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ISSUE

NOVEMBER 2020

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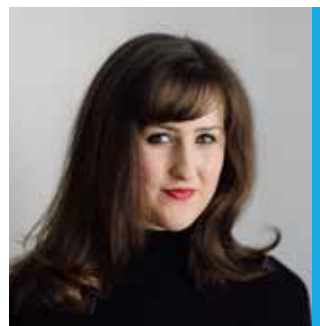
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**13**  
Publisher's Note



**14**  
Business: First-time Buyers  
By Melanie Everett



**18**  
Partner Spotlight: George Kamberos With Blueleaf Lending



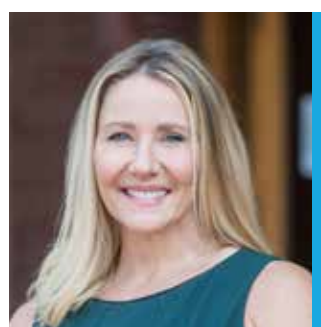
**24**  
Agent Feature: Sarah L. Ware



**32**  
Partner Spotlight: Straight-forward Home Inspections



**38**  
Cover Story: Whitney Hampton



**46**  
Agent Feature: Stephanie Wesson



**54**  
Agent Feature: Nicole Duran



**60**  
Agent Feature: Marki Lemons Ryhal



**64**  
Business: The Question of Expansion  
By Nick Libert



**68**  
REALTORS® Speak: 2020... Thanks a Lot!



**74**  
Cover Story: Lutalo McGee

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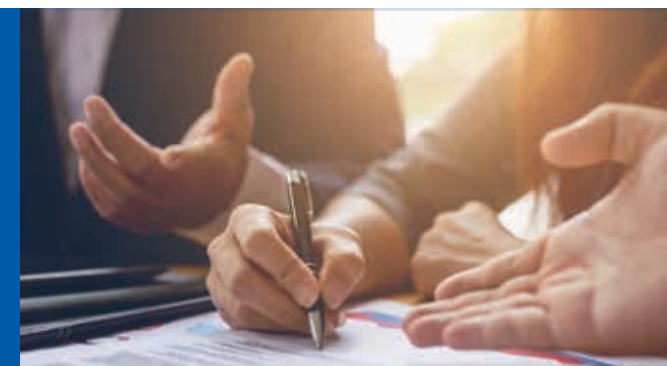
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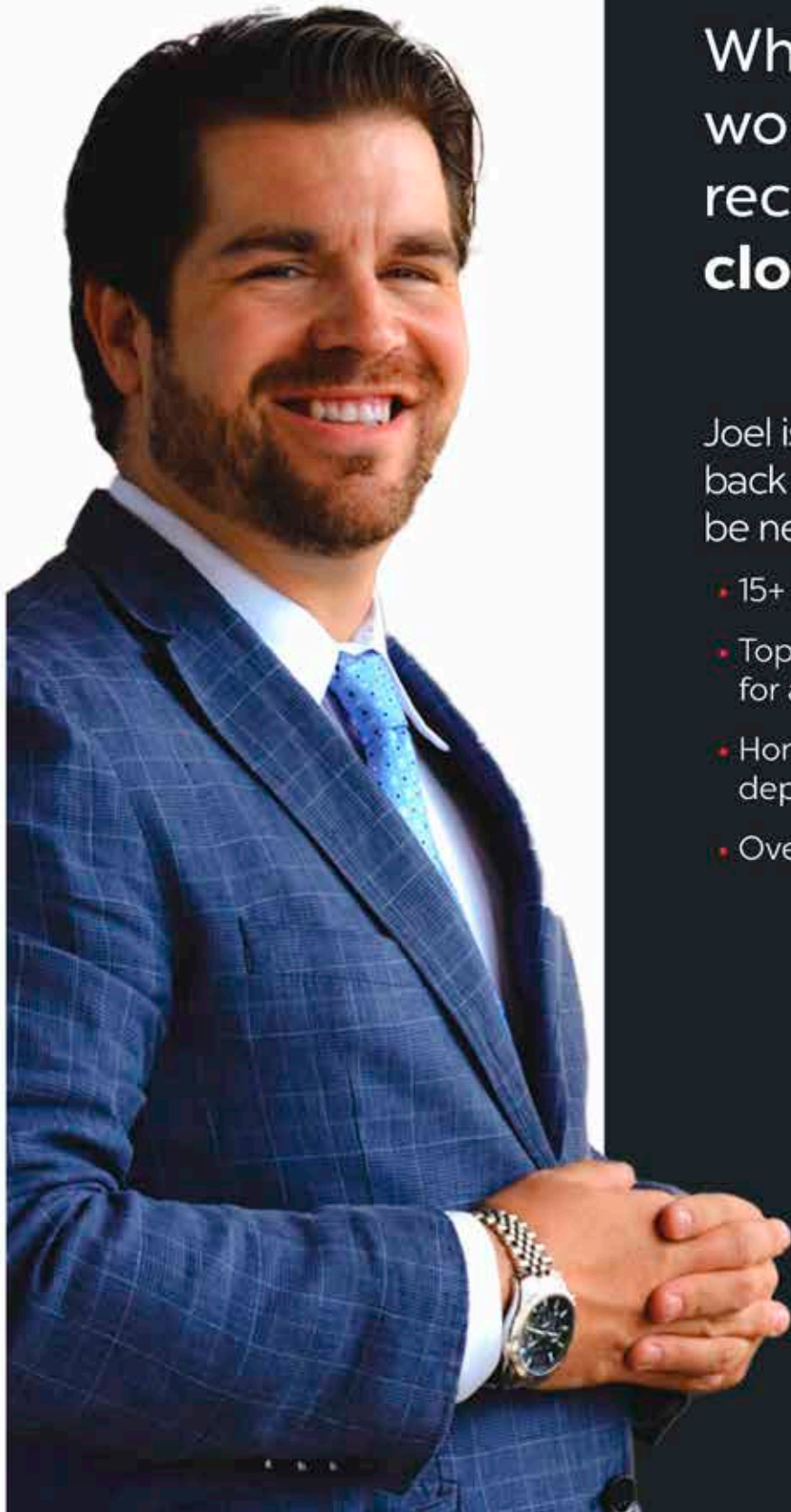
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2-Source: Mortgage Executive Magazine, 2018

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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

I am thankful every day for the opportunity to connect with the real estate community. Many of you have expressed over the years that you read every issue cover to cover. Our content is primarily based on word-of-mouth, merit, work ethic, community engagement, and reputation, so there is a strategy to the stories we tell and the people we highlight. Several months ago we asked for nominations of REALTORS® who gave of their time, talents, and finances to help improve Chicago. The goal was to craft an issue based on the theme of thanksgiving. I am honored to say that your nominations did not disappoint!

It was a pleasure diving into why the REALTORS® featured in this particular issue have such a heart for Chicago. Everyone's background is different, but one common thread they all share is making sure residents of our city enjoy living here. These stories are inspiring and my hope is that it leaves you with a desire to pull yourself out of your daily activities and contribute to a larger cause.

The words of Lutalo McGee resonate with me when he says, "I believe if more people spent more of their time and resources helping other people, the more happiness would be produced both individually and collectively. Half of the social issues we face would be eliminated by that basic shift in personal philosophy." Life is about the trail of influence we leave behind; not about what we can acquire along the way.

Fighting the good fight,



**Andy Burton**  
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► business  
By Melanie Everett

# First-time Buyers

As a newly-licensed twenty-one-year-old REALTOR® in 2014, I remember looking around my downtown Coldwell Banker office with wide eyes, wondering what my niche was going to be. In that office, there was Hunter, who worked with a ton of developers in West Town. Then there was Richard, who sold almost exclusively in 111 East Chestnut. Or Shruti, who dominated Grand Ohio. And there was Gene, who knew everything there was to know about bungalows on the north side. We had a top-notch crew, and I learned so much from these dear colleagues along the way.

Now, six years later, I know (without a doubt!) what my niche is: first-time home buyers. I've represented over 200 of them since the start of my career. I most certainly do not claim to know everything, but I've compiled a few tips and tricks for working with this particular breed of buyers—and hey, maybe first-time buyers will become your “thing” too!

### Educate, educate, educate.

In 2015, my go-to lender and I launched “So You Want

to Buy a Condo,” a free class to learn about the buying process. It was not an overnight success, but over time, our audiences grew and grew. We realized just how important education was to our potential clients. They don't teach you how to purchase real estate in high school or college—just like they don't teach you how to file your taxes, properly load a dishwasher, or other grown-up tasks. We still host SYWTBAC classes—these days, as webinars—and find so much joy in sharing our expertise with others. My advice for REALTORS® is to always start with the basics, and don't skip consultations! Your first-time buyer clients will be grateful that they had a game plan with firm expectations in place.

### Ask questions...and actually listen.

If I am being perfectly honest, meeting new people makes me sweat. I consider myself to be an outgoing introvert. I'm totally relaxed once I feel comfortable with someone, but initially, I do experience a lot of social anxiety, especially at a buyer consultation.

How do I conquer this fear? I ask a ton of questions! Firstly, because I actually want to know, and secondly, because people love to talk about themselves. At a buyer consultation, I'll always help myself get started by asking where the client lives and works, why they want to buy, and anything else that makes sense for that conversation. I also do my best to remember their answers, then bring them up later!

### Find a commonality.

This one goes hand in hand with asking questions. There is always a way to relate to another person, whether it's through a shared favorite food, a clothing compliment, or something deeper. For example, I had a buyer client this summer who loved Veja sneakers. I told her how much I adore my own Veja sneakers, and I wore them the next time I knew I would see her, which happened to be the inspection. (For the record, this client was a total sweetheart. She showed up to her final walkthrough with a gift for me: a tiny pair of pink Vejas for my baby girl.)

### Respect your elders.

You're probably wondering what I mean by this. Well, first-time buyers are typically hesitant buyers, and many of them will bring their parents to second showings or inspections. Most of the time it's totally fine, and moms and dads end up loving the homes their kids pick out. But there are also times when the parents do not approve. That's when you need to take a step back and allow the parents to express their opinions. I usually choose to zip it, answering questions if needed, but otherwise letting my client handle it. In the end, nine times out of ten, that buyer will still buy the property, and everyone will appreciate your respect and understanding!

### Be social.

Millennials love social media—I should know! At my firm, I encourage my brokers to connect with our clients on Instagram and Facebook only after the attorney review is wrapped up and things are sailing along. (Sometimes, we will wait until after closing—it's totally situational!) Once you're connected, be a friend. Like their posts, respond to their IG stories, and care about what's going on in their lives. As an added bonus, checking out your buyer's Instagram profile during the transaction is super helpful when it comes to shopping for closing gifts!

### About the Author:

Melanie Everett is an award-winning Chicago broker and founder of her boutique real estate firm, Melanie Everett & Company (M&Co.). She is a writer, negotiator, thinker, marketer, teacher, reader, and leader in her industry. Melanie's small-but-mighty team is the secret to her success. 2019 marked M&Co.'s first year as an independent brokerage and Melanie's best one yet with over \$25 million closed.

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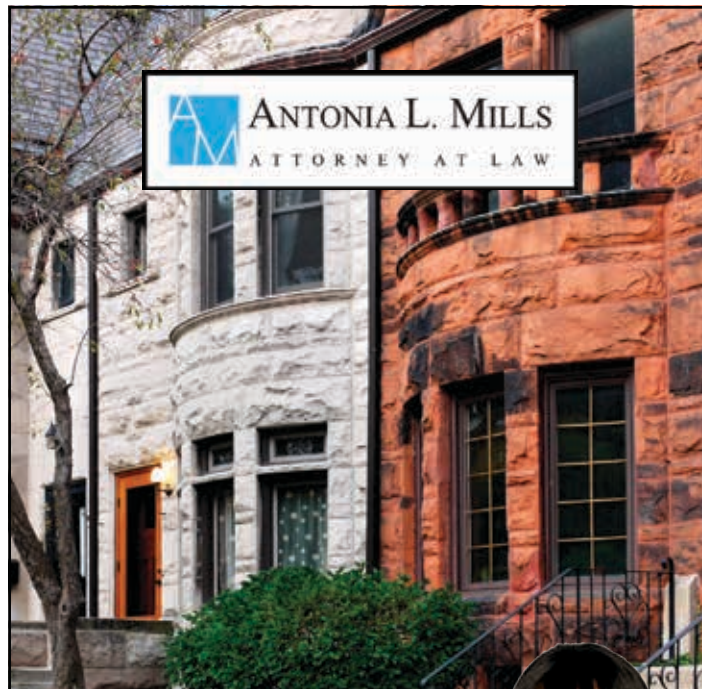




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# GEORGE KAMBEROS

## with Blueleaf Lending

### *Giving His All*

“Every REALTOR® ultimately wants to know that a lender they work with knows what they are doing,” says George Kamberos with Blueleaf Lending. “My business is my career, it’s not just a job to me. So when I work with a client and ultimately issue a pre-approval, they [agents and other parties] can trust that the client will qualify for the purchase and actually close the deal. Plus, I rely on referrals and relationships to stay in business, so you can trust that my level of communication will be second to none.”

When it comes to lending, George Kamberos definitely knows his stuff, and like he indicated above, knowing is half the battle. His ability to communicate and walk his clients through the process is what really keeps them coming back and referring their loved ones. You don’t have to just take my word for it though. Check out the below email he received just the other day from one of his first-time homebuyer clients:

“Thanks as well for being patient and walking me through everything. You have a natural knack for explaining things in crayons and big colorful shapes to people who have no idea what they’re doing!”

...



•••

In many ways, George really is a natural. Running a high-level, successful business is deeply rooted within him. He grew up watching his father run his own bars and restaurants, which he later sold to start a new business in real estate as a general contractor. His grandfather owned an insurance agency and showed George the sales side of the world.

Fully intent on becoming a business owner as well, George went off to Loyola University Chicago to get his degree in business of some kind. Not knowing exactly what he wanted to do, he geared his classes toward finance and economics. By his senior year, he realized he had taken enough classes to major in both.

