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Katherin Frankovic

Photographer



Nora McDevitt

Writer

Repair Sunken Concrete



If you are interested in contributing or nominating Realtors for certain stories, please email us at joe.dalessandro@realproducersmag.com

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publisher's note

Welcome to the DuPage Real **Producers** community! It is my honor to serve you all by bringing educational and inspirational energy to celebrate what has made you truly the cream of the crop in the DuPage real estate market. I look forward to highlighting your accomplishments, encouraging your dreams, and delivering recognition for your continued excellence in serving your clients.

Real Producers started as an idea in 2015 and is spreading across the nation like wildfire. We are now in over 100 markets and changing the way the real estate community interacts across America. As we embark on this journey in DuPage County, I promise to create platforms to connect and forums to recognize and celebrate what makes each and every one of you an achiever. I look forward to celebrating you at our events, providing tools to help you grow your business, and representing your passion for excellence in this dynamic industry we all share.

Here are some quick facts about Real Producers:

Distribution: This magazine is sent free of charge to the top 500 agents by volume in DuPage County. Within this region, there are thousands of agents and you in this elite group are the cream of the crop. Just to be in this group is an accomplishment that testifies to your hard work, dedication, and proficiency.

Content: This is all about you, the DuPage real estate community. We'll do personal and unique stories on members in this community giving you a platform to inspire others. As we grow, we'll add fresh content focused entirely on you. It costs absolutely nothing for a REALTOR® to be featured and we are always taking nominations for REALTORS® who are worth celebrating.

Our Partners: Anyone listed as a "Pre ferred Partner" in the front of this magazine is a part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue, attend our events, and be a part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have

recommended every single Preferred Partner you see in this publication, affirming their professionalism and dependability. If you are looking to add to your arsenal of incredible vendors, look no further.

Events: Along with the magazine, we will host free events where we, the best-of-the-best, get together at reputable local venues to socialize, mastermind, have a good time, and make a better DuPage community. We will communicate information about the events through the magazine, e-mails, and social media.

Contribution: If you are interested in contributing, nominating REALTORS® to be featured, know of top-notch affiliate partners who should be a part of our community, or would simply like to network, e-mail or call me at any time as I look forward to hearing from all of you! I'd like to personally thank all of our Preferred Partners as well as the many REALTORS® and Managing Brokers who helped

bring DuPage Real Producers to life.

We would not exist without you. I appreciate you all and look forward to seeing you at our LAUNCH PARTY!

Joseph D'Alessandro

Publisher, DuPage Real Producers

joe.dalessandro@realproducersmag.com 630.404.3869



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BALANCING ACT: SMARTS, HUMOR AND GRACE



It's not easy balancing a high-powered career as one of the Chicago area's top-performing real estate attorneys, a successful 22-year marriage to an urgent care doctor, Thomas Fry, and being the mother to two accomplished sons, Christopher, 15, and Matthew, 12. Still, somehow Vanessa Fry, with her smarts, sense of humor, warm-hearted nature, and can-do attitude, makes it all look effortless. She says, "I manage it all with a little bit of luck and a lot of grace."

Part of Vanessa's secret is that she focuses on building relationships both professional and personal. After practicing real estate law for 13 years, she has developed a referral-based business with the help of her super team of paralegals. Today, many of her good friends are also clients. While running and owning a boutique law firm, she still manages to find time to cheer on her boys at basketball and football games.

Vanessa credits much of her success to her parents, who taught her she could do anything she wanted if she was willing to work hard enough for it. She says, "My Mom has this sense of strength that is way beyond mine and being raised by a

strong woman was super helpful." She continues, "My dad passed away last year from a long battle with cancer. He spent 35 years in sales for Baxter Healthcare. He taught me that the customer's needs come first. I feel the same way." Her sons have watched Vanessa take calls while riding on Dumbo at Disneyland. She says, "They now know that you have to work hard for your clients. That's what makes your business flourish."

