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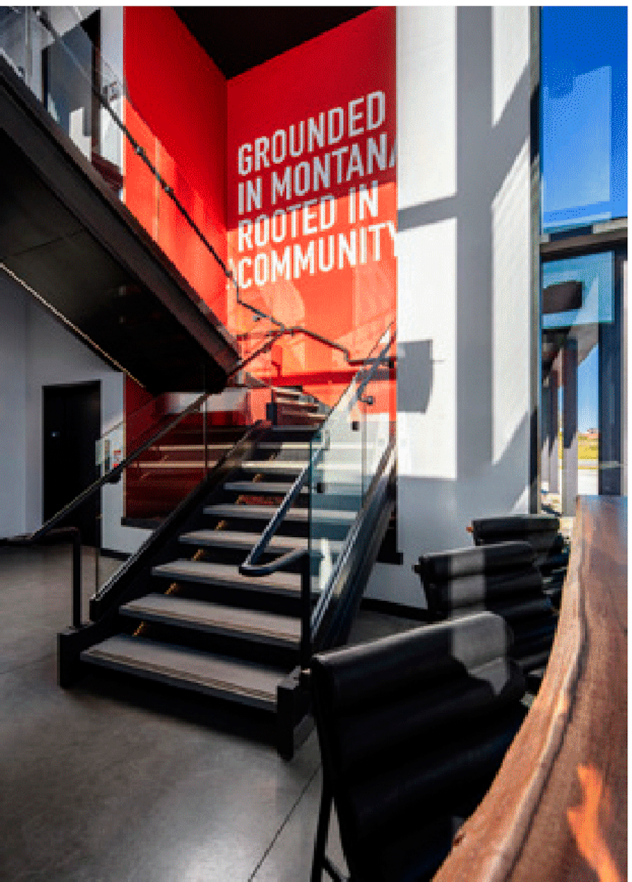
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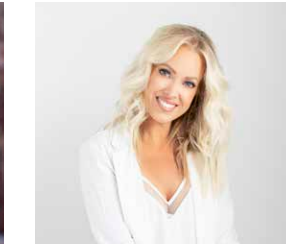



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 If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at rachelle.schmid@realproducersmag.com

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▶▶ publisher's note

welcome to the
**MONTANA REAL PRODUCERS
COMMUNITY**

I'm honored to be addressing you in our very first publication here in Montana. I've already met many of you, but it seems only fitting that, in our premier issue, we begin with introductions.

Real Producers started as an idea in 2015 and is spreading across the nation like wildfire. We are now in over 140 markets and as we launch here in Montana the mission remains the same; to connect, elevate, and inspire the top leaders in Real Estate, highlighting what makes them human and providing opportunities for the best of the best to strengthen their network and better their businesses.

As for me, I come to you as a story-teller. I have a passion for deepening community and relationships through the connecting thread we all share: your stories. You are the experts in Real Estate, and your Preferred Partners who have brought this celebratory platform to you are the absolute best in their fields. As I have sat with each of you over coffee or zoom, visited your offices, seen family pictures, heard bits and pieces of the journeys that have brought you to where you are today, and listened to your plans for the years ahead, one thing is abundantly clear: we always enter people's lives mid-story, and each and every one of you are so much more than what you do.

This is also true of the clients you serve. If I am a storyteller, you all are story shapers. You have the immense privilege and responsibility of walking your clients through one of the most stressful, joyous, fearful or exciting seasons of their lives. And you, with your expertise, professionalism, personalities and humanity have the power to help write the tone of it.

When I met with PollyAnna Snyder of Engel & Völkers she told me: "It's about establishing that relationship of trust through high competence and understanding of both the industry and helping your client's meet their goals and needs." I learned quickly that Mike Anderson of National Parks Realty is the definition of hard work and respect as he told me the honor and pleasure it's been to serve the people of his hometown and state.

In the *Real Producers* community, we are connecting the cream of the crop. As the top producers in our state of Montana, a vast majority of the volume and therefore the lives and families in our state, are taken care of by you. I have heard from you directly how seriously you take that responsibility, and so your Preferred Partners and I look forward to highlighting your accomplishments, and delivering recognition for your continued excellence in serving your clients.