In his first year out of college in 2012, George purchased his first short sale, and was thus introduced to the world of mortgages. He worked with a friend of his volleyball coach at Loyola, who was, and still is, a top-producing loan officer. After working with him, this friend mentioned that he could use some help managing his book of business. So George made his way into the industry, learning all of the ins and outs from one of the best.

“The best part was that it was one of the best refinancing markets in history at that time. So I learned everything *fast*, and with a lot of different clients with different situations. That really set me up for success as I started making my way through my own network of friends and family,” says George.

George aligned with Blueleaf Lending for their “dynamic platform.” “We operate in all fifty states and have low down-payment options on jumbo loans,” he says. “We do not have layers of management; our CEO relies on the top producers to run their businesses without any hiccups, and he, in turn, passes all of those savings into razor-sharp interest rates.”

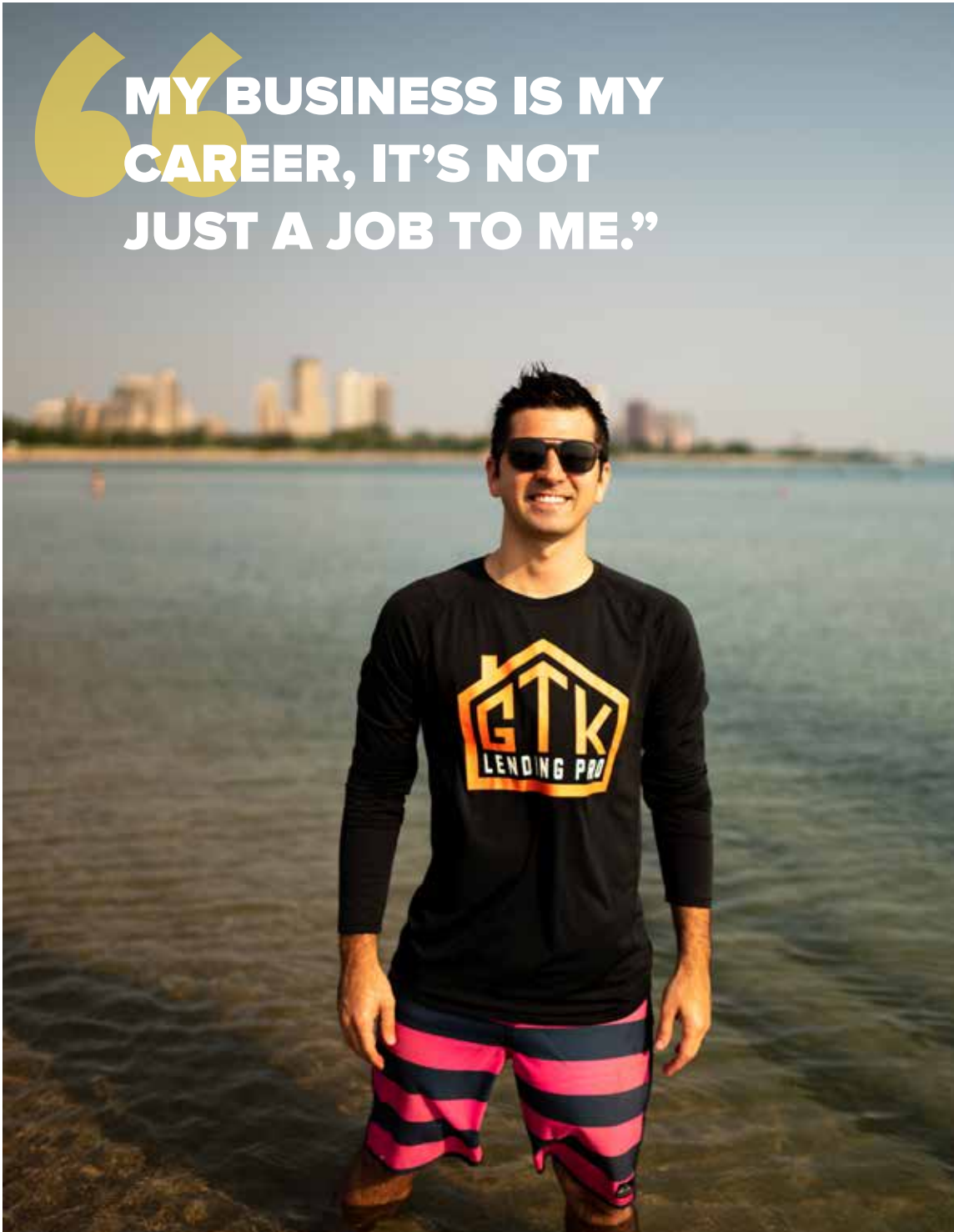
All of George’s time outside of business revolves around his wife and two boys. Since the pandemic, their activities have been limited to walks down by the beach and over the bridge through the park. But before, they enjoyed going down to North Avenue Beach with a tent and a cooler, and George would play in two-on-two beach volleyball tournaments. George grew up playing competitive volleyball, earning Player of the Year honors in Illinois his senior year of high school, and playing Division I Men’s Volleyball at Loyola.

George gives his best in everything he does, no matter what that may be. When the pandemic

shut everything down, he became the family’s beautician. He spent every weekend perfecting his manicure craft doing his wife’s nails, and cutting his sons’ hair every other weekend.

“I never knew I had it in me, but if the lending world goes away, I now have something to fall back on,” George jokes.

To keep George from entering the beauty industry, give him a call for your next mortgage.



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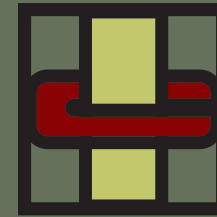
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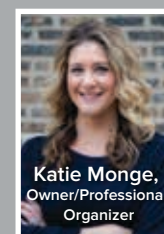
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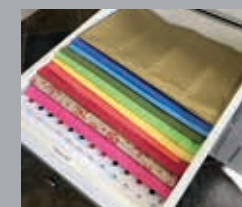
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▶ agent feature

By Chris Menezes

Photos by Heather Allison Love Photography



# SARAH L. WARE

## A SOUTH SIDE QUEENMAKER

“All that you touch you change, all that you change changes you, the only lasting truth is change.”

— Octavia E. Butler, from *Parable of the Sower*

The above quote from Octavia E. Butler has been the mantra of the South Side Giving Circle (SSGC) of the Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW) since its 2018 inception. A hyper-local branch of CFW, the South Side Giving Circle invests directly into Black women from Chicago’s South Side and south suburbs.

As one of their earliest philanthropic members, Sarah L. Ware has been committed to the SSGC’s initiative of becoming a “Queenmaker”: to facilitate the “power transformation for Black girls” in South Side Chicago. In its first year, SSGC attracted more than thirty women philanthropists from the South Side, who collectively awarded \$83,600 to nine Black-woman-led organizations within the community. In 2019, they grew to fifty-four members. ...



Sarah with South Side Giving Circle at a mixer.

**“I WANTED TO FIND A WAY TO GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY THAT I COME FROM, TO GIVE INPUT IN A WAY THAT WOULD MAKE AN IMPACT.”**



•••

Members like Sarah engage the Giving Circle in various ways. Some simply invest financially, while others attend meetings, visit sites, and actively engage with grantees through service and support. Through this broad-based membership group whose leadership reflects the communities they serve, Sarah is able to direct much of her philan-

thropic efforts to the South Shore, where she currently lives.

Born and raised on the South Side, Sarah went to grammar school with one of the founding members of the SSGC. After graduating high school in 1987, Sarah went directly into corporate America, where she worked, saved money, became a real estate

investor, and attended Harold Washington College part-time until 2005.

It only took a few words of encouragement for Sarah to branch out as an entrepreneur. She remembers the moment when one of the principals at the company she was working for at the time told her she was “too smart to be cooped up in an office,” and that she should look into being an entrepreneur or do something on her own. •••



Sarah in her younger planning days.



•••

Sarah originally obtained her real estate license as an investor in 1996, but did not become a REALTOR® until 2006. When she did step out on her own, becoming a co-owner of a real estate business for seven years, it did not end very well. Despite being a Chicago Association of REALTORS® Top Producer from 2011 to 2013, the business was dissolved due to unforeseen reasons. It was 2014, and she was at her lowest point financially and motivationally, and uncertain whether she wanted to continue practicing real estate.

“I sat down and wrote a one-year plan of action. It was “make it or break it.” I was able to come out of that year stronger and in my best financial position since becoming an entrepreneur,” she says.

Sarah went on to earn the CAR® 2015 President’s Award, CAR®’s 2016 REALTOR® Achievement Award, and the Illinois REALTORS® Outstanding Service Award for 2018.

Sarah’s company, Ware Realty Group, is a boutique office that serves the residential and commercial markets on Chicago’s South Side and within the south suburbs. Since certifying as a minority and woman-owned business, as well as a disadvantaged business enterprise (M/WBE), Sarah has been able to leverage her company with government agencies like the City of Chicago, City Colleges, and Chicago Public Schools, which has been a boon to her business.

She has also been able to participate in programs sponsored by the University of Chicago’s Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management. These programs have helped Sarah to dissect her business, move forward with strategic hires, and implement more targeted goal setting.

“One of the major challenges is access to management resources, and these opportunities gave me a plan for the next three years to help take my business to the next level,” she says.

With her success came a growing desire within Sarah to give back. “I wanted to find a way to give back to the community that I come from, to give input in a way that would make an impact. I also wanted to become philanthropic in my own community with people that look like me, and to become a role model for others that want to give back as well,” says Sarah.

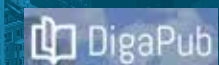
Through her involvement with the South Side Giving Circle, Sarah is grateful to have gained a new network of “like-minded African American women who are looking to change the narrative of the South Side,” she says.

“I love that I am able to put my money where my mouth is. Or, as they say, ‘Don’t talk about it, be about it.’”

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▶ partner spotlight

By Jennifer Mitchell

Photos by Heather Allison Love Photography



# Jesse W. Mills III

## FOUNDER OF STRAIGHTFORWARD HOME INSPECTIONS

### *Home Inspections, in a Straightforward Manner*

Prior to opening Straightforward Home Inspections, Jesse W. Mills III sold ad space for a real estate publication then became involved in residential home construction for over two decades. He knows the ins and outs of what makes a good or problematic home and how to communicate with clients about the reality of the home inspection issues.

“My first job was selling candy door-to-door when I was just eleven years old,” remembers Jesse. “But in high school, I became really interested in publishing. So after graduation, I started working for a neighborhood newspaper on the northwest side of Chicago. That led to a job at a real estate publication in Old Town, and after spending time there, I opened my first shopper (an advertising ad publication in the Uptown neighborhood) when I was nineteen years old.”

While working on his shopper publication, it was suggested to Jesse that he become a licensed REALTOR®, but he was more interested in gaining an understanding of how a home worked than how to sell one. So he started working in construction and eventually went on to become a master stucco mason. A visual artist,



Jesse with Straightforward Home Inspections' Office Manager, Melissa Fasuna.

too, Jesse loved playing with textures and was very adroit at matching older styles when replacing components of a home, like windows.

However, a fall from a three-story building (while landing on his feet) prohibited Jesse from continuing to work in construction for a period of time, but that gave him the room to rethink his career path.

Around that time, Jesse's mother bought a 2,600-square-foot home. Her home inspector rushed through the inspection in an hour's time and missed some major issues, including foundation issues that caused frequent leaks in her basement. With a deep

knowledge of how homes are constructed and a drive to do an exemplary job, Jesse knew he could serve clients far better. So he started working toward earning his certification and license while working part-time at an Ace Hardware store.

“I was a single father at the time and became a department manager at a local Ace Hardware so that I could have time to be involved in my son's day-to-day life,” says Jesse.

...



Neither afraid of heights nor spiders.



Once Jesse's son started high school, he was growing into a responsible young man who didn't require his father's attention so much. Jesse, wanting to make his son proud and ready to help guide people in the home-buying process, decided it was time to open his own home inspection company.

"Opening Straightforward Home Inspections in 2014 was the proudest moment of my professional life," recalls Jesse. "I had, and still have, a burning desire to be the best at anything I endeavor upon and I know that it shows based on the smiles of my satisfied clients and their continued referrals. Naming the company Straightforward Home Inspections has an actual dual meaning: everyone that deals with our company—clients, real estate agents, and lawyers—has a simple, fluid experience from an honest and real perspective."

Jesse emphasizes that not all inspection companies are the same, and in the long run, a thorough, friendly approach will *always* be better for the potential homeowner than a rushed one. It's Jesse and his team's dedication to a job well done that makes his company so successful.

"As demand for our expert services increases, we're really excited about finding and training new employees to grow our



team even more," notes Jesse. "It can be challenging to find the right people who we can trust to uphold our reputation, but as we find good people to train into highly skilled and experienced inspectors, it will be rewarding to bring them on board and become successful—and as the owner, I might be able to take an actual vacation!"

For Jesse, a successful home inspector is someone who has the drive and the ability to talk to different types of people, and who can be thorough and honest and not alarm clients with trivial things that come up on every inspection report. Thanks to his sales background, Jesse understands what information people need to know and the right way to deliver it to create a great customer experience, no matter what their background or buying experience. That skill is something he looks for when expanding his team.

One of the reasons why Jesse works so hard is his son, who is currently enrolled in the civil and environmental engineering program (CEE) at the University of Illinois.

