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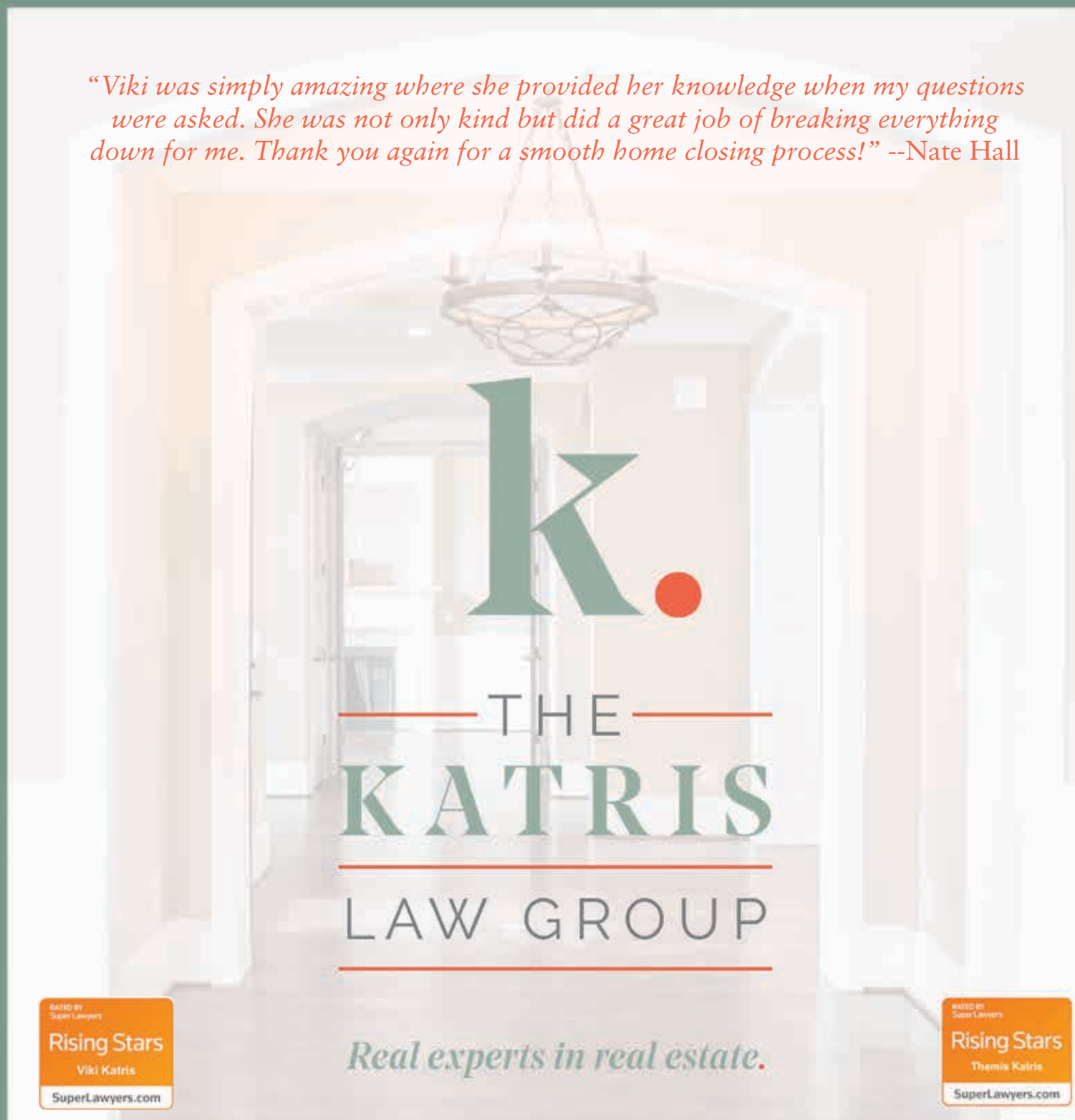


