing your work with such a large audience?

McGillivray: It's incredible to share what I've learned about real estate investing with so many people. When Income Property first started airing, the United States was going through a real estate crash and people all over the country were losing their homes. Through the show, I was able to show people how they could add value through income suites and pay down their

mortgages. To this day I still get messages from people saying that the show really helped them. It's very humbling and I'm very grateful for the opportunity.

Are you still involved with any real estate or construction projects off the air?

McGillivray: Absolutely. Real estate investing is my number-one business and always will be. Recently I've moved into the area of multi-use and multi-residential development projects. There are a lot of possibilities in that realm, and I'm excited to see where it goes over the next few years.

Are there any upcoming projects that you are particularly excited about?

McGillivray: Too many to count! I've always got several projects on the go, and that's just the way I like it. We've just wrapped season one of my newest show, Buyers Bootcamp for DIY Network and HGTV Canada, and we've started production on season two of my digital series, Scott's House Call, which launches in June on YouTube and Facebook. I just launched my first Scott McGillivray Collection product, and I've also got some other exciting off-air projects in development for real estate agents and investors. As we say in the business, stay tuned!

Photo courtesy of [Scott McGillivray's Facebook page](#).