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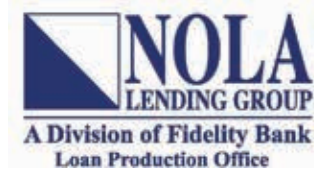


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▶ publisher's note

# BACK TO CLASS

## event announcement

By Gina Miller

I am so excited to announce *Baton Rouge Real Producers* will be hosting BACK TO CLASS, a **Benefit Runway Style Show**, showcasing several of our REALTORS® wearing fashions from local boutiques and clothiers. So mark your calendars and get your ticket! The event will take place on Tuesday, September 14, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm at City Club, North Boulevard.

### ▲ Save *the* Date

Organized by *BRRP* Preferred Title Company's Business Development and Marketing Representatives, Darby Baronet, Meagan Melancon, Alex Polito, Joelle Hocke, Bonnie Smith and Neila Stone, Back to Class

will feature over 30 local real estate industry leaders in individual fashion styles to inspire us and get us ready for the upcoming fall season.

Here's my favorite part... This first annual Benefit Style Show will raise money for school uniforms in an effort to relieve some of the financial strain placed on our single parents when preparing their children for the school year. I was a single mom for eight years, and I know this tune well! Getting students prepared with the proper attire and school supplies can truly take its toll on a household. We are proudly partnering with Jennifer Maggio and The Life of a Single Mom to get these uniforms in the hands of those in need.

The theme of **Back to Class** was chosen to encourage professionalism in the working field, whether that be appearance and etiquette or attitude and professionalism, **class never goes out of style.**

We will be celebrating the successes of our Real Producers, our Preferred Partners, all with the original mission of the event, to provide opportunity to gather together and strengthen relationships, build new ones and grow our businesses with other like-minded professionals.

I am so looking forward to this and anticipating this being the first of many.

Grateful Beyond, *Gina*

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▶▶ partner spotlight

By Breanna Smith | Photos by Aaron Cox

# CYPRESS ROOFING

**A Good Roof and A Firm Foundation**



Caprice



Joshua



Alexandra



Samantha

Equipped only with knowledge of the roofing industry and a desire to build a faith-based company focused on serving customers, Caprice Cline and her three children Joshua, Samantha and Alexandra opened Cypress Roofing in 2019. By sticking to their promise of “*service so good, the roof seems like lagniappe*” they have grown the company exponentially, serving the community one home at a time.

“We started with nothing,” Caprice said. “We had two computers and business cards and were all working out of our homes. We would go door-knocking every single day, and that’s how we built the business.”

Josh, the oldest, took to sales immediately – surprising Caprice and his sisters with his success knocking on doors and bringing in business. “It’s just amazing what you may not see someone doing, and God says look at that – yes, they can.”

With Caprice in charge of finance and marketing, Josh and Samantha handling sales, and Alex handling operations and administration, the company quickly grew. Within six months, they completed more than \$1 million in sales and added several new employees. Focused on growing and doing business the right way has paid off, helping them build valuable relationships with clients and being named the 2020 New Business of the Year by the Ascension Parish Chamber of Commerce.

### The Perfect Storm

In early 2020, a hail storm ravaged roofs in the West Baton Rouge area. The team had been knocking on doors, strategically advertising and spreading the word about Cypress Roofing for months prior – and when people were looking for a reputable company to fix and replace their roofs, they knew who to call.

“Business really exploded,” Caprice said. Then came an unprecedented

hurricane season with Louisiana seeing the most named storms in a season since 1851 – a whopping 30. Category 4 Hurricane Laura made landfall in late August as the strongest hurricane in terms of wind speed to hit Louisiana in 150 years.

Hurricane preparedness is a term no one takes lightly in South Louisiana, and Cypress Roofing was no exception. The team prepared by taking the time to make connections with homeowners early and often. And when the storms hit, Cypress Roofing took the opportunity to showcase their ability to work directly with insurance companies, provide high-quality customer service and get the job done well each and every time.