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MEET THE DUPAGE REAL PRODUCERS TEAM



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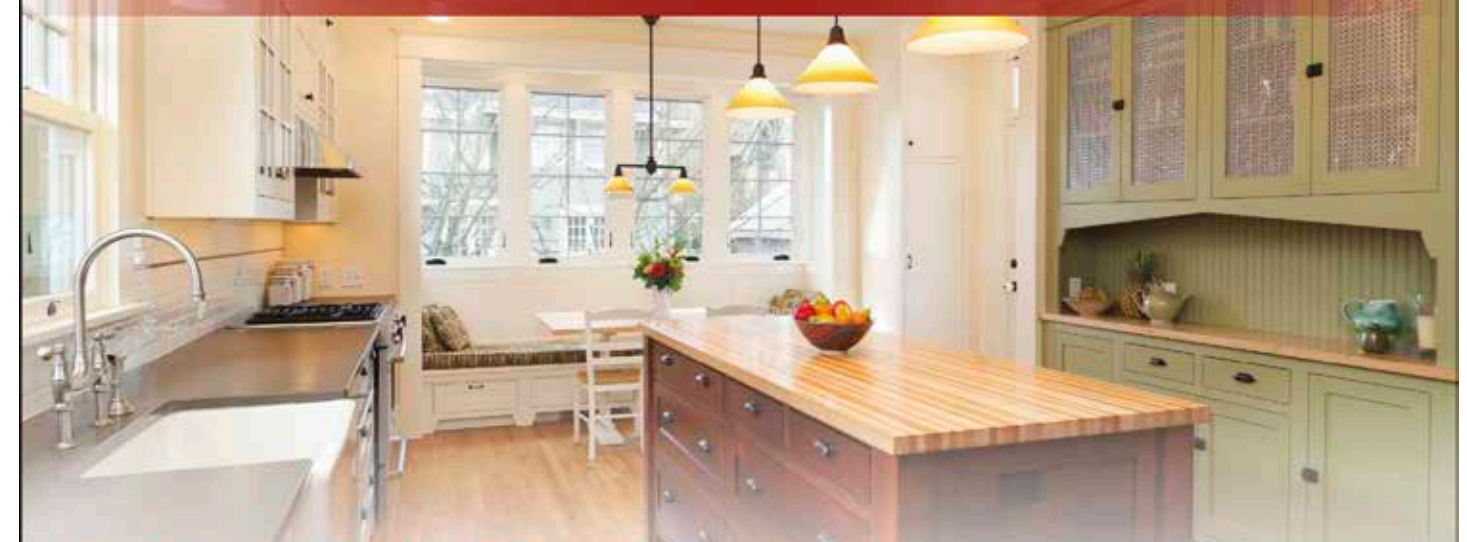


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Jennifer & Scott SLOWN

Written by **Lauren Young**
Photography by **Katherin Frankovic**

ADVANCING MILITARY COUPLE COMMANDS ATTENTION

For many REALTORS®, the possibility of work/life flexibility is a huge draw. The ability to set hours and potential for independence allows agents to maintain balanced lifestyles and pursue outside passions. That's certainly true of rising stars Jennifer and Scott Slown. Both have found freedom to work in real estate while also following their callings to service in the military.

Jennifer's grandparents on both sides were immigrants from the Czech Republic and demonstrated grit and real estate savvy. Her paternal grandparents built a lake house and cottages in southwest Michigan in the 1960s that are still in the family. Jennifer's parents also dabbled in real estate investment with rental properties in Illinois and Florida.

"My parents became default landlords after the housing crash," says Jennifer. "Growing up I saw the needs for property management like making sure rent is paid on time, preventative



maintenance and repairs are completed, and properties are turned over and cleaned for the next tenant. It definitely prepared me for my current role as a property manager."