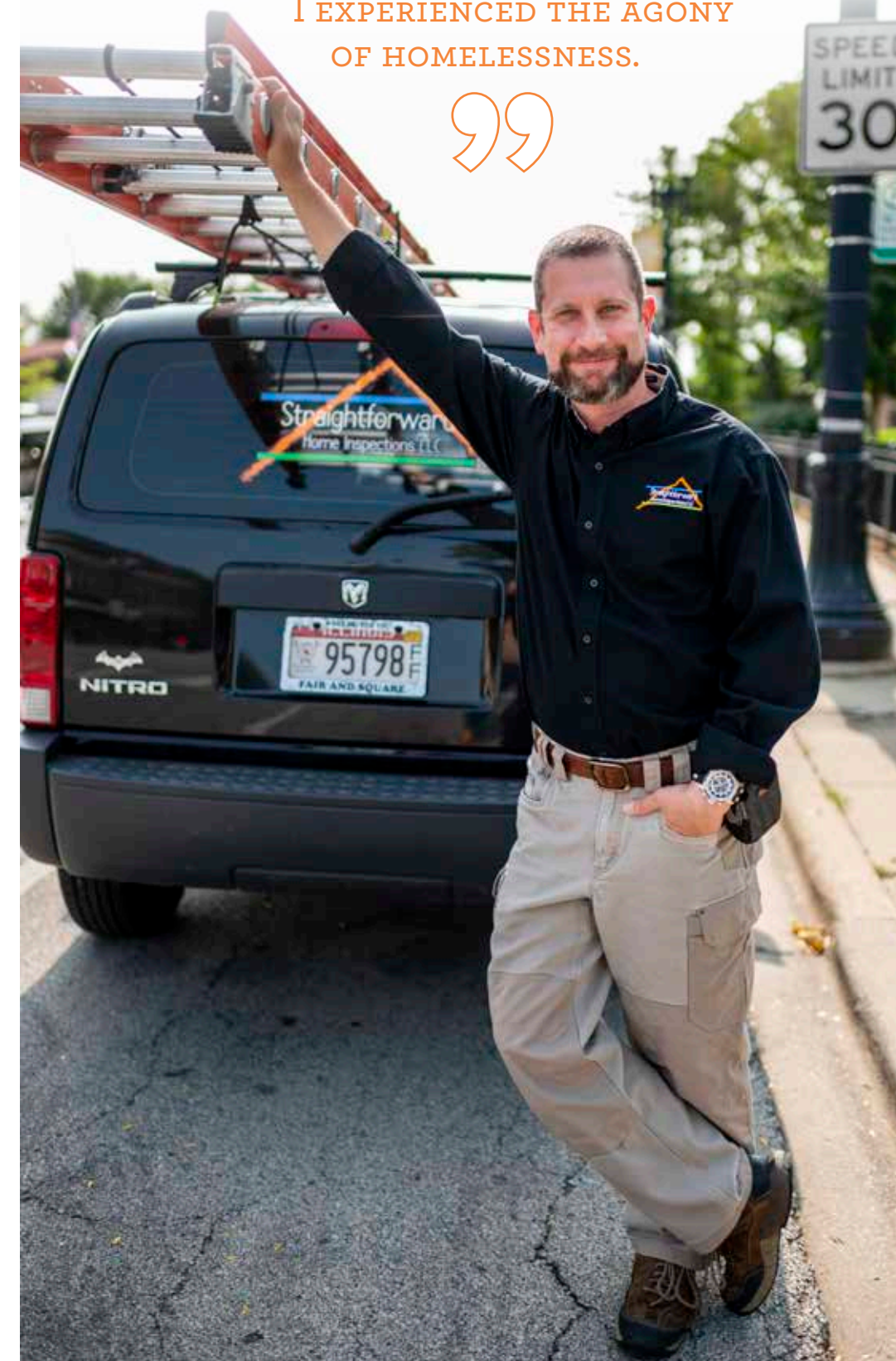
"He is my greatest inspiration and the reason why I push myself to be the best," claims Jesse. "I love what I do so I feel I don't actually work, but when I'm not working, my son and I enjoy discussing comics and watching Marvel and DC movies together."

"It's a bit ironic and a huge part of my drive that I became a home inspector because for a short period in my younger years, I experienced the agony of homelessness."

Now, as the owner of his own company, Jesse gives back by helping his clients. His commitment to his clients is best explained by his company's tagline "Working for you, fair and square!"

To learn more about Straightforward Home Inspections, visit [www.straightforwardhomeinspections.com](http://www.straightforwardhomeinspections.com), or call 773-680-7402.

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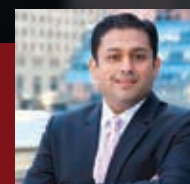
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# Whitney Hampton

CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE



Whitney with her grandmother (Irene Fisher), mother (Leslie Houston), little brother (JeKori King), and daughter (Lailani Lynch).

**When the pandemic hit Chicago and businesses were being forced to close their doors, Whitney Hampton, lead residential broker of A. Progeny Global, made herself available. She jumped into action and personally spent \$10,000 of her own money to help different Black-owned businesses that were suffering try to stay afloat. When the rioting hit, she just felt overwhelmed.**

“I understood the anger and the passion of those that were rioting, but I didn’t want our communities to just be casualties of war, and to feel helpless. So, I posted on Facebook that if any Black-owned business had been negatively

impacted by the rioting and looting, to please reach out and I would assist them in rebuilding,” she says.

Whitney’s post was shared over 100 times. People began contacting her left and right, both needing help and offering to volunteer.

“I didn’t initially know how I could be of service, but every business said they needed help with cleaning out and boarding up,” she says. “Lutalo McGee reached out to me that night and said he wanted to pay individuals to assist so they could make some money and help those in need. We decided to have everyone meet at the Home Depot on 87th Street. That following morning, we had over 50 volunteers.”

As the group went out into the community to help board up and clean out properties over the next three days, people looked out their windows and watched. Then one by one, they came outside and asked what they were doing, and after hearing the explanation, asked to help and volunteer as well.

“I had people who cried when they told me the city doesn’t even do street cleaning on their block and here we were randomly cleaning it up. It made them feel noticed. People volunteered, people donated, and we just kept going,” says Whitney.

...



Whitney working with volunteers to unload plywood to distribute to sites for boarding up buildings.



Boarding up one of many businesses that had been broken into and looted.



On day three, Whitney was told that many seniors didn't have groceries because the local stores had been looted, so the group pivoted their focus and started providing groceries to senior-housing buildings, nine in total. Then she was told that the Woman Infant Children (WIC) offices had been burned down and needed resources. Working together, the group donated diapers, wipes, clothes, formula, bottles, and more for 125 teen moms. And because they couldn't do everything that was needed themselves, Whitney also donated \$2,000 to other organizations to assist in their efforts to rebuild and unite the city.

"I remember being in Menards and Jewel stores with 20 volunteers filling up over forty carts of food and materials for nine days straight," says Whitney. "The volunteers sometimes cried because they were overwhelmed with the impact we were creating. We were allowed to change the narrative. It wasn't about the rioting and looting, but instead about the group that cleaned up and boarded up Chicago! It was about unity and community. It was about doing the work instead of waiting on someone else. And we made a difference, a huge difference, just by coming together."

Whitney's heart has always been with the community. She credits her grandparents for shaping her into the person she is today. Her grandfather, Buster Fisher, was a multi-talented DJ, Golden Gloves boxer, steel mill worker, and successful entrepreneur. He started and owned two multi-million-dollar businesses, and later, became the pastor at Second Baptist Church. Her grandmother, Irene, "Ran all the operations, and still managed to cook for us all three times a day, clean, and shower us with affection. She showed me how to be a strong, supportive wife and an amazing parent," Whitney recalls.

"My grandparents encompass everything I want to be—giving, loving, nurturing, successful, ambitious, supportive, and impactful. They are my personal heroes, and yet I am inspired by every Black person who has managed to create a strong, tight-knit family; who has carved out a patch of success, who has healed from past wounds, and who has inspired and encouraged those around them," says Whitney.

Whitney started giving of herself from a young age. She tutored kids when she was in elementary school, and after high school, moved to New Jersey where she mentored youth and assisted them with career development, tutoring, and coping skills. She was a founding member of the Greater Purpose Committee, which helped register young people to vote and provided outlets for creative expression by organizing showcases throughout Bergen County.

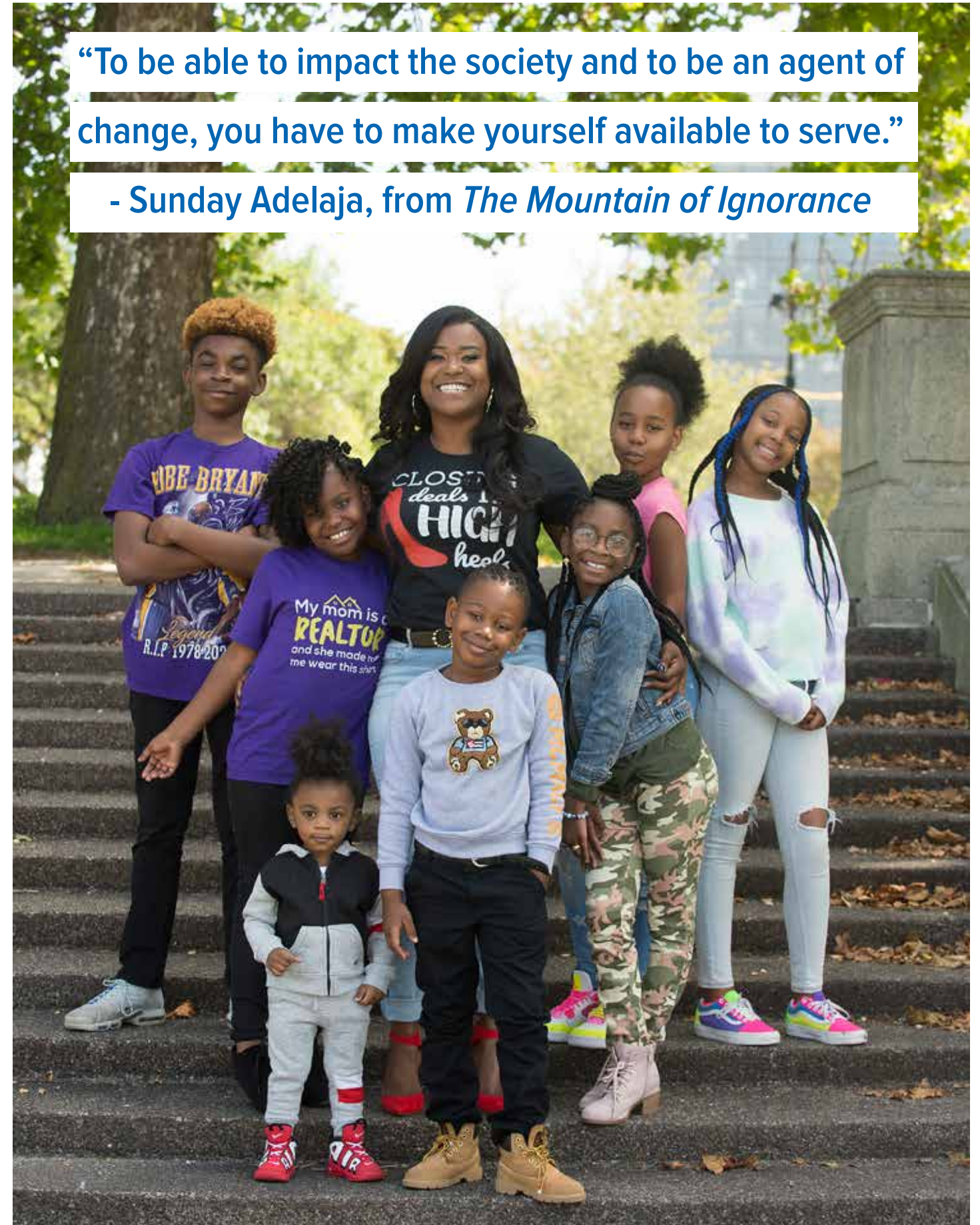
After her sister passed away, Whitney moved back to her hometown of Harvey, Illinois, and continued her work to build up the youth around her. First, as the youth director of Second Baptist Church under the guidance of her grandfather, and then with different organizations that asked her to come and speak regarding careers, the importance of education, leadership, and the like, to their youth. Even today, Whitney is the youth pastor at New Beginning Full Gospel Ministries.

"I have a heart for young people, so I am always 'adopting' someone's child by mentoring, tutoring, and feeding them, or because their parents have asked me to be involved in their child's life."



**"To be able to impact the society and to be an agent of change, you have to make yourself available to serve."**

**- Sunday Adelaja, from *The Mountain of Ignorance***



Whitney with some of the youth that she mentors.



Whitney with A. Progeny Global team: Travis Marley (Team Member) and Alonzo Abron (Managing Broker).



In the years before 2017, with her degree in business administration with a concentration in finance from DePaul University in Chicago, Whitney was working in corporate America to pay the bills and take care of her daughter, Lailani Irene Lynch. Although she was doing her best to be an agent of change in her community, she felt something was still lacking.

“I knew I wanted to change the landscape of the world around me and to help people [on a grander scale], but I never knew how. The real estate industry gave me the vehicle to live out

my purpose,” she says. “I started my career with big-name brokerages, but they didn’t have the same vision and desire to impact our communities [as I did]. In 2019, I met Alonzo Abron, and we discussed his brokerage A. Progeny Global. I asked him what his vision was, and he immediately talked about creating a legacy for our community. We were so in tune with wanting to be impactful, it was a no brainer to partner together, and earlier this year, we made that business partnership a reality.”



Whitney and her daughter.

Whitney entered real estate only three years ago and is already using her success to further her community. As the CEO and co-founder now of Urban Community Builders—the organization she recently established with Lutalo McGee, Lonzetta Mckennie, Wilonda Cannon, Shavahna Hunt, and Cierra Hayes—she is driven to build a better life and community for others through real estate.

“Real estate has allowed me to live out my personal mission on a grander scale: to assist our communities with financial literacy and community development. Real estate is one of the vehicles I am using to create generational wealth and change the trajectory of the communities I am tied to,” she says.

“Giving back allows me to live out my purpose every day—to uplift and inspire those that have been condemned and forgotten, and to create legacies of wealth (which means an abundant life) for my community and myself. It gives me the greatest sense of purpose and it is what motivates me when I wake up every day.”



