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TABLE OF CONTENTS

06
Meet the Tampa Bay Real Producers Team

08
Preferred Partners

10
Cover Story: RAY MIHARA

14
Rising Star: KERIN CLARKIN

20
Team Leader: Katie Ducharme

24
REAL Producers Launch Party!

30
Featured Sponsor SEC Inspection Services

32
Featured Agent Christopher Williams

38
Making A Difference: Jodi Avery

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MEET THE TAMPA BAY REAL PRODUCERS TEAM



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RAY MIHARA



▶▶ cover story

By **Dave Danielson**
Photo Credit: **Barry Lively**



Building Teams. Leading with Impact.

Think back to your favorite leaders in life.

Chances are they shared a few key attributes — recognizing potential, building on strengths and motivating others.

Chances are they look a lot like Ray Mihara.

Ray is Broker and President of Mihara

& Associates. But no title captures every quality that positively impacts others.

Competitive Fire on the Ice

Growing up, you'd find Ray mixing it up on the ice and pushing the puck toward the hockey goal.

Like a lot of hard-nosed competitors, Ray's passion for the sport

extended to college. But he didn't leave it there.

"I wanted to be a professional hockey player," he recalls. "Well, very few make it in the big leagues. So, I did what I considered to be second best ... handling marketing for a professional hockey team."

Ray hit the ice with the Buffalo Sabres. He had



an instinct for the marketing game. He saw the opportunities and knew how to capitalize on them. After a year with the Sabres, he stood out.





“My boss, Steve Donner, called me and said, ‘I have an opportunity. How would you like to work with Phil Esposito? The Tampa Bay Lightning were just awarded an NHL franchise,’” Ray smiles. “It took all of about three seconds for me to say, ‘When do we leave?’”

Ray made the move and started building from the ground up.

“It’s challenging to start an NHL hockey team. People in Florida didn’t know what a Zamboni was, what a blue line was, or anything about the sport,” Ray remembers. “So we were educating and selling Tampa Bay Lightning at the same time.”

With Ray’s work, the rough patches of ice were overcome, and the Lightning launched successfully.

A New Game

After two and a half years, Ray pursued another passion — real estate. In 1997, he joined ERA.

Ray’s instincts from hockey translated well.

As he says, “I think that’s why Mr. Esposito gave me the chance to be involved with his team, because he felt I was aggressive, and I understood the sport. I was able to take that and move into the real estate world, and the marketing programs I put in play helped get the phone ringing right away.”

By studying local industry leaders, and using printed marketing materials, the phones definitely rang. By his second year, he was one of the top three agents. By his third year, he finished at number one.

Player/Coach

While he was making goals for his clients and himself, soon he was mentoring others — like a player/coach.

As he says, “It was a good feeling, because I was making money, and I was also helping others succeed.”

For 10 seasons, Ray wore the ERA colors. Seven of those years, he was the top agent. In the process, through teamwork and leadership, Ray had created a smaller group of individuals there.

About that same time, Ray felt it was time to move to a smaller organization. In the process, the economic downturn hit.

It wasn’t easy, but Ray stayed on his feet and adapted to the new rules.

“During the crash, we had to understand the changes — things like short sales and foreclosures and all of that. It

became our new world,” Ray points out. “And we had to understand how to best help clients through a very difficult three years. Going through that time really helped me understand that this business is a lot more about people than it is about homes. Having a chance to meet with families and see what they’re going through, it was clear to me that our business is 80 percent about people and 20 percent about homes.”

A new opportunity emerged. As the economy rebounded, Ray’s team encouraged him to start a brokerage.

“I had no interest in being a broker, because I enjoyed being in the trenches,” he smiles.

With persistence from Ray’s team, Mihara & Associates was born in 2012. He had a specific vision for the new group.

“The game plan was very different from traditional companies. With most brokers and companies, the agents go out, they make the sales and brokers get a percentage, and the company survives,” Ray says. “Mine was different. I felt my expertise was on the marketing side. So I did the marketing, and they did most of the selling.”

Over time, the team has grown. What started as seven agents has grown to a roster of 65. And in the mix of it all is Ray.

“I’ve never given up selling,” he says. “Because I love being in the trenches. But the thing that excites me the most is seeing my agents do well. I love hearing their stories and their success. I also always want to be there. If there’s a troubled deal, my being in the trenches and understanding what they’re going through allows me to help.”

Winning Each Moment

Winning isn’t easy, but Ray helps new agents see the path.



“When you get into this business, it requires a huge sacrifice. And the first one to three years, you have to almost give up control of your life, and become completely dedicated to your beginning,” Ray emphasizes. “But if you do it, and do it up front, after three years, you’ll regain control. And the balance will come back.”

With that balance, Ray and his team give back to multiple causes, including the American Cancer Society, Children’s Home, Pediatric Cancer Foundation and Humane Society of Tampa Bay.

Ray also cherishes time with his wife, Annette, and his 8-year-old daughter, Brooke.

“Brooke is very young, but as I look to the future, my dream would be for her to someday take over the business. While you don’t want to force kids into a career, maybe a nudge here or there wouldn’t be so bad,” he smiles.

Whether they’re exercising, enjoying Lightning season tickets or playing golf or camping, Ray, Annette and Brooke take time to enjoy the moment.