As an attorney, Vanessa sharpened and mastered her negotiation skills. She says, "A successful negotiator understands the perspective of each party: what their weaknesses are, what their strengths are, and what each party wants in the deal. Then you find a way to navigate a successful transaction for all parties involved. It's about creating a win-win. Sometimes that means telling your client why they have to pay another \$2,000 or telling the other side why they won't get another \$2,000." She credits much of her success to being aggressive while also being graceful, and respectful as well as humble and grateful.

Vanessa starts her day thinking about something she's excited about, something she needs to im-







prove on, something she is grateful for, and something she wants to accomplish. This ritual sets the tone for her day and helps her focus. She is continually looking for areas to improve. She says, "I truly have that entrepreneurial spirit." To be successful, Vanessa says, "You must always have goals and always want to do better, but you also have to be willing to work harder than the next person. You need a Plan A and a Plan B." She firmly believes in paying it forward, too, and mentoring young up-and-coming attorneys in the industry.

"I firmly believe that at the end of the day, it is the relationships that get a deal closed. In life, just like in business, nothing is perfect. We can strive for perfection, but there are just so many unknowns in any transaction. Practicing real estate law requires putting together the pieces to a puzzle to have a successful transaction." It requires a lot of patience.

Vanessa is amazed by the magic of her own life, and how everything works out through small miracles, hard work, and humor. She says, "There is an element of grace in all of this." And for that, she is grateful every single day.





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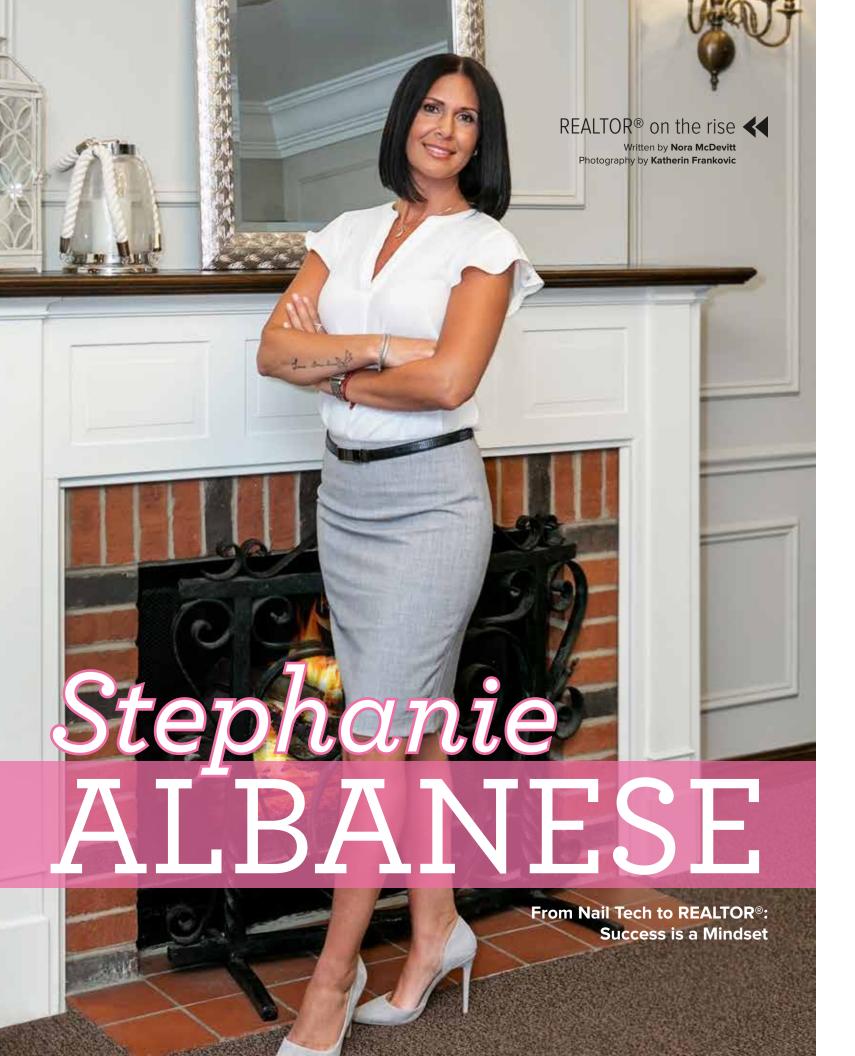


