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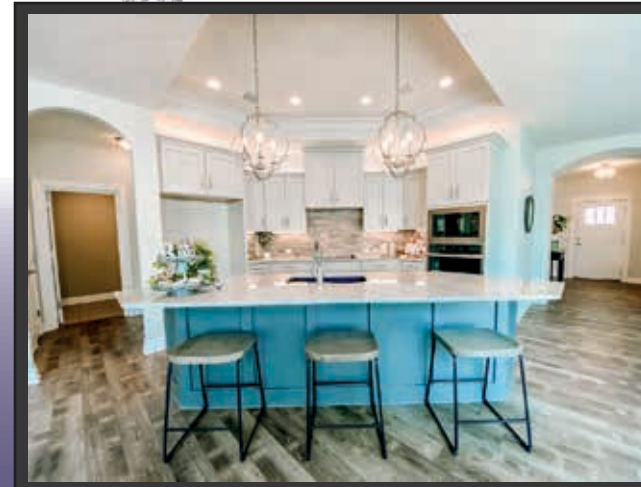
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TABLE OF CONTENTS



17
History in Real Estate: Wichita Tax History



20
Niche Agent: Carrie Wolke



28
Top Producer: Eric Locke




37
Ask the Expert: Heartland Credit Union



40
Celebrating Leaders: Jim Wood




46
Partner Spotlight: Kanza Bank



52
On the Rise: Crystal Espinosa



58
Featured Team: Park Plaza Realty



64
Honoring Rod M. Stewart

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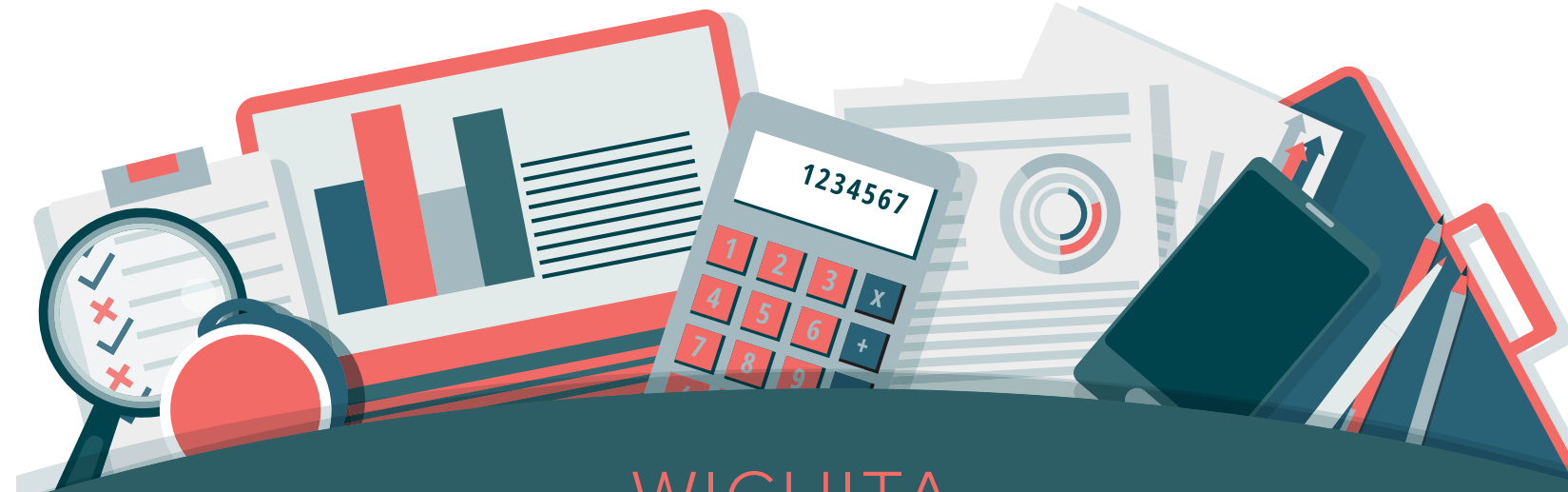
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WICHITA TAX HISTORY

There is a long-held belief in the tax field that the only fair tax is one that someone else pays. In the 1870s, the good people running the Wichita city government made the calculation that the citizens of Wichita would rather live in a city that was virtually tax-free rather than striving to be sin-free. With this concept as its north star, the city passed into law ordinances set fees and fines for anyone being the purveyor of sinful activities, especially the big three: prostitution, gambling and alcohol.