“Our world revolves around speed. But it’s good to slow down and enjoy the moment. Because the moment will come and go,” Ray recommends. “If you do fewer things every day, every week, every month and every year, and you actually enjoy the things you do, and you know what? You enjoy life.”

It’s about making an impact.

“Each night, I go to bed wanting to know people are better because of something I did or said — that I’ve been a good husband, a good parent, and that I’ve made a difference with my clients and my team. My success is knowing I had a positive impact on them.”

Some lead during games. Others like Ray Mihara live it.



KERIN CLARKIN

BREAKING NEW GROUND



▶▶ rising star

By Dave Danielson

Photo Credit: Allie Serrano of Allie Serrano Portraits, LLC

YOU CAN LEARN A LOT FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD SUCCESS. BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, YOU HAVE TO FIND WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU.

Ask Rising Star Kerin Clarkin. As a Rising Star with Keller Williams Realty South Shore, he's not interested in following down the same, worn path. Instead, he has built a reputation for results by creating his own path — by breaking new ground.

CHANGE OF LOCATION

Growing up in Long Island, New York, Kerin started his path into real estate in 2004 with Century 21, where he was one of the younger agents. Soon, he moved to National Home Finders that eventually became Coldwell Banker and worked with Top Agent Paul Musso that showed him everything there was to know about real estate and investing.

*1 Key of Advice from Kerin is to always shadow "Intern" for a top agent and learn everything they do and everything they don't do!

"In New York in the early 2000s, there was a big club scene. There was no technology, no social media. And at the time, if you went to Manhattan, or to the beach in the summer, all the kids would hand out club fliers, and we're talking about thousands and thousands of fliers, because that was the way to communicate then," Kerin remembers. "So I took that mindset of why don't I do the same thing in marketing with real estate? So I would order 5,000 to 10,000 fliers."

With his fliers in hand, Kerin made his way to the malls, shopping centers and other public spaces, handing them out, putting them on cars — whatever it took. It paid off.

"My first deal ever was a \$450,000 house, because a guy was so annoyed that I kept putting a flier on his car. No one did it before. My thinking was why would I do everything that everyone else does. I want to make myself different," Kerin recalls. "In the process, I went from making no money, to then just unbelievably making money in real estate."

After the economic downturn of 2008, Kerin moved to Tampa.

"I moved down here thinking I was going to be here 30 days. And I've been here for nine years," Kerin smiles.

After stepping away from real estate for a time to work in hospitality and dining marketing, Kerin decided to get back into real estate. So four years ago, he joined Keller Williams.

"When I started, I told the managing partner of our three offices that I would be the number one agent within three to four years," he laughs.

His prediction came true when he finished number one in 2018 with \$22 million in volume.

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But for all of that success, when Kerin meets a new client, his focus is on their needs.

“I’ve done things for free to help people, I’ve paid my commission out to help families move because they didn’t have money,” Kerin emphasizes. “I do this because I enjoy what I do. And I like helping people. That’s what this is about — just helping people.”

BUILDING BALANCE AND COMMUNITY

When he’s not working, Kerin loves spending his time with his son and his parents. He also enjoys restaurants, jet skiing, playing poker and reading books about history.

No matter where you meet him, you can count on Kerin to be authentic and real — and to form genuine connections with the people he meets.

“There’s nothing better than going to a store and saying hi to somebody and kind of feeling like you’re in that small town. We’ve grown out of the small-town atmosphere with social media. We should go back to that small-town feel. I don’t cold call, or call up expired listings. I don’t call up for-sale-by-owner listings, or Zillow leads. I don’t buy any leads. And yet I still sold over 100 houses, because it’s all about getting to know people on a personal basis.”

Kerin has built success for his clients and for himself his way.

“When I started, everyone told me what I was doing was wrong and stupid,” he remembers. “They would say, ‘You should be cold calling, you should be doing this. You’re wasting your time doing all this nonsense.’ But I believe that if you’re a real estate agent, it’s not about just selling and buying homes. It’s about community. You should know everything about your community.”

From food truck festivals to the Biggest Easter Egg Hunt, Kerin is 100% part, and always helping his community with family events.

With that spirit, Kerin owns FunTampa.com to boost the sense of community and small businesses that exist in spite of corporate expansion.

“It’s one of my favorite things I do right now,” he says. “With FunTampa.com, I go around, and I do interviews and create VIP videos for people that own their own local businesses, and I don’t charge them a single dollar.”

Kerin also has advice for those just entering the business when it comes to building their network of business for the future.

“I don’t care if you are friends with 90% of

the people in your community. And I don’t care if you have 50 relatives who live in that community, your business should be based upon everyone who doesn’t know you,” Kerin explains. “Because if you base them on the people who just know you, you’re going to fail. It’s not about popularity. It’s about helping your clients.”

PRIORITIZING HIS PATH

For Kerin, he’s learned to set priorities and make time for the parts of his life that deserve attention and time, too.

As he says, “If you’re working for money to be successful, if you’re not spending it, then what’s the point? If you’re working to make sure your kids have a good life ... well, your kids will have a better life if you hang out with them.”

At the end of the day, Kerin is a Rising Star who breaks new ground. But it’s not just the results that matter. It’s his approach — his journey.

As Kerin smiles, “When people think about me, I would want them to say I actually did good for the community — that I did everything I could to support and make people happy.”