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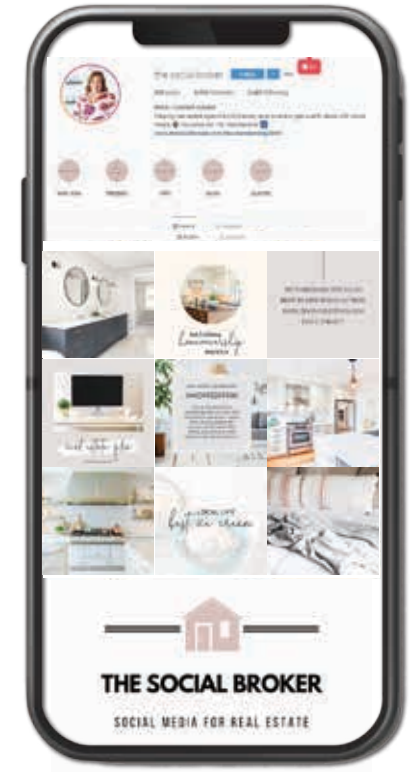
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▶ agent feature  
By Jennifer Mitchell  
Photos by Sonya Martin

# stephanie Wesson

## Doing the Hands-on Work of Creating Change



Onsite at a Habitat for Humanity build.

Some might look at Stephanie Wesson's nineteen-year career as a REALTOR® and take note of her \$201M career volume or the fact that she's been a Top Producer since 2003. But what's even more impressive is the amount of time and effort Stephanie puts into giving back.

"At the end of each year, we plan our annual charity calendar and commit to various charities," notes Stephanie. "Our crew's goal is to have one event each month, and our business model allows us to give a minimum of five percent of the proceeds from real estate sales to charitable organizations."

Though the list of organizations Stephanie supports is extremely long, she tends to focus on charities she can spend time with and actually see their good work in action.

"When you're an active participant beyond giving money, you quickly realize that the world is bigger and greater than you," states Stephanie. "It will remind you that you have a purpose, and your actions are meaningful. I encourage everyone to pick a cause that is meaningful to them and show up. I promise, you'll be a changed and better person for it."

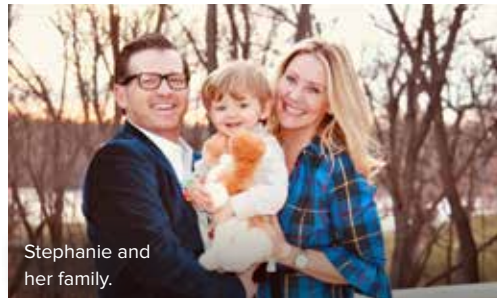




**When you're an active participant beyond giving money, you quickly realize that the world is bigger and greater than you. It will remind you that you have a purpose, and your actions are meaningful.**



Stephanie with one of her favorite little ladies at Coat Angels delivery.



Stephanie and her family.

girl gave me the biggest hug and told me she loved me. She had never received a coat that was hers before. She always had hand-me-downs. That really tugged at my heartstrings.”

Personally, and through her business, Stephanie supports the American Heart Association, Letters to Santa, Working in the Schools, Coat Angels, the Lakeview Pantry, the Alzheimer’s Foundation, the Thanksgiving Basket Brigade, and a back-to-school drive.

Prior to the pandemic, every year, her team would choose a date, craft a menu, shop for items, and then invite clients, family, and friends to make delicious meals for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House.

“That event is great because you are a part of the process from inception to fruition,” explains Stephanie. “To see the relief on parents’ faces and know you’re eliminating small tasks from their day is very rewarding.”

Her team also usually participates in group home builds through Habitat for Humanity, where they work with the families who will be living in the home to build scaffolding, install windows, and put up drywall.

...  
Getting her team involved in charitable work was an organic process. Stephanie has long been active in her community and has volunteered for local, national, and global organizations. Her life changed forever when she visited Haiti to help build a church and a school. “To see and experience the joy these people have while living with so little taught me that joy is something you can choose no matter your situation. It was a life-changing experience.”

Four years ago, she committed to making charitable work a part of her business and started hosting events for clients, friends, colleagues, and family to create an even greater impact and network for good.

“I can’t explain the joy one gets from working together toward a goal,” claims Stephanie. “I was recently volunteering with Coat Angels and a little

...





Stephanie with a crew in action for the Ronald McDonald House Father's Day brunch.



But, like for many, “Due to health safety concerns, our main events had to be canceled this year,” says Stephanie.

On her own time, at least once a quarter, she and a colleague go to St. Josephat Church to make sandwiches and assemble lunches to feed the homeless, and since 2004 (minus four years due to injury, travel, and COVID-19), Stephanie has raised funds by participating in the Chicago Triathlon.

Even her entry into real estate was driven by her desire to help others.

“I love helping people. Period,” states Stephanie. “It gives me great joy to be a part of people’s biggest decisions on where they are going to live.”

When she’s not working, volunteering, or training for the Olympic-distance triathlon, Stephanie loves

spending time on the lakefront with her fiancé Peter; his son, Warner; and their dog, Sophie. They love biking, setting up a picnic, playing games, or going to the beach.

“We do our best to stay active and healthy,” says Stephanie. “My fiancé does most of the day-to-day cooking, but I love cooking the big, ridiculous, multi-course meals for friends and family.”

For those looking to get involved and give back, Stephanie has a piece of advice: “Look beyond your cell phones and personal lives and find a cause where you can share your gifts and time to implement real, positive change—no matter how little or small. It’s all about taking that first step. Then you’ll find real success by leveraging your personal gifts to educate, incite, and excite people to create significant change and make the world a better place.”

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# Nicole Duran



▶▶ agent feature

By Chris Menezes

Photos by Sonya Martin

## THE SMALL BUSINESS AMBASSADOR OF LOGAN SQUARE

From the moment Nicole Duran stepped foot on the streets of Logan Square, she fell in love with it. She loved all the small, local businesses that gave the neighborhood its unique character, and knew right away she wanted to make it her home. And with that feeling of love came an overwhelming feeling of protection.

“I wanted to help keep the neighborhood as amazing as it was. It was a fast-transitioning neighborhood [beginning to gentrify], and I wanted to make sure that it did not become dominated and stripped of its character by big commercialized companies,” says Nicole.

So Nicole joined the Logan Square Chamber of Commerce (LSCC), which helps support local businesses in the community, and Logan Square Preservation (LSP), which helps preserve the community as a whole, educating citizens about the town’s architecture, history, and beautification efforts.

By serving on the event committees for both LSCC and LSP, Nicole focuses on supporting and pro-

moting all the small businesses and entrepreneurs in the neighborhood. She helps organize parties, events, and fun activities to help drive people to local businesses. She also works to inspire entrepreneurs—like nail techs, yoga teachers, professional organizers, and massage therapists—to go off on their own and build their own businesses, helping them build clientele, teaching them basics on how to structure a new business, as well as promote them.

However, with the onset of COVID-19, things have changed quite a bit for Nicole. Before, Nicole would throw an event like her self-care wellness event, which brought together local entrepreneurs, like yoga instructors, massage therapists, confectioners that specialize in healthy treats, etc., to offer services to people and gain new clients. Since the pandemic, she has had to get even more creative with her efforts.

That’s where her real estate business has come into play. Nicole now uses 100 percent of her marketing budget to also help promote local businesses. She tries to partner with a different small business each month to do a mailer that includes a coupon or promotion to help drive more clientele to that business. She features and promotes the same deals on her social media platform.



•••

She also uses products made in Logan Square in her gifts and giveaways to her clients. For example, she will buy a few hundred spice packets from LMK, a farmer's market vendor, and add them into care packages for her new buyers, or she'll send flowers from Fleur, a florist and boutique shop, to her clients, friends, and family.

"I will basically do anything for the people in my life and community who need a little help, especially in these tough times. Logan Square has the most amazing people in it, and it gives me a warm sense of fulfillment to help such great people," says Nicole.

Sometimes, Nicole will simply walk into a business and just offer her support. And even that, she has found, can go a long way. As she explains through this story when she walked into a restaurant she saw was struggling:

"I just told her [the owner] how I wanted to help and that we are all in this together, and she just

started crying out of relief. It gave me goosebumps. That was the first time I really felt how much people [running local businesses] needed help from the community. It lit a fire in me to keep pushing to help local businesses."

Nicole knows what it's like to be out there on your own, work hard, and start a business. She grew up on the South Side of Chicago. Being the second of five kids, she was called upon to help raise her two youngest sisters. She started working at the age of thirteen at an old neighborhood diner and moved out of her parents' house at age fifteen. When she was eighteen, she and her cousin decided to move to the north side of the city.

Nicole always had to work hard and hustle to make a better life for herself and her family. She received a full-ride scholarship to the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) where she studied business management and marketing. For fifteen years, she supported herself by working in the



**“Logan Square has the most amazing people in it, and it gives me a warm sense of fulfillment to help such great people.”**

service industry, overlapping real estate and serving for the last four of those years before she hit the ground running in real estate in 2014.


"I fell in love with real estate right away and knew this is what I was meant to do with my life," she says. "I love the combination of the hustle with just being able to help others and do the right thing to have a successful career. Real estate has given me the life I want to live, and I am grateful for all the people in my life who made this all possible."

A couple years ago, Nicole started building her team and mentoring new brokers. "My goal is for everyone on the team to love what they do as much as I do, while having a good, balanced quality of life. I have learned over the years that life is all about balance and without it, you will get burned out," she says.

Nicole balances her life with her husband, Ryan—they've been together since she was nineteen—and their Frenchie dog, Rico. Yoga is a huge part of her life, but Nicole also enjoys any activity she can do outside, like gardening, biking, hiking, swimming, paddle-boarding, and running. Nicole also loves traveling, food, culture, live music, and spending time with her friends and family.

"Through working in real estate and giving back to my community, I have gained fulfillment and a sense of purpose that drives me to help those in need even more," Nicole says. "In doing so, I meet some of the most wonderful and interesting people. I believe positivity attracts positivity, which has drawn like-minded people into my life, creating amazing relationships within my community that I am eternally grateful for."

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# MARKI LEMONS RYHAL

## LEMONS RYHAL



agent feature

By Jennifer Mitchell

Photos by Heather Allison Love Photography

## LIFTING DIVERSE VOICES THROUGH EDUCATION

**Marki Lemons Ryhal is not only a successful REALTOR® and fifth-generation entrepreneur, but she's also a mentor, an award-winning educator, a global keynote speaker, and an international best-selling author. Yet somehow, she still finds time to volunteer and give back in big ways.**



Marki has been a national education workgroup chairwoman for the Residential Real Estate Council, a member of the Board of Directors at the Real Estate Business Institute, and a member of the Presidential Advisory Council at the Women's Council of REALTORS®. She currently serves as a state legislative contact to Rep. Nicholas Smith of the Illinois General Assembly. Marki was also a two-time presidential appointee to the Chicago Association of REALTORS® Board of Directors. There, she personally raised \$50,000 to support their Diversity Committee's efforts to tackle topics like fair housing and economic development, as well as engage with local chambers of commerce, seek grant opportunities, and serve REALTORS® in Chicago's seventy-seven unique neighborhoods.

"Like many, my life has been significantly affected by the pandemic," notes Marki. "I am no longer able to travel as a speaker, so I made a promise to myself that I would emerge from quarantine better than when I entered it. Everything was going smoothly until George Floyd was killed and the riots and looting occurred. I jumped into action and created a Facebook Live video, which has been viewed more than 37,000 times on Facebook alone. That video raised more than \$50,000 for the 77 Diversity Committee, and it lit a fire under me. I decided to fund a scholarship under CAR® to help women who reside in underserved communities."





Marki with Austin and Stephen.

**“I love real estate and the role I play in real estate education. I’m the mentee who became the mentor, and my soul is delighted that I get to do what I love.”**

Marki is a big proponent of education because she has earned sixty real estate-related certifications, designations, and licenses in addition to an undergraduate degree in hospitality management from Chicago State University and an MBA from Saint Xavier University. She also notes that she was raised in a household that valued volunteering.

“My mother and my grandfather are my personal heroes because they instilled in me a strong work ethic coupled with a love for family,” remembers Marki. “They were very vested in my becoming independent and having every opportunity regardless of cost. I was lucky enough to work side by side both of them for more than twenty years at our family’s restaurant, Lem’s Bar-B-Q, located on the South Side of Chicago. Lem’s is the second-oldest, black-owned restaurant in Chicago, and it is Chicago’s oldest barbecue restaurant.”

Marki is happily married to Stephen C. Ryhal, a locomotive engineer for Union Pacific Railroad, and the two blended their families.

... The initial goal was to raise enough money to fund four scholarships, but Marki had something bigger in mind. She was approaching her fiftieth birthday and decided to use that milestone to raise funds for not four, but ten scholarships.

“I asked my friends, family, and network to make a donation to the scholarship in lieu of buying gifts and we met our fundraising goal,” says Marki. “But I didn’t want to continue asking people for money, so I created Be ReMarkiTable notebooks, which are sold on Amazon, and all proceeds are donated to the Marki Lemons Ryhal Education Advancement Scholarship.”



Marki with Stephen and Skyler.

“Stephen is not a stepfather to my son Skyler, he’s the father who stepped up,” claims Marki. “Skyler is twenty-four. He graduated from Howard University and is now working as an analyst with Accenture. Our other son, Austin, is thirteen and attends Sheridan Math and Science Academy. My two amazing sons make me smile every day because their smiles tell me they are happy, and the fact that they spend their time volunteering tells me they get it.”

Everyone in Marki’s home knows their way around the kitchen, and as a result, their house has been the local hangout during the pandemic. Several nights a week, Marki hosts neighbors on her deck, providing them with a home-cooked meal.

Despite the pandemic, Marki is still finding ways to educate REALTORS® online.

“I love real estate and the role I play in real estate education,” states Marki. “I’m the mentee who became the mentor, and my soul is delighted that I get to do what I love.”