Our publication will be in your mailbox every month, we'll see you at exclusive events, and we're always in touch on social media. This is your community; join in the fun and start sharing your stories, we can't wait to know you more.

With Montana it is love,
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CONTENT:

This is all about you. We'll do personal and unique stories on members in the community, providing you with a platform to inspire others. As we grow, we'll add fresh content focused entirely on you. It costs absolutely nothing for a REALTOR® to be featured. We are not a pay to play model; we write real stories, about Real Producers, and we're always accepting nominations. We will consider anyone brought to our attention; we don't know everyone's story so we need your help to learn about them!

OUR PARTNERS:

Anyone listed as a "preferred partner" in the front of the magazine is funding and fueling this community and is an essential part of it. They are the top professional in their industry. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our events, and be a part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work

with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have recommended every single preferred partner you see in this publication. We won't even meet with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and "stamped for approval." Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for the best REALTORS® in the area, but the best affiliates, as well, so we can grow stronger together.

EVENTS:

Along with the magazine, we will host free events exclusive to this community, where you- best of the best- get together at reputable local venues to socialize, mastermind, deepen our connections, and better our businesses. We will communicate about events through the magazine, emails, and on social media.

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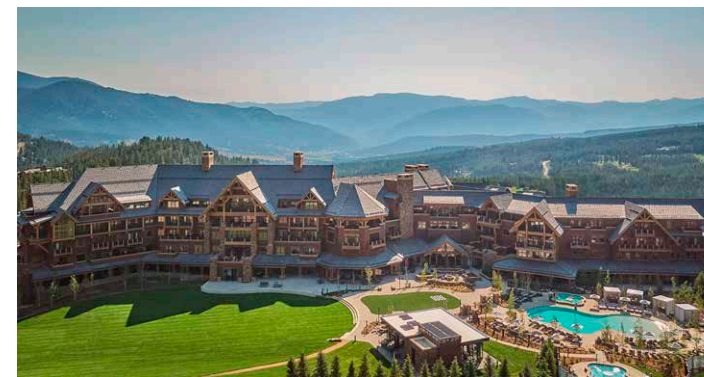
If you are interested in contributing, nominating REALTORS® to be featured, know of top-notch affiliate partners who you believe should be a part of our community, or would simply like to network; email or call me. I look forward to hearing from you!

I'd like to personally thank all of our Preferred Partners as well as the many REALTORS® and Managing Brokers who helped bring *Montana Real Producers* to life. We would not exist without you. I appreciate you and look forward to seeing you soon!

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spend more time in the field, which is really what I love doing—creating,” he says.

THE DRIVE FOR PERFECTION

Jeff still enjoys the Montana lifestyle as much as he did when he arrived all those years ago. When he’s not working, you’ll find him hiking, mountain biking, wake surfing, skiing in the backcountry and at Big Sky, or hunting. He and his wife of 26 years, Arin, have two daughters, Maci (23) and Franci (20).

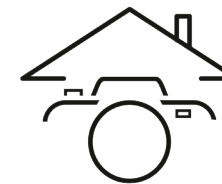
“My wife and I have raised two amazing kids who are super hard workers, motivated, and willing to try anything — that’s our number one success,” Jeff says. “My relationship with my wife is fantastic, and we’ve had a great time as empty nesters for the past couple of years.”

Jeff has been building since he was 15 and has no intent on stopping anytime soon. His drive for perfection remains strong, as does his commitment to serving the clients and partners he works for.

“I’ve always been extremely driven. My passion has trickled down over the years to our team. We have excellent construction crews and a great management team. When you finish one of these big projects like we do, you always see room for improvement, but going back a year later, all you see is what others see — how beautifully they turned out.”

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HOME IS WHERE THE HARTS ARE

Tim and Lori Hart are Montana people now. But, before that, they lived in the midwest, power boating on an Indiana lake and living on the Maumee River in Ohio. Tim remembers spending time on the Au Sable River, in Michigan. He watched “A River Runs Through It” and he felt a strong draw to Big Sky Country.