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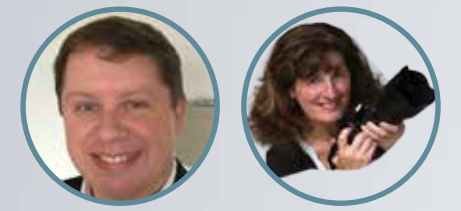
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Photo Credit: **Sherry Keenan**
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KATIE

DUCHARME

HITTING ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

Thousands of people rise to their feet. Hats are removed. Hands cover hearts. Silence envelopes the moment.

As the red, white and blue colors flutter in the evening breeze, the crackling roll of a snare drum echoes. Katie Ducharme takes a deep breath. And with a full voice and patriotic heart, she sings the National Anthem, expressing her nation's hope and pride.

Katie has been here before. In fact, time after time, her voice is sought after wherever the flag is raised and saluted.

The reason? She hits all the right notes. And she cares — just like she does for her clients who applaud her efforts as their real estate agent.

Early Stages

Before Katie became a team leader with Coastal Properties Group: Affiliate of Christie's International Real Estate, being in the limelight was nothing new for her.

"I grew up in Michigan, and was always performing in front of people. I started singing the National Anthem professionally when I was six years old," Katie recalls.

When she was 18, she moved to New York City and continued life as a

singer and performer — attending theatre school, auditioning and recording music. In time, she got married. And as time passed, the young couple moved to Florida for new opportunities.

In 2006, Katie saw a description for a new opportunity with KB Home. They needed a Senior Design Consultant.

"It just intrigued me to be able to present these options and help them pick what they wanted for their homes. And it was almost like being on stage ... selling yourself and the product," she says. "I love beautiful homes, design





and colors. And I feel like I've always had a little bit of a knack for that."

Katie's expressive side drew her to KB Home.

"I was a design studio consultant with them for two and a half years," she remembers. "I was in sales and design and presentations, and I just loved it so much. That was my first taste in, in real estate until the market crashed."

As the market stabilized, she joined UDR in 2010 as a Sales and Leasing Agent.

"The market kind of picked up a little bit, but it wasn't good enough where I felt I could get my real estate license. But I was doing rentals, so that was great. Again, I was on stage every day doing tours of properties and in the community and I loved it."

New Venues

By 2014, it was time for a new chapter.

"As the market picked back up, I said it's time to get my license," she emphasizes. "And I had my eye on Coastal Properties Group. The office was brand new. It was just getting built here and Dunedin, So I said that's where I want to work."

At the same time, Katie continued singing and building a following with performances of the National Anthem for a wide range of Florida events. Her performance at Coastal Properties Group was strong, too. In fact, after six months, she recorded over \$2 million volume, and she started her own team.

"When I got my license, again, it was about performing and selling yourself and

the home. But you have to have a good, positive attitude and give out good vibes and be kind and, no matter how your life is going, you have to always be great to the clients and sell that house," Katie smiles.

As she looked to build her business, a friend suggested that she gain awareness through her following as a singer by advertising on a billboard near one of the stadiums. She did.

As she says, "I've had my billboard for the last four years, and it's probably one of the best things I've ever done."

Katie builds her business through relationships.

"I think how close I get to my clients. One of my clients was in the hospital the other day, and she had nobody to pick her up, so I took her home," she says. "I just, I genuinely care about people's wellbeing. I love my clients."

Her impact is reflected in her results. During her first year, she sold \$9 million in volume, earning Rookie of the Year honors in 2014. She has kept building. In fact, in 2018, she recorded \$28 million in volume on 97 transactions.

Teamwork In Tune

Katie credits her team, including Alicia and Whitney... along with her father who stepped in as business demands sped up.

"My dad sold his business in Michigan, and he was retiring, and he was down here on the beach, and so I said, 'Dad, I know you can do this. Can you get your license?'"



You help me, and I'll cut you in on deals," Katie says. "He got his license a few years ago, and he's a broker associate with Coastal. And that's how my team started."

The central part of Katie's team in life is her husband and their two boys. Together, they enjoy travel, dining and, of course, singing. She also enjoys giving back to local organizations, including the Children's Dream Fund and the VFW.

While she has a passion for performing, Katie has a passion for performing a valuable service for her clients.

"I'm a good listener, and I'm very patient with my clients. I think it's important to really be genuine in your process and be genuine with your clients. People can see through it if you're not. I truly care about people."

At the conclusion, Katie Ducharme's voice, bold brass horns and thundering drums reach the crescendo.

As the anthem ends and melts into thunderous applause, she has reached a special place in the hearts of those who have heard her.

For less than two fleeting minutes, she has left an impact. Because, just as she has for her clients, when it mattered the most, Katie once again hit all the right notes.