The scholarship is available to African American women in underserved communities within the Chicagoland area who are seeking to obtain their real estate license or attend a historically Black college or university. This scholarship is in special honor of Marki’s late mother, Hazel S. Lemons.

“My community is in desperate need of equal access to quality learning and leadership development opportunities,” claims Marki. “My next endeavor is to partner with organizations to ensure history textbooks are accurate in the way they describe the history of our country.”



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business  
By Nick Libert

# THE QUESTION OF EXPANSION: WIDER vs. DEEPER?

Nearly everyone wants to grow their business, whether it be for financial gain, award recognition, or client service. It may well be why you are reading this article right now. But for the hundreds of agents I coach across the United States, achieving growth is often a question of working smarter, not harder. I know. There was a time when I drove hundreds of miles a week and spent tens of thousands of dollars a year in the name of “expansion” when, in fact, I had stretched myself farther but had not gone deep enough where I already was.

Take, as an example, my own experience of choosing to take on clients across state lines (I am licensed in IL, IN, and MI) and in the far suburbs, yet I would drive through my own neighborhood and see only two or three of my own signs (listings) instead of what should have been at least a dozen. I would spend several hours in the car each day to close three to four deals a month instead of taking the temporary “hit” to my pocketbook and focusing on prospecting and generating leads in my own area. It was only when I downloaded the Life Cycle app (available for iPhone; similar concepts are available for Android devices) that I began to track the number of hours I spent in the car (and other “time vampires”). I then realized that if I would be willing to go deeper, i.e., work for more and better business, in areas that didn’t require so much time in the car, I would be able to close more deals with less overall work.

Here’s another common block to growth: many of us spend a lot of time and money chasing after “new” leads, but never dig deep

enough in our own database of “just mets,” past clients, and VIPs to actually get their repeat business and referrals. Think about this: if you spent a bit of time reaching out for the birthdays and special moments, such as housing anniversaries of everyone in your database, how much more repeat and referral business might you garner from those clients as compared to your chances of being blown off by strangers who have no relationship with you?

Have you connected with everyone in your sphere on social media? Have you added each of their home addresses and personal information data (such as the aforementioned birthdays and anniversaries) to your CRM? I coach our agents at my brokerage to only use technology that syncs with their phone, database tool, and the MLS so everything requires only one point of data entry. We also strongly encourage our REALTORS® to conduct “leveraged events” or the ones our office provides. These are opportunities for an agent to reach out to their database with an educational event, something fun, or an item of value. These kinds of events allow you to go beyond the “buy with me, sell with me” conversation to something deeper.

Track every day’s activity from start to finish. As I discuss regularly, I recommend an early start to the day (as analyzed in *The Miracle Morning for Real Estate Agents: It’s Your Time to Rise and Shine* by Hal Elrod, et al.) and part of that early start should be time-blocked for lead-generation focused prospecting for new business, not servicing existing transactions (that can

come later in the morning) because “life” will get in the way of your prospecting the longer you wait. An organized database is also key to easily pulling up contact information and tracking activity.

So before you decide to expand your marketing into a new area, consider whether or not you’ve fully plumbed your “home” area. Where you live and play is key—you are seen there, you probably already do business there—and the likelihood you will relate to locals there is higher because you know the hot spots, transportation, etc. You cannot underestimate the time you lose being in the car—you really can’t answer emails, texts, or do computer work safely or effectively. Don’t mindlessly conduct your days or spend your money without a strategy. Track everything and analyze regularly! Your business depends on it.

#### About the Author:

Nick Libert is the founder and coach of EXIT Strategy Realty, EXIT Realty’s largest and most productive franchise in the Midwest, with over 250 agents servicing Northern Illinois. Nick is a consistent Top Producer with the Chicago Association of REALTORS®, and has been named a Five Star Real Estate Agent nine out of the past ten years. In 2020, he was named Best of Zillow and a Nextdoor Neighborhood Favorite in over a dozen areas in and around Chicago.

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# 2020... Thanks a Lot!

## Chicago Real Producers Share their Gratitude

This has been a challenging year. Yet as we look back and reflect, we cannot help but see all the amazing things we are thankful for this year. In this article, we highlight gratitudes shared by our Chicago Real Producers community. We hope this is uplifting and encourages you to focus on the good that has come from 2020!



**GIANCARLO BARGIONI** WITH DREAMTOWN REALTY: “My beautiful daughter being born on 8/12/2020”



**JANELLE DENNIS** WITH @PROPERTIES: “The social isolation of 2020 has made me more thankful than ever for my constant companion, my dog Lexi. She is the biggest love bug and makes me laugh every day. Of course, family and friends are also important but with so little direct contact, Lexi fills my heart with love.”



**KEVIN ROCIO** WITH @PROPERTIES COMMERCIAL: “I am thankful I was able to continue doing what I love and enjoy my life while doing it.”



**LAURA TOPP** WITH BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY: “I am thankful for my faithful clients who have trusted me to help them navigate buying and selling their homes. Housing needs have changed. I have been able to help my clients make those changes seamlessly.”



**LAURA RAHILLY** WITH COLDWELL BANKER | LRG, LAURA RAHILLY GROUP: “Health, love, comfort, and a beautiful backyard to grow organic veggies and watch my girls play.”



**SAM SHAFFER** WITH CHICAGO PROPERTIES: “I’m thankful for the real estate market thriving, my gym being open, spending quality time with my family and my loved ones, and staying safe and healthy.”



**STEVE GENYK** WITH GENYK GROUP REAL ESTATE: “While 2020 has been extremely challenging, I am very thankful for the fact that 2020 has reminded me not to take anything for granted as things can change in a blink. With that, I am also thankful for refocusing my priorities and fully appreciating the most basic but most important things I have—family, health, and love.”



**MARKI LEMONS RYHAL** WITH EXIT STRATEGY REALTY: “I am thankful for the ability to pivot my business in an uncertain market.”



**JEFF PROCTOR** WITH @PROPERTIES: “Friends, family, health, and an incredible business community.”



**LAWRENCE DUNNING** WITH MAIN STREET REAL ESTATE GROUP: “I’m thankful for health, good friends, and my growing family. Baby Victor (due 12-30-20) was conceived in the quarantine lockdowns. A good reminder that in every negative situation we can find a positive. And no matter how bad the external situation is, we can always appreciate what we DO have, not what we don’t. Ultimately, little else matters than health and time with loved ones. No billionaire ever wished for more money on his deathbed!”



**MELISSA LOPEZ** WITH CHICAGO REAL PRODUCERS: “I am so incredibly thankful that I have been able to explore so much nature and play in some fantastic waterfalls!”



**AXEL COHEN** WITH COMPASS: “I’m thankful for mine and my family’s health and well being during these difficult times.”



**JESSE MASIN** WITH @PROPERTIES: “Although 2020 has been full of hurdles, I am thankful for having an amazing fiancé, two beautiful pups (Oscar and Winston), and fantastic clients who have continued to trust me with their real estate investments!”



**JACQUELINE COLANDO** WITH REDFIN: “I’m thankful for the health of my family! Hopefully, everyone continues to stay healthy.”



**NICOLE DURAN** WITH @PROPERTIES: “I’m so thankful for all the love I have in my life. I’m so lucky to have so many amazing people in my life and love each and every one of them in their own special way.”



**DAVID FRANK** WITH DAVID FRANK LAW GROUP: “I am thankful for health and low interest rates!”



**CHERI KASELLA** WITH HAVEN HOME STAGING AND REDESIGN, INC.: “I am thankful for the stay-at-home order in the spring as it forced HAVEN to focus on important needs of the business that too often got pushed to low priority. We were fortunate during that time to find so many additional talents that individuals on our team had to share that we would not have known if we weren’t forced to slow down. This slowdown is now helping us grow. Thankful and in awe of our multifaceted team.”

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**DYMPNA FAY-HART WITH CENTURY 21 AFFILIATED:** “I am thankful every day for my family, and for the good people that are always willing to give a helping hand, many who have been hit so hard in 2020—a year that was slated to bring happiness and hope has brought trauma, turmoil, and trying times to many ... many are looking forward to ‘waving’ 2020 goodbye (myself included) and ready to welcome a new year with open arms!”



**KATIE MONGE WITH NEAT METHOD:** “My healthy family and new baby coming at the end of the year!”



**KATE WADDELL WITH COMPASS:** “As I reflect back on 2020, amidst all of the chaos, upset, and fear, I am most grateful for the time that I was given with my family. I have so many treasured memories with my two-year-old son and newborn daughter that I otherwise wouldn’t have had. I think that is pretty special and will treasure those memories forever.”



**MIA HABLE WITH ART-FULLY ARRANGED STAGING:** “I am thankful for the chance to increase creative outlets in my life. I have taken some of the extra time we have been given now so many people are working from home, to paint and get creative and infuse that into my designs!”

**PAUL CARNEY WITH PHOENIX RISING HOME STAGING:** “In 2019 we moved our three warehouses totaling 54,000 square feet into one large, 80,000 square feet, warehouse. This was exhausting and expensive. We needed a great 2020 to pay for this expense. Then COVID-19 hit, then the riots, and other business challenges. It has been a trying year for sure. I am grateful for all the employees who took pay cuts during the shelter-in-place and kept working so our clients could close on their pending transactions, and help Phoenix Rising Home Staging stay in business. I am grateful for our financial partners, Scott and Seth, and their continued confidence and support in our great business. I am especially grateful for our staff, Lorena, Becky, Selma, Kasey, Tom and Kevin and their efforts this year. Working long hours, often unpaid, they are the reason we will come out of this year a better company. I have had two family members contract COVID-19 and I am grateful to report they are both fully recovered. I am grateful for my family, wife Monika, daughter Nuzzia, and sons Paul Jr, Stefan, and Antonio. My best friends and source of limitless fun and joy. It has been an incredibly challenging year. Like most business owners, I work an average of 70 to 80 hours a week, often without pay doing all I can to position our company for success and prosperity. It would be easy to become overwhelmed by all the obstacles we are all facing ... but when I look at our amazing vendors we work with, like *Real Producers*, and the amazing personnel I am lucky enough to employ and work with everyday and my wonderful, loving, fun family, I realize how wealthy and fortunate I am. I am grateful for every day I am blessed to work with and come home to the people in my life.”



**TYRONE GREEN WITH RE/MAX NEXT:** “I am thankful for supportive family, friends, and colleagues through these challenging and trying times.”



**AGNES MROCKOWSKI WITH SATURN TITLE LLC:** “I’m thankful for my wonderful staff at Saturn Title that through this whole pandemic has given 110 percent all while practicing social distancing. I’m thankful for all of our loyal attorneys and clients that have adapted to our new way of life. This experience has made us all humble as well as grateful for friendship, family, and the little things in life that matter most.”



**GRIGORY PEKARSKY WITH VESTA PREFERRED:** “The unique opportunity to spend so much more time with my daughter.”



**RUTH ROBERTS WITH WINDY CITY BLINDS:** “Since COVID-19 started, my siblings and parents have set up a once-a-week Zoom call to catch up. It took COVID-19 to make us stop and check in with each other, but it is something we all plan to continue so I’m thankful for more time with family, even if it is virtual!”



**BARBARA O’CONNOR WITH DREAM TOWN REALTY:** “As challenging 2020 has been, I find the most challenging thing is not being able to hug/kiss my children and grandchildren. However, I am so grateful for the fact that I had time to reflect on what is truly important in my life. Also, I got to really enjoy my backyard. Lastly, I realized I will never retire as I cannot sit still.”



**CRYSTAL KURZYNSKI WITH GUARANTEED RATE:** “I’m thankful that during a time where most of us have felt isolated, I’ve had the opportunity to join a community of positive and motivated individuals. During difficult times, it can be challenging to stay focused on your goals. I’m grateful that I’ve had the opportunity to grow and continue to work hard for my clients due to the support of my family and amazing community around me.”



**MIKE OPYD WITH RE/MAX NEXT:** “The agents at RE/MAX NEXT that trust myself and my partner with their business.”



**GINA STOLOWSKI WITH ARETE RENOVATORS INC.:** “Despite the obvious struggles that 2020 has brought, there is a lot to be thankful for. I am thankful to have welcomed my son into this world right before quarantine and to have had the chance to keep him at home longer than expected (getting to witness a lot of changes and ‘firsts’). I am also thankful that Arete’s entire team has remained intact and healthy throughout this changing environment. Despite the challenges, we adapt, and are set to come out ahead of our 2019 year-end numbers.”



**MICHAEL MANDILE WITH MANDILE + LORIMER PROPERTY GROUP AT COMPASS:** “Through such a roller coaster of a year I am very grateful we were able to see past the bumps in the road and blow past our goals by having a record year. This is not just based on numbers, but we are very happy to know that we helped so many people find their way in life during such a difficult time. COVID-19 was not easy for anyone, but through it all, we have many clients who have bought and sold with ease. It feels good knowing we were there for them during that time, and we had a process in place that truly helped others.”

**LANCE KIRSHNER WITH COMPASS:** “First and foremost, I am most thankful for the health of my friends and family during these crazy times. Beyond that, I have much to be thankful for, most notably, the dedication of my team. Without them, there is no way I could achieve anywhere near the success we have reached in a difficult year. In addition, they have the patience and loyalty to continue to support me, as I learn and grow as the team leader.”



**HEATHER LOVE WITH HEATHER ALLISON LOVE PHOTOGRAPHY:** “I’m thankful for all the extra time I have had with my family and a space to garden.”



**EMILY BURTON WITH CHICAGO REAL PRODUCERS:** “I’m thankful for extra time with my husband and kids, having meaningful conversations with one another, learning more about each other, trying new things together, and growing in grace for each other.”



**JOSH WEINBERG WITH KELLER WILLIAMS:** “I’m grateful for being healthy. Grateful for being part of the best team in the world. I’m also grateful for Real Producers being an amazing resource for our industry!”

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# LUTALO MCGEE



▶ cover story  
By Chris Menezes  
Photos by Sonya Martin

## On a Mission



Lutalo with some of his team (Earl Solomon, Kameelah Paulk, Kiara Poole, and Phillip Pippion)

When Lutalo McGee lost his good friend to gun violence as he sat in a car right next to him, during his senior year of high school, it changed the trajectory of his life.