While Jennifer's husband and partner, Scott, did not have a family background in real estate, its

history in military service set the tone for his future work ethic and career trajectory. Scott's father joined the Navy after high school and served three combat tours in Vietnam as a Gunner's Mate. After his service, he focused on earning technical certifications while working his way through the ranks and eventually becoming the Director of Information Technology for the City of Evanston. "He did very well for himself through hard work and determination," says Scott. "He has always been the example I look up to."

Jennifer and Scott grew up a few blocks from each other and, though they rode the same bus to school, did not connect until they both joined the Naval Sea Cadet youth military program. They began dating near the end of high school, eventually following each other to college. After her sophomore year, Jennifer joined the Marine Corps Reserve and was deployed overseas several times. She eventually earned her bachelor's degree in nursing after her second deployment. Scott graduated with a





Jennifer and Scott checking up on a development they will lease and manage.

“
We’ve been slowly adding new single and multi-family homes to our property management portfolio.
- Jennifer

degree in criminal justice, targeting a commission as a military officer.

“You need a four-year degree to be an officer, and after graduating I was waiting to be selected for a commissioning program,” he explains. While he waited, Scott sought temporary employment, applying for an office manager position at RE/MAX Professionals Select in Naperville. During the interview with managing broker Rich Conte, he encouraged Scott to try his hand as a real estate agent, explaining the many opportunities and freedom that the career provides. He connected Scott with some of his most successful agents for mentorship. In his first week, Scott was hosting open houses for \$800,000 luxury homes in Naperville and connecting with buyers. He was blown away with the unlimited potential for growth as a real estate professional.

“I ended up putting my military plans on hold and became a full-time agent,” says Scott. “That’s when I started to convince Jennifer, who was deployed at the time, to join me in the profession after her return. I saw the potential for what we could do together.”

As Jennifer’s deployment came to an end, Scott’s business continued to grow. Upon

her return, she joined the team and earned her real estate license in 2015. She transitioned back to the Marine Corps Reserve, allowing her to continue her military service and grow the couple’s real estate business. In 2016, still wanting to serve his country, Scott began his military career and enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard. In 2018, the pair expanded into property management. A chance opportunity grew their business tenfold, practically overnight.

“We sold the home of a couple who were also investors,” says Jennifer. “They were in the process of building Randall Crossings Townhomes, a rental townhouse community in North Aurora. They were impressed with our work ethic and service provided while selling their home and asked if we would oversee leasing and management of the entire 40-unit project. Our property management went from four units to 44!”

An additional 28 units of one-bedroom and studio apartments are being developed next to the Randall Crossing Townhomes, which



Toys For Tots at RE/MAX Professionals Select.



The Slowns at home with their newborn daughter Riley and cats Yoshi and Izzy.



Scott receiving the Academic Award from the Illinois Army National Guard.



the Slowns will also lease and manage. “We’ve been slowly adding new single and multi-family homes to our property management portfolio,” she adds. “Included are some Oswego and North Aurora commercial buildings which added roughly 50 units and brought us to 104 total units, not including the upcoming apartment project.”

With all this rapid growth, Scott and Jennifer both recently earned the RE/MAX’s 100% Club award. In their military careers, Jennifer will soon be promoted from First Lieutenant to Captain in the Marine Corps Reserve, and Scott was recently commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Illinois Army National Guard after three years as an enlisted infantryman.

When the two are not managing their business or active in the military, they find time for community involvement, focusing on veteran and youth causes. They hold annual VA home loan seminars at the Naperville VFW post, educating veterans on the housing benefits they have earned. Jennifer volunteers with the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program, the Naval Sea Cadet youth program, and is currently the Vice President of the Chicago Chapter of the Women Marines Association. She’s also served as the Senior Vice President of the Naperville American Legion and supports the DuPage Marine Corps League and Naperville VFW.

