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SHORT**

RIISING STAR
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**ALSO IN
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LAUNCH PARTY RE-CAP!

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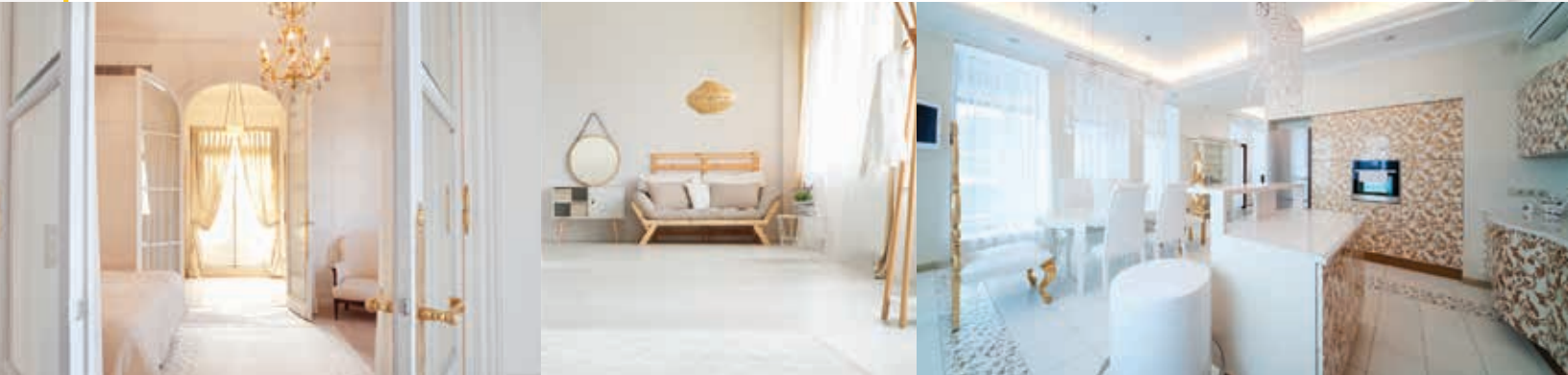
MICHELLE CROUCH

Ask The Expert:

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APRIL 2020

Karen Johnson



Karen Johnson
Senior Real Estate Loan Originator
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publisher's *note*

Wichita REALTORS®...I am still in shock at the tremendous turnout for the Launch Party! I am overflowing with so much joy and gratitude toward every single one of you that attended. Thank you for your support and for contributing to such a successful event.

I've said this a million times and will say it a million more, I have the best real estate gig in the ICT! I get to meet all of you and learn your stories. I get to throw great parties that simply celebrate you and allow you to connect with one another, and with the best *local* businesses.

I know it may still sound a bit too good to be true, but Real Producers wants nothing from you. We simply want to connect you to your peers through this monthly publi-

cation and through quarterly REALTOR® appreciation events. Well, maybe we do want something from you...we want your participation, feedback and nominations.

Which agents should we meet with? Who has a great story that needs to be told? Which business is at the top of their game that we should know about? What would you like to see in *your* publication? What could we do different or better?

Wichita Real Producers is all *about* you and just *for* you. I can't wait to meet every single one of you and put a face and story to your name.

Please be sure to take a moment to recognize our newest business partners, *recommended* by you and *vett*ed by us: US Bank, Movement Mortgage, Kemper Health, and Kanza Bank.



Sincerely Your Friend, Your Publisher,
and also your fellow REALTOR®,

Samantha Lucciarini

editor's *note*

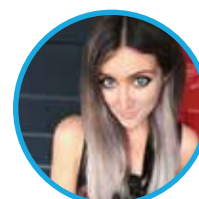
Hello to our incredible Partners and Agents!

My name is Lanie Schaber, and I am your Wichita Real Producers Editor. I have been a part of the Real Producers Editing Team for 4 years, and have had the incredible opportunity to work with RP Magazines in some of the largest cities in the nation. That being said, I have observed some very real challenges that our preferred partners and Top Producing REALTORS® have faced as a result of COVID-19.

There has been one common theme that I have recognized through my involvement in Real Producers. Our Top Producing Real Estate Agents are tough and adaptable. They have weathered through many storms including volatile markets, rising mortgage rates, shifts in technology, shifting political climates, environmental changes, and so much more.