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A difficult pregnancy forced Stephanie
Albanese to leave her job as a nail salon
manager in 2014, and she spent the next
four years raising her daughters. In 2018,
it was time to return to work and she
began to explore her options. She wanted
to do something that would provide her
with more challenges, rewards, and
fulfillment. While she was interested in
real estate and understood construction
from her experience putting up drywall,
laying tile, and remodeling with her
construction foreman father, she was
hesitant to leap into the industry.

It was the encouragement of her husband Ben that caused Stephanie to put her doubts aside and go for it. Today, she is a rising star in DuPage real estate.

Stephanie recalls sitting in the parking lot with Ben after leaving their 4-year-old daughter's doctor's appointment. They were struggling on one income and trying to pay off some debt. She finally found the courage to tell him that she was seriously considering be-

coming a REALTOR®. She recalls Ben saying to her, "I married you because you are smart, strong, and I know you can do anything you put your mind to... and no, I do not think you will fail. I know you will be great!" He continued, "Pay for the school right now and find out when the first class starts!" Classes started that week, and Stephanie went to school.

She says, "It was the best feeling ever. I found my passion." Stephanie acknowledges how important it is to have solid emotional support when you set out to accomplish a new goal. She is very grateful for the strong partnership she has built with her husband based on mutual respect and understanding.

Stephanie hit the ground running, and has completed nine transactions so far this year. She is very grateful for her fantastic mentors at Berkshire Hathaway Starck Real Estate in Bloomingdale who taught her that success starts with your frame of mind. She embraces this concept more each day. For Stephanie, real estate is an opportunity to build relationships and have fun doing what she loves.

Stephanie is honing a receptive mindset. She says, "I allow opportunities to flow into my life, and in return, I can give more of my expertise to my clients." Allowing flow is also about work-life balance.

Stephanie loves cooking, traveling and participating in martial arts with her two daughters, Gianna and Giuliana. She and her husband work hard to support each other and their girls.

She also attributes her success to her ability to build and develop client relationships rooted in trust. She says, "I truly believe consistency is the key to achieving a goal." She continues, "Working in nail salons, I became a good listener and developed strong relationships with my clients."

With a lot of tenacity, persistence, focus and close attention to her clients' needs, Stephanie is hitting her stride as a REALTOR®. She is proud to be a positive role model to her two daughters, Gianna and Giuliana, teaching them what can be accomplished when you set your mind to it. She says, "Success means never giving up." She continues, "It is amazing what can happen when you have faith and believe in yourself."







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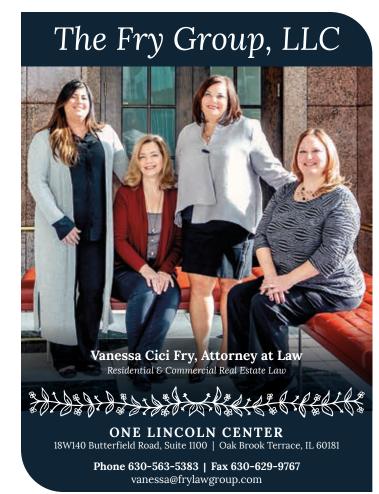








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LIFE IS A GAME. PLAY IT HARD.

The daughter of immigrants from Taiwan, Alice Chin learned from her parents early on that nothing great is accomplished without a lot of determination, persistence, and grit. A builder with a big vision, she worked hard to become one of the Chicago area's top producers. With a career volume of \$350 million and 15 years in the industry, she's just getting started.