“My passion is serving the veteran community and I recently accepted a position as the fundraising chairperson for the Naperville Gold Star Memorial committee,” says Jennifer. “The memorial will be built in Naperville’s Veterans Park and will recognize families who have lost a child, spouse, parent, or other immediate relative to military service. It’s a cause that hits close to home.”

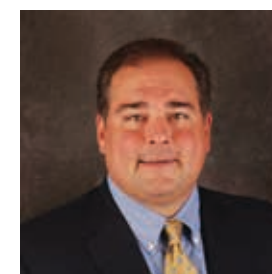
In September, Jennifer and Scott welcomed their baby girl, Riley, who also keeps them on their toes. When not serving their clients or their country, the busy couple enjoys hiking national parks and time away at the family’s lakeside property near New Buffalo, Michigan.



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“I ended up putting my military plans on hold and became a full-time agent. - **Scott**”



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SCOTT A. BROWER

From Prosecutor to Properties



partner spotlight

Written by Lauren Young
Photography by Katherin Frankovic

Scott Brower grew up in Lansing, Michigan, with his parents and sister. His mother was a teacher with a psychology degree and his father was an officer in the Michigan State Police for 30 years, including a 16-year stint as a bodyguard for the governor. This gave Scott access to many perks during his childhood.

“I got to meet the 1979 NCAA national champion Michigan State basketball team and its star Magic Johnson. I flew on planes around the state, and meet the governor many times,” says Scott. “I learned the value of hard work but also how to have a professional demeanor and to enjoy the fun parts of your job.”

While enjoying the perks of his dad’s job, a future career as an attorney didn’t cross his mind. In fact, he initially majored in engineering at Olivet Nazarene University. But his past connection to law and law enforcement came calling. “While taking some of those first courses in engineering, in the back of my mind I kept thinking about going to law school,” says Scott. “Once I made that decision, it all fell into place naturally for me.” Scott chose Northern Illinois University to study law. Shortly after, he became a criminal prosecutor.

“That was a direct result of my dad being in law enforcement,” recalls Scott. “After I moved on from being a prosecutor, I still look back on it as one of my favorite jobs.” Scott followed that experience with tenures at other law firms before starting his own in 2003. He originally started in criminal defense because of his background, but after a few years he focused on real estate law.

“I love what I do now, because it allows me to work in my strength, which is helping people in challenging situations with professionalism and a positive attitude,” says Scott. “My time as a prosecutor and other roles allowed me to learn how to negotiate well and deal with stress-filled situations. I can use those skills to help people buy and sell their homes, and to give them peace of mind during the process.”

During his transition from criminal law to real estate, Scott realized that the depth and complexity of the buying and



Teamwork makes the dream work! The Brower team, left to right: Kathy O'Shea, Kim Jennings, and Rada Hansen with Scott.



“ We have been able to navigate those ups and downs because we see ourselves as a steady influence and calming force for our clients. ”

... selling process is often underrated. From attorneys to lenders, new homeowners to REALTORS®, the required teamwork gives Scott energy to make all parties happy with the end result. “I am a success because of the people who work with me,” says Scott. “I surround myself with a great team to help with all the work that goes along with it. That aspect makes me enjoy this work more than anything I’ve ever done.” Scott’s ability to collaborate has gotten notice. Scott’s firm was just awarded “Best Law Firm in Naperville” by *Naperville Magazine* in September 2020.

When not working with buyers, sellers, and REALTORS®, Scott and his family actively support local charities and their community. “We are very active at our local church and the Ronald McDonald House,” says Scott. “One of our daughters was very sick when she was born, and diagnosed with only a 10% chance to live. We stayed at the Ronald McDonald House for four months, and now we give back as much as we can.”

Scott attributes much of his success to wife, Jami. “She has allowed me to focus on real estate law by taking on the heavy lifting with the children growing up,” says Scott. “She is a big part of the growth of my practice.”