Due to the quality of service our preferred partners provide, and the strength of the reputations they have built, our partners are confident that they, too, will prevail. Our local businesses know that they still want to be in front of their ideal clientele - Top REALTORS®! Our local agents will continue to require vetted and trusted partners to accomplish their clients' homeownership goals—even if it isn't this exact moment.

Through the length of time, our preferred partners have built equity via their reputations. Throughout Real Producers Magazine, I can see that the seeds of credibility have already been planted by both Top Producing Agents, as well as preferred business partners; and these seeds will be ready to bloom as soon as it's harvest time.



Sincerely,

Lanie Schaber,
Editor

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A man with glasses and a blue button-down shirt stands in front of a large yellow biplane. The biplane has a large black letter 'M' on its side. The background is a museum-like setting with track lighting.

Wichita Home Team – Keller Williams Signature Partners

Written by Dave Danielson
Photos by Darrin Hackney

*Some folks shy away
from the storms of life.
Others embrace the
challenge and
the opportunity to
help others.*

One who moves headlong toward a challenge is Kirk Short. He's CEO and Team Leader of The Wichita Home Team and a Broker Associate with Keller Williams Signature Partners.

Kirk also finds himself in the eye of the storm in more ways than one—including as a trusted leader who has helped his clients and team members weather challenges and achieve their goals...and also as an active storm chaser who puts himself in the line of the plains' most dangerous storms.

...

» top producer

KIRK SHORT

IS IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

The winds that circle around the real estate world can be tumultuous. Along the way, though, Kirk’s clients and his team members rely on his experience and expertise to shelter them from the unexpected.

MADE FOR THIS

Kirk remembers his first exposure to real estate.

“I’ve always been around it since I was 8 years old. My dad, Wayne Short, was in real estate,” Kirk says. “He served as the President of the local association. I knew I would get into the business all my life.”

“For me, success is doing what you love and loving what you do...constantly pushing yourself and achieving new things and new experiences.”

As he came of age, Kirk served in the Marine Corps for a time, before being medically discharged. From there, he gained valuable experience in a number of areas including car sales, landscaping and irrigation, and long-distance sales for MCI.

“It wasn’t long before I realized that wasn’t for me,” Kirk recalls.

“That’s when I decided to join my parents’ real estate company.”

LEARNING AND GROWING

Kirk started from the ground up, working as a receptionist, then getting licensed, becoming a broker, managing one of the offices and then finally buying the company from his parents when they decided to retire.

A couple of years ago, Kirk joined Keller Williams Signature Partners, where his team continues the tradition of success he has enjoyed since his start in real estate 22 years ago. In fact, in 2019, his team accounted for over \$18 million in volume on 102 transactions.

WINNING TEAMWORK

Kirk is quick to share the credit with his team that includes his father, who assists with new home development business, along with four other buyer’s



agents, his long-time personal assistant, Sherri, a Marketing/Social Media Director, and his wife—a local real estate photographer who adds her talents to The Wichita Home Team.

The love Kirk has for what he does is clear.

“I think one of the great things is that everything is different and changing in this business. Even if you sold the same house over and over, the buyers, the sellers, and the circumstances would change,” he emphasizes. “I really like the opportunity to be a problem solver and be that resource for people. For me, success is doing what you love and loving what you do...constantly pushing yourself and achieving new things and new experiences. It’s more than just ‘Real Estate’—Real Estate is really a conduit to the experiences and the people along the way.”

Kirk cherishes time with his wife, Alicia. They’ve been married since 1998 and enjoy their pets, including their two dogs and two cats.

In his free time, Kirk gives back in a number of ways to the local community, including serving on the Board of Directors for the Kansas Aviation Museum. He has also served on the Board for Children’s Miracle Network and served on the Committee for Woolstock for the Kansas Humane Society.

AT THE CENTER OF THE STORM

One of Kirk’s passions during his free time is life’s literal storms.

For the past 10 years, Kirk and his wife have been active storm chasers—bearing witness to some of the most destructive forces on the planet.

“We check the forecasts and the weather models a day in advance. Then my wife makes the arrangements and sets our schedule,” Kirk explains. “We try to stay within a day’s ride...heading out into the path of what’s expected. We’ll go out and set up. Our chases usually are within Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and sometimes Nebraska.”

