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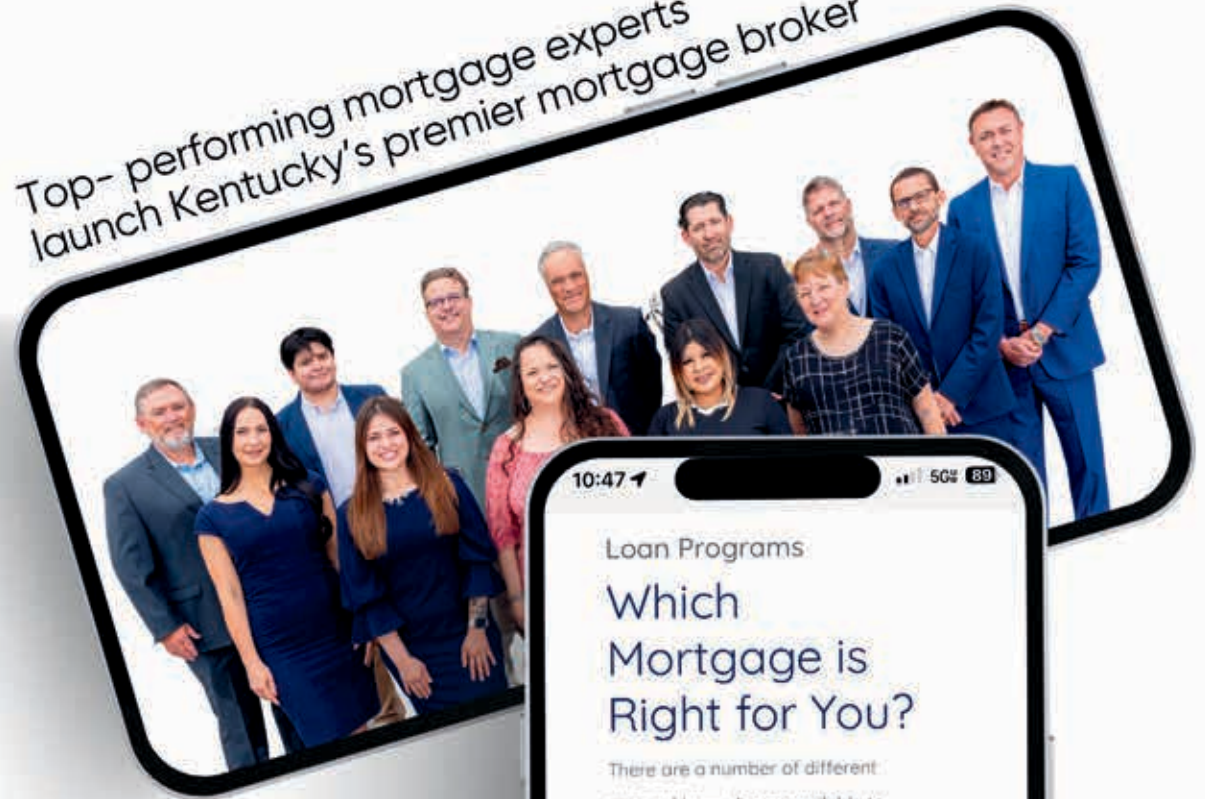
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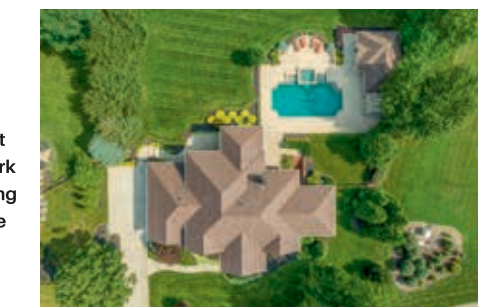


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J C S E P H MILLER



▶▶ celebrating leaders

Written By Brett Rybak
Photos By Renee Hensley Photography

continuing down the path as a servant leader in the commonwealth

Joseph Miller's drive to serve others has been well-rooted in the man he's become for years. However, it is the process of how Miller has evolved as a servant leader that is worthy of recognition.

Miller has an extensive background in church and nonprofit leadership. He ran the Rowland Arts Center for Teens in Clark County, Kentucky, for more than a decade and still serves as president of the board for the organization designed to equip young people in the community with the education, resources and skills needed to be successful in middle and high school and beyond.