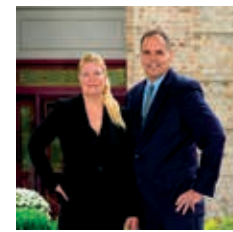
Scott and Jami just celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary, vacationing with their three daughters in Mexico. Rylee is a junior at the University of Michigan. Bailey is a freshman at Illinois State University. Kenzie is a junior at Naperville Central High School. They all love to travel and visit local restaurants with their parents. The family also enjoys playing games on their screened-in porch and long talks at dinner. Their dog, Charlie, follows Jami wherever she goes!

Scott has been reflecting on this year and how he can continue a renewed focus on customer care. Together, the goal of his four-person staff is calm, continuous communication with clients. Scott considers this a key differentiator for his firm. “This has been an incredibly crazy year with lots of unknowns in the market,” says Scott. “We have been able to navigate those ups and downs because we see ourselves as a steady influence and calming force for our clients. We are the objective piece in the process to help them navigate difficult seasons. That is where my office excels.”

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PATTY WARDLOW

“I was always going to open houses,” says Patty Wardlow of the real estate pastime she kept while working retail for many years.

“This was long before the Internet, I would monitor final sale prices in the newspaper and log them in a notebook. I’d also watch to see if buyers and sellers would stay in the same neighborhood, looking for patterns.”



The Wardlow Group passed 100 year-to-date closed transactions in October 2020!

A few years later, these exercises would give her the background in real estate data analysis and trend-spotting that would catapult her REALTOR® career.

Patty grew up in the Downers Grove area in a family of five. Her father, Randy, was Vice President of the Midwest region for a major retailer, Carson Pirie Scott. It was from her father that Patty learned about customer service and prioritizing their needs first. She also picked up, mostly from overheard phone calls, the importance of data and how to use it to make business decisions.

“At the end of each day, he’d take phone calls to check sales of units and volume,” says Patty. “He would look at the different times of the year and how seasonality affects buying. It gave him information to decide what to sell and when.”

She followed her father into retail, working for many years as a regional manager for a nationally-leading luxury goods retailer. By the time she was 22 years old, she was overseeing multiple locations, predicting trends, and analyzing inventory levels. On the side, she invested in real estate. Eventually, it grew from hobby to passion.



» cover story

Written by **Lauren Young**
Photography by **Katherin Frankovic**

Local Lifer & Data Miner



“
 I’m competitive and
 love helping others
 reach their goals.
 Pouring into my team
 is what really fills me.
 ”



Patty and Brian Wardlow

After one year when she spent over 300 days on the road, Patty realized her retail career wasn’t ideal for family life. While purchasing a home with her husband, her REALTOR® gave her a final nudge toward a transition to real estate. “She told me that I should get my real estate license,” says Patty. “I was already doing all the research and planning, so why not go all in? That was 18 years ago, and I haven’t looked back since.”

In Patty’s first year as a REALTOR®, she worked with a mentor and owner of a boutique firm. The experience she gained was priceless. “I was working 60 hours a week and loving every second of it,” she reflects. “I was working the long hours because I wanted to, not because I had to. I’m a driver and I’m passionate, so if I love what I’m doing, I’ll just keep going.”

Several years into her career, her twins were born eight weeks early and then the economic recession hit. Home prices were tumbling at a rapid rate. Patty was forced to learn how to work smarter and to closely



study market values and sale prices, like she had before. "I would check weekly, but had to process all the data manually," says Patty. "There were no 'InfoSparks' or Keller Williams 'Kelle' or 'Command' data resources. I did it all by hand, and tracked the local market area trends, and shared the data with our office. This allowed us to price correctly each season. My goal was to be the expert on my clients' biggest assets, their home. Providing this market insight gave us the leverage to be that for them," she adds.

After the recession, Patty met a buyer's agent from another state. This REALTOR® shared systems and models that revealed a better, more efficient, way to do business and build a team. "I remember Caryn Prall asked me if I was ready to change my life," says Patty. "She saved me from burnout and working unsustainably. Between Caryn and the buyer's agent, Paige Burnett, they introduced me to systems and models from Keller Williams."