One of the highlights of his time on the road tracking down storms with Alicia has been meeting Sean Casey. In fact, Kirk got a chance to be behind the controls and drive Sean’s custom-built

Tornado Intercept Vehicle featured on the Discovery Channel show, *Storm Chasers*.

Each time seeing a tornado is an unforgettable experience.

“Mother nature is incredible. You get a chance to see both the beauty of these storms and unfortunately, the destruction of these storms,” he says. “The destructive nature of it is pretty awe-inspiring. You get an adrenaline rush when you see it, but you don’t ever want to see it hit any buildings or towns.”

FULFILLING HIS PURPOSE

The storms Kirk and Alicia chase are a metaphor for the opportunities to serve that have been part of Kirk’s life along the way.

When the circumstances are uncertain, and the winds of change on a deal are circling, the people who work with Kirk know they can count on him to deliver calm leadership in the eye of the storm.

As he says with a smile, “In the end, I would like people to feel that I’m a good guy who always did things to help other people’s lives be better.”





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RACHEL LANGE

IS MAKING HER MARK!

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► rising star

Written by **Dave Danielson**
Photos by **Jennifer Ruggles**

Those who have an impact on those around them have a selfless, positive spirit—looking for ways to add value and contribute to the lives of others.

One of those making her mark on the Wichita region is this month's Rising Star, Rachel Lange, who serves as Director of Real Estate with Lange Real Estate.

Step by Step

Rachel's career in real estate was not a given. But step by step, she found her way to a career that gives her a rewarding feeling.

"As I was growing up, and when I went off to college, I had a passion for social work. I always had a passion for wanting to help people, so I naturally gravitated toward that," she recalls.

As Rachel made her way through college, she enjoyed the social studies classes she took, so she took the next step and earned her graduate degree in the field.

Rachel started her professional career offering a wide range of services, including crisis intervention counseling, therapeutic support services management, medical social work, and more.

After a few years, Rachel was ready for a new direction that would provide a greater salary as she started her family.

"I was pregnant with my son, and my dad owned a number of companies here in Wichita. He presented an opportunity to work in human resources with his company," she says. "I've always been intrigued by the business and I enjoy taking on new challenges and opportunities."

...

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...

A New Path

After three years, Rachel was ready for a new challenge.

“I had always been interested in real estate and the idea of helping other people and solving problems for others. So, I ended up moving over to the real estate side of the company,” she explains.

Rachel started off in property management, on both the residential and commercial sides. A year ago, she moved into the world of both residential and commercial real estate as an agent—on top of her other duties.

“The transition has been good. I’ve learned a lot. I think it has opened my eyes to a number

of different things that I wasn’t expecting,” Rachel says. “There have been a lot of new challenges and opportunities, and I’ve enjoyed every bit of it. I am glad that I took the plunge and did it.”

Her passion for what she does is clear.

“I really enjoy working with customers and being able to provide creative solutions for them,” smiles Rachel. “One thing I found is that every transaction is completely unique, no matter if it is the same type of transaction or not. Every customer has different needs. It’s really great being able to provide the solutions to whatever it is that they’re really wanting or needing out of that transaction.”

Team Spirit

Rachel is thankful for the team of professionals at Lange Real Estate.

She elaborates, “The team that I’ve had a chance to work with includes many mentors within the community. A lot of what I’m able to accomplish is due to our team...it’s a great group of people who bring a lot of energy and entrepreneurial spirit each day; who really want to be creative and solve problems for people. That spirit keeps driving me to be better every day.”

Rachel is proud of the benefits they bring to their clients each day.

“We have many tools for clients, including Equiset, which is an alternative financing program. We also offer property management and development services for internal investors and developers,” she explains. “That has given me a plethora of options for clients. I don’t have to approach it in a ‘one-size-fits-all’ way. I can truly identify customer needs and explore several options.”

Away from work, Rachel cherishes time with her husband, Ryan Mills, and children, Kennedy and Kade.