The policy of taxing sin was not swept under the saloon floor either. In fact, the sin laws were consistently the subject of debate before the City Council and covered in detail by the two Wichita newspapers: the Wichita Beacon and the Wichita Herald. Further, to make it convenient for the sinners, the city not only allowed the fines and fees to be paid in advance, but the city insisted on it. As Wichita historian Craig Miner described in his book, "Wichita The Magic City," if a prospective violator failed to show up early with fines and fees in hand,

they could be jailed as vagrants with no means of support or fined \$500 for operating a nuisance.

So, in effect, the perpetrator could be jailed or made to pay large fines if they DID NOT violate the law. And, since prostitution was illegal by state statute, if the city wanted to enforce the state criminal prohibition on prostitution, it had a list of prostitutes who had been admitting their transgressions and paying fines for violating Wichita local ordinances for years. However, by the end of the 1870s, the Herald reported that pressure from a group of prominent local citizens to enforce state laws making prostitution illegal, along with the beginning of the temperance movement, succeed in driving much of the sinful activities underground and off the "tax rolls" but not out of reach for a motivated customer.

Was Wichita just a little ahead of its time in taxing sin? According to ABC News, Colorado is expected to bring in \$355 million in revenue by taxing marijuana sales, and the state has brought in more than \$1.6 billion in tax revenue

since it legalized the recreational sale and use of marijuana in 2012. So far 17 states have legalized marijuana sales, including a number of politically red states and 13 more states appear to be following the same path.

The legacy of prohibition was organized crime and a movie (The Untouchables). The legacy of the "War on Drugs" has been Mexican cartels and an exploding prison population. There appears to be one rule that governs all human behavior: People do what they want to do. If you want to look at a successful effort to change people's behavior, just look at tobacco use. Smoking has declined dramatically, not because it was made illegal but because many people became convinced that it could be harmful to them and because taxes on tobacco significantly increased.

Possibly the question that was raised in the beginning of this article should be rephrased. Maybe the only fair taxes are the ones that apply equally to the conduct of all citizens, whether you are a sinner or a saint.

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Carrie got her real estate license in 2004 and began her career at a small agency in her hometown of Andover. She soon felt the need to move to a larger company with possibilities of more exposure and growth. She ended up at Plaza Real Estate in the new-homes division and quickly discovered it wasn't her niche. For the next several years, she worked under two prestigious brokerages until she ended up at Keller Williams Hometown Partners

in 2011. Here was where she started to flourish and really learned to grow her business. KWHP has been Carrie's home for the last 10 years. She's thankful to have made many lifelong friends and gained many clients there. Carrie has recently decided to make a move and join eXp Realty under a close friend and fellow REALTOR®. She feels it is the best decision for her and her family, and, to Carrie, family always comes first.

Carrie met her husband, Ryan and married him in 2014. She lovingly refers to him as a good ol' country boy! The *Green Acres* theme song was actually the intro at their wedding reception, she laughed as she told me. Honestly, they probably couldn't be more opposite. He's a farmer turned Product Manager for farming equipment, and she's a fashionista. In fact, she attended K-State and, in 2001, received a bachelor's degree in Apparel Design and Marketing and a minor in Business.

...



••• She grew up loving clothing and the art of fashion. She even created her own wedding gown, which she designed to transform into her reception dress after the nuptials. I asked Carrie, why real estate then? How did you get here? Her response: “I watched the movie *Indecent Proposal!*” Even though she enjoyed the movie, she didn’t care about the plot. Instead, she seemed to have found her calling! She describes watching Demi Moore show gorgeous homes while wearing beautiful outfits and suits ... maybe meeting a nice guy ... lol! I mean, it’s just a movie, but Carrie thought that it looked like an amazingly fun and perfect job for her, so she went for it!