The genesis of their journey west, was a family trip to Big Sky in the late summer of 2004. It was 75 degrees with no humidity -- unlike their home. On that first morning, they woke up to snow blanketing Lone Mountain and the sight of a moose just outside their window under a sky painted with an August blue hue. Tim looked out at the mountain and said ‘Honey, I’m home’. Two

years later they were packing the truck and moving west.

Lori is originally from a farming town nestled in the heart of the Midwest, boasting a population of 8,000. It’s a community where lending a hand to your neighbors is second nature, where making eye contact and exchanging waves are friendly greetings as you pass by.

“I noticed a similarity right away in Bozeman,” Lori said. “We live in a harsh environment sometimes and you just stop what you’re doing and you help people. That resonated with me and that felt more like home.”

The Harts moved to Bozeman and Tim started working in the

Big Sky real estate market. He mostly helped people find second homes, vacation rentals and luxury real estate. Unfortunately, the market crash hit shortly into the Harts’ new Montana life. Tim joked that “I was practicing real estate as not many folks were buying. Buyers were mainly waiting to see where and when the market would bottom.”

With a lack of sales, they were burning through savings. Lori, who had stepped away from being an attorney in Ohio, remembers being at home with three young kids. They hadn’t made many friends yet, their families were far away, and now the financial burdens of the crash made it hard.

“It was a really humbling time. We really felt the pain,” Lori said. “Maybe we didn’t lose our home, but we were able to truly empathize with people who were struggling at that time. It made us more compassionate for the circumstances that people were going through and also gave us the motivation and drive to truly step up and make a difference for them.”

They remember one friend who had a house to sell. She was upside down on the home and had no way of making it right. She approached Tim, who navigated her through the process of a short sale. Said Tim, “It felt really good to be on the positive side of this situation seeing a friend and a client have a clean slate and a new chance.” Several others followed. And, with a lot of diligence, Tim was able to help them all start over and enjoy home ownership again...which was a rich and emotional journey.

It took a few years for the business to make a turn. Tim said they went into full-scale survival mode. They kept their heads down and lived conservatively. In 2010, Tim decided to focus his business on Bozeman and things started changing.

“Little by little, the floodgate started to open and we started to find some success. Lori started making calls for me to prospective clients and after a few years she got her license.” Tim said. “I came home to her one day in 2014 and I looked at her, I said, ‘I think it’s time!’”



“**It made us more compassionate for the circumstances that people were going through and also gave us the motivation and drive to TRULY STEP UP AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR THEM.**”



They both knew what that meant. It was time to start their own company, which was born in 2015. Tim points to a verse from Proverbs which reads “A good name is better than great riches.” They named their company Hart Real Estate Solutions.

The Harts have grown to a team of six agents and shortened the company name to Hart Real Estate, but they strive to keep their identity in the midst of change. Real estate can become very transactional, but, for them, it’s about the people they serve. They are so proud of their team and so humbled to be able to support them as they serve their clients, make new friends, and give back to the community that they call home.

In this season of life, the Harts love spending time with their kids and enjoying the Montana outdoors. Recently, Tim was on the Missouri River with some friends. They talked about life and caught some seriously large rainbows. There was not a speed boat in sight. It’s his privilege to share the Montana he used to dream about and to serve every client with their own Montana dream.

“**Little by little, the floodgate started to open and we started to FIND SOME SUCCESS.**”



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The
Big
Sky
Real
Estate
Co.

By Zachary Cohen
Photos by Arnica Spring Photography

Martha Johnson was born in St. Paul, Minnesota and raised outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but she's been living in Big Sky since 1988. Since landing in Big Sky, Martha has become a staple of the community and one of its biggest advocates for responsible growth. She's one of the area's top real estate brokers, proving that her commitment to the betterment of Big Sky and its people remains strong.

After growing up in Pennsylvania, Martha went to college in Boston and began her professional career working for a senior partner in a prestigious law firm. But after time in Boston and Philly, Martha had a realization: she wanted to move west.