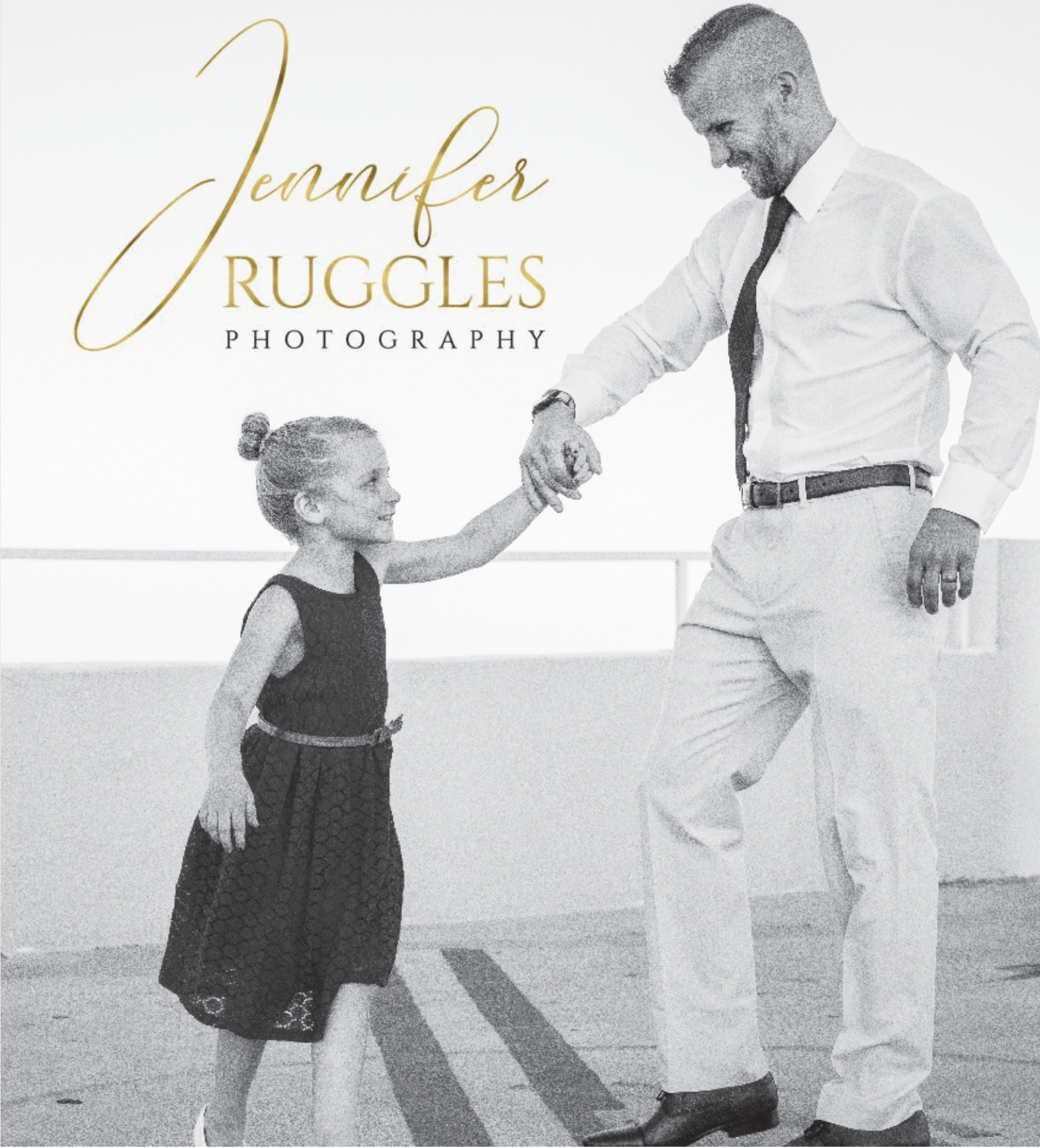
She also enjoys being involved in church activities and volunteering, as well as spending time with her family and watching Kennedy and Kade grow and take part in school activities.

Rachel also has a spirit for giving back to the community. She’s on the Board of Directors for Women in Commercial Real Estate and has also served as a board member for the Triple Crown Real Estate Trust, as well as the Salvation Army.

As Rachel considers her relatively early steps in real estate, she feels a lot of excitement for the road ahead.