Of course, being a REALTOR® is no easy task, as we all know. She’s had to work extremely hard, but now, she does make a good living, wears nice outfits and shows beautiful homes! As a matter of fact, Carrie has earned many honors being a REALTOR®. She has been in the President’s Club and the Masters Circle. She’s been a Million Dollar Producer many years in a row with every brokerage she’s been under! She’s already hit the

5-million mark this year, with more prospects in the pipeline.

You wouldn’t know it from talking to her, but a few years ago, Carrie went through a very dark spell. As previously mentioned, family is most important to Carrie, and she was very close to her parents, especially her mom. Carrie’s mother was diagnosed with Glioblastoma Multiforme, an aggressive form of brain cancer, in March of 2016. At the time of her mom’s diagnosis, she was 8 months pregnant with her youngest child. Carrie was always by her mom’s side during her illness. She attended every radiation treatment and doctors appointment, all while having a toddler and a newborn. Trying to run a real estate business on top of that was a daunting task.

In December of 2017, her mother was placed in hospice care. From then and every day until her passing in February of 2018, she, her sister or her father were always by her side. Months after her mother’s death, Carrie described herself as just going through the motions of life. “I was walking around like a zombie, depressed.” She thankfully had a moment



of clarity. She thought about how disappointed her mom would be that her daughter was not living life to the fullest!

After all, she had 4-year-old and 2-year-old little boys! She had found her joy again, then COVID hit in 2020. Her father, who had been an integral part of her and

her boys’ lives, succumbed to COVID-19 in January of 2021. She and her sister were able to be in the room at his time of death. They were the ones tasked with making the awful decision to take him off oxygen. They held his hand as he took his last breath. One comfort she does have is that

“Just keep going, because there’s enough business for everyone.”

her parents are together again... They were very much in love. Losing her dad was the hardest on her little boys because they were so close to him.

Today, Carrie and her family are happily living their new normal. Besides her thriving real estate business, they are also very active! Jude, 7, loves to play soccer, basketball and football. Hudson, 5, is more of the creative type. His parents think it’s time to put him in musical theater because he’s always singing and acting out scenes. The family also loves to watch sports... They are big K-State fans!

As a seasoned REALTOR® and top producer, Carrie’s advice to new agents is to never give up – “Just keep going, because there’s enough business for everyone” – even during these unprecedented times.

The main thing Carrie wants to be known for as a REALTOR® is that she truly cares deeply for her clients and friends, and is forever grateful to them. She strives to make everyone feel appreciated and that they are deserving of her best efforts. When asked to define success, Carrie describes it as being a “feeling” rather than accomplishments.

“It can only be defined by the person experiencing it.” With her winning personality, passion and drive, I can only imagine Carrie Wolke will continue having ALL THE FEELS in both business and in life for many years to come.



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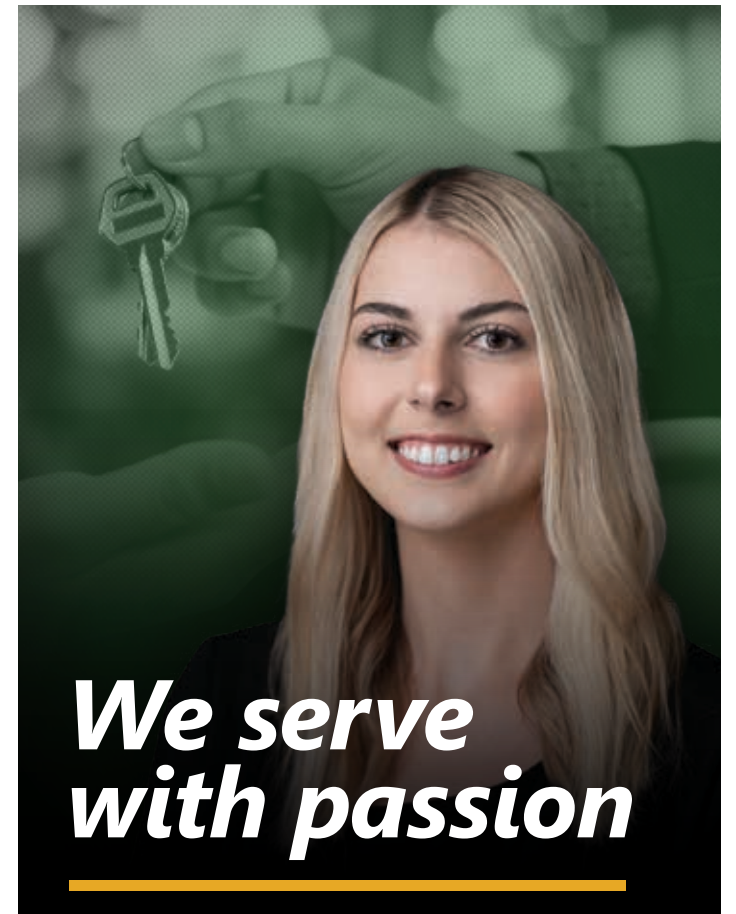