Amid the devastation, Cypress Roofing worked around the clock to be of service to those in need. “We love touching people’s lives,” Caprice said. “As much as we push to make this company successful, we equally love people. When people know that you care about them and not just the bottom line – that goes for our homeowners and the people who work for us – we care about each of them as people first.”

### A Whole Lot of Togetherness

The Cypress Roofing team has substantially increased over the past two years. Caprice is proud of the fact that each person employed with Cypress Roofing has sought out the company, ready to be a part of it. God has brought the best in the business to Cypress Roofing, those prepared for the perfect storm every single time.

“God’s just got his hand all over every aspect of the business,” Caprice said. “We have had the opportunity to bring on wonderful staff members that have added so much to our business and our lives, in general. We feel so blessed to have our Cypress teammates.”

The core four – Caprice, Josh, Sam and Alex – equally own the company and have worked to build it from the



ground up on a firm foundation of faith, service and doing the right thing. Their complementary skills and strengths combined with their unwavering family bond benefits the business, and most importantly, their clients.

“Alex is the one who first got into roofing, and she knew nothing. Zero. And she’s one of the most knowledgeable people in roofing now,” Caprice said. “She just took it upon herself to learn everything and partnered with our supplier, Jonah Doucet, asking a million questions. He was and continues to be a great source of information.”

“Ninety-nine-point-nine percent of the time it’s great working with your adult children,” Caprice said with a laugh. “Not only do we see each other during the week, we see each other on the weekends, we’re at each other’s houses at night, we go to church together – it’s a lot of togetherness! It’s a lot of togetherness that a lot of



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people might not be able to handle but we just love each other and being around one another. The most fun we have is when we’re around each other.”

The fabulous four are corporate members of the Rotary Club and volunteer with Bethany Church. On their days off, they’re often found fishing at the family camp in Cocodrie. “Like we don’t have enough togetherness!”

From day one, the Cypress Roofing core four have kept the words of Joshua 1:9 in mind as they weather the storms of business, sky-rocketing construction material costs and the uncharted waters of serious growth: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

**Tell us about your education.**

Baton Rouge kid through and through. I went to Catholic High School. Then got my BA from LSU in International Studies and French. I then went on to get my JD from Southern University Law Center were I graduated from in 2016.

**Why did you want to become an attorney?**

I was naturally drawn to the law and was told since a young age that I should be an attorney. I worked in the family business as a Professional Landman for a while after I finished my undergrad degree at LSU. By doing this type of work, I learned a lot about property law, real estate law, mineral law, contracts, etc. and became very interested. Then in about 2012 when the oil & gas market took a hit I decided to go back to law school.

**If you were not practicing law, what would be your alternate profession?**

I would probably be back working in the oil & gas industry or working back with the Walt Disney Company and/or Universal Studios.

**What is one thing you wish you would have known before you went to law school?**

How to manage my time better! That is by far one of the most valuable things I learned in law school. It is something I still practice in my everyday life and without good time management there is no way I could accomplish everything that needs to be done.

**Are you involved with any other organizations or causes?**

My wife and I are parishioners at St. Jude Catholic Church. I am also a member of the American Bar Association and the Louisiana Bar Association.

**What is the best piece of advice you have received?**

“Why worry? If you’ve done the very best you can, then worrying won’t make it any better.”

**Tell us something interesting about yourself.**

I attended the French immersion program at St. Anne’s University in Nova Scotia, Canada twice and I am still fluent in French.

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By Breanna Smith | Photos by Peyton Johnson

# MIRIAM & REMY M|R Property Group



## BETTER TOGETHER

**M**iriam Kantrow del Rio and Remy Baus Curry met one day in 2019 after months of a mutual friend saying they should get together. After a drink at Stabs, the two got into their cars and called each other from the parking lot, talking all the way home, and then the next day and the day after that.

“

WE BOTH HAVE A COMPETITIVE SPIRIT, ENTHUSIASM AND GENEROUS HEARTS.