“When I think about the work I do with others, I hope that people see me as somebody that they have a positive experience with,” she says. “Someone who has added value to their lives in some way, to bring a smile that brightens their day and hopefully leave a positive impact on their life.”

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2020 SPRING PARADE OF HOMES

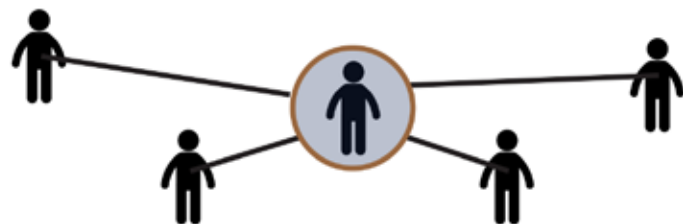
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►► partner spotlight

Written by Dave Danielson
Photos by Derrin Hackney



INTEGRITY AT WORK WITH MICHAEL BROWN

Security 1st Title



Each day, you dedicate yourself to smoothing out the process for your clients and helping them achieve their goals.

At the same time, it's important to work with a partner you can trust—someone who is there to back all of your efforts and the process itself with solid fundamentals.

That's where Security 1st Title comes in...as a partner who puts integrity to work each day.

Steady Excellence

Michael Brown is Senior Vice President with Security 1st Title. Each day, he and his team keep their eyes and efforts focused on their primary mission.

"Security 1st Title is here to be that independent, third-party who protects property rights by providing title insurance and closings services," Michael explains. "We do that in a professional, courteous manner. And many times, we're the gatekeeper of that contract. Our role is to be that neutral third party to the contract. It's our duty to ensure that all parties adhere to that agreement, and that way, we're protecting the interests of all parties involved in the transaction."

It's a passion to serve that fuels their efforts.

"I think it's really working with people and having those relationships

and bonds. We take pride in working with all parties to facilitate that,” Michael says.

ADDING UP THE DIFFERENCE

Through time, the reputation that Security 1st Title has built has come property by property and family by family.

In turn, the company’s team has grown with its tradition for excellence.

As Sales Manager, Amy Feather says, “We have 400 employees throughout the company. Our experienced and professional staff has seen just about every type of transaction that occurs.”



Our team is knowledgeable, professional, and courteous

Michael agrees, following up saying, “Our team is knowledgeable, professional, and courteous; we’re here to be a resource. If agents or brokers ever have a situation that may be a little confusing or new to them, they’re free to call any of our people, and we will guide them in the right direction to find the solution.”

INNOVATIVE PARTNER

Security 1st Title has stayed at the forefront of the industry through time, using the latest tools to better serve the process.

“Over the years, we have obviously seen the increasing role of innovation and technology,” Michael says. “We use it to search title records, and it’s also how we communicate and share information with our customers.”

As Michael points out, each successful deal takes teamwork—and a spirit of partnership.

“I applaud our Association of REALTORS® members throughout South Central Kansas, along with our real estate brokers and agents who are taking on the personal commitment to inform and educate homebuyers.”

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

Security 1st Title is committed to its mission of supporting each real estate deal. It is equally as committed to supporting the community, as well.

One way of doing that is by taking their expertise out into the community.

“We enjoy supporting the educational events of our industry,” Michael says. “We truly believe that everybody wants to learn, so it means a lot to us to provide support toward those educational events. It’s important to us that we’re doing our part to make sure that all parties represented in a transaction are up to speed with rules, regulations, and current trends in the market.”

Another way the team supports its community is with its trademark set of large barbecue smokers—adding a delicious, nutritious dimension to a wide range of events.

“We have enjoyed taking those out over the past 10 years to various community and charity events to provide an extra level of hospitality,” Michael says. “We like to do our part, and to support those memorable events and experiences.”

Whether answering questions, providing solid solutions for real estate closings or supporting its community, Security 1st Title demonstrates the power of integrity at work.

As Amy says, “We do that not just for ourselves, but to assist others in achieving their goals. Success for us is all about helping others succeed. If we can help someone along toward their own successes, then that’s rewarding for us.”

If you would like to get into contact with Security 1st Title, call **316.267.8371**, visit online **www.Security1st.com** or email **Michael: MJBrown@Security1st.com** or **Amy: AFeather@Security1st.com**.