“Obviously it was a traumatic experience for me, and it shaped my emotional journey as a young man going into my early 20s. But out of that experience came a commitment that I would use all of my resources, time, and skills to try and help other youth that were on that path [I’d been on] when I was a kid, and to give back to my community,” says Lutalo.

Lutalo set out to become a college professor and community activist, studying economics and African American studies at Eastern Illinois University and went on to do graduate work at Cornell University.

“If you talk to those I went to school with, they would tell you I was always talking and lecturing. My fraternity nicknamed me ‘Soliloquy’—my chosen path seemed to fit me,” Lutalo says smilingly.

However, as a result of his academic and philosophical journey in his 20s, Lutalo realized that “many of the social and political issues facing the Black community started with a lack of wealth [and, therefore, financial ability] to influence and force change in public policies.”

Given his conclusion, Lutalo decided to pivot from becoming a professor to becoming an entrepreneur. After surveying his options, he decided to go into real estate development. His goal was to generate money that he could then use to employ people and to teach empowerment through asset accumulation. ...

...

“Real estate was just supposed to be what I did on the side to build wealth and later finance what would be a community center,” he says. “At the time, I was firmly committed to being an educator and loved the work I was doing with youth. What I didn’t expect was for my career as a broker, and then later as an owner and managing broker of a real estate firm, to take off.”

Lutalo actually worked as an educator for seven more years until deciding to move into real estate full-time. He worked as a Chicago Public School teacher, dean, chess and softball coach, and mentor. Also, just a few years ago, he operated as the superintendent of the Saturday University School System for the Black Star Project, which provides free tutoring in math and reading, as well as a number of other free programs, including dance and video production, on Saturdays within neighborhood community centers and police stations across the Chicagoland area.

Remaining as committed to the community as ever, though he is well into his real estate career, Lutalo later founded the nonprofit organization Ani Empowerment Group, which, in conjunction with his real estate company, Ani Real Estate, “provides a series of free real estate workshops geared toward helping individuals to change their financial situation and wealth position through real estate education and acquisition,” states Lutalo.

So when the first wave of riots hit Chicago this summer, and Whitney Hampton, broker and owner of Hampton Real Estate and Investments, put out a call on social media for volunteers to help board up impacted Black businesses that were looted, Lutalo immediately contacted her.



Lutalo at a breakfast meetup for the clean-up efforts right after the riots. He is with the Clean Out, Board Up crew and volunteers.

“I told her I was all-in to help and would help find and coordinate volunteers and our plan of action. That night I put out a call of my own and promised that I would pay \$20 per hour to anyone that showed up to help us board up businesses and clean up the community. My thought was that we could kill two birds with one stone by both helping those businesses and provide some income to people that might be out of work due to the COVID-19 layoffs and economic impact,” says Lutalo.

Almost instantly, a number of people signed up for paid work, and a number of people just wanted to help for free. Lutalo also had a ton of people contact him who said they couldn’t make it out, but wanted to send money to help the effort. In just under two days, Lutalo personally received approximately \$10,000 in donations to help buy supplies, rent vehicles, and provide food and water for those volunteering. Clean Out, Board Up 2020 was on its way.

“We were *galvanized!*” says Lutalo. “With that support, we spent the next two weeks, from early in the morning to late in the afternoon, going from location to location, responding to calls for help in Chicago and the south suburbs. The efforts eventually morphed into us delivering food to senior homes, and others who didn’t have access to stores due to the looting.”

Out of Clean Out, Board Up 2020, Lutalo, along with Whitney Hampton, Lonzetta Mckennie, Wilonda Cannon, Shavahna Hunt, and Cierra Hayes established Urban Community Builders to “empower the community through all things real estate.”



Lutalo at a clean-up effort with Alderman David Moore and the Cook County Treasurer Melissa Conyers-Ervin.

...

**“IF MORE PEOPLE SPENT MORE OF THEIR TIME AND RESOURCES HELPING OTHER PEOPLE, THE MORE HAPPINESS WOULD BE PRODUCED BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY.”**





“I think real estate is fundamental to where I go and our community goes,” says Lutalo. “It’s no secret that many people gain wealth through real estate and doing so is a reasonably attainable goal with the proper plan and guidance.”

“American culture can be quite competitive and selfish at times,” he continues. “The problem with that is that it doesn’t really produce any genuine happiness in people. The more people ‘win,’ acquire, and are ‘liked,’ the more they want. It’s a drug.”

“I believe if more people spent more of their time and resources helping other people, the more happiness would be produced both individually and collectively. Half of the social issues we face would be eliminated by that basic shift in personal philosophy,” Lutalo muses.

“What we need are more people that operate on the philosophical principle of ‘I am because we are, and we are because I am.’”



Lutalo with Whitney Hampton.

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# TOP 250 STANDINGS

Teams and individuals from January 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020

| #  | First Name | Last Name   | List # | List \$       | Sell # | Sell \$      | Total # | Total \$      |
|----|------------|-------------|--------|---------------|--------|--------------|---------|---------------|
| 1  | Jeffrey    | Lowe        | 117    | \$130,666,000 | 46     | \$60,746,250 | 163     | \$191,412,250 |
| 2  | Matt       | Laricy      | 149    | \$65,915,150  | 166    | \$83,137,263 | 315     | \$149,052,413 |
| 3  | Emily      | Sachs Wong  | 57     | \$72,314,250  | 29     | \$34,575,375 | 86      | \$106,889,625 |
| 4  | Leigh      | Marcus      | 126    | \$81,034,800  | 44     | \$24,834,917 | 170     | \$105,869,717 |
| 5  | Mario      | Greco       | 119    | \$66,308,770  | 48     | \$27,476,250 | 167     | \$93,785,020  |
| 6  | Karen      | Biazar      | 109    | \$61,380,484  | 19     | \$11,850,000 | 128     | \$73,230,484  |
| 7  | Grigory    | Pekarsky    | 64     | \$21,115,664  | 86     | \$43,322,450 | 150     | \$64,438,114  |
| 8  | Melanie    | Giglio      | 53     | \$35,210,637  | 62     | \$29,097,900 | 115     | \$64,308,537  |
| 9  | Sophia     | Klopas      | 58     | \$41,144,250  | 28     | \$15,627,500 | 86      | \$56,771,750  |
| 10 | Carrie     | McCormick   | 50     | \$34,961,950  | 20     | \$16,951,750 | 70      | \$51,913,700  |
| 11 | William    | Goldberg    | 46     | \$31,547,927  | 24     | \$13,545,208 | 70      | \$45,093,135  |
| 12 | Tommy      | Choi        | 36     | \$18,791,500  | 45     | \$24,178,850 | 81      | \$42,970,350  |
| 13 | Brad       | Lippitz     | 26     | \$17,178,500  | 25     | \$24,065,860 | 51      | \$41,244,360  |
| 14 | Hayley     | Westhoff    | 37     | \$23,946,580  | 19     | \$15,948,500 | 56      | \$39,895,080  |
| 15 | Julie      | Busby       | 35     | \$21,147,250  | 28     | \$18,541,100 | 63      | \$39,688,350  |
| 16 | Jennifer   | Mills       | 37     | \$24,819,460  | 23     | \$14,150,234 | 60      | \$38,969,694  |
| 17 | Jennifer   | Ames        | 26     | \$26,700,500  | 14     | \$12,215,350 | 40      | \$38,915,850  |
| 18 | Nathan     | Wilks       | 33     | \$14,041,825  | 57     | \$24,277,701 | 90      | \$38,319,526  |
| 19 | Sam        | Shaffer     | 19     | \$8,912,500   | 49     | \$29,210,404 | 68      | \$38,122,904  |
| 20 | Katharine  | Waddell     | 27     | \$14,929,500  | 40     | \$22,799,100 | 67      | \$37,728,600  |
| 21 | Benyamin   | Lalez       | 19     | \$11,085,650  | 52     | \$25,885,100 | 71      | \$36,970,750  |
| 22 | Nancy      | Tassone     | 8      | \$14,236,500  | 6      | \$22,470,000 | 14      | \$36,706,500  |
| 23 | Jason      | O'Beirne    | 47     | \$27,843,700  | 13     | \$6,597,000  | 60      | \$34,440,700  |
| 24 | Barbara    | O'Connor    | 42     | \$21,257,500  | 23     | \$12,821,000 | 65      | \$34,078,500  |
| 25 | Layching   | Quek        | 3      | \$1,217,000   | 53     | \$32,581,000 | 56      | \$33,798,000  |
| 26 | Keith      | Brand       | 14     | \$6,132,050   | 53     | \$27,471,749 | 67      | \$33,603,799  |
| 27 | Daniel     | Close       | 18     | \$8,887,000   | 39     | \$23,656,887 | 57      | \$32,543,887  |
| 28 | Timothy    | Sheahan     | 32     | \$23,170,928  | 16     | \$9,341,378  | 48      | \$32,512,306  |
| 29 | Millie     | Rosenbloom  | 15     | \$15,654,000  | 20     | \$16,607,600 | 35      | \$32,261,600  |
| 30 | Melissa    | Siegal      | 29     | \$21,317,743  | 14     | \$10,223,909 | 43      | \$31,541,652  |
| 31 | Lance      | Kirshner    | 35     | \$17,086,700  | 24     | \$13,953,550 | 59      | \$31,040,250  |
| 32 | Debra      | Dobbs       | 17     | \$19,859,500  | 15     | \$10,818,500 | 32      | \$30,678,000  |
| 33 | Sara       | McCarthy    | 30     | \$14,132,275  | 27     | \$16,345,494 | 57      | \$30,477,769  |
| 34 | Jill       | Silverstein | 14     | \$8,296,500   | 29     | \$22,109,750 | 43      | \$30,406,250  |

| #  | First Name | Last Name       | List # | List \$      | Sell # | Sell \$      | Total # | Total \$     |
|----|------------|-----------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| 35 | Nicholaos  | Voutsinas       | 18     | \$8,894,750  | 41     | \$21,408,700 | 59      | \$30,303,450 |
| 36 | Ryan       | McKane          | 67     | \$26,434,501 | 7      | \$3,819,900  | 74      | \$30,254,401 |
| 37 | Elena      | Theodoros       | 43     | \$22,689,550 | 10     | \$7,446,900  | 53      | \$30,136,450 |
| 38 | Daniel     | Glick           | 18     | \$16,830,000 | 21     | \$13,033,150 | 39      | \$29,863,150 |
| 39 | Ivona      | Kutermankiewicz | 28     | \$20,804,200 | 11     | \$8,563,650  | 39      | \$29,367,850 |
| 40 | Matthew    | Liss            | 31     | \$19,156,400 | 14     | \$10,011,000 | 45      | \$29,167,400 |
| 41 | Scott      | Curcio          | 33     | \$13,174,084 | 34     | \$14,974,301 | 67      | \$28,148,385 |
| 42 | Kelly      | Parker          | 23     | \$12,575,500 | 24     | \$15,513,000 | 47      | \$28,088,500 |
| 43 | Santiago   | Valdez          | 41     | \$15,201,300 | 33     | \$12,227,700 | 74      | \$27,429,000 |
| 44 | Joel       | Holland         | 29     | \$14,167,050 | 27     | \$13,040,300 | 56      | \$27,207,350 |
| 45 | Timothy    | Salm            | 9      | \$23,949,000 | 3      | \$3,040,000  | 12      | \$26,989,000 |
| 46 | Kevin      | Hinton          | 30     | \$13,431,283 | 34     | \$13,163,300 | 64      | \$26,594,583 |
| 47 | Melanie    | Everett         | 12     | \$5,161,900  | 47     | \$21,216,200 | 59      | \$26,378,100 |
| 48 | Steve      | Genyk           | 15     | \$18,101,500 | 8      | \$8,257,500  | 23      | \$26,359,000 |
| 49 | Grace      | Sergio          | 36     | \$24,873,800 | 2      | \$693,650    | 38      | \$25,567,450 |
| 50 | Chezi      | Rafaelli        | 20     | \$19,786,500 | 7      | \$5,243,900  | 27      | \$25,030,400 |

