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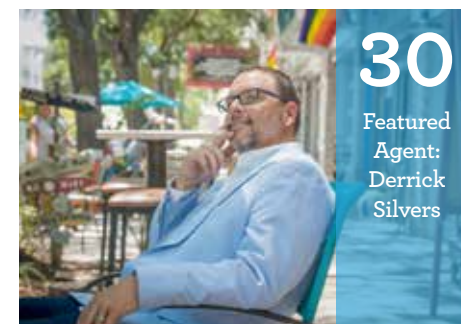
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By **Dave Danielson**  
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# STEPHANIE McELROY

## *Flying High by Staying Grounded*

Achieving great things in life shouldn't come at the expense of compromising your values.

That's a lesson that Stephanie McElroy teaches each day through the example of how she cares for those she works with.

In the process, as a real estate agent with Keller Williams Realty Brandon/Suburban Tampa, she has earned accolades and respect from her industry peers.

### **The Road to Real Estate**

Stephanie started her work life in the corporate world. She began in the accounting department of Publix Super Markets when she first got out of school. Then it was on to corporate purchasing. In time, she met her husband, Joe.

Those early years were foundational elements in her life that set the groundwork for her career in real estate — a career she started when she earned her license in 2002.

Within a few years, Stephanie and her husband started their family. Her real estate career was important to her. Yet, Stephanie feels a strong, unyielding bond with her family. That priority took precedence with the birth of her second child.

"I took a few years off, and was out of production when my kids were little," she recalls. "I just worked a little bit for close family members and a couple of personal friends. But that was really it for a few years. So I was technically out of the business from 2008 to 2012."

### **Second Chapter**

After the economic downturn and the period when the housing market crashed, the timing was right in a lot of ways, and Stephanie formally re-entered the real estate industry in 2012 working with corporate and private investors.

Since then, she has steadily grown her results, based on a solid reputation as a caring and knowledgeable resource for her clients.

...





“

*We all need to be agents who answer our phones, but I think there are some times when you've got to recognize the moment that your family needs you.*

Her success has been magnificent. In fact, in 2018, Stephanie was involved in 90 transactions for nearly \$20 million in volume. In the process, she also earned the North Florida Region volume award.

When you work with someone who truly cares about you and your success, word spreads quickly. And that's what has happened during Stephanie's real estate career.

"I don't do a lot of outside marketing, because most of my business comes from my personal friends, family, previous clients and personal referrals," she says.

Success for Stephanie has rightfully come as a direct result of the way she supports those she serves.

"I work with a sense of compassion. It's just in my general make-up. I have empathy for other people," Stephanie explains. "It's not my money they're spending on that new house, and I still take it very seriously. It's not my money that they're getting when they sell their home. But I take that seriously as well."

In turn, Stephanie shares her clients' trials and tribulations.

"If my clients are going through a struggle, I have a hard time sleeping at night," she admits. "If they're sad about not getting that house, I am, too. I'm always thinking, 'How can we fix this for them?' It seems like my best ideas happen at 2 a.m."

#### **Strong Focus**

No one is perfect. And it's easy to get distracted. But Stephanie does her best to focus on her role.

As Stephanie says, "My passion has stayed focused on helping people. Sometimes in this business, personal goals can get in the way. But it's not about the money for me, it's not about possessions. It truly is about helping someone make what could be one of the biggest decisions they're going to make in their lives, whether it's buying their first home, or selling a home that they love. I get involved in my clients' lives. I've made some really great friends by getting to know my clients. In turn, it has been very rewarding for my career."

Like most in the industry, balance in life is tough to achieve. But Stephanie continually keeps the goal of achieving it squarely in sight.

"I truly try to focus on the real priorities. Earning money is necessary and we all have bills to pay, but you also have to recognize that it's not just about that, you've got to find your big why and keep it in focus."

For Stephanie, her *why* is her family.

"It's about relationships, and you've got to build those relationships with your family as well as your clients — to truly make yourself and your family a priority," she emphasizes.