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WICHITA REAL PRODUCERS LAUNCH PARTY!

On Thursday, February 27, from 12 pm to 3 pm, Wichita Real Producers hosted its first exclusive REALTOR® Appreciation event. The Launch Party was an epic success for Wichita's Top 300 REALTORS® and Wichita Real Producers Trusted Business Partners. The event was hosted at the beautiful Mark Arts.

Sponsors included Platinum Sponsor: Credit Union of America. Gold Sponsors: Pillar to Post Home Inspections and US Mortgage. Silver Sponsors: Security 1st Title, Craig Sharp Homes, KS State Bank, LeaderOne, Two Men And A Truck, Radical Bubbles, Dawn's Designs, The Collective - Events & Design, and Refined Furniture Rental.

Catering was provided by Scotch and Sir-loin, as well as Meddy's. The signature blue cocktail, Friendlitini, named by Platinum Sponsor Credit Union of America, was a huge hit! The live pianist and cello player serenaded guests. Opening the event, Wichita Real Producers Publisher, Samantha Lucciarini, made a welcoming speech thanking the 350+ guests in attendance. Ernie Warren, VP of Retail Sales of Credit Union of America and Wichita's Mayor, Brandon Whipple headlined the event with special messages.

It was truly a party for the books!









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GREG FOX

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BETTER HOMES & GARDENS REAL ESTATE ALLIANCE

Written by **Dave Danielson** | Photos by **Darrin Hackney**

Those who have a knack for leading and helping others achieve their own dreams share a powerful blend of attributes.

At the forefront of these characteristics for leaders is realizing that their role is about others. They know that ego can cloud their vision and distract from the work of supporting others.

As Broker/Owner at Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate Alliance, Greg Fox is one who leads with genuine strength and gratitude.

Gift for Leadership

His gift for leadership started with true service. In fact, after high school, he joined the U.S. Army and served for seven years as a medic.

“As I transitioned out of the service, I did a couple of different things,” he says. “First, I thought about becoming a doctor. Then I had a change of heart, and I worked in the automotive industry.”

In time, Greg’s wife had a new suggestion for him.

As he remembers, “She said, ‘Why don’t you go into real estate?’”

Greg’s transition was similar to most who enter the business...slow.

“During my first nine months as a real estate agent, I sold a total of three homes,” he says. “I enjoyed it, and I realized that what we do in this industry isn’t selling. It’s about helping people. It’s been natural for me to have the opportunity to work with people.”

In time, Greg earned his Broker’s license and stepped back from personal production to fully support his team members.

“I adore real estate. I love this work and what I do, and one of the things I enjoy the most is having the opportunity to solve problems,” Greg explains. “Sometimes, people think growth and becoming bigger automatically means success, but I’d rather have an office of 60 happy people than a larger office where you aren’t maybe able to support your team at the same level.”

It’s that type of servant leadership that helps create an environment that is supportive and nurturing.

“I am very grateful for our team. I obviously didn’t do this on my own in this office. It’s not like I’ve picked this thing up on my

...

shoulders myself,” he says. “It has taken everyone who has been here through time and all of their contributions. Everyone has played a very important role in serving our clients and building where we are today. None of us in life get here by ourselves.”

Life’s Priorities

Greg’s world revolves around his wife of 26 years, Tracy Cassidy, and their children—son, Chris Cassidy; daughter, Erin Evans; daughter, Brady Barnard; daughter Katrina Fox; and son, Kelbe Fox.

As he says, “When I think about success, I think about the fact that we have eight grandkids here in town. That is success. I’ve been married to the same woman through time. That is success. For me, success is, am I happy?”

In his free time, Greg is a big fan of James Bond films—a true fan.

“My brother and I have been James Bond fans through the years. In fact, as we like to joke, we look at the films in the series, not as just cinema...but as a historical documentary,” he says with a laugh.

As James Bond fans know, one of the most engaging parts of the James Bond story is the technology and world of gadgetry around the British hero.

