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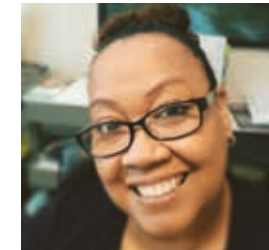
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If you are interested in contributing or nominating Realtors for certain stories, please email us at eliza.piotrowski@realproducersmag.com

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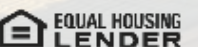
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►► ace of the month

Written by **Elizabeth McCabe**
Photography by **Wild Dog Digital**

Meet REALTOR® RICK RUIZ

Rick Ruiz



(L-R) Richard Pobre, Rick Ruiz, Yvette Riggott

Helping Others Achieve the American Dream!

After graduating from college with a finance degree in 2001, Rick Ruiz taught high school Economics for a year. He ventured into real estate as a part-time job. “That quickly turned into 60 hours a week,” he smiles.

He has been a REALTOR® ever since, creating a future for himself. With 800 transactions under his belt, he is proud to have helped a number of clients over the years.

“My favorite part of being a real estate agent is helping people and meeting people,” says Rick. “The American Dream is real. Being the conduit for someone to achieve the American Dream never gets old.”

Real estate is a dream come true for Rick. He explains, “When we were growing up, we were lifelong renters. I wanted to own real estate and live how my landlords lived (generating income as the owners of the property) versus how we lived.”

At the young age of 19, the American Dream became a reality for Rick when he purchased his first home. The process went smoothly from start to finish. Rick says, “I knew nothing. I completely trusted the REALTOR®. He made it so easy. It was the best decision that I ever made. I knew in one form or another – whether the investment side or the service side – I wanted to be in real estate.”

Leading The Way

For the past seven years, Rick has been ranked in the top 1% of real estate agents in Las Vegas. He is currently ranked #70 in the Valley of over 15,000 agents.

Rick uses his expertise to serve others and is proud to be the current President of the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals in Las Vegas. He regards this role as an honor as well as a duty, a God-given responsibility.

“Our mission is to create and sustain Hispanic homeownership,” says Rick. “We educate the real estate professional and bridge any gaps between what our community and our culture needs and demands, along with what the market may (or may not be) be delivering.”

Giving Back to Others

Growing up in poverty to an uneducated single mother, Rick is a big fan of giving back. He credits many who have helped him along the way to make him the successful entrepreneur that he is.

“Few opportunities were at my disposal,” he comments. “Someone reached out time and again with a helping hand to me.” Now he returns the favor by making a difference for others. One of the ways that he does that is through the Make-A-Wish Foundation®.

“Make-A-Wish changed the way of how I viewed the world,” says Rick. “It gave me a rebirth for believing in the human spirit and the human race.” When he saw how others are focused on the wish recipient, who is struggling with a life-threatening diagnosis, it was life-changing for Rick.

He reaches out on behalf of the child to various organizations, private donors (such as celebrities), to make children’s wishes possible. “I literally have never been told no,” he says.

Rick started granting wishes since 2015, and it’s a “beautiful feeling.” Whether that is swimming with dolphins in Hawaii, taking a trip to Tokyo to see a Pokémon factory, or going to Disneyworld, Rick couldn’t be happier seeing children get the wishes of their dreams.

Fueled by Family

Every real estate agent has a why. Rick is no exception.

“My family is my why,” he says. “I’m a completely different person before I was a parent.” He is more driven now.

Rick has a 21-year-old daughter, who is a senior at the University of Reno. His 18-year-old son is a senior in high school. He also has a 15-year-old sophomore in high school.

“I’ve been blessed,” he says. “My commitment to them has been to put them first. They are healthy, thriving, and I couldn’t ask for more from them.”

When Rick isn’t spending time with his family, he enjoys food, live music, and travel.

For more information on this month’s Ace of the Month, check out Rick’s website, www.RickTheRealtor.Vegas.



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Clay is also very passionate about helping our veterans, active duty military members and first responders get into new homes!!! Clay is one of three certified military mortgage boot camp instructors for the state of Nevada, which means he gets to help educate the public and his real estate partners by disproving a lot of the myths that are floating around out there about VA loans.

With Clay's extensive knowledge of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, FHA, Jumbo and VA guidelines, he usually knows what underwriters are going to request before we even submit an application to them! Because of this understanding of what is needed at the beginning of the mortgage process, Clay's clients can feel confident they will be getting a top-tier home loan experience.

Clay fully understands that the industry has changed and continues to change daily, monthly and on an annual basis. As a seasoned mortgage professional, Clay works diligently to stay informed and educated of frequent industry changes so that he can better serve his clients and real estate partners!

Knowledge. Experience. Customer service. Clay uses these skills to guide his clients through what might, for many of them, be the largest purchase of their life. In trying to make the transaction as stress-free as possible, Clay wants his clients to actually enjoy purchasing a new home or refinancing their current home loan.



