SO, WHAT EXACTLY ARE ALL THESE PAPERS THAT YOU ARE SIGNING AT CLOSING?

You have done a lot to buy your new home. You've looked at house after house, made offers and counter-offers, signed a final contract, applied for a mortgage, been through qualification and underwriting – and at the end of it all is closing.

And it's at closing that you will be presented with a small mountain of paperwork; a stack of legal documents that, while not quite as high as the Mallory Step on Everest, still can be quite daunting nonetheless.

Closing can be intimidating, especially for first-time homebuyers told by their mothers never to sign anything without reading it first. Even for experienced homebuyers, signing the closing papers can be nerve-wracking, and they'll often comment that they feel like they're signing their life away without knowing exactly what they are signing.

There is some good news about closing though: First, there really is no document which signs your life away. Really. The second is that many of the documents are fairly standardized, and are signed at every closing.

The documents typically signed at each closing include:

The Closing Disclosure (CD), which is a settlement statement, which was previously referred to as a HUD1. The new CD replaced this document in about October 2015. This document sets forth all the financial terms of the transaction and includes how much money the buyer has to bring to closing A sample CD can be viewed here (it is for illustration only and the figures will not apply to your transaction). Keep in mind that this is a 'sample' and your CD may include more or less items and the money amounts will be different.

The Note: The promissory note is the borrower's formal promise to repay the money that the bank is lending. It shows the amount of the loan, the interest rate, the length of the loan, and the amount of payments. This is usually a 2 or 3 page document and does not require a notary. The note is not filed publicly at the Courthouse.

The Deed of Trust to Secure Debt: This is the document which pledges the property as collateral for the loan. In other words, the deed of trust is what gives the lender the right to foreclose if the loan isn’t paid back. This document is usually about 12 to 18 pages and does require a notary. This document is filed with the Chancery Clerk of the county where the property is located.

There are also a number of other documents that are typically signed at every closing: papers by which you swear that you still have your job, promise to cooperate with your lender if documents need to be corrected later, and acknowledge that there are no side agreements between you and the seller, that neither the seller, one of the Realtors, the lender or the closing agent has given any money to you to bring to closing as a part of your down payment. On top of that there are usually other affidavits, certifications, and disclosures which may be required by your specific lender. Again, these are all typically very standardized documents and do not differ greatly from closing to closing.

There will also be some additional documents that you will be required to sign. These documents are produced in our office and required by your lender and your title insurance company. Please click here to see samples of these documents.