“One of the projects I’ve been working on is creating a 1/8 scaled model of the Aston Martin car that has played a central role through James Bond films,” Greg tells us. “Each month, I receive a new shipment with parts to continue building the vehicle. It’s really life-like,

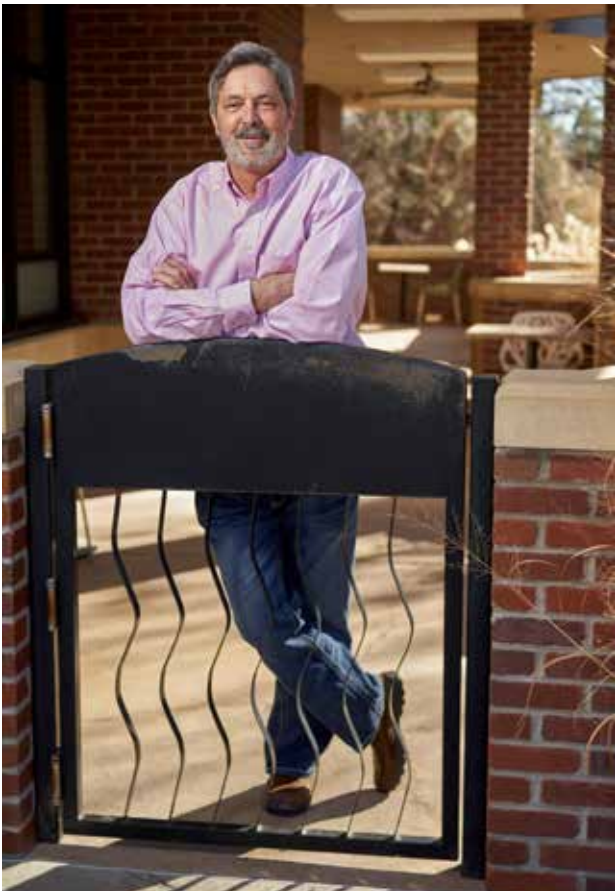
with working lights, steering wheels, and more!”

Greg and Tracy also enjoy traveling together; exploring warm-weather destinations and going beneath the waves as licensed scuba divers.

When he returns to Wichita after times away, Greg looks forward to the role he plays for those he serves—the agents who work with him.

“That’s my real job. I’m here to give the best I can to the agents on our team,” he says with a smile. “They know that I will do whatever I can to support what they need. I’m here to take their calls and to provide that support whenever they need it.”

Whether he’s weighing in and serving as a sounding board or brainstorming with an agent on a set of solutions to offer clients, Greg is there to literally answer the call.



Each day, Greg makes a lasting difference as a leader with an exemplary blend of strength and gratitude.



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- Katie Brown
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MICHELLE CROUCH

IS HELPING PEOPLE & ANIMALS FIND THEIR “FUR”EVER HOMES!

Berkshire Hathaway Home Services PenFed Realty

Written by Heather Pluard • Photos by Jennifer Ruggles

People aren’t always the ones who need new homes. Unwanted pets often do, too. Michelle Crouch works for them both. As a Berkshire Hathaway Home Services PenFed REALTOR®, she routinely helps her clients find their dream homes. As the Adoption Coordinator for LAPP, the local no-kill shelter, she helps animals find their forever homes.

“My clients don’t mind a few stray dog hairs on me,” Michelle laughs. “Showing houses and dogs is all I do—I never take a day off. Saturdays are especially busy since that’s the day most people look at homes, and it’s also a big day for animal-adoption events.”

Scheduling is key. “I’m lucky that most people are flexible,” she explains. “I’ll show my clients properties before and after I show dogs at an adoption event. Lifeline Animal Placement & Protection (LAPP) is the only no-kill shelter in the Wichita area, and people understand that these ani-

mals need someone to advocate for them, too. It’s my goal to get every single one of them adopted.”

So far, Michelle has helped more than 4,000 cats and dogs find new homes. “I started volunteering at LAPP in 2011,” she says. “My Jack Russell Terrier had just died from cancer, and my other dog was depressed and started eating everything. I thought she needed a new dog friend, so we visited LAPP to find one. I was impressed by their facilities and how well they treat the animals. I immediately decided to become a volunteer at this remarkable non-profit.”

Jamie, Michelle’s husband, is extremely supportive of both her career and her life’s calling to help animals. They live in Goddard and have three fur babies—Milo, Pixie, and Bandit—all of whom they rescued. The couple has been together for 28 years and married since 2001. That’s also the year Michelle started selling real estate.