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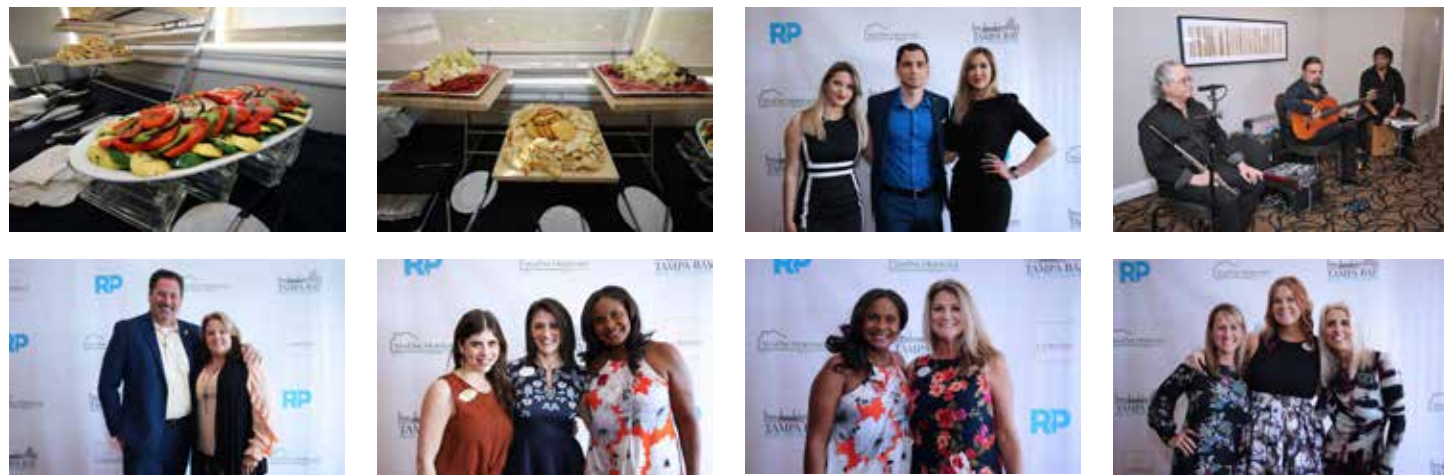
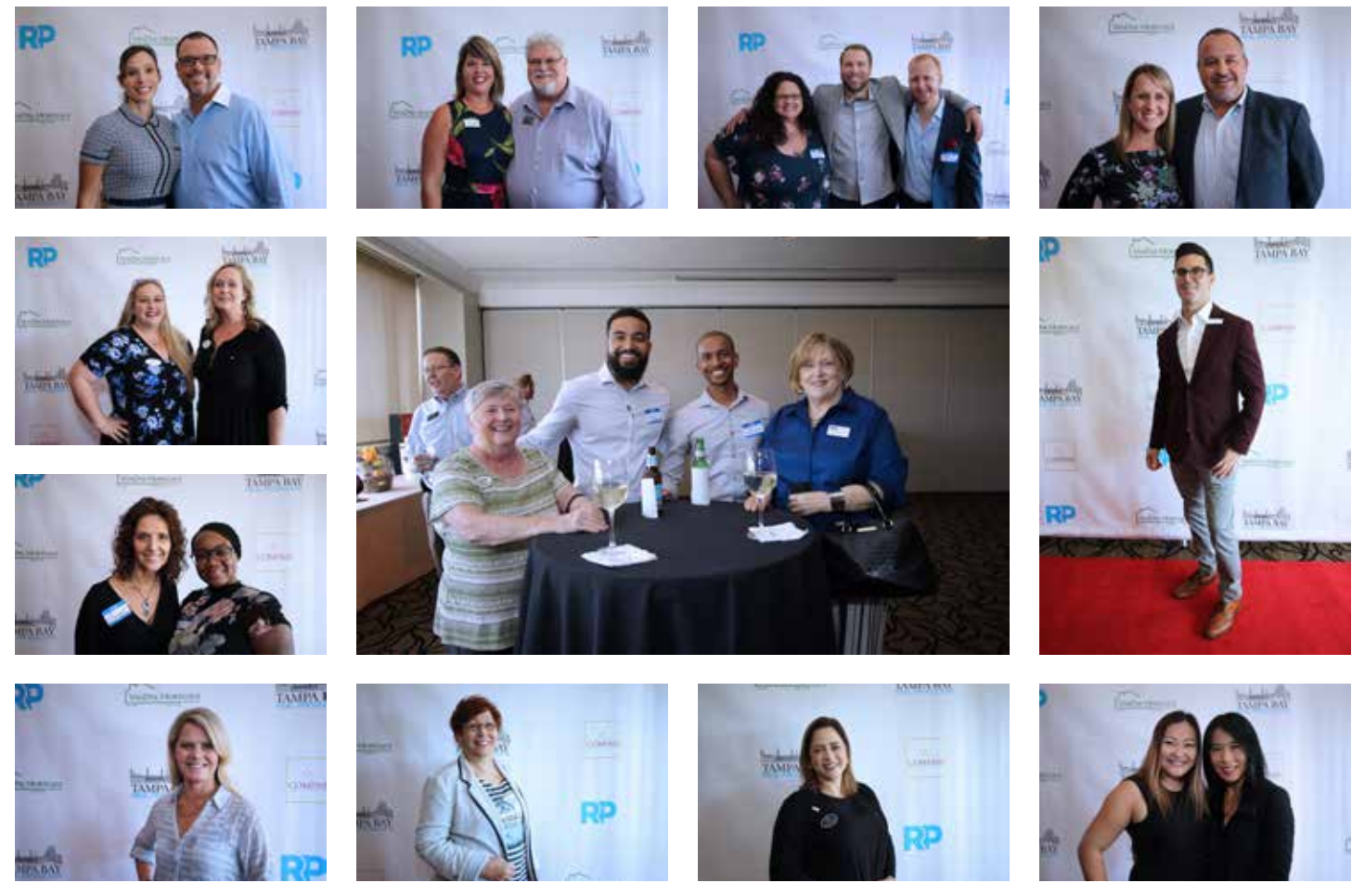
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SEC INSPECTION SERVICES

A POSITIVE PARTNER

There are obviously a lot of interlocking pieces that work together to help ensure that real estate transactions go as smoothly as possible. Each organization and provider along the way is a partner in the process.