Alice moved to the United States when she was just 3 years old. Born in Tapei, Taiwan, she moved with her family to Dallas, Texas, and then Westerville, Ohio. When Alice was 11, they moved to Naperville, Illinois, where Alice grew strong Midwestern roots. Alice watched her parents work very hard for everything they achieved. This instilled in Alice a strong sense of responsibility and work ethic.

Always good with numbers, Alice decided to go into financial services after graduating from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She landed a job as a financial analyst but felt limited by the position. While she loved the numbers, she also loved working with people and craved more interpersonal work. An entrepreneur at heart, Alice was attracted to the unlimited growth potential real estate offered. She also wanted to serve people more directly. In 2005, she got licensed and made a career transition into real estate. In 2016, she joined Keller Williams Realty Infinity in Naperville.

Alice's Taiwanese background has been a valuable asset to her in real estate. The Chicago area is international and Alice's fluency in Mandarin and English, as well as her comprehension of Asian



••• cultural nuances and practices, has given her a competitive edge. Traveling to Asia often, Alice has built a strong professional bridge between Asia and the United States. She wants to build an international real estate business with expansion teams across the Midwest and in Asia. With strong roots in Asia, Alice is well-positioned to accomplish this goal.

Alice wants to make a lasting impact on her industry. She says, "The most rewarding part of my business is to see how many clients, team members, and business affiliates we can impact in a big way daily." She continues, "You get to make an impact when you work hard to serve your clients and improve each day."

The other area where Alice gets to make a huge impact is her family. She is married to Michael Jan and together they have two children: one daughter, Annabelle, who is 6 years old, and one son, Isaac, who is 20 months. Annabelle attends The Avery Coonley School in Downers Grove. Alice volunteers a ton of hours, and she has developed

a strong sense of community through the school. She and her husband have worked hard to make sure that their children grow up with a strong connection to their Chinese heritage and identity. They also travel to Asia often.

Holding steady to her vision, Alice is not someone to waiver from her goals. Once she makes a decision, she sets out to accomplish it with tenacity, determination, and focus. She recognizes when she is off-course, and she is not going to hit her target. It's usually those off-course moments that provide Alice with huge growth opportunities. It stops Alice in her tracks and forces her to reflect and adapt. Alice sees challenges as growth opportunities. She is inspired by personal growth guru Simon Sinek. Like Sinek, she doesn't see business as a win-lose game, but instead an infinite game where you constantly work to improve.

Her biggest challenge to date was having to reorganize and rebuild her team. She realized that her team was not working, and she had the wrong



people in key positions. She needed to start fresh. She realized, "I can't give people responsibilities before they are ready." It was very difficult for Alice to say to the people on her team, "This isn't working, and we need to part ways." She rebuilt her team with a sharp focus on the right personalities in the right positions.

Alice says, "I am super excited about my current team. They drive me to do better each day." Alice has put in place the people she needs to move forward. Recognizing that you become like the five people you spend the most time with, Alice is careful about who she lets into her life. She wants her team to inspire each other to accomplish great things together. As Michael Jordan said, "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships."

Alice defines success as, "Having such a lasting impact on others that your passing reverberates for generations." A builder at heart, Alice constantly looks for ways to expand her business. Perhaps you could sum up Alice's ethos in one of her favorite quotes from Mother Theresa: "Life is a game, play it."

Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.

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When his mother desperately needed a kidney transplant, Paul Baker stepped up to save her from certain death. He is not someone to shy away from a challenge or opportunity. He is guided by a sincere desire to serve people. Paul is the friend you call when you're in a tight jam because you know he will show up. He leads by example.

Paul started in real estate when he was 30. Young and eager, he dove right in. As a rookie agent, he made tons of cold calls and pounded the pavement to get clients. Today, as Broker-owner of Platinum Partners Realtors in Downers Grove and Lombard, eight out of 10 of his clients are referrals. He credits much of his success to his commitment to serving his clients. He says, "You go out of your way to do the weirdest stuff sometimes. One time, I had to personally load my car up with trash leftover from the previous owner before my client took possession of the property."