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# TOP 250 STANDINGS

Teams and individuals from January 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020

| #  | First Name  | Last Name      | List # | List \$      | Sell # | Sell \$      | Total # | Total \$     |
|----|-------------|----------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| 51 | Colin       | Hebson         | 23     | \$17,166,439 | 14     | \$7,659,500  | 37      | \$24,825,939 |
| 52 | Richard     | Kasper         | 16     | \$9,628,050  | 26     | \$15,111,015 | 42      | \$24,739,065 |
| 53 | Lisa        | Sanders        | 36     | \$16,662,000 | 17     | \$8,033,000  | 53      | \$24,695,000 |
| 54 | Cynthia     | Sodolski       | 18     | \$13,833,000 | 17     | \$10,714,600 | 35      | \$24,547,600 |
| 55 | Amanda      | McMillan       | 26     | \$12,377,461 | 19     | \$11,640,001 | 45      | \$24,017,462 |
| 56 | Danielle    | Dowell         | 31     | \$15,872,000 | 17     | \$8,063,500  | 48      | \$23,935,500 |
| 57 | D           | Waveland Kendt | 26     | \$12,969,200 | 15     | \$10,506,400 | 41      | \$23,475,600 |
| 58 | Alexandre   | Stoykov        | 10     | \$4,419,500  | 41     | \$18,893,400 | 51      | \$23,312,900 |
| 59 | Nicholas    | Colagiovanni   | 16     | \$10,834,500 | 11     | \$12,134,000 | 27      | \$22,968,500 |
| 60 | Elizabeth   | Ballis         | 14     | \$11,033,250 | 10     | \$11,734,500 | 24      | \$22,767,750 |
| 61 | Kimber      | Galvin         | 27     | \$15,839,950 | 13     | \$6,856,250  | 40      | \$22,696,200 |
| 62 | Stephanie   | Cutter         | 24     | \$14,509,000 | 19     | \$8,137,000  | 43      | \$22,646,000 |
| 63 | Joseph      | Kotoch         | 13     | \$8,075,000  | 30     | \$14,031,500 | 43      | \$22,106,500 |
| 64 | Frank       | Montro         | 88     | \$17,293,299 | 26     | \$4,375,375  | 114     | \$21,668,674 |
| 65 | Lindsay     | Everest        | 11     | \$10,108,000 | 7      | \$11,539,975 | 18      | \$21,647,975 |
| 66 | Kelly       | Angelopoulos   | 21     | \$12,176,000 | 15     | \$8,636,000  | 36      | \$20,812,000 |
| 67 | Lauren      | Mitrick Wood   | 18     | \$10,879,000 | 17     | \$9,453,000  | 35      | \$20,332,000 |
| 68 | Bruce       | Glazer         | 15     | \$6,653,750  | 18     | \$13,462,000 | 33      | \$20,115,750 |
| 69 | Deborah     | Hess           | 27     | \$15,117,900 | 13     | \$4,953,800  | 40      | \$20,071,700 |
| 70 | Darrell     | Scott          | 9      | \$4,336,000  | 33     | \$15,698,500 | 42      | \$20,034,500 |
| 71 | Alishja     | Ballard        | 23     | \$11,594,501 | 12     | \$8,207,500  | 35      | \$19,802,001 |
| 72 | Dennis      | Huyck          | 22     | \$11,924,930 | 10     | \$7,796,533  | 32      | \$19,721,463 |
| 73 | Robert      | Picciariello   | 51     | \$19,634,049 | 0      | \$0          | 51      | \$19,634,049 |
| 74 | Rizwan      | Gilani         | 21     | \$9,738,775  | 15     | \$9,690,000  | 36      | \$19,428,775 |
| 75 | Nadine      | Ferrata        | 17     | \$11,417,500 | 13     | \$7,974,499  | 30      | \$19,391,999 |
| 76 | Christopher | Engelmann      | 4      | \$1,196,500  | 38     | \$18,184,600 | 42      | \$19,381,100 |
| 77 | Erlend      | Candea         | 24     | \$17,565,000 | 2      | \$1,770,000  | 26      | \$19,335,000 |
| 78 | Laura       | Meier          | 16     | \$8,283,500  | 23     | \$10,688,249 | 39      | \$18,971,749 |
| 79 | Camille     | Canales        | 18     | \$7,888,400  | 22     | \$11,038,533 | 40      | \$18,926,933 |
| 80 | Owen        | Duffy          | 19     | \$11,697,500 | 19     | \$7,226,500  | 38      | \$18,924,000 |
| 81 | Keith       | Tarasiewicz    | 16     | \$5,060,080  | 28     | \$13,708,900 | 44      | \$18,768,980 |
| 82 | Mark        | Jak            | 9      | \$9,020,500  | 10     | \$9,629,000  | 19      | \$18,649,500 |
| 83 | Gwen        | Farinella      | 5      | \$16,245,000 | 2      | \$2,357,400  | 7       | \$18,602,400 |
| 84 | Margaret    | Baczkowski     | 9      | \$12,607,000 | 4      | \$5,860,000  | 13      | \$18,467,000 |

| #   | First Name | Last Name  | List # | List \$      | Sell # | Sell \$     | Total # | Total \$     |
|-----|------------|------------|--------|--------------|--------|-------------|---------|--------------|
| 85  | Michael    | Rosenblum  | 20     | \$12,421,747 | 8      | \$6,038,500 | 28      | \$18,460,247 |
| 86  | Juliana    | Yeager     | 20     | \$10,918,811 | 11     | \$7,124,400 | 31      | \$18,043,211 |
| 87  | Nathan     | Binkley    | 12     | \$7,793,500  | 16     | \$9,839,000 | 28      | \$17,632,500 |
| 88  | Vincent    | Anzalone   | 11     | \$8,039,250  | 14     | \$9,534,900 | 25      | \$17,574,150 |
| 89  | Mark       | Icuss      | 9      | \$11,450,500 | 12     | \$5,958,500 | 21      | \$17,409,000 |
| 90  | Paul       | Barker     | 19     | \$11,141,600 | 9      | \$6,266,700 | 28      | \$17,408,300 |
| 91  | Michael    | Hall       | 26     | \$13,277,400 | 9      | \$4,062,900 | 35      | \$17,340,300 |
| 92  | Joshua     | Lipton     | 11     | \$9,940,000  | 8      | \$7,239,500 | 19      | \$17,179,500 |
| 93  | Shay       | Hata       | 19     | \$9,517,250  | 16     | \$7,650,500 | 35      | \$17,167,750 |
| 94  | Samantha   | Porter     | 23     | \$14,688,750 | 3      | \$2,407,307 | 26      | \$17,096,057 |
| 95  | Reve'      | Kendall    | 36     | \$15,845,500 | 1      | \$1,240,000 | 37      | \$17,085,500 |
| 96  | Ryan       | Preuett    | 12     | \$14,805,000 | 2      | \$2,269,000 | 14      | \$17,074,000 |
| 97  | Pamela     | Rueve      | 13     | \$9,230,000  | 8      | \$7,840,000 | 21      | \$17,070,000 |
| 98  | Natasha    | Motev      | 7      | \$11,853,000 | 3      | \$5,175,000 | 10      | \$17,028,000 |
| 99  | Joanne     | Nemerovski | 8      | \$9,030,000  | 11     | \$7,953,000 | 19      | \$16,983,000 |
| 100 | Lucas      | Blahnik    | 20     | \$11,009,013 | 14     | \$5,709,750 | 34      | \$16,718,763 |

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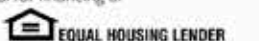
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# TOP 250 STANDINGS

Teams and individuals from January 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020

| #   | First Name | Last Name  | List # | List \$      | Sell # | Sell \$      | Total # | Total \$     |
|-----|------------|------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| 101 | Ian        | Schwartz   | 13     | \$7,022,100  | 14     | \$9,680,500  | 27      | \$16,702,600 |
| 102 | Ronda      | Fish       | 7      | \$9,554,500  | 5      | \$7,059,900  | 12      | \$16,614,400 |
| 103 | Paul       | Mancini    | 18     | \$8,064,000  | 13     | \$8,299,000  | 31      | \$16,363,000 |
| 104 | Brady      | Miller     | 19     | \$7,103,775  | 27     | \$9,192,000  | 46      | \$16,295,775 |
| 105 | Jodi       | Serio      | 20     | \$15,656,000 | 2      | \$618,000    | 22      | \$16,274,000 |
| 106 | Stacey     | Dombar     | 33     | \$14,293,100 | 5      | \$1,758,500  | 38      | \$16,051,600 |
| 107 | Amy        | Duong      | 16     | \$6,524,672  | 16     | \$9,480,400  | 32      | \$16,005,072 |
| 108 | Nick       | Rendleman  | 17     | \$6,497,400  | 32     | \$9,333,479  | 49      | \$15,830,879 |
| 109 | Alexa      | Hara       | 3      | \$9,440,000  | 12     | \$6,372,400  | 15      | \$15,812,400 |
| 110 | James      | Buczynski  | 17     | \$12,044,000 | 6      | \$3,732,000  | 23      | \$15,776,000 |
| 111 | Janelle    | Dennis     | 18     | \$8,390,800  | 12     | \$7,331,900  | 30      | \$15,722,700 |
| 112 | Haley      | Levine     | 11     | \$3,543,400  | 31     | \$12,154,363 | 42      | \$15,697,763 |
| 113 | Rubina     | Bokhari    | 9      | \$6,896,250  | 10     | \$8,799,400  | 19      | \$15,695,650 |
| 114 | Suzanne    | Gignilliat | 7      | \$9,411,000  | 1      | \$6,250,000  | 8       | \$15,661,000 |
| 115 | Kathryn    | Schrage    | 31     | \$13,322,000 | 5      | \$2,326,000  | 36      | \$15,648,000 |
| 116 | Bari       | Levine     | 7      | \$3,543,250  | 18     | \$12,013,500 | 25      | \$15,556,750 |
| 117 | Danny      | Lewis      | 15     | \$6,729,450  | 15     | \$8,711,250  | 30      | \$15,440,700 |
| 118 | Karen      | Schwartz   | 18     | \$7,973,500  | 14     | \$7,461,400  | 32      | \$15,434,900 |
| 119 | Steve      | Otwell     | 0      | \$0          | 32     | \$15,320,238 | 32      | \$15,320,238 |
| 120 | Michael    | McGuinness | 3      | \$901,400    | 33     | \$14,402,300 | 36      | \$15,303,700 |
| 121 | Connie     | Engel      | 13     | \$7,068,000  | 13     | \$8,165,000  | 26      | \$15,233,000 |
| 122 | Scott      | Berg       | 37     | \$14,775,980 | 1      | \$454,000    | 38      | \$15,229,980 |
| 123 | Brent      | Hall       | 22     | \$14,791,400 | 1      | \$376,000    | 23      | \$15,167,400 |
| 124 | Mark       | Keppy      | 17     | \$8,480,863  | 14     | \$6,495,000  | 31      | \$14,975,863 |
| 125 | Brooke     | Daitchman  | 15     | \$7,086,900  | 13     | \$7,875,500  | 28      | \$14,962,400 |
| 126 | Elias      | Masud      | 7      | \$2,946,700  | 25     | \$11,878,224 | 32      | \$14,824,924 |
| 127 | Sarah      | Ziehr      | 35     | \$14,504,600 | 0      | \$0          | 35      | \$14,504,600 |
| 128 | Marta      | Lazic      | 12     | \$3,875,300  | 24     | \$10,610,500 | 36      | \$14,485,800 |
| 129 | P Corwin   | Robertson  | 11     | \$14,453,843 | 0      | \$0          | 11      | \$14,453,843 |
| 130 | Brooke     | Vanderbok  | 24     | \$12,524,350 | 3      | \$1,873,900  | 27      | \$14,398,250 |
| 131 | Gail       | Spren      | 19     | \$10,045,750 | 5      | \$4,264,000  | 24      | \$14,309,750 |
| 132 | John       | Lyons      | 11     | \$3,718,200  | 26     | \$10,427,500 | 37      | \$14,145,700 |
| 133 | Greg       | Whelan     | 2      | \$797,500    | 22     | \$13,317,500 | 24      | \$14,115,000 |
| 134 | Kathleen   | Malone     | 7      | \$4,658,500  | 13     | \$9,364,000  | 20      | \$14,022,500 |

| #   | First Name | Last Name | List # | List \$      | Sell # | Sell \$      | Total # | Total \$     |
|-----|------------|-----------|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| 135 | Ryan       | Huyler    | 15     | \$11,825,500 | 5      | \$2,125,000  | 20      | \$13,950,500 |
| 136 | Rafay      | Qamar     | 16     | \$5,719,500  | 19     | \$8,086,900  | 35      | \$13,806,400 |
| 137 | Eric       | Hublar    | 6      | \$1,969,500  | 25     | \$11,773,650 | 31      | \$13,743,150 |
| 138 | Akos       | Straub    | 16     | \$7,111,000  | 16     | \$6,613,000  | 32      | \$13,724,000 |
| 139 | Gregory    | Desmond   | 10     | \$6,870,500  | 9      | \$6,844,000  | 19      | \$13,714,500 |
| 140 | Robin      | Allotta   | 15     | \$6,314,500  | 14     | \$7,385,200  | 29      | \$13,699,700 |
| 141 | Megan      | Tirpak    | 6      | \$6,044,750  | 6      | \$7,522,500  | 12      | \$13,567,250 |
| 142 | Jacob      | Tasharski | 9      | \$4,246,000  | 15     | \$9,290,500  | 24      | \$13,536,500 |
| 143 | Kieran     | Conlon    | 13     | \$8,270,500  | 11     | \$5,260,500  | 24      | \$13,531,000 |
| 144 | Joanna     | Olszynska | 18     | \$9,979,000  | 8      | \$3,496,676  | 26      | \$13,475,676 |
| 145 | Margaret   | Daday     | 11     | \$6,327,000  | 10     | \$7,131,000  | 21      | \$13,458,000 |
| 146 | Katherine  | Malkin    | 8      | \$12,070,000 | 3      | \$1,376,500  | 11      | \$13,446,500 |
| 147 | Natalie    | Renna     | 10     | \$3,772,700  | 29     | \$9,620,401  | 39      | \$13,393,101 |
| 148 | Patrick    | Shino     | 3      | \$1,143,000  | 30     | \$12,171,649 | 33      | \$13,314,649 |
| 149 | James      | D'Astice  | 9      | \$3,983,000  | 22     | \$9,326,000  | 31      | \$13,309,000 |
| 150 | John       | Huebner   | 11     | \$5,516,500  | 13     | \$7,790,750  | 24      | \$13,307,250 |