"I feel very passionately about being in purpose and on-time in purpose," Miller said. "My job is to serve other people. For the longest time, that's what I did through the teen center in Clark County. I could tangibly see the change in middle and high school students. I grew up alongside those kids in my professional and leadership development."

But after running the organization for a decade, Miller opted to try real estate as a part-time avenue to supplement income. The husband to Caitlyn and father of Merritt and Leighton felt he needed to further help his growing family.

"I was looking around at our first home, a 3-bedroom, 1.5-bath place that we had simply outgrown, asking myself what I could do for our family," Miller said. "Cait's a school teacher, doing God's work. I was running a nonprofit. I was doing something and still am doing something great but I did this to supplement. Then I asked what does the next five years look like for us, our kids and what we want?"

Miller felt his wife was in a great position at her school in Clark County and was tenured. He felt an opportunity in front of him to go out and make that difference for his family. He had run the teen center for 10 years and that aspect was continuing to thrive.

"I really ran into the opportunity with Keller Williams Commonwealth and Tara Smith accidentally," Miller admitted. "I went on Indeed.com, updated my information and through reverse prospecting, it said I should apply for the position. One of first lines said 'looking for a servant leader.' I went through an extensive interview process for the team leader position. This was my opportunity to change lives, grow the company internally and externally, right the ship and help grow the culture."

So Miller, who through his on-job training as team leader feels he has "received an MBA without having to pay for it" because he has come into contact with so many top producers and high achievers, hasn't looked back and now has the opportunity to open doors for everybody from other top producers to new agents so they can gain leverage to obtain their desired lifestyle for themselves and their families. His main priority is still helping people in any way possible.

“ I FEEL VERY PASSIONATELY ABOUT BEING IN PURPOSE AND ON-TIME IN PURPOSE. MY JOB IS TO SERVE OTHER PEOPLE. ”

“
**ALL THE TIME
 I HAVE NOW IS
 PRECIOUS SO
 I WANT TO BE
 WITH MY WIFE
 AND KIDS**
 ”



“I think the biggest thing I’d like to tell anybody is we want to create lives by design,” Miller adds. “If there’s somebody new to the business, I can create a business plan for you to achieve your goals. I want to be somebody who can connect regular people to whatever their dream goals are. We have visions of what we want in our life and so few people go do it and chase those ambitious goals to achieve what they want for their family. We talk a lot about limiting beliefs. How do we get behind self objections to ‘can I do this’ or ‘should I do this?’ It’s about removing fear and going after what you really want in life. A lot of people die at 30 but live to 80 but I care about making sure that doesn’t come true for people I work with.”



“I love coaching my son’s soccer team and spending quality time with my wife, kids and friends,” Miller said. “If I’m being really selfish, it’s going to a baseball game or reading a book that’s sat on my shelf for several months. All the time I have now is precious so I



want to be with my wife and kids when I’m off the clock.”

It’s apparent that Miller’s effort spent as a servant leader, one that has proven fruitful in both his career and personal life, is having an impact on those he works with every day.

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▶ cover story

Photos By Keni Parks
Written by Elizabeth McCabe

MEET MELIA HORD

A GAME CHANGER IN BLUEGRASS REAL ESTATE

“Real estate is simple but not easy,” says REALTOR Melia Hord. “Although everyone can do it, not everyone should. I don’t think I have ever had the same transaction, even though we follow the same process. Everyone is different. The reality is our job isn’t the grandiose image portrayed by the real estate TV shows and often doesn’t depict our value or our average day serving our clients, community or the industry. It’s a job of relationships and service which takes empathy, compassion, patience, understanding, resilience, perseverance, tough skin and lots of love.”

Melia Hord, founder of the MELIA Realty Group (MRG) at Keller Williams Bluegrass, has built a remarkable career in ten years. She’s also the first Kentucky partner with PLACE, a real estate platform made up of the Top 1% of real estate agents across all brands in North America, elevating the services, models and technology she offers her clients and the growing team at MRG’s “Happy Place” on Southland Drive. Her concierge approach resonates the highest level of professionalism, knowledge, and service to guide others to the closing table.