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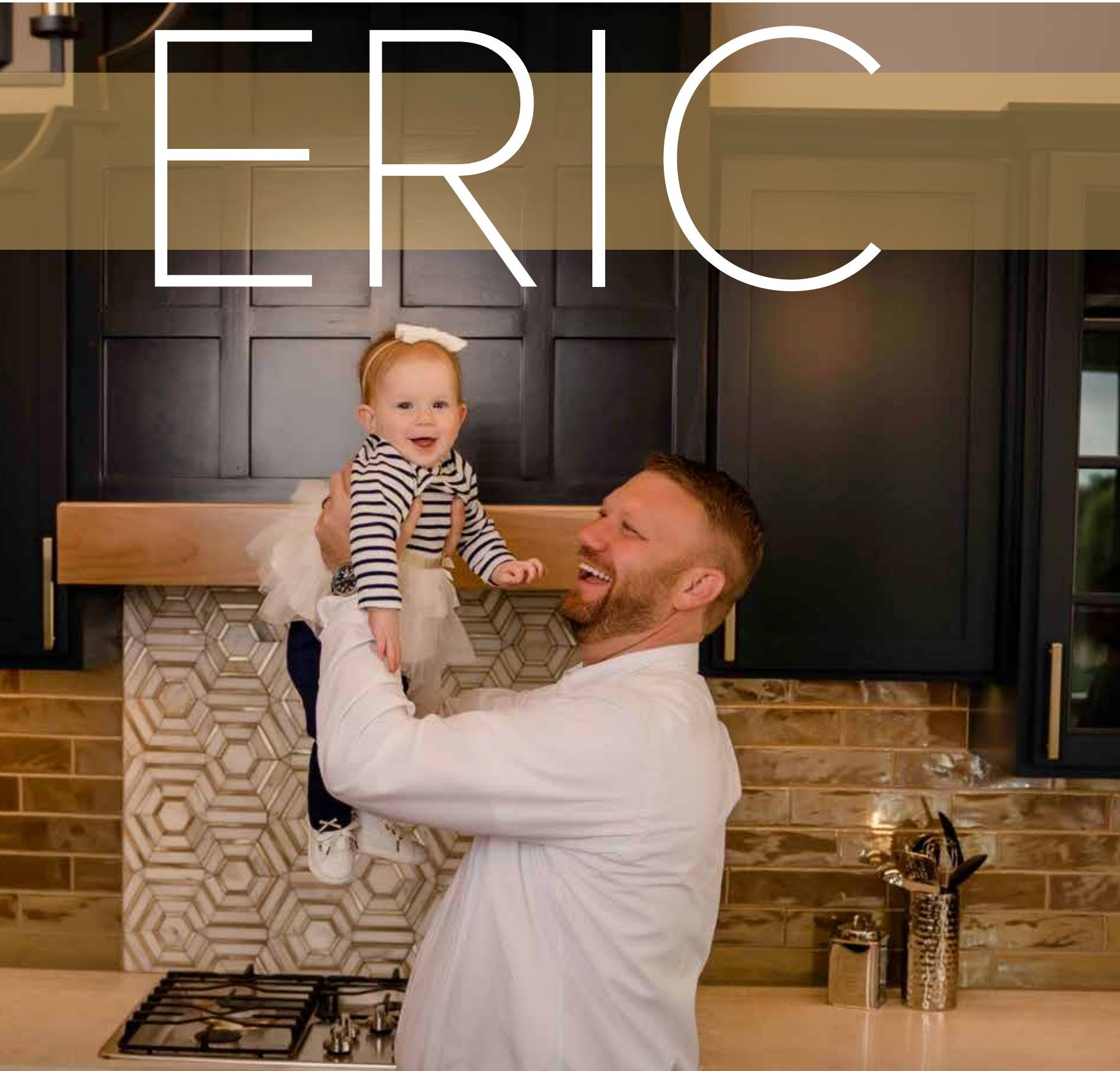
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ERIC