That sense of priority is something she urges new agents to instill at the outset of their career—to ensure that healthy boundaries are in place from the beginning.

"We all need to be agents who answer our phones, but I think there are some times when you've got to recognize the moment that your family needs you. When your kids are in the middle of telling you something that happened at school today and your phone is ringing, you've just got to just shut it off for a few minutes."

Stephanie and Joe have been married for 18 years. They're the proud parents of two daughters, 14-year-old Jordan and 13-year-old Taylor.

In their extra time, Stephanie and her family also make a habit out of giving back and being involved.

They give of their time and talents at church, sponsor children through Food for the Hungry, along with being involved in United Way for years.

#### **Keeping Faith**

In her work, Stephanie's faith in God is central.

As she says, "I believe He gives you the tools and talents to do your part. You have to work hard and see where it goes. If it doesn't work out, then it wasn't God's plan for you at that time. You have to keep faith in knowing that God does have a plan for each and every one of us."

While she has a competitive side and works extremely hard during the negotiation process that she enjoys, Stephanie continually flies high with a truly grounded sense of caring for others

"Hopefully, people remember me for being a kind and compassionate person," she says. "That matters to me more than anything else."



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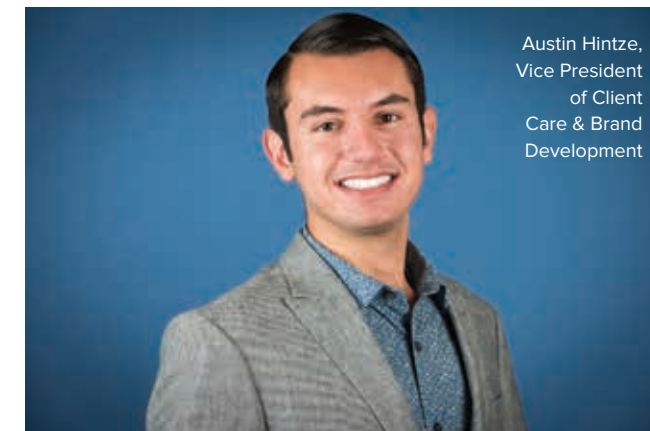


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At the same time, you can count on Waypoint Property Inspection for a proven level of expertise to expedite the process. In fact, since 2005, the Waypoint team has completed more than 7,000 full-service home inspections.

Austin Hintze is Vice President of Brand Development at Waypoint. The company was founded by his father, Bob Hintze.



Austin Hintze,  
Vice President  
of Client  
Care & Brand  
Development

“He was basically a one-man show until 2013. That’s when my uncle actually came on board as our second full-time inspector,” Austin explains. “And I joined a company in 2014 in a marketing capacity, and ever since then, we’ve just been adding more inspectors and adding more staff to our team.”

### Covering the Region. Delivering Results.

Today, Waypoint boasts a team of several full-time inspectors, plus a marketing and administrative staff located at the company’s headquarters in Brandon.



Eddie Lai, Vice  
President of Field  
Operations

The growing team is also strategically located, with inspectors located throughout the surrounding greater Tampa area to provide a wide geographic area spanning seven counties and beyond.

Waypoint offers a full range of home inspection services, including buyer inspections, pre-listing inspections for sellers, insurance inspections and more. One of those that are especially important involves new home construction.



Bob Hintze,  
President

“There’s an assumption out there at that if a house is brand new, it’s not going to have any problems,” Austin points out. “But we’ve noticed the opposite to be true in our line of work.”

### Recognizing Their Important Role

No matter the age of the home, or the scope of the property, the Waypoint team takes pride in their part in the process.

•••



•••

“The most rewarding thing is dealing with clients when they’re in probably the most stressful time in their life. We come in at such a crucial point in that process,” Austin emphasizes. “We’re helping people either move forward with the home of their dreams, or we’re helping them realize that maybe there are some other things to consider.”

Through their work, the Waypoint team stays fully mindful of their purpose, and the extent of their role in any given real estate transaction.