A Journey Rooted in Strong Values

Born and raised in Morristown, NJ, Melia grew up with strong work ethics and family values. Her father, an immigrant from Budapest, and her mother, a Jersey native, instilled the importance of integrity, honesty, and hard work. “My dad passed away on my 16th birthday leaving my mom four teenagers to raise on her own. Through loss, she groomed strong, independent children.”

As a former CPA, Melia spent the next decade in corporate America climbing the corporate ladder from assistant controller to the youngest controller in the Nation for her company. Starting at a young age, Melia has always exceeded expectations. She explains “I started babysitting at age 11. At 14 I begged my mom to give approval to work at the local movie theatre. Then I moved into the restaurant industry working every service position for over 10 years.”

From Corporate America to Real Estate

Leaving Corporate America, Melia opened a nationally acclaimed gift company focused on “relationship

marketing.” She chuckles remembering preparing gifts for local agents for their clients. “I always knew I’d get into real estate one day. For years, my brother told me to get my license. Timing truly is everything and the life before real estate groomed me in more ways than I ever realized till now.”

Melia started with KW on January 3, 2015. “Real estate was the best decision I ever made for myself and my family. I learned quickly it was not about me buying or selling a home but rather helping my clients buy, sell or invest in homes. I get to build relationships one client at a time, with every deal and then throughout their homeownership chapters.”



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Overcoming Challenges

Melia’s journey has not been without challenges. In 2008 her family was victim to a bad partnership, complicated with the housing crisis, losing most of her family’s legacy. “We spent five years working with brokers and attorneys to abate our West Coast development to no avail. During this my mom passed suddenly and three months later my sister died. I was left to manage the family business and both estates in different states while raising two little boys.”

Through hardships, Melia learned the importance of relationships. “My personal friends became my village to help with the boys while my professional sphere helped me learn the intricacies of the industry at this pivotal time. Through adversity came personal growth, faith and empathy which now helps me do well in this industry.”



I get to build relationships one client at a time, with every deal and then throughout their homeownership chapters.



know the journey they walked to get there.” She adds, “Everyone and everything has a story. We started this podcast to share the stories within our community. We want people to know the struggles, grit and determination as much as the happy ending to their story - and who doesn’t love supporting a great story? It’s our way of connecting people to their business and our community. Everyone should listen, it will simply melt your heart.”

Outside of real estate, Melia is an avid traveler, loves to cook and spend time with family and friends. “I strive to get away at least once a quarter for a ‘recharge’ weekend by the ocean. I also love to share a great bottle of wine or glass of bourbon over laughter. And I simply love being a baseball mom.”

Building a Legacy

Melia’s dedication to her clients and community is evident in everything she does. “At MELIA, Our Mission is to Deliver the Dream of Homeownership. We believe everyone deserves to own a home. Homeownership is the foundation of the American Dream and supports all aspects of our society. We help people make smart decisions and build wealth with real estate and then we connect them to our community.” Melia loves Lexington commenting, “I think Lexington is the best place to live, work and play. We get the unique

opportunity to help local and future residents learn that too!”

There have been a lot of mistakes, challenges, wins and accomplishments along the way for Melia which she says has led to great opportunities. “Opportunity is never lost - it is just found by others.” Melia was named Kentucky’s Women Business Owner of the Year in 2024. She was one of the first developers of Distillery Heights in downtown Lexington. And her partnership with PLACE allows her to work beside the best in the industry. “PLACE is the industry’s white unicorn.” It provides unparalleled resources and support to her clients and team plus

benefits such as health insurance, stock options and revenue share to help agents build wealth and security for their families. “My goal is to help other agents become PLACE partners to grow their business and leverage their time for the things the love.”

A Passion for Life and Learning

Melia is passionate about the community and started the “JustAskMelia” podcast to share the untold success stories of people and businesses within. “It’s easy to look at someone and see the upside of success; it’s another to



Melia has been married to Chuck for 25 years and they have two sons together, Brendan and Will, and a bonus son Chris who brought their first grandson, Ryker. “I am so lucky to be their mom. God really gave me the greatest job and gift in raising these fine men.” Brendan plays D1 baseball and is going on to coach college baseball while Will is a phenomenal agent coming back full-time as a postgraduate from UK.