"They taught me how to live a life by design and think bigger," says Patty. "They helped me to achieve success through others. I'm competitive and love helping others reach their goals. Pouring into my team is what really fills me. My team is vital to my success and we hold each other accountable to keep learning and growing. That's a life by design, and it's what keeps me going." Her sales team of Sharon



The Wardlow family at the beach: Patty and Brian with sons Brock (left) and Drew (right) the beach: Patty and Brian with sons Brock (left) and Drew (right)

Kramer, Stephanie Kramer, and Molly Roche have all found their natural roles within the team. A strong administrative staff also keeps their proven process rolling.

Patty has been the number one agent in Downers Grove since 2012. She attributes the success to her commitment to her clients and being constantly focused on providing current, experienced advice. This local, tailored insight is why she continues to receive referrals. "If the data shows it is not the right time to put the house on the market, I will tell my clients," says Patty. "If it is the wrong time of the year or if the neighborhood is saturated, we'll hold off and revisit in 30 to 60 days."

Even after learning more efficient data practices, Patty still loves diving deep into local listing and sales data. She shares her techniques with other agents and teaches accurate pricing for Keller Williams. Educating her clients gives them a strategic advantage and makes the process less stressful.

"When we have appraisals, I teach my clients that even if they have offers at a certain amount, it doesn't mean that we will get that amount all the way to the closing table," says Patty. "Coaching clients and being fully transparent about where we are headed is our goal. The biggest compliment we receive at the end of the closing is when the client says it was the smoothest experience and there were no surprises."

Over her career, Patty has received multiple awards and regular recognition. Involved in over 1,000 transactions, she has been #1 in Downers Grove from 2012 through 2019. She is typically included in the Top 10 REALTORS® in DuPage County. She was ranked #44 of 44,000 agents last year and has been featured in *Chicago Magazine*, HGTV, and has contributed to the *Chicago Tribune*, as well.

A life-long Downers Grove resident, Patty actively supports her community with high-school sweetheart and husband, Brian. They both share and maintain the



The Agents of The Wardlow Group, left to right: Stephanie Kramer, Patty Wardlow, Sharon Kramer, and Molly Roche

same group of friends from their time at Downers Grove North. Patty is routinely involved in the Keller Williams RED annual day of local service. While Brian stays busy with their sons, Brock and Drew, and their traveling sports teams, his coaching experience, tenacity, and team mentality translate into Patty's business, too.

As Patty looks forward to next year, she reflects on all the people in the Downers Grove community she has been able to support, especially

during these challenging times. "I would say, as an industry expert, I've been very lucky to be trusted by local law enforcement officials, physicians, judges, teachers, and leaders in the local and state government for their home investments," says Patty.

"This past year has taught us that we can only expect the unexpected. You have to be ready to pivot and adjust with every market," she adds. "In 2021, we will continue to adapt and share our collection of data on thousands of local transactions so clients can make informed decisions. Together, we can find success in this ever-changing real estate market."



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Debbie Pawlowicz & FAMILY

Born to Close: From Childhood Sales
Calls to Her Own Family Firm

Written by **Lauren Young**
Photography by **Katherin Frankovic**

...



Debbie and Kristi at work in their new office

Debbie Pawlowicz grew up in an energetic Italian household with three sisters, her grandmother from Italy, and her parents under the same roof. Throughout Debbie's childhood, her father owned hotels and houses and managed his rental properties. From time to time, the family played support staff whether taking calls from renters, stamping rental receipt pads or helping at the properties.

"My sisters and I were actually the ones who used to answer the phones when homes were for rent," remembers Debbie. "It might have been this

experience that taught me how to close sales, converting potential buyers or renters for our properties. It was fun for all of us, working together as a family."