“Unfortunately, sometimes there are inspectors out there that aren’t as objective as they should be, and they try to sway the client’s decision one way or the other,” Austin says. “What we do is we thoroughly train inspectors that our job is to look at that home objectively, and present information and allow the client to then talk with their agents, and then decide if that home is the one that they want to move forward with. Our job is not to sway a client one way or the other. We’re just there to provide information.”

#### Answering the Need

A growing team means an ongoing ability to be responsive. While some organizations find it difficult to return phone calls promptly in what can be an extremely time-sensitive business, Waypoint has the staff and organization to answer and return calls quickly.

When the need arises, Waypoint has the capacity to be there.

“We normally don’t need that much of a heads up to make a quick-turn inspection work with our schedule,” Austin says. “One caution with that, however, is every now and then we do have people call us and schedule an inspection when they’re on the last day or two of their inspection period. While that’s not normally an issue for us to work in, the problem comes if we find anything that may require a specialized resource such as a roofer to become involved.”

For that reason, Austin recommends that inspections be scheduled as early as possible.

#### Leading by Example

As you look at online industry ratings, Waypoint’s numbers are definitely on the positive end of the spectrum. In fact, out of hundreds of reviews posted for them, you’ll consistently see that they receive top marks.

As their business continues to grow through referrals, Waypoint also has a lofty reputation in the industry. In fact, the firm is a teaching organization for others in the business.

“We’re honored to be involved in coaching other home inspection companies across the country. We have a group of about 10 companies that we’re coaching to help them grow their business,” Austin smiles. “It means a lot to us to be in a position where we can actually help other companies.”



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# KITCHEN

Decluttering your possessions can set you free! The best way to begin is by reviewing room-specific tips for making the most of your space while letting go of things that don't bring you joy. Start in the heart of the home: your kitchen.

Do you have trouble finding what you're looking for in your kitchen, especially if you're in a hurry? Your Bundt pan is nowhere to be found, but those plastic kids' cups seem to multiply overnight! You're not alone. The overwhelming task of decluttering this space can be made easier by breaking down those items into categories. Just grab a couple of boxes, set a timer to keep you focused, and plunge in, keeping these helpful questions in mind: *How often do I use this? Do I have multiples of this item? Would I buy this again?*

- **Linens:** Mismatched, worn out, or heavily stained dish towels, cloths, and oven mitts can be repurposed as cleaning rags, donated, or, as a last resort, thrown out.
- **Cooking utensils:** Sort through these to make sure everything is in good condition (look for cracks, peeling, warping, etc.) and assess how many of each you need, keeping in mind how often you cook and what you use most.
- **Kids' kitchenware:** Unless your children/grandchildren are 3

and under, much of the plasticware you've been keeping for them to eat on and drink from can probably go. Bye-bye, sippy cups!

- **Spices, oils, vinegars:** Pull all of these out and immediately discard any you don't use or are expired. It's likely you can stick to the basics here, with the knowledge that you can always purchase a small amount of a particular spice as needed in the future. When you've finished, think of a new way to store these items thoughtfully so they are visible and organized (there are many cute storage options available for spices!).
- **Fridge/freezer:** When was the last time you wiped down and disinfected your fridge and freezer from top to bottom? Here's a good opportunity to do so, as well as to check expiration dates on everything (especially those condiments!) and reorganize sensibly, with items you use most at eye level.
- **Tupperware:** Does everything have a mate (bottom and lid)? If not, it should go, along with anything stained orange by that delicious pasta dish you were saving in the fridge.
- **Glasses and coffee mugs:** First, eliminate any glasses or mugs that are chipped. Next, consider who in the household uses what and how often. Coffee/tea drinkers likely need one or two mugs per day, and many of us have our favorites. Likewise, beer drinkers may have specific glasses or mugs they prefer. Some pieces may have sentimental value as well. If you have too many mugs or glasses for your cabinet space, storing some and rotating them out may be an option.
- **Medicines/vitamins:** The kitchen is a convenient and logical place to store these items. Important here is to be sure what you save isn't expired and that you know what it is used for. Also, confirm you've tucked away meds and vitamins high enough that pets and children can't reach them. Old/unwanted medications should not be thrown out; rather, dispose of them safely in designated kiosks at locations such as Walgreens.
- **Junk drawer:** This drawer (or drawers) is a necessary but potentially scary catch-all place. Now's the time to pull everything out of there and see what's been lurking. Keep only what you need. Discard anything expired or no longer useful, and consider what may make more sense in another location of your home.