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# TOP 250 STANDINGS

Teams and individuals from January 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020

| #   | First Name  | Last Name    | List # | List \$      | Sell # | Sell \$      | Total # | Total \$     |
|-----|-------------|--------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| 151 | Michelle    | Browne       | 25     | \$11,919,000 | 3      | \$1,380,000  | 28      | \$13,299,000 |
| 152 | Daniel      | Fowler       | 9      | \$3,624,450  | 17     | \$9,595,400  | 26      | \$13,219,850 |
| 153 | Stephanie   | LoVerde      | 18     | \$7,048,950  | 10     | \$6,141,500  | 28      | \$13,190,450 |
| 154 | Susan       | Kanter       | 17     | \$7,955,000  | 11     | \$5,157,000  | 28      | \$13,112,000 |
| 155 | Philip      | Skowron      | 12     | \$9,231,000  | 4      | \$3,825,000  | 16      | \$13,056,000 |
| 156 | Kathryn     | Barry        | 10     | \$3,351,500  | 21     | \$9,685,100  | 31      | \$13,036,600 |
| 157 | Radim       | Mandel       | 24     | \$8,899,400  | 8      | \$4,093,500  | 32      | \$12,992,900 |
| 158 | Dominic     | Irpino       | 18     | \$7,315,950  | 20     | \$5,659,000  | 38      | \$12,974,950 |
| 159 | Eudice      | Fogel        | 10     | \$4,240,000  | 13     | \$8,696,000  | 23      | \$12,936,000 |
| 160 | Christopher | Mundy        | 16     | \$10,378,500 | 5      | \$2,548,000  | 21      | \$12,926,500 |
| 161 | Survi       | Kobawala     | 0      | \$0          | 27     | \$12,922,050 | 27      | \$12,922,050 |
| 162 | Mariah      | Dell         | 13     | \$5,530,000  | 13     | \$7,356,899  | 26      | \$12,886,899 |
| 163 | Thomas      | Bezanes      | 8      | \$3,386,500  | 13     | \$9,499,388  | 21      | \$12,885,888 |
| 164 | Sam         | Jenkins      | 13     | \$9,902,500  | 4      | \$2,851,498  | 17      | \$12,753,998 |
| 165 | Amir        | Fouad        | 19     | \$8,959,146  | 4      | \$3,650,000  | 23      | \$12,609,146 |
| 166 | Landon      | Harper       | 16     | \$10,608,095 | 2      | \$1,980,000  | 18      | \$12,588,095 |
| 167 | Scott       | Stavish      | 12     | \$8,676,000  | 7      | \$3,911,500  | 19      | \$12,587,500 |
| 168 | Brittani    | Walker       | 10     | \$3,134,500  | 29     | \$9,367,463  | 39      | \$12,501,963 |
| 169 | Brett       | Novack       | 15     | \$8,058,465  | 7      | \$4,414,000  | 22      | \$12,472,465 |
| 170 | Elizabeth   | Lothamer     | 5      | \$3,926,900  | 22     | \$8,536,500  | 27      | \$12,463,400 |
| 171 | Ken         | Jungwirth    | 14     | \$5,450,950  | 13     | \$7,012,300  | 27      | \$12,463,250 |
| 172 | Benjamin    | Lissner      | 6      | \$2,035,500  | 29     | \$10,414,000 | 35      | \$12,449,500 |
| 173 | Patrick     | Natale       | 11     | \$6,178,500  | 11     | \$6,193,500  | 22      | \$12,372,000 |
| 174 | Nancy       | Hotchkiss    | 22     | \$8,450,500  | 9      | \$3,861,000  | 31      | \$12,311,500 |
| 175 | Kevin       | Wood         | 4      | \$11,129,554 | 1      | \$1,175,000  | 5       | \$12,304,554 |
| 176 | Ryan        | Gossett      | 13     | \$4,866,500  | 13     | \$7,412,000  | 26      | \$12,278,500 |
| 177 | Zachary     | Redden       | 5      | \$2,610,000  | 19     | \$9,661,088  | 24      | \$12,271,088 |
| 178 | Stefanie    | Lavelle      | 11     | \$4,812,900  | 14     | \$7,415,750  | 25      | \$12,228,650 |
| 179 | Melanie     | Carlson      | 5      | \$2,992,000  | 13     | \$9,220,000  | 18      | \$12,212,000 |
| 180 | Chris       | McComas      | 13     | \$6,790,900  | 10     | \$5,390,000  | 23      | \$12,180,900 |
| 181 | Michael     | McCallum     | 13     | \$6,185,250  | 11     | \$5,948,000  | 24      | \$12,133,250 |
| 182 | Emily       | Smart Lemire | 9      | \$5,485,000  | 7      | \$6,569,500  | 16      | \$12,054,500 |
| 183 | Adam        | Zagata       | 7      | \$2,892,000  | 21     | \$9,127,250  | 28      | \$12,019,250 |
| 184 | Steven      | Powers       | 7      | \$5,165,000  | 8      | \$6,824,000  | 15      | \$11,989,000 |

| #   | First Name | Last Name  | List # | List \$      | Sell # | Sell \$      | Total # | Total \$     |
|-----|------------|------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| 185 | Karen      | Peterson   | 6      | \$7,572,500  | 3      | \$4,374,000  | 9       | \$11,946,500 |
| 186 | Jacqueline | Colando    | 25     | \$10,131,400 | 4      | \$1,810,500  | 29      | \$11,941,900 |
| 187 | Michael    | Maier      | 18     | \$9,788,625  | 7      | \$2,099,500  | 25      | \$11,888,125 |
| 188 | Mark       | Tranter    | 19     | \$10,203,900 | 3      | \$1,657,000  | 22      | \$11,860,900 |
| 189 | Keith      | Wilkey     | 9      | \$7,370,100  | 6      | \$4,444,500  | 15      | \$11,814,600 |
| 190 | Marlene    | Rubenstein | 10     | \$6,552,500  | 11     | \$5,256,500  | 21      | \$11,809,000 |
| 191 | Rory       | Fiedler    | 0      | \$0          | 27     | \$11,763,800 | 27      | \$11,763,800 |
| 192 | Gregorio   | Cirone     | 21     | \$6,550,600  | 9      | \$5,117,000  | 30      | \$11,667,600 |
| 193 | Elizabeth  | Caya       | 0      | \$0          | 24     | \$11,657,000 | 24      | \$11,657,000 |
| 194 | Patrick    | Teets      | 10     | \$6,397,250  | 7      | \$5,232,000  | 17      | \$11,629,250 |
| 195 | Randy      | Nasatir    | 9      | \$5,539,000  | 12     | \$6,081,750  | 21      | \$11,620,750 |
| 196 | Lisa       | Huber      | 12     | \$6,612,000  | 11     | \$4,981,728  | 23      | \$11,593,728 |
| 197 | Nick       | Nastos     | 7      | \$2,354,000  | 26     | \$9,218,200  | 33      | \$11,572,200 |
| 198 | John       | Vossoughi  | 7      | \$4,016,500  | 8      | \$7,555,000  | 15      | \$11,571,500 |
| 199 | Marc       | Zale       | 5      | \$2,567,500  | 19     | \$9,001,900  | 24      | \$11,569,400 |
| 200 | Ryan       | Smith      | 76     | \$11,550,079 | 0      | \$0          | 76      | \$11,550,079 |

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Gurney Law Group

# TOP 250 STANDINGS

Teams and individuals from January 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020

| #   | First Name  | Last Name  | List # | List \$      | Sell # | Sell \$      | Total # | Total \$     |
|-----|-------------|------------|--------|--------------|--------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| 201 | Cindy       | Weinreb    | 6      | \$2,727,500  | 18     | \$8,775,800  | 24      | \$11,503,300 |
| 202 | Sherri      | Hoke       | 7      | \$6,325,000  | 7      | \$5,145,000  | 14      | \$11,470,000 |
| 203 | Jennifer    | Bell       | 17     | \$6,875,300  | 11     | \$4,576,650  | 28      | \$11,451,950 |
| 204 | Koon        | Lau        | 9      | \$3,674,500  | 16     | \$7,681,000  | 25      | \$11,355,500 |
| 205 | Lindsey     | Richardson | 15     | \$6,016,000  | 11     | \$5,332,035  | 26      | \$11,348,035 |
| 206 | James       | Demarco    | 10     | \$4,370,000  | 13     | \$6,926,500  | 23      | \$11,296,500 |
| 207 | Hasani      | Steele     | 16     | \$8,949,902  | 5      | \$2,286,900  | 21      | \$11,236,802 |
| 208 | Qiankun     | Chen       | 16     | \$4,911,000  | 20     | \$6,322,000  | 36      | \$11,233,000 |
| 209 | Lisa        | Kalous     | 7      | \$3,715,000  | 13     | \$7,517,600  | 20      | \$11,232,600 |
| 210 | Jeffrey     | Proctor    | 11     | \$7,369,999  | 3      | \$3,837,500  | 14      | \$11,207,499 |
| 211 | Nichole     | Dinino     | 5      | \$1,610,000  | 20     | \$9,592,899  | 25      | \$11,202,899 |
| 212 | Lyn         | Harvie     | 11     | \$5,193,500  | 11     | \$5,974,388  | 22      | \$11,167,888 |
| 213 | Matthew     | Engle      | 7      | \$3,048,400  | 25     | \$8,113,900  | 32      | \$11,162,300 |
| 214 | Joe         | Zimmerman  | 23     | \$8,918,055  | 6      | \$2,224,500  | 29      | \$11,142,555 |
| 215 | John        | Eargle     | 13     | \$5,034,999  | 16     | \$6,084,500  | 29      | \$11,119,499 |
| 216 | Cara        | Buffa      | 17     | \$9,063,397  | 4      | \$2,044,250  | 21      | \$11,107,647 |
| 217 | Phyllis     | Smith      | 17     | \$6,414,000  | 14     | \$4,609,990  | 31      | \$11,023,990 |
| 218 | Christopher | Gaggero    | 8      | \$3,316,500  | 17     | \$7,652,500  | 25      | \$10,969,000 |
| 219 | Ted         | Kuhlmann   | 13     | \$6,206,900  | 10     | \$4,725,500  | 23      | \$10,932,400 |
| 220 | Elizabeth   | Palomar    | 28     | \$10,255,200 | 2      | \$610,000    | 30      | \$10,865,200 |
| 221 | Giovanni    | Leopaldi   | 11     | \$3,814,000  | 19     | \$6,999,400  | 30      | \$10,813,400 |
| 222 | John        | Grafft     | 19     | \$8,610,400  | 5      | \$2,183,000  | 24      | \$10,793,400 |
| 223 | Stephen     | Hnatow     | 11     | \$5,818,500  | 9      | \$4,971,900  | 20      | \$10,790,400 |
| 224 | Robert      | Sullivan   | 9      | \$5,781,200  | 8      | \$5,005,500  | 17      | \$10,786,700 |
| 225 | Steve       | Dombar     | 0      | \$0          | 18     | \$10,750,100 | 18      | \$10,750,100 |
| 226 | Rachel      | Krueger    | 10     | \$8,751,400  | 4      | \$1,977,000  | 14      | \$10,728,400 |
| 227 | Megan       | Wood       | 5      | \$2,232,500  | 17     | \$8,470,000  | 22      | \$10,702,500 |
| 228 | Elizabeth   | Brooks     | 7      | \$10,701,832 | 0      | \$0          | 7       | \$10,701,832 |
| 229 | Mark        | Zipperer   | 18     | \$6,303,900  | 9      | \$4,365,900  | 27      | \$10,669,800 |
| 230 | Steven      | Acoba      | 6      | \$6,374,000  | 5      | \$4,250,000  | 11      | \$10,624,000 |
| 231 | Elizabeth   | Licata     | 8      | \$4,474,000  | 7      | \$6,057,500  | 15      | \$10,531,500 |
| 232 | Chloe       | Ifergan    | 10     | \$4,148,500  | 9      | \$6,352,500  | 19      | \$10,501,000 |
| 233 | Christina   | McNamee    | 8      | \$4,695,500  | 9      | \$5,775,000  | 17      | \$10,470,500 |
| 234 | Douglas     | Smith      | 4      | \$2,738,000  | 7      | \$7,720,000  | 11      | \$10,458,000 |

| #   | First Name | Last Name   | List # | List \$      | Sell # | Sell \$     | Total # | Total \$     |
|-----|------------|-------------|--------|--------------|--------|-------------|---------|--------------|
| 235 | James      | Sheehan     | 8      | \$4,583,000  | 8      | \$5,842,000 | 16      | \$10,425,000 |
| 236 | Dawn       | McKenna     | 8      | \$6,358,000  | 7      | \$4,031,000 | 15      | \$10,389,000 |
| 237 | Stefanie   | D'Agostino  | 33     | \$10,369,393 | 0      | \$0         | 33      | \$10,369,393 |
| 238 | David      | Nimick      | 12     | \$5,596,400  | 9      | \$4,763,000 | 21      | \$10,359,400 |
| 239 | Curtis     | Crotty      | 2      | \$1,445,000  | 16     | \$8,904,500 | 18      | \$10,349,500 |
| 240 | Cory       | Tanzer      | 16     | \$5,594,498  | 13     | \$4,728,800 | 29      | \$10,323,298 |
| 241 | Robert     | Yoshimura   | 8      | \$3,751,000  | 14     | \$6,571,700 | 22      | \$10,322,700 |
| 242 | Tara       | Leinenweber | 27     | \$10,310,008 | 0      | \$0         | 27      | \$10,310,008 |
| 243 | Jane       | Shawkey-Nye | 5      | \$8,650,000  | 2      | \$1,650,000 | 7       | \$10,300,000 |
| 244 | Kyle       | Jamicich    | 8      | \$5,765,000  | 9      | \$4,518,800 | 17      | \$10,283,800 |
| 245 | Tiffany    | Meyers      | 4      | \$1,550,000  | 22     | \$8,723,900 | 26      | \$10,273,900 |
| 246 | Nick       | Libert      | 14     | \$4,257,540  | 17     | \$5,947,775 | 31      | \$10,205,315 |
| 247 | Derek      | Disera      | 9      | \$7,671,000  | 5      | \$2,527,500 | 14      | \$10,198,500 |
| 248 | Ashley     | Carter      | 18     | \$6,483,678  | 11     | \$3,701,500 | 29      | \$10,185,178 |
| 249 | Deanne     | Thomas      | 2      | \$4,875,000  | 2      | \$5,300,000 | 4       | \$10,175,000 |
| 250 | Michael    | Saladino    | 13     | \$4,597,388  | 13     | \$5,557,000 | 26      | \$10,154,388 |

**Disclaimer:** Information is pulled directly from the MLS. New construction or numbers not reported to the MLS within the date range listed are not included. The MLS is not responsible for submitting this data. Some teams may report each agent individually, while others may take credit for the entire team. *Chicago Real Producers* does not alter or compile this data nor claim responsibility for the stats reported to/by the MLS. Data is based on Chicago proper only and may not match the agent's exact year-to-date volume.



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After



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