”



of ways. Before the two knew one another, they married young and had children. They were stay-at-home moms for several years, who, after years of focusing on their kids, were determined to put their hard-earned degrees from LSU to work. Both women earned their bachelor's degree in marketing – Remy went on to earn a master's in Social Work, and Miriam earned hers in Human Resource Development. Around the same time, Miriam started a Pilates business, and Remy was a certified yoga instructor with her own business. In 2016, both women got their real estate licenses.

They shared so much in common, and the more they talked, they also began to realize that they had the same goals and wanted similar futures.

Miriam and Remy thrive in a team atmosphere. They love collaborating, and they are never hesitant to dream out loud. Many of their business collaborating sessions happen during their morning walks, including their decision to start M|R Property Group. “We said, let's make this happen,” Miriam said.



They haven't stopped talking since.

“It's like a little love story,” Miriam said.

### Sisters of the Soul

The pair share a lot of experiences, and their lives parallel in a series

Both love their families and put their children first. Remy's three children are Baus, Lena and Robert “Robbie” Lee Curry VI. Miriam's children are Kaplan, 19, Matthew, 18, Parks, 15, and Reed, 15. They were the driving

force behind the women's decision to go full-steam ahead, along with the encouragement from their husbands, Robert Curry and Randy del Rio. The two realized that being on their own islands would not allow them the freedom to be fully present for their children as their individual businesses continued to grow. “We wanted to help each other and be able to spend more time with our families without sacrificing our careers.” And with that in mind, they formed M|R Property Group.

The duo also points to marketing and transaction coordinator Blair Root for keeping them organized and focused on serving their clients. “She really helps us nurture our relationships,” Remy said.

Remy and Miriam's partnership is more than a business. They are soul sisters who came together to do great things and make a difference in their community. Their latest project is a nonprofit that will help single women and divorcees by offering support and assistance with homeownership. This year, they will partner with other local businesses for the Hogs for the Cause fundraiser festival in Baton Rouge. Proceeds from the festival will allow the organization to help thousands of families battling pediatric brain cancer through direct

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THIS MARKET IS CRAZY RIGHT NOW, IT'S DEFINITELY AS CRAZY AS IT'S EVER BEEN AS LONG AS WE'VE BEEN IN REAL ESTATE. **AND WE STILL LAUGH A LOT. IT CAN BE VERY STRESSFUL, AND THAT'S ONE THING I LOVE ABOUT HAVING TEAMMATES. WE GET TO TALK THINGS OUT, LAUGH ABOUT IT AND REMIND OURSELVES WE'RE DOING GREAT AND DESERVE TO BE HAPPY...**

”

grants and funding programming at children's hospitals.

**Same But Different**

Miriam and Remy share a lot of experiences and laughs. They are similar in many ways – both are family-oriented go-getters who love working with people. “We both have a competitive spirit, enthusiasm and generous hearts.” But it's their differences that make them click so well as friends and business partners.

Remy is an expert multi-tasker who is thorough and focused on the details. “I'm constantly impressed by Remy,” Miriam said. She's a competitor who enjoys the thrill of working to get the best deal for her clients. “Remy always wins.”

Miriam marches to a different drum. People are naturally drawn to her – a testament to her warmth, compassion and ability to connect with people. Remy recalls one time when Miriam arrived for a showing, knocked on the door and met a total stranger. “He



said, I think you're at the wrong house, but are you in real estate? Are you looking for a house to buy?” She ended up listing and selling his house – and

the one next door, too. “All because she pulled up in the wrong driveway – that's the kind of stuff that Miriam does,” Remy said laughing.

The dynamic duo complement each other's strengths and skills in a way that can only be described as meant to be. “This market is crazy right now, it's definitely as crazy as it's ever been as long as we've been in real estate,” Remy said. “And we still laugh a lot. It can be very stressful, and that's one thing I love about having teammates. We get to talk things out, laugh about it and remind ourselves we're doing great and deserve to be happy... One of the biggest things for me in having a team like this – it gives me a confidence that I've never had. It's not just me, I have Miriam's expertise and Blair by our side. They give me a sense of confidence I've never had in business before.”