This list should serve as a good jumping-off point for paring down those kitchen objects. Keeping a sheet of paper handy to list what items you might need to replace can also be useful. If you're feeling especially motivated, use this decluttering process as an opportunity to wipe down shelves and organize what you decide to keep. Lastly, now that your culinary space is feeling lighter, cleaner, and more organized, do what you can to part with these cast-offs responsibly: Donate, re-home, and/or recycle what you can.

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By Dave Danielson  
Photo Credit: Barry Lively



» rising star

# LAURIE ELKES

## GIVING HER ALL

When you get to know RE/MAX Capital Realty agent Laurie Elkes, you soon realize that she isn't happy unless she knows she has given her all — in all she does.

While we all do our best to reach our potential, it's clear that Laurie does it with a level of focus that doesn't come along just every day.

It's that kind of potential-seeking spirit that has quickly earned Laurie a spot among the region's true Rising Stars.

### DOOR-TO-DOOR DRIVE

It's been said that life begins at the end of your comfort zone. If that's the case, Laurie began expanding her world at a very young age as a girl in Pennsylvania.

"I've been in sales my whole life. I started at the age of 11. My dad came home one day from work one day and said, 'We're going to

Disney World.' I had three brothers and sisters, and spending money was limited," she remembers.

As the oldest child in the family, Laurie's independent spirit was set in motion with the prospect of going to Disney World.

"I decided I was going to make little loop-de-loop potholders. And when they were done, I literally door knocked and sold them by the dozens, to the point where, in 1978, I had over \$100 in my pocket," she smiles. "That was a lot of money for an 11-year-old in 1978. Although it sounds crazy, that's where I got myself experience got over the fear of knocking on a door."

The experience unlocked a new level of belief for Laurie.

"I realized the power of being able to make how much money you want to make," she recalls.

Soon after her trip to Florida, Laurie's family decided to make the move to the Sunshine State permanently.

As she grew, she continued to grow her sales abilities and successes. She sold lipstick and mascara and worked in retail. At the same time, her father, who was in the building industry encourage her to work with him.

At the time, she pursued her interest in the fashion world and retail. For a while, she took a step away from the professional world to raise her children. In time, she went back to work for Avon, excelled quickly and became a leading manager in the Tampa area.

### A NEW DOOR

Economics and financial conditions change. As her role was eliminated, Laurie took a breath and a step back for a few months. Then she made a pivotal phone call.

...





••• As she recalls, “Kendall Bonner is a good friend of mine. And I called her in January 2015 and said, ‘Okay, I’ve not worked for three months. Do you need somebody to stuff envelopes? I’m just looking for lunch money. I don’t want to work full time.’”

Kendall arranged for one of her agents to meet with Laurie. And she was hired on the spot as a Transaction Coordinator.

“Before I knew it, I was full time and did that until the summer of 2017,” Laurie says. “Then, I decided it was time to get my license. And I haven’t stopped since.”

She made a fast start, bringing the advantages of working behind the scenes and in front of clients together.

“Through this experience, I’ve learned how to create processes and procedures so that every client feels the same way, and experiences the same level of “white glove” service.

#### RAPID RISE

She achieved her goals of delivering that kind of experience — and then some.

In her first six months as an agent, she completed \$3 million in volume. And in 2018, she doubled that number — reaching a lofty \$6 million — for an astounding total of nearly \$10 million in just her first 18 months as a real estate agent. In the process, she’s been recognized with a Top Contributor award.

How did she make that kind of transition?

“I truly, truly love what I do, and I just never stop,” she smiles. “I love showing houses. I have a joy for it. And I have a process and passion for it.”