LOCKE

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND



Working in the industry since 2001 and licensed since 2003, Eric Locke has mastered the business in many different ways. It was when he was just nine credit hours away from graduating college when he found himself always stepping out of class to answer his pager and make deals since he was building homes on the side. He quickly realized he was making more money as a REALTOR® than he would have in his given degree field. He loved advertising and thought he could pair advertising, home building and real estate together for a sustainable career.

He began working with Devin Suer at J. P. Weigand and says: "I'm thankful to this day that she was able to get me that opportunity. They provided great training and room for growth."

He stayed with Weigand for two years before transitioning to Realty Executives as a solo agent and accelerated his career there for 12 years. It was in 2017 when Eric approached the owner of Realty Executives, Brodrick Jayroe, about other opportunities and to discuss forward thinking. At that time, Brodrick's Realty Executives franchise was expiring, and they spent the next several months traveling the country and interviewing franchises. Ultimately in 2017, they converted Realty Executives into ERA Great American Realty. The



▶▶ top producer

Written by **Ashley Streight**
Photography by **Jennifer Ruggles Photography**

technology, support, systems and culture is enormous, and they have been thriving ever since.

Eric now has a team of five, and they are the top five-person or less team based on transactions in the state of Kansas (according to Real Trends Wall Street Journal). Eric himself is impressively ranked in the top 1% of real estate professionals nationwide. He has a deep understanding of how important each member is and what it takes to achieve such a high rate of success. One of the first things he teaches his



team is that this isn't a job, but a way of life. Don't treat your customers as a paycheck, but treat them as you would want to be treated. Don't just sell them something to sell something. Don't sell them junk, and don't ever sell them something you can't sell for them down the road if needed. We should be their REALTOR® forever from that moment forward. He teaches them that they are trusted advocates and experts helping their customers buy or sell likely the biggest investment they'll ever make.

"If you do this one transaction right, you'll get three more from their friends and family, and it'll balloon throughout the years," he says.

"Cortney Woodard has really stepped up to the plate and taken over as team leader once Liz Hennessy retired in late 2020. She's been with me for seven or so years. Jerica Bornowsky has stepped up to the plate in a big way also. She transitioned from nursing to full-time real estate agent and has done very well. Lexie Hildebrand has over 14 years in the customer service industry and that shows in her customer reviews and transactions. I have a great team that has great knowledge, great work ethic, amazing customer service, and they all know how to win a deal for our customers."

From 2003, Eric's approach was far different from others in the industry. He was the 21-year old kid that would show up to the office at noon to start his work and would wear jeans and a polo when the typical agent was in a suit and tie. "I was fishing for a different fish than the other agents, and my SOI at 21 years old didn't want another salesperson in a suit." At that point, he interviewed with Cleve Smith, who was the managing broker of Realty Executives, and they hit it off immediately.

"Cleve is smart, compassionate, patient and seemed to actually care about connecting with me to help me grow my business. Cleve has always said that the company is only as good as its agents. If they don't make money, the company doesn't make money. The agents are the public face of the company that everyone sees and associates with. Cleve has been my mentor for 16+ years, and anyone that's ever met him or worked with him has undoubtedly left that point in their life with a positive feeling. He is truly a person that is invaluable and has a heart of gold."

To this day, Eric is still a jeans and polo kind of agent and has been wildly successful by stepping out of the box. "I took my perception of what the old catalog salesperson was and molded it into what I thought they should be to help create a relationship. Back then, buyers expected someone in a suit and tie with slicked-back hair trying to sell you sailboat fuel and snake oil. I think they liked my laid-back approach. I'd still close the deal, but it was without them feeling pressured. Like you learn in management class, the best way to get someone to realize what you want them to realize is by asking questions in a way that they will have that 'aha' moment. And because they realized it themselves without being forced or coerced, then it's a more comfortable decision instead of a forced or uncomfortable transaction."