"We grew up with horses," Martha reflects. "We always had a western saddle and ropes and steer heads in the barn. My mom had a passion for the West. So, when I was really looking to put down roots, I talked to my parents and decided I wanted to go west. We were lucky enough to grow up skiing in places like Park City and Vail, but I wanted to go cowboy west, not just mountain west."

Martha had family friends who had been visiting the Nine Quarter Circle Ranch for 25 years. So she called the ranch and asked if she could be a wrangler.

"They said we didn't typically hire wranglers from Philadelphia," Martha laughs. But Martha persisted. She accepted a job as a dining room server and headed to Big Sky, where she's thrived ever since.

"I flew out May 18, 1988. Back then, all the big ranchers in the West would ship their cattle and sheep to the Gallatin Canyon for summer grazing. The local bars were full of authentic cowboys and

INGRAINED IN
THE BIG SKY
COMMUNITY





sheepherders, who I ultimately became friends with,” Martha continues. “I worked my way from dining room girl to riding out with the cowboys to round up the horses and helping them saddle 60 head of horses every morning for rides. I couldn’t believe this way of life really existed.”

Over the ensuing years, Martha worked various jobs. She became a ski instructor, waitressed, started Serendipities, a small coffee, baked goods, baked potato, and ice cream shop in the mountain mall in the base area of the Big Sky Resort. She later opened another restaurant, The Huckleberry Cafe. Martha was always the first one to arrive, the last one to leave, showing her commitment to service and success.

REAL ESTATE CALLS

Meanwhile, several of Martha’s close friends were real estate agents. They saw her work ethic and began encouraging her to join them in the business. By then, Martha was married and working over 70 hours a week at the restaurants. So, she decided to take a leap of faith, launching her real estate career and leaving her days as a cafe owner behind.

Martha officially began her real estate career in 1996. By the early 2000s, her husband, Scott, stepped back from his role as the General Manager of The Big EZ Lodge to operate and manage River to Peaks Real Estate. Together, they helped their small real estate office become one of the top real estate and consulting firms in the area.

“What helped accelerate our firm is that we were family,” Martha explains. “We were all in on lifestyle. We’d take clients skiing, golfing, and exploring Big Sky, and often cooking dinner for family, clients, and friends. We introduced them to the Big Sky way of life, and my kids grew up in that environment. My babies were in the back seat all the time on real estate tours,

“

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AND WATCH CLIENTS
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WE’VE WORKED SO HARD FOR WHAT WE

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AS A FAMILY.



hiking lots, and visiting homes. I would take my kids with me everywhere. At the time, there was no daycare in Big Sky, and if my family couldn't help watch the boys, they were with me."

Martha made countless sacrifices in these years, fully devoting herself to her real estate craft. The results followed; she quickly became one of Big Sky's top brokers, earning a strong reputation for her service, commitment, and expertise.

Today, Martha is the broker and the VP of Sales with The Big Sky Real Estate Co. She closed \$270 million in 2023, and her biggest year to date was over \$350 million. Her decades of experience, deep commitment to her work, connections within the local community, and family support are the foundation of her success.

FULL CIRCLE

Perhaps the greatest joy in Martha's business today is that she has the chance to work with her son, Charlie. Both of her sons spent countless hours tagging along with her on real estate sales calls. Sam now works in the luxury travel sector, while Charlie joined Martha in real estate in 2020. Working with Charlie has been one of the greatest gifts of Martha's career.

"As a working mom, when he asked to work with me, I literally wept. This is a hard business that takes a lot of hours, and there were plenty of times I was late for dinner or missed a ski race or part of their day-to-day life. There are a lot of sacrifices. When Charlie wanted to work with me, I wept with joy that he wasn't resentful and wanted to link arms and join as a team. That was the proudest day of my life. We work really well together," Martha beams.

"He has been by my side his entire life. He's articulate, knows the product, and knows how to listen. It is the ultimate joy to be able to work together and watch clients interact with him. We've worked so hard for what we have, and now we get to enjoy it as a family."



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