Laurie is indeed a big believer in processes and checklists are one of her favorite things. When asked for advice for others just starting in the industry, it’s this sense of organization she would recommend.

“I would say to people that it’s very important to know your systems and processes before you start. I don’t believe in faking it until you make it. You can’t wing it in this business. If you do, you’re not going to be able to give everybody the same service,” she emphasizes. Also, make sure you’re going with a broker that offers training, I’ve been with the same broker since I’ve got my license. I constantly feel valued, and I know they always have my back, and I always have an opportunity to learn and grow with them.”

#### MAKING STRIDES

Laurie has definitely given her all to learning as much as she could, as quickly as possible. Her next goal? Expanding her comfort zone again and becoming more adept at the listing side of the business, since her start has been primarily as a buyer’s agent.

In the meantime, she gives her all to her family, including her husband of 25 years, her 23-year-

old son who is a U.S. Army paratrooper, and her 25-year-old daughter who gave Laurie her first grandchild last year.

Laurie feels a deep sense of gratitude and responsibility for what she does.

As she explains, “We have an opportunity to change people’s lives through our work. This business has allowed us to change our lives. But not to take advantage of it ... to respect it.”

Giving her all isn’t an option for Laurie Elkes. For her, it’s a way of life.

“I always want to be able to lay my head down at night and know that I always do the best job I can, no matter what it is, no matter what the experience is, whether it’s real estate, or whether it’s family or whether it’s something in life.”





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▶ featured agent

# DERRICK SILVERS

## refining results



By Dave Danielson  
By Barry Lively of B. Lively Images



That level of achievement didn't happen automatically. It took long hours poring over contracts and servicing the business they were bringing in.

"I would go into a listing, and she'd go show buyers and come home and I would do the listing at eight o'clock at night, and then I would have to write up offers up until midnight," Derrick remembers.

He reached a moment of clarity.

"At that point, I said, 'We've got to do one of two things here, either get out of this industry or build a team,' he explains. "So I told my parents, 'We would love to team up with you. Come in, and bring your people, I'm going to form a team.' It's one thing I never saw my parents do. They worked by themselves and did all their own paperwork. And I saw them working a lot and doing what I was doing while getting burned out. But I realized I couldn't have it that way. I've got to do it differently."

So they hired an administrative team member and a marketer. Soon, Derrick's parents were bringing leads in.

That was two years ago. Last year, a new licensed assistant, Mandy, joined the team.

"We figured out a way to streamline business where Mandy is out meeting with a lot of the clients, and then I'm in the back, making sure everything's running correctly. And that's what Bianca does, as well. Bianca is more of a buyer's specialist, and I'm more of a listing specialist. And Mandy works in both areas with us."

### DEFINING THE "WHY"

Success has continued to mount. Each of the last two years, the team has recorded about \$21 million in volume.



On the surface, it's easy to think that those who reach his level have had some shortcut or magic formula. But Derrick is a great example of how sustained success requires sustained effort. Through time, he has made decisions and moves that have helped him and his team refine their brand of results for those they serve.

### GETTING STARTED

Derrick's real estate journey actually started with his family.

"My parents actually are in their 20th year of being realtors. My mom was in real estate in Ohio, when we moved down here in the late 70s," Derrick recalls.

For a time, Derrick's mother got out of real estate and worked for the school system. About 15 years ago, she re-entered the business. Derrick's father joined her 10 years ago, after working in the car business for 30 years.

His parents enjoyed success and naturally thought Derrick would, as well.

"They kept pushing me to get my real estate license," Derrick smiles. "For me, schooling was never fun. I spent my whole adolescent life trying to learn nothing. And I've spent my

whole adult life trying to learn everything. And so I took on the challenge and went to real estate school, passed and earned my license in 2013."

The family appeal was contagious. Not long afterward, Derrick's father-in-law moved from New Jersey, decided to get his license, and strongly encouraged Derrick's wife, Bianca, to do the same. She did.