When we asked him what the most rewarding part of it all is for him, it becomes clear why he's so triumphant. "I love the appreciation and unsolicited responses I get from my past customers. I get invited to weddings, baptisms, birthday parties, etc." This goes to show that in the short time he works with them, he leaves a lasting impact on each and every client he works with.

Eric and his team are not only great REALTORS® but are also extremely involved with the community and love to help whenever they can. Together, they have sponsored or donated over \$10,000 to the local Wichita community. In addition, they have provided a Christmas dinner, children's gifts and money to approximately 20 Wichita families in need in recent years.

Though his original retirement plans included moving to Texas when he was 40, God had different plans, and he is now a dad to a 9-month-old precious little girl. "I didn't think it was possible, but I love her more and more each day. She's developing quickly and is all smiles and laughs, which is great. A happy baby makes every moment enjoyable. Having said that, Marci is a saint. She does so much and does it with love, grace and dignity. She has become an amazing mother, and her love for Logan Marie is out of this world. It's exciting to watch them growing together. They are already best friends, and they're both doing amazing."



Eric and Marci recently purchased 40 acres in the flint hills with a 5-acre pond, which he says, "Now, that's now my Texas." They also have a 12-year-old Havanese dog named Daisy, who is Facebook famous for going on vacations with them and living her best life.

It's readily apparent that a combination of Eric's hard work and love for helping others has led to his accomplishments both personally and professionally.

"Success isn't the size of your house or the cost of your car. It's the ability to be doing something that you love that benefits others without asking or expecting them to thank you. Success is the reward."

SUCCESS ISN'T THE SIZE OF YOUR HOUSE OR THE COST OF YOUR CAR. IT'S THE ABILITY TO BE DOING SOMETHING THAT YOU LOVE THAT BENEFITS OTHERS WITHOUT ASKING OR EXPECTING THEM TO THANK YOU. SUCCESS IS THE REWARD.



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JIM WOOD



STRIKING THE RIGHT NOTES

Though he came into the industry quite unexpectedly, Jim Wood says it was great timing. It was while he was playing six nights a week with the Soule Survivors at a nightclub that he met a builder/developer and his construction superintendent. His son had just been born, so he was looking for a way to get out of the nightclub life and be at home more. Just two short months later, he quit the band and started out as a property manager, managing both new and existing apartment projects. He then left the property management business, got his real estate license and specialized in residential real estate.

It was in 1980 that Jim earned his broker's license and managed a new real estate office, as a broker/manager, specializing in new home sales and marketing for a land developer and oil man. In 1984, he started his own residential brokerage with his wife as broker/owner. Five years later, he partnered with Jim Miner and they formed New Home Marketing LLC to sell and market new homes and communities exclusively and realized they had found a niche which would become the largest new home sales and marketing company in the Wichita area. In 2013, he went to work for Perfection Builders, as a broker for a newly

“

Selling new homes and communities is one of the most **complex** and, at the same time, one of the most **exciting** professions in the world.

”



formed brokerage to represent Perfection in the sales and marketing of a national franchise specializing in luxury courtyard patio homes, where he currently works.

“Music helped to build my confidence and leadership abilities early in life. I became a lead soloist in St. Peters church choir on Capitol Hill in Albany, NY, singing for governors, politicians and socialites, etc. In high school, I had the lead role in two musicals: “Oklahoma” and “Brigadoon.”

Today, Jim is a true leader in the industry, who says the most rewarding part is helping the builders, developers, and salespeople he's worked with become successful, while witnessing the new home communities become a reality. Though he's been in real estate since 1974, he plans to continue marching on. In 2013, when he was considering going part-time or retiring, he received a call from Scott Lehner, co-owner of Perfection Builders with Jason Ronk.