That's why Melissa and Dan Menikheim, who lead SEC Inspection Services, view their role in the process as a critical component in supporting the work that's been done.

THE RIGHT SERVICE

Since 1999, SEC Inspection Services has served thousands of area residents from their headquarters in Clearwater.

"We provide a wide range of inspection services," Melissa explains. "Those

include residential and commercial inspections, insurance inspections and other services that support buyers and sellers in the process."

In addition, SEC Inspection Services conducts mold inspections.

As Melissa points out, "Mold inspection capabilities require more, because you need to have a license that is above a typical home inspection."

While SEC Inspection Services has been in existence for 20 years, it boasts a record of experience that dates back even further than that.

"Dan was working in the construction

industry before we got into the inspection business," Melissa recalls. "He knew that inspections were starting to become more popular. Having a construction background, he saw it as an opportunity to use his knowledge. Inspections had never been mandatory at that point."

But not too long after that, insurance companies started requiring four-point inspections for homes that are 30 years old or older.

"Generally, it's a requirement that the inspection is completed before insurance can be issued," Melissa says. "The four-point inspection looks at electric, plumbing, heating & air and roofing. If someone is buying a home, we can do the



▶ featured sponsor
By Dave Danielson

four-point inspection with the general, detailed inspection. Or if someone is in their home and it becomes 30 years old, then they need to obtain this four-point inspection."

RESOURCE FOR RESULTS

Melissa and Dan take pride in being a resource.

"We really enjoy helping people make an informed decision about the home they're going to purchase so they have the knowledge they need," Melissa explains. "Things can look great from the outside, but then there might be bigger issues that were hidden. Or, if everything is perfect the way they want it, we can help them understand that what they're getting."

SEC Inspection Services promotes true partnership in their day-to-day duties.

"What that means is we treat your clients like you treat them. We give them back to you the same way you brought them to us," Melissa adds. "We are friendly, and we are a resource with a vested interest in everyone winning. If the client wants that home, we want to help them, and be part of the solution."

Melissa and Dan are very involved in their community. In fact, Melissa serves as part of the Pinellas Realtor Organization (PRO).

"It helps us stay connected with the real estate industry and community so we can better refer and support the people we work with... and so we can refer people back to agents. We have a huge network of people who may have a plumbing issue or an electrical issue.

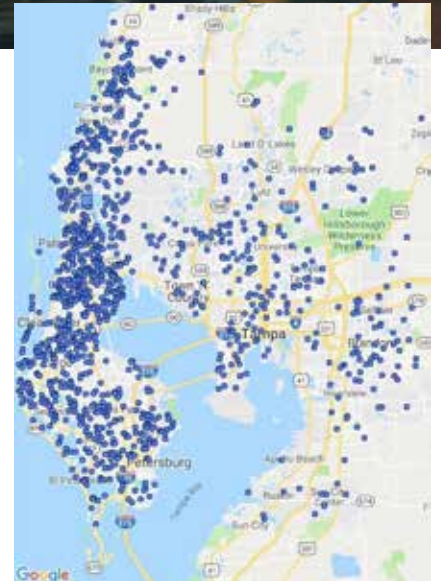


In those cases, we can help and say we highly recommend these people, so we can know the industry professionals so they can get involved if needed."