After college, Debbie married in 1984 and knew she wanted to soon start a family of her own. While working in a major downtown law firm in the accounting department, she began thinking about what type



Debbie with her husband Steve, Daughter Kristi, and Kristi's children Bennett (left) and Ambrose (right)

of business would best support her desired lifestyle.

"We closed on our first family home directly after returning from our honeymoon," says Debbie. "We scrounged every penny we had because it was so important to us to own our own home and start our 'American Dream.' In 1985, I got my REALTOR® license and it allowed us to start a family two years later."

Over the years, Debbie has seen many market changes, transitions, and evolutions. Her success can be attributed to the capacity to adapt quickly and repeatedly.

"When I first started, interest rates were just dipping below 10%," says Debbie. "It is like the whole world was jumping up and down because rates that low were unheard of. Since we can't change the market, the onus is on us to adjust to how people can buy and sell and support them no matter the interest rate, economy, or industry trends."

During her career, Debbie has earned multiple awards and recognition. These include many top production and customer service awards as well as a lifetime achievement award. She is a 10-time recipient of the Five Star Agent Award and has been mentioned in *Forbes* and *Chicago* magazines. Her impressive list of certifications and designations include CNC, CSC, SRS, CIPS, ePRO, C-RETS, C2EX, and AHWD, which range from technology to team-building, diversity and negotiation skills, seller specialist and practice excellence.

A few months ago, Debbie made another big adjustment. With her daughter, Kristi, as lead broker and husband, Steve, for her business support, she launched her own agency: DPG Real Estate, an independent

“
All the people around you
are the reason you are
able to achieve success.”

family firm. They're hoping their "magic" teamwork boosts her 30-year career in serving clients to a higher level and ultimately leads to hiring more agents and future expansion.

When not hard at work, Debbie finds it important to be actively involved in her community and real estate industry organizations. She is on the Board of Directors for the Mainstreet Organization of REALTORS®, where she serves as treasurer. Through her involvement in the Government Affairs and Public Policy Committees at local and state levels, she works to protect property ownership rights. Debbie is a member of the Lisle Economic Development Commission, a board member for the Lisle Education Foundation, a committee chair for the Chamber of Commerce, and is President of the Ladies Lions Club. She is also a precinct committeeman and a committee co-chair for a special event to benefit Bridge Communities, which raises funds to help families transitioning from homelessness.

Like real estate, giving back is a family affair. "My daughter, Kristi, is also involved in Mainstreet on the Young Professional Network committee and is a board member for the Downers Grove Area Newcomers group," says Debbie. "She and her husband, Lee, have two little beautiful babies, and I'm beyond proud of

all she is capable of doing for her clients and community."

Similar to Debbie, Kristi took an indirect route to real estate. She graduated from the University of Missouri, majoring in journalism, and uses her advertising knowledge every day for the new firm. Debbie's husband, Steve, holds a real estate license but is primarily an engineering consultant. Their oldest son, Michael, is a priest and lives in Rome, Italy. Son David, also an engineer, and his wife, Erin, just bought their first home in Virginia and have an adorable little girl named Natalie. Jack, her youngest, is finishing up his last semester of college studying engineering and will be moving to Texas shortly.

"When our family can be all together is when we are the happiest. Add a meal and we are in heaven," says Debbie. "It does seem that anything we do is always centered around food. We even catch ourselves connecting over Zoom calls during mealtimes. Really no matter what, we

enjoy spending time together whether it is going on trips, watching a movie, or simply going for a walk."

As Debbie looks to an exciting future with her new venture, she's reflective about the accomplishments she's reached and how essential those around her have been. "All the people around you are the reason you are able to achieve success," says Debbie. "Your family and friends are your support while our industry is full of extremely knowledgeable, passionate, and caring people ready to help. Grab any chance you get to learn from them. What a blessing it is to be part of our REALTOR® family!"