The early success of the M/R Property Group is proof – Remy and Miriam are better together. And the pair have plenty more in store.

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» home matters  
By Shauna Osborne

# ETIQUETTE

## THAT ENDURES

Who remembers, as a child, having to sit down in the days following your birthday and holidays and painstakingly write out “thank you” cards to those friends and family members who had presented you with a gift? Though it seemed a tedious chore at the time, this deliberate, impactful practice of showing gratitude has likely stayed with you over the years, taking on various forms of expression as etiquette expectations have changed. While some rules have mostly fallen by the wayside, such as certain restrictions on dress (e.g., white after Labor Day = now totally acceptable), some practices do – and should – endure. Here are a few etiquette expectations that have retained their social value and should, in this author’s opinion, continue to be honored:

### BE PUNCTUAL.

While we joke about being “fashionably late” for parties and other casual get-togethers, being on time has never gone out of style. Being punctual – from the Latin *punctualis*, meaning “a point” – literally means arriving at the right time and the right place (and can apply to phone calls and virtual deadlines!), demonstrating that you respect the time and efforts of the person or institution expecting you.

### USE GOOD TABLE MANNERS.

In these times of busy families and eating on the go, having a civil, sociable meal around the dinner table is more refreshing than ever. While rules about which fork to use and keeping elbows off the table can be relaxed now, some conduct should never change: Chew with your mouth closed, wash your hands before you eat, participate amicably in dinner conversation, and don’t reach across the table or others’ plates.

### EXPRESS GRATITUDE.

Whether a handwritten “thank you” note (still the gold standard – as Emily Post says, “You can’t hold digital thanks in your hands the way you can hold a note!”), an email, or a phone call, expressing gratitude is an imperative interpersonal interaction that helps strengthen relationships and brings the person giving thanks as much gratification as the person receiving it. Whatever form it takes, your “thank you” should be personal, specific, and succinct.

### EXCUSE YOURSELF.

The multipurpose “excuse me” can be used in myriad situations to alleviate discomfort or annoyance. Accidentally bump into someone? Didn’t hear what was said to you? Sneeze or cough in public? Need to leave the room abruptly? This one, polite little expression will take care of it all!

### USE TECHNOLOGY RESPECTFULLY.

This one is fairly new, given the rise in mobile technology over the past several decades; nonetheless, it’s now *crucial*. Think back to before cell phones, when taking a call necessitated stepping away from company to speak in privacy: The same rule of respect should apply today. If taking a call is necessary when in the presence of others, step away – for your discretion and to prevent any awkwardness for your companions. Keep conversations brief and quiet, and certainly *don’t* use speakerphone in public. On the whole, try to focus on who is in front of you; texts, phone calls, and social media that can wait for later *should*.



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» rising star

# STEPHEN WILLIAMS

By Breanna Smith  
Photos by Aaron Cox

— Poised for a Purpose —





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When Stephen Williams' wife, Taralyn, called and told him to get to the hospital, he didn't hesitate. She was there for a routine visit to discuss back pain that began a few months earlier. Worried and with his phone on 1%, he darted into the hospital. The receptionist told him to have a seat, and Taralyn would be out of her ultrasound soon. "I said okay, great! Then I turned around and said, wait... Ultrasound? Would there be any other reason she's having an ultrasound besides a baby?"

There in the waiting room, God answered Stephen and Taralyn's prayer - a baby girl was coming soon. Very soon. "We had no clue at all," he said. "We found out well into month seven." Then, the scramble began to spread the joyous news, build the nursery and prepare for their daughter Ava Raye, now 2. "That was the greatest adventure of my life," he said.

**Why > How**

With God guiding his steps, Stephen is always poised and ready to dive into life's next change or adventure. He sees life's changes and challenges through the lens of their bigger purpose - the why.

One of his favorite quotes is **"if your why is big enough, how doesn't matter."** "That's what I live by," he said. "There's no bigger why than my family. I keep photos of them with me because there are long, long days and that keeps me motivated and helps me understand that there's a bigger purpose to all of this - it's much bigger than me."