The next step was deciding where to start. Derrick and Bianca took his parents' advice and began with Keller Williams, where they grew with the firm's legendary training system.

Soon, it was time for their next step. They went out on their own and experienced the challenges of establishing and growing their own business.

"That first year was tough. The second year, we started to gain some traction and started getting some referral clients. We also started doing more marketing and investing some of the money that we were making back into advertising and Zillow was one of the big ones for us at that point."

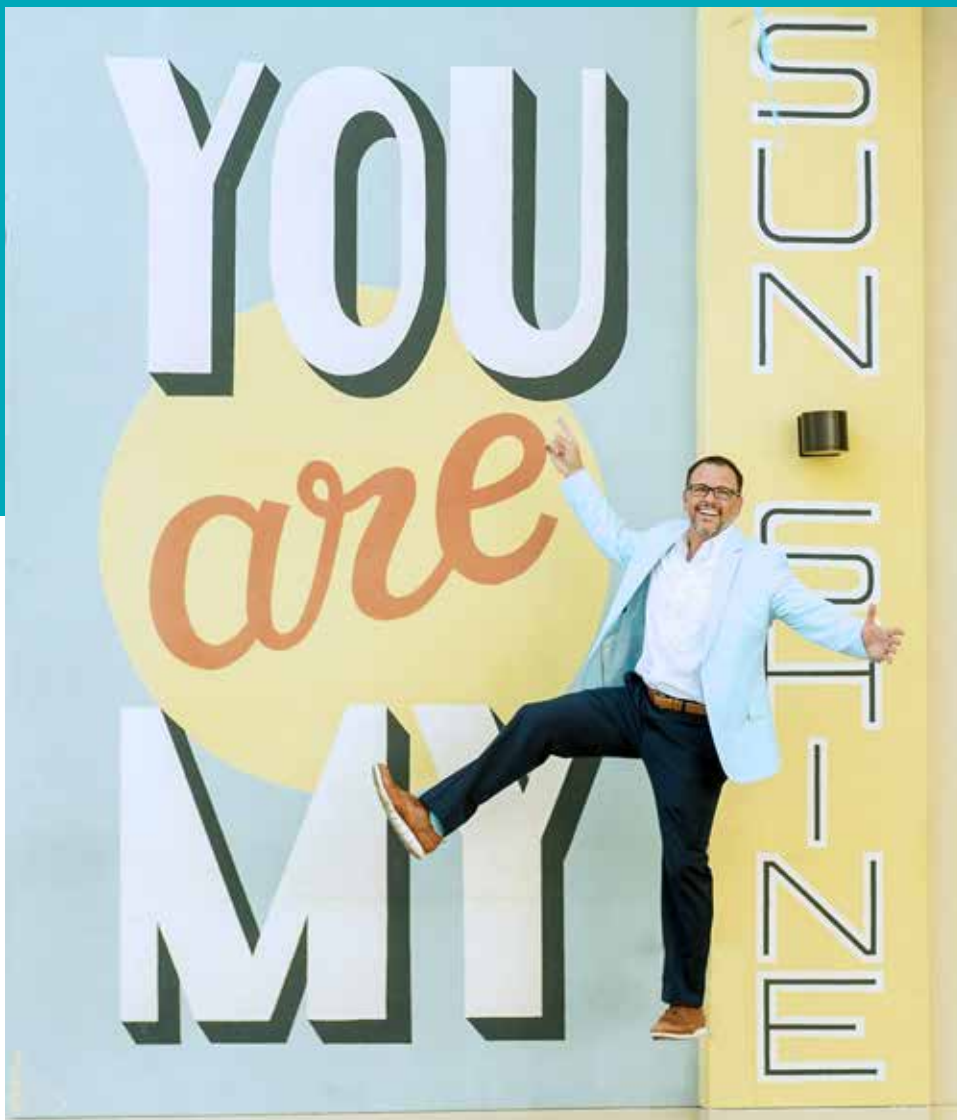
### STREAMLINING THE APPROACH

The third year saw a breakthrough level of results, as they recorded \$8 million in volume.