A challenge inspires Paul. The harder the deal, the more he enjoys it. It makes him work harder. As Paul's business grows, he seeks out more challenges. Recently, he began rehabbing properties. His advice to agents just starting: "Take every opportunity to plant every seed possible. Take every risk you can. Take every listing and focus on helping people make their dream a reality."

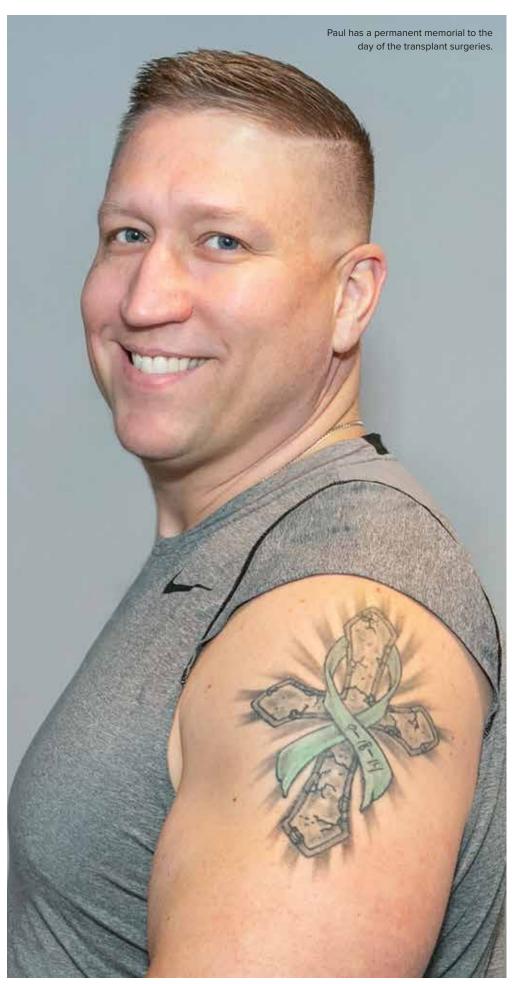
Paul is very grateful to his mentors and all the people that helped him succeed, especially his wife, Jodee. He says, "You can't do this business without the support of your spouse. She encouraged me to keep going, and never doubted I would succeed. In order to meet life's challenges, you need to have people that support you. It's essential to show up for the people in your life and lend a hand when you can."

His mother's recent kidney transplant was such a situation. He explains, "My Mom's health wasn't • • •









good on dialysis. For two years, she had to get dialysis three times a week. Finally, they put her on the donor list." He agreed to donate his kidney. He explains, "If I agreed to donate my kidney, then my Mom gets pushed to the top of the donor list." Shortly after, Northwestern found a donor match for his mom.

It was the fall market, one of the busiest times of the year, and not exactly when you want to go through a significant medical emergency. Baker explains, "I was at a listing appointment the day before her surgery. I explained to my client that I might get an urgent call from Northwestern. It turns out, I get a call from Northwestern. They need to test me for the West Nile virus. The only lab is in California, and I need to be at Northwestern by 4 o'clock so they can overnight the labs." He looked at his phone. It was two o'clock in the afternoon. He realized he had to leave that moment. He told his potential clients. They responded, "You're donating your kidney to your Mom? You get the listing." Frazzled by the urgency of the situation, Paul rushed down to Northwestern. He arrived 10 minutes before four o'clock.

On the day of the surgery, everything had to go perfectly, or the transplants would not happen. He was also in the middle of closing a deal. The stars lined up that day, and the three operations were a success. When Paul woke up from his surgery, he turned to his wife, Jodee, and asked, "Did Stewart Avenue in Lombard close?" Paul's wife looked at him a little shocked, smiled, and replied, "Yes, it did." The following week he got three listings, and he was happy that three lives were saved. He says, "It's just life. Everything comes down to the wire. It's in those split seconds that everything seems to work out. When you do the right thing, life cooperates with you."

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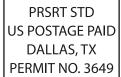
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