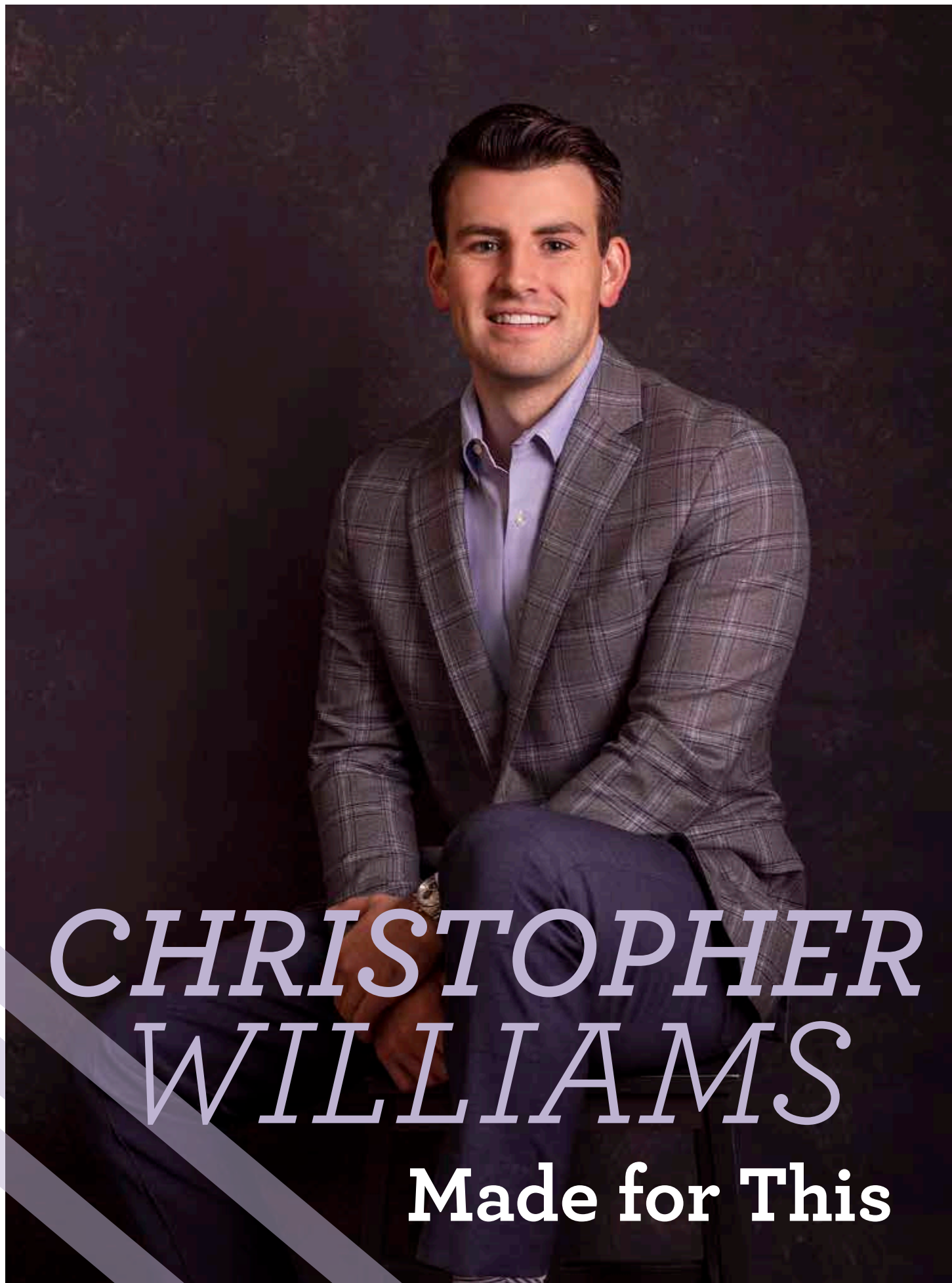
As Melissa says, real estate agents have a tough job. And SEC Inspection Services is there to make that job as easy as possible.

"Sometimes, agents don't understand all of the elements that come into play during an inspection. They have to understand why a four-point inspection isn't passing and when they should get a wind mitigation inspection and what the process is if mold is found," Melissa explains. "That's why we do educational events, and we're always available for people if they want to meet for one-on-one training and education. And we definitely encourage that, because the more they know, the easier their job is."

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CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS

Made for This



▶▶ featured agent

By **Dave Danielson**
Photo Credit: **Allie Serrano** of
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It's clear Christopher Williams would be a leader at whatever he chose in life. It's also clear he was made to be a real estate professional.

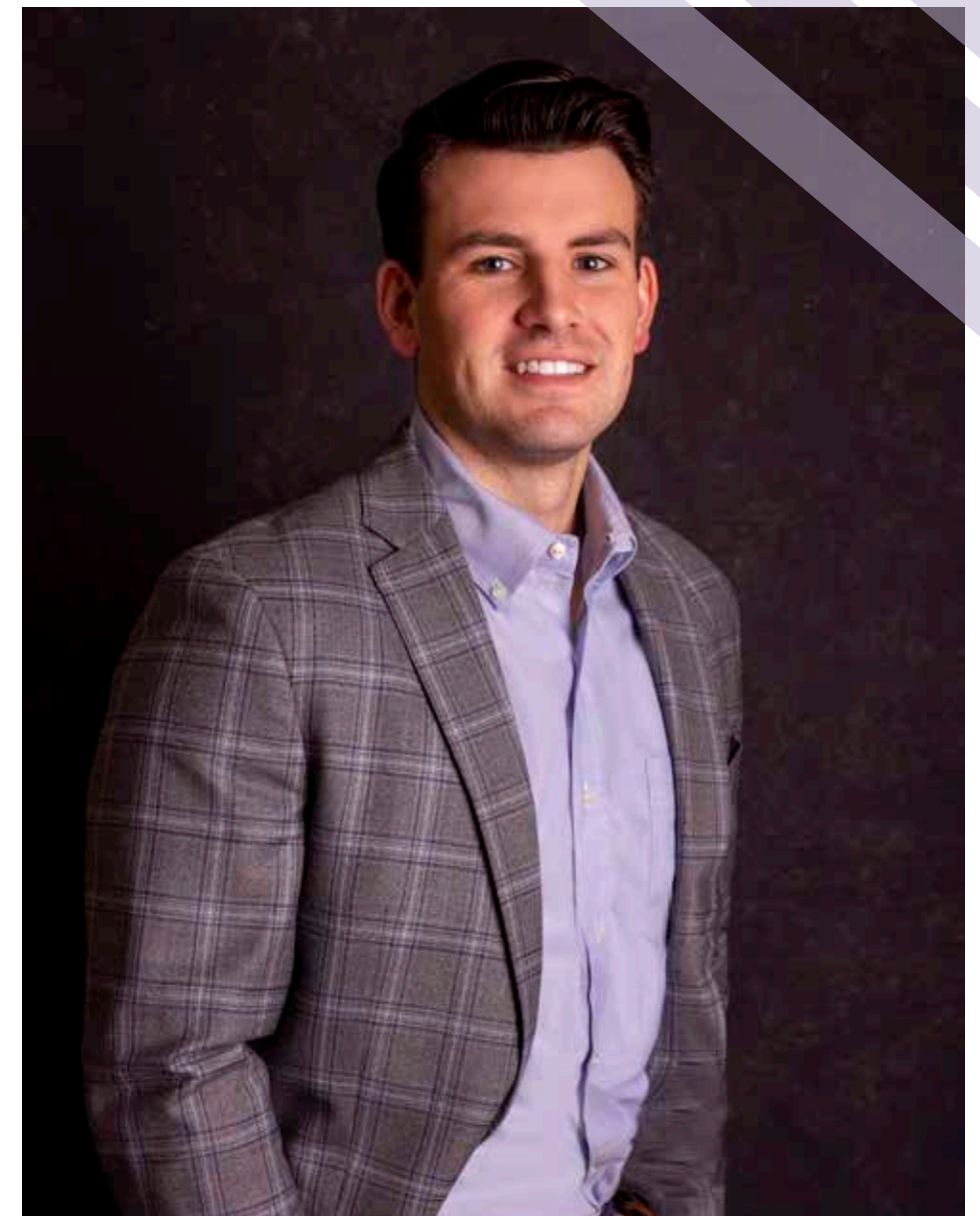
And the word "professional" is key. It describes the preference, approach and mindset Christopher brings to his work with People's Choice Realty Services (PCRS).