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DIPALI PATEL

▶▶ REALTOR® feature

Written by **Lauren Young**
Photography by **Katherin Frankovic**

SUPPORTED & SUPPORTIVE: Returning Her Family's Encouragement



up becoming a REALTOR® in 2005 mostly because of his encouragement.”

Starting part-time, Dipali was able to juggle being a REALTOR® and raising her children at the same time. Thanks to hard work and creative time management, she even earned the same income while working non-conventional hours. As her children grew older, Dipali was able to jump in full-time.

“In the beginning, I worked for a company that is actually no longer out there, through paid leads,” says Dipali. “I was taught how to manage contacts and the area where I wanted to work. Within a year of getting my license, I found my way to Keller Williams Realty Infinity in Naperville, and am very thankful I did.”

Since becoming a full-time REALTOR®, Dipali has earned impressive recognition. These include regular awards for volume, her range of sales, and she was even ranked first in the Midwest region for transactions for a period. This year, she'll be ranked second for individual volume.

Amidst her personal achievements, Dipali is quick to give her family credit for their continued backing. In 2012, after Dipali's daughter had left for college, her real estate business seemed to plateau and wasn't growing as well as she'd like. She even began to think about a second job.

“I discussed with my husband what I should do and he told me to stick with real estate and to invest more into marketing myself. After some time of active marketing, we'd see what the results are and go from there,” she explains. “I put more time and

“My family support is a huge reason for my success,” says REALTOR® Dipali Patel. “I work crazy hours and my children, husband, and in-laws are very encouraging. They help make sure things get done at home when I'm out taking care of my clients.”

Supportive family has been a critical advantage for Dipali since growing up in India with three close sisters and a brother. Dipali moved to the U.S. in 1984, started high school, and then attended business school, staying with her uncle and then her sister. Following graduation, Dipali remained in America and worked in the insurance industry.

After meeting and marrying her husband, Utpal, they moved to the Chicago area with their growing family in 1992. Utpal was required to travel frequently in his role as IT Manager for PepsiCo, so Dipali was needed at home with their two daughters.

“My uncle is actually the one who pointed out that I would be a good REALTOR,” says Dipali. “I did end





The Patel family, left to right: Nisha, Utpal, Dipali and Shaina

“It’s important to show people what to look for in a home and guide them in the right direction.”

... money into advertising, and since then I’ve only come up positive. I’m so glad he encouraged me to stick with it.”

When Dipali isn’t busy helping clients, she enjoys spending time with family, listening to music and dancing. Daughter Nisha is a dentist and graduated from the esteemed University of Michigan School of Dentistry. She is now in residency at a VA hospital in Chicago. Her other daughter, Shaina, is studying occupational therapy at Midwestern University. She also likes hiking, socializing, and traveling with friends and family. Her favorites include Jamaica, Colorado, Punta Cana Costa Rica, and India, among other locales.

Dipali and her family also like to remain active in many local charities and organizations through her

husband’s company. Those include donating time and resources to those in need, children’s programs, and educational groups in India. It allows her to pay forward all the support from others she’s gotten over the years. “I enjoy supporting a diverse assortment of people and causes,” says Dipali. “I think that’s also what makes me a good resource as a REALTOR®. I love helping people who are looking to invest and teach them what I know, whether they are a first-time buyer, investor, or repeat client.”

“It’s important to show people what to look for in a home and guide them in the right direction,” she adds. “I am thankful to my clients for their support and referrals. I go above and beyond for my clients, but I won’t pressure anyone into making a decision. For me, it’s all about giving patience to the process.”



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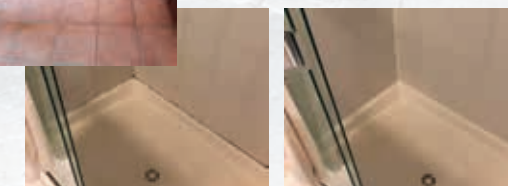
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