Real estate deals are the successful result of a long line of steps and decisions taken over time.

The same can be said about successful real estate careers.

As Broker Associate at RE/MAX Metro Tampa Bay, Derrick Silvers has achieved an impressive level of sustained excellence.







For us, it's about making people the number one thing. It's about putting people first, communicating with them and setting the right expectations

...

Today, Derrick and Bianca are at RE/MAX Metro Tampa Bay. Through time, though, they moved, working at a range of firms. Each step along the way was a chance to learn. And each stop has played its part in adding to the success story.

That success is based in no small measure on the "why."

"Anybody can make money. But my big "why" was time," Derrick emphasizes. "My favorite part of being a realtor is having time with my family. I was in the car business before this, and when you're working for someone else, you're at their mercy ... I can still work 50 to 60 hours a week and still have time for my family, and that's really been the greatest asset for real estate for us."

Derrick enjoys time with Bianca and his 13-year-old son. An accomplished, ranked tennis player in earlier days, Derrick has found a new passion on the court — Pickle Ball. In fact, he plays in tournaments and plans on competing in the sport's U.S. Open tournament this year.

Giving back is also important to Derrick, as well. Just like in his work with clients, Derrick's approach to helping people is personal, as well.

As he says, "We really like to help people who maybe aren't doing so well. That's something that means a lot to us to be able to do."

The passion for what he does fuels Derrick's drive to serve his clients ... and refining results for everyone involved.

"For us, it's about making people the number one thing. It's about putting people first, communicating with them and setting the right expectations," Derrick says. "That's one of the things that's carried over for us — making sure people understand and know that we care for their wellbeing."



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Written by Elizabeth McCabe

# MARIAN YON MAGUIRE *Gives Back* TO THE *Leukemia & Lymphoma Society*



For more information on the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, check out their website, [www.lls.org](http://www.lls.org).

"I'm a cancer survivor," says Realtor Marian Yon Maguire of the YES-Homes Group. "I'm seven years out from having a bone marrow transplant (thanks to her brother who served as her donor)." She had Multiple Myeloma, a cancer that has not yet been cured.

She adds, "My mother died from the same cancer. I do believe the amazing thing about any blood-based cancer and lymphoma is that it doesn't matter who you are, what your lifestyle is, or whether you are a male or female."

Marian was determined to make a difference, and she had that opportunity by running for the Woman of the Year for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in 2017.

"It was very challenging but very amazing," comments Marian. The Man or Woman of the Year involves a 10-week fundraising period where people put out a plea for donations. The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society handpicks their candidates – usually 10 women and 10 men – to champion their cause.

"I got to meet really great people in our community in the Greater Tampa Bay Area," says Marian. "The year I ran, one of the groups (led by an ex-pro football player) raised over \$100,000." While she didn't win the Woman of the Year, she made an impact through her funds raised.

In addition to being a supporter for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Marian has given speeches at the American Cancer Society for the Hope Lodge. It's a place near and dear to her heart. Marian explains, "I spent the summer of 2012 at the Hope Lodge over by Moffitt."

She continues, "The strides that they have made against cancer is amazing. What we have in our backyard at Moffitt, what I call the International House of Cancer, recruits doctors from all over the world."

Marian adds, "When you are a cancer survivor, I doubt that any cancer survivor doesn't ask God, 'What is my true purpose? If I'm alive what am I supposed to do?'" For her, it's an evolving answer, but she is determined to give people hope through her battle.

Marian concludes, "Cancer doesn't define who you are. It's just a moment in your life. You can never forget that you are spared."



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*"Working with Evolve&Co has elevated our brand. Through their strategic partnership building, creativity, and press pitching, the revenue speaks for itself." - Sea Dog Brewing*

*"We contracted Evolve&Co to design a timeless, iconic logo for State Theatre, a historic music venue, and they absolutely nailed it!" - State Theatre*





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SEARCH FOR  
THE PERFECT  
TITLE  
COMPANY  
IS OVER.**



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