Early Advantage

Christopher has been part of PCRS for 17 years — since it was founded. How's that possible you may ask? It's because he literally grew up in the business. His father, C.B. Williams, is the broker. In addition, his mother, Ramona Williams, works with ProspectsPLUS.

"We were founded in 2002. I started stuffing mail, and I worked summers and weekends. I also did some shadowing and learning the inner workings of the business," he explains. "While the industry is vastly different now, it gave me a foundation for what it was, and I was familiar with what it would take to succeed."

If the job needed to be done at PCRS while Christopher was growing up, there's a pretty good chance that he contributed, including tasks like file maintenance, receptionist duties, admin work, and more. In fact, he even got involved in recruiting activities.



"I was 15 years old. And I was calling to recruit agents to work here," Christopher remembers. "It just created good habits. There were some things that, in the moment, you don't realize how beneficial they're going to be to you in the long term ... it gave me an underlying confidence."

Christopher took that confidence with him to college at the University of Florida.

"All I had really known was real estate at that point in time, and I knew I wanted to do something business-driven," he recalls.

He graduated cum laude with a degree in finance, then earned his Master of Science degree in Finance from the University of South Florida in 2015.

In the meantime, Christopher had earned his real estate license in 2013 — working by day and pursuing his master's degree at night.

Coming Home

Christopher had plenty of options in his field of study, but he chose to stay with real estate.

"A lot of people choose real estate as a later path in life where it's not their first career, but I bucked that trend. By the time I had finished graduate school, I had a pretty healthy-sized business, but I was an individual agent."

Soon, Christopher saw rapidly increasing results that stretched through his first three years as a professional.



“

A lot of people choose real estate as a later path in life where it's not their first career, but I bucked that trend.

...
 “By the end of the second year, we were doing 50 transactions a year and probably 65 to 70 after that. At that point in 2016, I thought you know, this thing has legs,” he smiles.

Again, the key word for Christopher is “professional.”

“I always took the approach that this was a business, I didn't treat it as a job, a hobby, a passion or anything like that. Because it was truly business at the scale I was running into at that point. So I took a very analytical approach, just kind of who I am the way my brain works, set out a bunch of systems. And it just kept growing.”

Evolving and Improving

A year ago, Christopher started building his team of seven.

“I had kind of reached personal production limits,” he explains. “So far, so good. It's helping me expand my reach. I can get to a wider number of people, and we can provide a supreme service while growing a brand and a technique of selling houses that we think is unique.”

The results are impressive. In 2018, Christopher recorded \$27.5 million in personal volume. In 2017, his volume placed him among the GTAR Top 100. In 2018, his GTAR put him among the Top 50. Christopher places more importance on providing the right fit for his clients.

“When we sit down with somebody, especially on the listing side, I say, ‘I want to make sure that our goals are aligned with you.’ I'm not going to always be your best fit, and I'm doing you a disservice in the event that I try to just push hard as I can,” he says.

A changing real estate industry requires an evolving approach.

“I look at general macro ideas from people all over the country and I read as many industry related articles as possible” Christopher emphasizes. “It would be naive to think that what I'm implementing here is hands-down the best. That would be doing a disservice to the people we end up serving so I am always looking for new ideas from fellow professionals.”

Giving Back and Paying Forward

In his free time, Christopher enjoys exercise, going to restaurants and reading. He and his team also give back through a number of local organizations, including Young Professionals Network, and ongoing support of St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

While he grew up around the business, Christopher's success wasn't automatic. It was the product of focused, hard work.

“I spent months poring over contracts and addendums. I used to drive neighborhoods and take notes and all of that,” he says. “I've been here

for nearly two decades. But I wanted to make sure as I met with more and more clients, I was giving them more knowledge.”

It's the same kind of approach Christopher shares with new members of the industry.