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JOHNNY RICHARDSON & KATIE MEADOWS

Johnny Richardson and Katie Meadows

▶▶ REALTOR® team on the rise

Written by **Elizabeth McCabe**
Photography by **Wild Dog Digital**

This Soon-to-be Husband and Wife Team are Rockin' It in Real Estate!



Johnny, Katie and Sharky

Wedding bells will soon be ringing for REALTORS® Johnny Richardson and Katie Meadows. Real estate is part of their past (how they met), their present, and will be a part of their future.

On September 20, 2020, they will officially become husband and wife in the presence of friends and family. Johnny has been a REALTOR® for two years, and Katie has been in real estate for one year. They complement each other with their work ethic, drive, and determination.

“We’re both workhorses,” Jonny smiles. “So working together flows well. It’s pretty easy.” They rarely take days off and understand when the other one has to work on a Sunday.

Johnny

Johnny has a career volume that exceeds 31 million. He has earned a number of honors, including top closing agent in sales volume, top closing agent in units, top listing agent, highest volume of units sold, and top real estate agent for units sold.

Prior to real estate, Johnny enjoyed a successful career building an insurance agency. “I had two offices in Las Vegas with life insurance and annuities,” he says.

Katie

Katie’s career volume is currently over 2 million, and she is proud to have earned two awards. She was named Rookie of the Month and was recognized for being a “rising superstar” in real estate. She received her Bachelors’s in Business at the University of Phoenix before launching into real estate.

They’re Passionate about Real Estate

Both Johnny and Katie like helping clients through the process of purchasing a home. They enjoy taking clients by the hand and leading them through the process of home-ownership in a systematic fashion. As a result, confused clients have much-needed clarity.

Real estate has also allowed Johnny and Katie to develop personally and professionally. Johnny comments, “I’ve learned to develop patience with people, other agents, and clients.”

Katie has learned to get outside her comfort zone since she didn’t come from a sales background. Obtaining her own clients and showing people the process of real estate has helped her develop professionally.

Together, they enjoy “treating clients just like family.” They are there for them as needs arise with their stellar work ethic and availability.

They are excited about their future in real estate. Currently, they are working on a program to teach real estate agents how to run a business. Johnny says, “We’ve been working on the process for 60 days and are halfway through production.” They are excited

to soon launch their innovative program to train future REALTORS®.

Personal Interests

Both adrenaline junkies, Johnny and Katie, thrive on adventure. They recently went skydiving and also like to ski. They enjoy working out and are fans of CrossFit. As their schedules permit, they like to travel and broaden their horizons.

They also enjoy spending time with their families. Katie’s mother and sister reside in Las Vegas while Johnny’s mother and 18-year-old daughter live in New Jersey. This engaged couple enjoys the constant companionship of their French Bulldog named Sharky.

Johnny and Katie enjoy making a difference for others through Operation Underground Railroad. This nonprofit assists in getting victims out of underground sex trafficking. They also donate to CARE Complex to help others.

Johnny and Katie are looking forward to meeting other top producers in Las Vegas to work with in the future. They conclude, “Real estate is a lot of fun, although it is a lot of hard work.” Fortunately, their work ethic and partnership with one another is an asset when it comes to the daily demands of real estate.



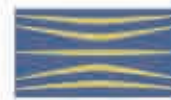
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Geoff Lavell

Created a
Small but
Mighty
Team
with THE
Brokerage

► elite broker spotlight

Written by **Elizabeth McCabe**
Photos by **Neon Sun Photography**



His Success Comes From Helping Others

Dream it. Do it. After being a REALTOR® for 15 years, Geoff Lavell took the next logical step in his career and became a broker.

“I was tired of being at the mercy of other companies’ whims and not having broker support,” he says.

Now he has established his own brokerage, THE Brokerage, A Real Estate® Firm, which has been a quiet, but growing success.

Geoff has a career volume of 250 million dollars and is proud to be part of the Greater Las Vegas Association of REALTORS® “Top 40 Under 40” for 2012, 2013, 2014, and Hall of Fame. But his favorite part of his job isn’t his own accomplishments but those of his agents.

Watching his 35 agents succeed and grow is what it is all about for Geoff. He explains, “We are a tight-knit group of agents and welcoming to new people. I’m not with my agents every moment, but I’m confident that my agents will undoubtedly do the right thing.”

Their office culture sets them apart from the competition. As Geoff says, “We are small, but we always will be.” He designed THE Brokerage to be like that. They have a wealth of experience.

Geoff explains, “We’ve watched Las Vegas grow from a small rural town to the thriving metropolis it is today. My team of real estate agents have weathered the boom market of the early 2000s, the mortgage crisis, and

the most recent recession and have seen sales gains year over year, with a portfolio of more than 2,500 closed transactions.”

Overcoming Cancer Created A Heart For Others

“I beat cancer in 1997,” says Geoff. “Most of the good things in my life today came from my experience with leukemia.”

Not only did Geoff meet friends through overcoming cancer, but it also created a heart to serve others. Making a difference is what it is all about to this dedicated broker.

