



## GWIN'S TRAVEL (MBE/WBE)

### Longtime Employee Buys Worldwide Gwin's Travel to Keep Agency Local, Serving Leisure and Business Clients with Flair

When the owners of an extremely successful, multi-million-dollar travel agency decided to retire three years ago, a longtime employee purchased the company to keep it local, retain the experienced staff and provide the individualized touch clients deserve.

Gwin's Travel offers leisure and corporate travel to locations in the United States and around the world. Rhonda Kaminski had worked as an accountant for Gwin's Travel since 1989. Three years ago, she bought the travel agency from Graydon and Terrie Gwin. Her objective was to keep the loyal and experienced travel specialists – many of whom had spent more than 25 years in the industry – together in St. Louis. The company became Woman Business Enterprise (WBE) certified in 2015.

"There was a lot of interest in buying the company that could have meant (moving) the agency out of town," Kaminski said. "I just wanted to keep us together and stay in the St. Louis area."

Gwin's Travel can make dreams and destinations come true via cruise packages in the Hawaiian Islands and Asia Sailings; vacation packages to the Canadian Rockies, the St. Martin Villas and Pacific North Rail Journeys; escorted group deals to Switzerland, Italy, Greece and Alaska; and exclusive offers to New Zealand, the Mexican Riviera and the heart of Europe.

Headquartered in Kirkwood with an office in Bethalto, Ill., Gwin's Travel has 30 full-time employees, with agents averaging 18 years with the company and more than 23 years in the travel industry. Kaminski describes Gwin's Travel, an affiliate of travel giant BCD Travel, as offering "the best of both worlds" – the strength and expertise of a large corporate like BCD that delivers a vast technology presence combined with the personal and quick response of a small company.

"Some clients like going online, booking their vacation or cruise with no problem," she said. "Other clients want to talk with agents – that personal service is important to us. We get to know our clients from all over the world."

Gwin's Travel has a good reputation and has earned the respect from clients such as Anita Ferrari Hurst, who posted the following on the company's Facebook page: "We booked our first cruise last February with Kerry at Gwin's and she made the process so easy. All we had to do was pack and enjoy ourselves. Kerry took care of the rest."

Gwin's Travel is also active in the community through contributions and organizational participation. Working with Apple Vacations, Gwin's Travel collected and delivered items to the USO at Lambert St. Louis International Airport (STL). The company also collects food for area food banks.

For more information about Gwin's Travel, visit the website at [www.Gwins.com](http://www.Gwins.com) or call (314) 822-1958. The company can also be found on Facebook at Gwin's Travel.