“For those starting out, I would say, know your craft. Once you're in front of clients, what sets you apart is not only service ... it's market knowledge and local knowledge. So learn your areas, learn your contracts, make clients feel secure, like you are the professional,” Christopher points out. “I use the term real estate professional, not realtor. Because I think there's a certain connotation to realtor and real estate agent. We want clients to know they're working with somebody who's got their best interest in mind. But more importantly, has the experience and knowledge to handle the ups and downs.”

Christopher Williams may have had a head start on his real estate journey and the success he creates for others. But he had something much more important — hard work, a drive to be better and professionalism.



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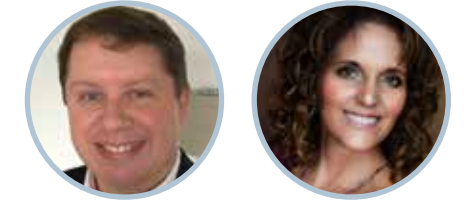
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By **Dave Danielson**
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AN A-LIST LEADER IN GIVING BACK



By any measure, Jodi Avery is an A-List real estate leader. As an individual agent with Keller Williams in Tampa, she's ranked among the top 1 percent of all local realtors for several years.

Just as importantly, Jodi is an A-List leader when it comes to giving back and helping others. In fact, she literally created the list.

Attitude of Achievement

As the youngest of four children, Jodi developed an early, clear vision of life.

"I'm extremely athletic and overly competitive. And I was a state-ranked tennis player. That was my passion growing up. I used to travel around the country doing that," Jodi remembers.

As a single mother of four children, homeschooling has been her top priority since the very beginning. In turn, they became fluent in four languages, studied

opera, and became classical pianists. They also modeled and appeared in more than 350 commercials.

Things completely changed when Jodi transitioned through a trying time.

"My life completely changed. So I had to pull them out of every single event, no more modeling, no more nothing.





Photo Supplied

They all went to public school, and I started in real estate,” Jodi recalls.

Within her first month, Jodi finished among the top five agents in her office.

“I just didn’t know what everyone else was doing. And that’s what set me apart. I knew how I wanted to be treated. And that’s how I treated people,” Jodi explains.

The treatment she gives is special.

“When we show houses, we have coolers, and on top is a little shelf. And on the shelf, we have granola bars, chocolates and some fun stuff. Inside are drinks and food. And then we have a pen, a flashlight and my A-List book,” she points out.

The A-List is Born

As Jodi started meeting with clients, her sessions were filled with questions and a need for resources.

“They would say, ‘Hey, we need a home inspector, we need a roofer, and so on. And I kept writing the same names,” Jodi recalls. “I’m all about time management. So having to write the same thing out over and over isn’t

efficient. So I said I need to put the names of home inspectors, termite people and others on one page.”

Soon, other needs came up — and other names.

“They would say, ‘Hey, we need a plumber, we need a roofer, we need an electrician, and so the list grew organically,” she laughs.

The list evolved into a few sheets. And then it became a small book.

“It just kept growing. It’s kind of one of those little tiny things that you think, ‘Oh that doesn’t make a big difference.’ But it does,” Jodi points out. “So that’s how it all started.”

As you might guess, Jodi’s A-List Book continues to evolve. And getting into it is a coveted honor.

As Jodi talks with new clients, she gives them a copy of the book and explains, “If you need any work done, here’s a great reference. The people in this book have been highly vetted. Every year, it changes, people come off, people come on, and it doesn’t cost any money to be in here. I put them in, and take them out.”

When a lady moved to Tampa from New Jersey, Jodi gave her the A-List Book. That’s when the creator really saw the power of what she had put together.

“Three or four days later, I stopped by to say hello. And as I pulled up into her driveway, her lawn guy was my lawn guy. Then the guy cleaning her pool was my pool guy. And inside, the cleaning lady was my cleaner. In her house, she had 11 service providers all from the book,” Jodi marvels. “So for her, these people are great. And then everyone in the book knows each other. So then everyone refers each other. It was a cool thing to see.”

Jodi’s A-List Book has gained traction, attention and use. In fact, she prints 50,000 books to share throughout the region. She continually adds new categories, with everything from best restaurants, best burgers, best date nights and more.

With numbers like that, it’s easy to see why many have wanted to be included in Jodi’s creation. In fact, she conducts interviews, reviews “applicants,” and she has even had those who have offered to help her establish guidelines for inclusion in some areas such as restaurants.

But, as the name, “Jodi’s A-List Book” suggests, it’s her ranking.

“It’s a matter of me personally, and what I like in each category,” she says.

Spirit of Contribution

In addition to helping people find resources, Jodi has also made a huge difference when it comes to helping people save and share older items with those in need.

“When people are selling and moving, they become desperate at the end. And I noticed that a lot of people just started dumping and throwing things away,” Jodi says. “I’m so involved in the community and charities and different things. So when I saw someone throw a couch away or beds away, I thought there are too many kids sleeping on the floor or on a mattress. And I said you know, we just need to donate it.”

Jodi has coordinated donations online and helped to connect items with where they’re needed most. In fact, she met with more than 100 nonprofits to identify a list of needs that, ever since, the community continues to take steps to meet.

The difference Jodi makes is marked by contribution, involvement and awards, including the Dove Award for those who go above and beyond in all areas of life.

Driving it all is a simple list of key priorities.

“My whole business is about faith first, and family and then community,” Jodi says. “It’s about going above and beyond and helping others.”

In the A-List of those who give back, one thing is certain. You’ll find Jodi Avery’s name at the top.

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