Today, she’s located at Saint Andrews Place and works for two of Wichita’s top builders, Comfort Homes and Don Klausmeyer Construction.

“I love my builders,” she says. “They’re excellent. I have so much respect for how they run their businesses. They treat employees like family, and many of us have been with them for years. I stand behind their product so much so that I had one of them build my house! I’m proud to work for them both.”

In addition to new homes, Michelle sells existing properties, too. She’s known for spoiling her clients. “I answer my phone 24/7,” she says. “You can call me at 3 a.m. and I’ll pick up the phone. I also do a lot of extra things other real estate agents won’t do, like cleaning up a client’s house, power washing their fence or taking their dogs out of the house for a showing. I am constantly going.”

That’s the level of service that has earned Michelle a large referral base and the #2 spot at Berkshire Hathaway Home

Services PenFed Realty. When she isn’t helping her real estate clients, Michelle is helping her four-legged friends. On top of volunteering to show dogs at LAPP adoption events, she also coordinates veterinarian care, schedules puppy play-dates and conducts home visits with prospective adoptive families.

“Every home needs a dog, and every dog needs a home,” says Michelle. “I deeply believe in what I do on both fronts, but I don’t intermingle my passions. I never try to sell houses to people who are coming to adopt dogs or try and adopt dogs to people who are buying new houses. But I do want to get the word out about LAPP. You can save a life by adopting. If you’re looking for a new home or a new pet, ‘Get off the Couch and Call Crouch!’” Michelle doesn’t ever plan to retire from helping both people and animals find the perfect home.

If you or someone you know would like to get involved with LAPP, please call 316.807.8473 or visit online lifelineanimalplacement.org

Meet Some of LAPP’s Pups Up for Adoption!

Go Big or Go Home! If that is your motto then I am your dog! My name is **BANE** and I am a 4-year-old Great Dane Mix, or some may refer to me as a gentle giant who is passionate and fun-loving. Either way, I would be really excited to meet you and show you why they call us GREAT Dane and not just MEDIOCRE Dane. You will love me...I guarantee it and if you don’t, maybe you will have a friend or know someone who needs BIG DOG LOVE.





My name is **BISCUIT** and I am a 5-year-old Shepherd Mix. I have spent most ALL of my life at the shelter but if given the opportunity, I would much rather be in a loving home than in the shelter. The nice people at the shelter are the only family I have known, so I may need some time to warm up to unfamiliar faces. But once I do, I will be glad to show you my bouncy, lovable self, and shower you with endless affection and sloppy kisses.

My name is **BLUE**, I am 3-year-old Lab mix, and I am somewhat of a gossip queen. I like to get right up in your business and sit in your lap. When I am not being all nosy, I adore going for walks – the longer the better. I would even entertain the idea of being a running partner if we could work on my skills. I am the kind of girl who likes all of your attention so I believe I would flourish in a home where I am able to shine as your only furbaby.



My name is **IRIS**, I am a 6-year-old Pit Bull Terrier mix, and I am as beautiful as my namesake. I don't like to brag – but I am somewhat of a super friendly, playful and very affectionate beauty Queen. I must admit I love attention of all sorts...I love being petted and cuddled, and I especially love having my belly rubbed. I should warn you that I am very responsive to any type of affection you give me; if you kiss, pet or cuddle me, I don't just lay there and soak it up, I will kiss and cuddle you back!



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Written by
Ernest Warren

Technology has fundamentally changed the consumer's homebuying journey. With housing and lending information readily available on the internet, lenders and REALTORS® must keep up with the consumers' demands. Communication methods have evolved from traditional phone and face to face interactions, to also include websites, text, and chat as common methods to conduct business. Consumers demand a process that is quick, simple, and convenient.

Today's top-performing loan originators must not only be knowledgeable in all Real Estate Lending areas but also technologically proficient in order to meet the consumer's wants and needs. At the Credit Union of America (CUA), our purpose is simple and straight forward. Welcome to Friendly! We aim for friendly products, friendly processes, and friendly results for the consumer and the REALTOR®. We focus on establishing long-term relationships with our REALTOR® partners and our members—relationships that help you and your clients achieve success today and in the future. We want to be the trusted advisor you contact before anyone else.

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