Stephen starts his days with prayer, Gospel music and a talk by motivational speaker Eric Thomas. "Waking up every morning, I try to look at the



bigger purpose," he said. He's a Rising Star who is thankful for where he's been and excited about where he's going. "Growing up where I come from, making what I make now is crazy to even think about."

While running a store in West Virginia, he spoke with his friend and former coworker, and now fellow REALTOR® Deante' Thomas who encouraged him to get involved with real estate. Stephen's extensive sales background, infectious enthusiasm

and ability to make anyone feel comfortable talking to him were the same qualities of top producing agents.

"At the time, I did not know what a REALTOR® was, did not know the duties of a REALTOR®, nothing," he said. "And none of my family members could tell me what a real estate agent did," he said, laughing.

Thirty days later, Stephen was making the 13-hour drive from West Virginia to Baton Rouge for his licensing exam. From April through October of 2018, Stephen worked full-time with AT&T and as a REALTOR®, spending his mornings maxing out on the number of Facebook messages he could send and making calls. During his lunch break, he showed houses and when he clocked out, it was right back to real estate. "It's been a hustle since day one, and it has just kept growing."

**The Real Estate Tribe**

In the words of Andrew Carnegie, teamwork is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results. From day one, Stephen has leaned on his "real estate tribe" of Deante' Thomas, Richard Spears, Ericka Queen and his Keller Williams Realty Red Stick Partner family.

"Over time we have built this tribe - a tribe of folks that help each other out with everything. It takes a team to make sure you're doing the right things." They offer the perspective of someone outside of a transaction or situation with knowledge of the industry - help that has been invaluable in launching Stephen's career. "I like my tribe because I can call them up and ask them "am I crazy?" and they'll tell me," he said with a big laugh.

“Waking up every morning, I try to look at the bigger purpose.”



Stephen deeply values the work he does with first-time homebuyers. "Changing lives one home at a time is near and dear to me," he said. Helping his friends, family and neighbors become homeowners is a blessing - another part of his bigger purpose. In all of his successes, he points to God and those around him, especially his wife, Taralyn.

"She really believed in me from day one when we moved back here from West Virginia. She stood by my side before I closed my first deal and still keeps me encouraged and grounded to this day with sweet motivating notes and kind messages throughout the week."

With his trust in God's plan, Stephen is ready to serve where he is called. His sights are set on another trip to Key West, but for now he's happy BBQing and boiling with his family and friends or looking for the next great Italian spot in Baton Rouge.



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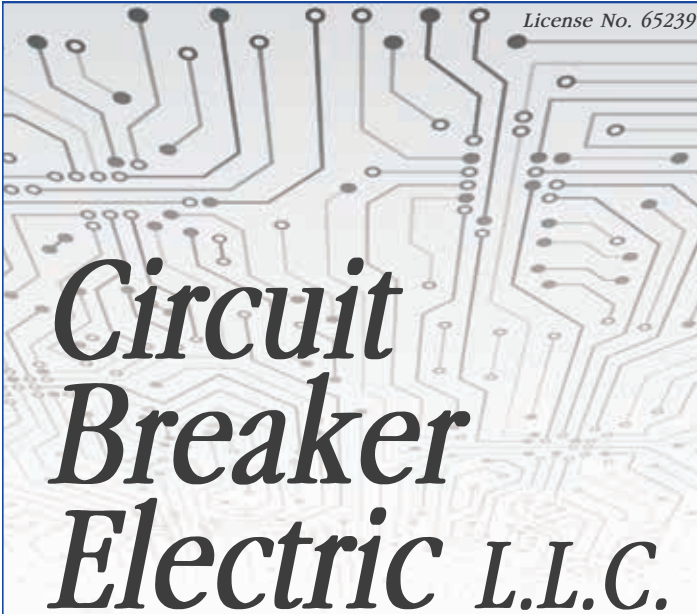
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A photograph of Victoria Haddad, a woman with long, wavy blonde hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a white blazer over a dark blue top and large, ornate gold earrings. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with wooden slats.