Geoff was proud to be awarded Volunteer of the Year for the Nevada Childhood Cancer Foundation (NCCF). He has been a proud supporter, volunteer, and sponsor of various Childhood Cancer organizations since 1997.

“It’s important to remember that true ‘success’ in life comes from helping others. I enjoy my career in real estate tremendously, but volunteering is my passion,” says Geoff.



Geoff was also one of four Honorable Mentions for the 2012 National Association of REALTORS® Magazine Good Neighbor Award.

As Geoff says, “I want to be remembered for my service to others.” He also supports *Candlelighters* Childhood Cancer Foundation of Nevada and St. Jude.

Blessed With A Wonderful Family

Geoff is married to his wife, Kisha, and they have two children: their daughter Brynn and their son Gannon.

“I have a wonderful mom Maria, great in-laws Ed and Rochelle,” adds Geoff. “I lucked out in all aspects. I’m very fortunate to have what I have and to be around who I’m around.”

When Geoff isn’t working, he enjoys getting out into nature as much as possible. “We like to get away from the city and from the hustle and bustle,” he smiles.

Geoff concludes, “I don’t take myself seriously, but I do take my job and ethics seriously.”

For more information on this month’s Elite Broker, check out his website, thebrokerage.vegas.





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Billy and his wife Julie

MEET REALTOR® BILLY O'KEEFE



high roller
Written by Elizabeth McCabe
Photos by Neon Sun Photography

OVERCOMING THE ODDS

With a 21-year career in real estate, Billy O'Keefe has seen it all. With over 1000 transactions exceeding a total volume of 300 million, he recalls the good times, and some of the low times, especially the downfall in the market.

"Losing everything when the market crashed was devastating," recalls Billy. "I couldn't keep my power on.

On a few occasions, I had to take my kids to McDonald's at night to do their homework."

Declaring bankruptcy, losing his marriage, and everything he had worked so hard for was not only extremely humbling but transformative for Billy. He explains, "It was such a crushing blow, but I had to somehow pick my-

self up and rise from the ashes. Instead of falling into depression, I chose to use the experience to learn and grow. I was able to recreate and grow my business even better than before. Getting my ass kicked turned out to be a great motivator, making me better and smarter for the future."

He overcame the odds that tried to define him. Billy became stronger because of his adversity and it shaped his character into the gracious REALTOR® he is today.

"It created a high level of awareness in how I show up as a human being, and I have become more appreciative of the small things. I can recall during that time, I was chasing after \$250 rental referrals to make ends meet. After going through this experience, I never turn a chance to help people, regardless of the size of the sale. I am very grateful for everything that comes my way."

Life Before Real Estate

Prior to real estate, Billy was a fitness professional and trainer. He excelled in doing in-home personal training and consulting. Little did he know that making his own schedule and not having his own boss, was preparation for launching into a successful real estate career.

An entrepreneur at heart, Billy entered real estate in 1998 and was able to give up personal training a year later.

"I love the complete creative freedom to do whatever I want. I'm not under the constraints of a specific model or micromanagement. There is no limit to the amount of business I can create, and I am rewarded for my discipline and effort," Billy smiles.

Not only does Billy reap the financial rewards from real estate, more importantly, he has been able to create more time to spend with his kids, and foster valuable relationships.

Rewarded Through Relationships

"I've met so many awesome people and continue to grow these relationships outside of business. I think of my clients more as friends than clients," says Billy.

...



(L-R) Sandrine, Billy and Mashenka

Billy views his relationships as a reward for being able to run his business the way that he wants. He was inspired by a mentor years ago who impressed upon him that it's "always

about being attached to the truth, not the commission."

"That message has resonated with me over the years," says Billy. "I don't look at clients as dollar signs. I will always give my advice based upon what I think is in their best interest, even if that means talking a seller out of selling, or telling a buyer to rent."

Focused on Family

Billy, who recently got married to his wife Julie on September 28, is excited to begin the next chapter of his life with her.

Billy has three teenagers who currently reside in San Diego. Their ages are 18, 16, and 13. Despite the distance, Billy visits his children almost every other weekend for long weekends.

"I always look forward to driving out there to see them and spending time with them. They are the WHY in everything that I do", he says. "I am so lucky, they are well-mannered and have kind hearts. I have a great relationship with them, built on mutual respect." He also always takes advantage of teachable moments with them.

In his downtime, Billy enjoys exercise and fitness for his mental and physical well-being. "I also love listening to audio CDs for personal and business development. I'm always trying to figure out how to be better," he says.

He is also committed to helping others. He gives back to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission to feed the homeless.

Billy concludes, "I love what I do. I'll never do anything else besides real estate. I am unemployable in the corporate market!" He loves helping his clients and is grateful to all of them.

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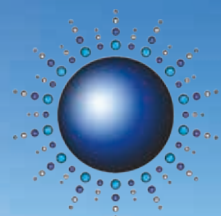
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