A Vision for the Future

Melia's vision for the future is clear. "For me, real estate is a passion and a ministry. Every day, it allows me to be significant in other people's lives in a capacity I never imagined possible: serving clients, coaching agents and making our community a better place. I'm fulfilled and happier beyond any job I ever had. There are days I wish I started at 18 like Will, but God's delay prepared me to be my very best in this field."

With a team of dedicated agents and a strong foundation built on relationships, Melia Hord sums up her significant impact in the real estate industry. "Be significant in someone's life and you'll find true success. You are never too old or too young to make a difference. Be proud of your reflection in the mirror. The best risk is always you - so go after what you love and you'll never work building a life worth living and a legacy worth leaving."



For me, real estate is a passion and a ministry.

Every day, it allows me to be significant in other people's lives in a capacity I never imagined possible.



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Central KY Real Estate Photography

There is only one chance to make a good first impression, and real estate agents know the listing photos are a major part of what shapes buyers' opinions of a house or property. With the experience of having been an agent herself, Bre Taulbee of Bre Taulbee Photography understands just how critical it is to provide the absolute best photos to a client and what it takes to deliver on that duty.

"From knowing so many real estate agents, and from having my license for two years, I know you have to bring a level of thoughtfulness and care to this," Bre explains. Having seen the agent's side of the process, she understands the desire to do as much as possible for the client and how the pictures can make or break interest in a listing. Determined to elevate her work above the rest, she brings an unparalleled attention to detail to photographing a home, always communicating with clients to ensure they receive exactly what they expect and beyond. "I am committed to bringing my best for them! I can make any house look better than it does," she declares. "No one will ever say, 'the pictures don't do it justice'."

In addition to photos of the home or property, Bre also offers free headshots for agents who work with her, as well

as branding and product photography. Her drive for delivering clients unsurpassed quality photos is derived not only from her empathy for real estate agents, but also from the passion found when one finds their true calling after a long search. "I have loved photography since I was a kid, and even took photos at sports events when I was in high school," Bre reminisces. Also holding a love for science and health, she decided to pursue that path instead and graduated with her degree in Kinesiology, but soon found the choice brought little joy. "After fighting hard to get a job after college, I wasn't happy with the options I had for a career in my field, so I decided to follow my heart and start my photography career," she elaborates.



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Photos By Kristen Ellis
Written By Dan Steele



Although she has done nearly every type of photography since she started in 2016, Bre has happily found her niche in real estate. “A family member is a real estate agent and someone she met at a networking event asked if I did real estate photography. I didn’t at the time, but I was like, “Yes I do!”” she laughs. “I had never even realized it was an option.” After the first time, she fell in love with it. “I knew this is exactly what I want to do,” she says. “The most fulfilling part of my job is meeting people I wouldn’t have. In doing real estate photography, I meet so many amazing, passionate agents and their clients who are dealing with a life change whether it’s big or small.”



“**I define success as having a good balance in life.**

Having a career you are passionate about, but also allowing yourself time to enjoy family, friends and the beautiful things in life.

”

Bre and her husband, Thomas, also own Leestown Coffee House on Leestown Road, spending much of their time there together with their four-month-old son, Arlo, but they also make sure to carve out time for activities beyond work, such as walks, enjoying the best food found in the Lexington area, and traveling. By her own definition, the Stanton native has found success in her adopted town of Lexington. “I define success as having a good balance in life,” she muses. “Having a career you are passionate about, but also allowing yourself time to enjoy family, friends and the beautiful things in life.”



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Photo By Bre Taulbee Photography

Jenny Mateyoke

Jenny Mateyoke, a successful REALTOR® with nearly 20 years in the industry, attributes her achievements to a “servant’s heart” philosophy, guiding her career and community efforts. Initially working in healthcare administration, Mateyoke transitioned to real estate seeking autonomy over her success. She started with a traditional broker, later founding The Mateyoke Group in 2009, where she serves as owner and listing specialist. Her passion for mentoring others led her to coaching with I Love Coaching Co., emphasizing the importance of personal growth and development within her team.

“One day I woke up and wanted my success or failure to depend on myself and nobody else,” Mateyoke said. “I spoke to an agent in Lexington about a potential real estate career. Shortly thereafter, I took the two-week course, quit my healthcare job and never looked back.”



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