» cover story

# VICTORIA haddad

## BUILT FOR THIS

By Breanna Smith | Photos by Aaron Cox

A young Victoria Haddad grew up on job sites alongside her stepdad and mom who owned a successful home-building company. “He was the builder, she ran the company.” Victoria began offering her opinions and valuable insights on flooring and paint colors from her 6-year-old perspective. Now, she and her husband, Randall, who also grew up in and works in the industry, are raising their children much in the same way. Some days, walking through job sites with her daughter Payton feels like taking a look back in time. “She walks into a house now, and she’s what I imagine I was probably like at 8 - telling us that the paint color is bad or that they should really think about redoing the floors. I’m like, kid, get out of here!”

...





Having been steeped in the business for her whole life, she's an aficionado of the small details that make a house a home. "I see so many things that you'd probably only pick up on if you were in construction for most of your life." And it's the little things that make all of the difference. "You just have no idea," she said with a laugh.

**Hustle, Mama!**

When 2020 began, no one knew what the world had in store, but Victoria knew one thing – it was time to get busy. "I just decided in 2020 when COVID hit, let's get as busy as we can possibly get – start building custom homes, have a baby, and start a team. No big deal, ya know?"

She's no stranger to the grind of real estate with 14 years of experience under her belt, starting when she was

just 19. Instead of summer classes one year, she enrolled in Burk Baker. A week after getting licensed, while the ink was still drying, she finalized her first transaction and more than a house was sold that day in 2007 – she was sold on real estate.

"All of 2008 I was doing real estate, working at a restaurant at night, selling makeup, doing everything I could do." In search of something a bit more steady amid the financial crisis, she went back to her roots and began working with D. Honore Construction working on commercial projects. There, she fell in love with the company motto "Integrity built-in." But soon her side hustle selling makeup with BeautiControl took off and she pursued it full-time. After having her daughter Payton, she opted for fewer makeup

parties in the evenings and thought, "I loved real estate, I'm going to go back."

Through her journey back to real estate – with D. Honore Construction and BeautiControl – she found the principles that were inside her all along. "Be the heart of your business; don't just use your head, use your heart. Take care of people and love on people. Life is about building relationships, not transactions."

As busy as her days get, she always makes time for listening to and loving people, especially her daughter, Payton, now 8, the family's newest addition Beau, 3 months, and her stepdaughters, Natalie, 15, and Alli, 14.

She often remembers advice she was given early in her career. "Seriously,



“Be the heart of your business; don't just use your head, use your heart.”

I was told to open my hand and write 'Shut Up' as a reminder to stop and listen to my clients, really hear what they need and want. And to pray before all appointments. A great friend/mentor of mine told me they prayed before every appointment to be a blessing to who she was meeting. This is important to me and seems to always make these appointments go smoothly and work out best for my clients!"

**Full Circle**

For Victoria, everything has come full circle – evidence that she's right where God wants her to be, doing what she does best. After building her family's home she thought, "You know what? That was fun!" So she decided to do it again, this time for friends, and dove headfirst into building custom homes for her clients that become extended family.

"It's always been in my blood to be a part of this industry. I love it."

Victoria enjoys the hustle and bustle of building and real estate as well as quiet fishing trips with her family and when the schedule allows, an organic margarita from Agave Blue with her girlfriends. Perhaps it's no coincidence that Beau was born on Cinco De Mayo, and simply more evidence that she's on the right path.



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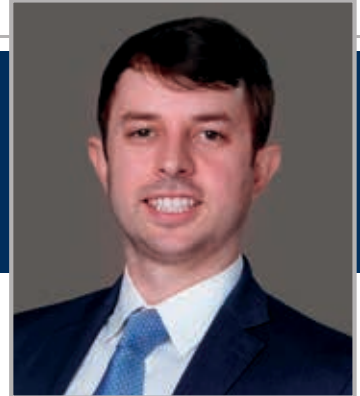
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