He remembers well the first words out of his mouth: “Do you have any gas left in your tank? Do you have a couple years left in you?” He and Jason had purchased a franchise, Epcon Communities, and were wanting to grow the company and have their own in-house brokerage to exclusively represent and sell the communities, and needed a broker. They then formed Summit Properties, which just recently changed to PB Realty. They are now the number-one builder/developer of luxury patio home communities in Wichita and the number-one Epcon Communities Franchisee in the United States out of 145 communities. They have expanded into Louisville, KY, and are currently looking at expanding to other markets as well.

Jim has been married to his wife, Sondra, since 1966, and she is also a real estate broker who works part time for PB Realty. Her specialization is in contract compliance, and she also provides real estate training for new agents. They own a property on Table Rock Lake in Missouri and

•••



••• enjoy spending time on the water with their son, Kelly, and his fiancé, Jessie. They also love to go boating, attend live music festivals, concerts and venues in Eureka Springs, Branson, Fayetteville and Rogers. Jim says he also loves to jam with the musicians passing through the area. They are avid fans of WSU basketball and have been attending games for over 50 years.

In our industry, Jim recognizes how important it is to find a niche and learn as much as possible. “Take all the training you can. Read everything you can about your industry. Learn to be humble. Respect women in residential real estate – they are really good at it. Work hard, play hard and have fun. Enjoy the ride!”

He has had a tremendous contribution to the improvement of the new home sales and marketing profession for the builders and developers in the Wichita area and is highly respected by many. Early on in his real estate career as an independent resale agent, he became aware of the lack of training,

interest and expertise there was in new construction sales by the residential resale profession.

Coming from the corporate world selling manufactured products gave him a good understanding of what was missing and needed for the builders to be successful: a dedicated agent and brokerage to represent them, tailored specifically for their new homes and communities. And this is where his niche began.

“Selling new homes and communities is one of the most complex and, at the same time, one of the most exciting professions in the world. If you can accept the roles you play, and the challenges you receive, you may well discover that, unlike many who go through life without any great sense of achievement, you will be able to look back on your life in later years and say,

“You know what: I was pretty good. I helped a lot of people to own homes. I have molded a lot of lives. I influenced one of the most important things in the world – the way people live.” – Dave Stone



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I influence one of the most important things in the world – **the way people live.**

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Jake Baird is a Residential Lending Specialist with KANZA Bank. When you talk with him, it's easy to see the deep sense of gratitude he feels for the role he plays.

"Technology has taken over in this world, so any time you can get a personal connection working

with a REALTOR®, or customer, I always enjoy that. I've always been in a relationship-based business, and I love working with people. Fostering and growing relationships within the community is something I cherish," Jake says.

"I always try to see the best in everyone. The people are what drives our business. It's rewarding when you've done something for someone and they want you to do it again."

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“I think that’s one of the main concerns people have ... to stay informed.”

REWARDING LIFE

Family is at the heart of life for Jake. He looks forward to spending time with his wife and their three children.

In his free time, he enjoys the Wichita community that he has been part of throughout his life.

His dependable and committed approach is something that his clients have come to rely on.

“I want people to come away from meeting me to know that I’m someone they can trust, that I will get the job done for them,” he says.

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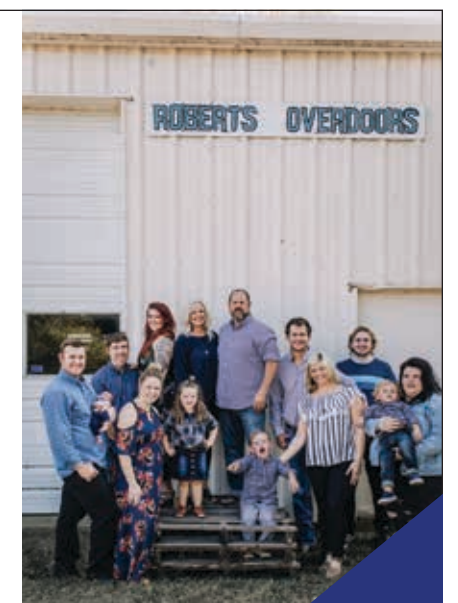
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Crystal ESPINOSA

**POSITIVE
ADVENTURE**

▶▶ on the rise
Written by Dave Danielson
Photography by Kelly Remacle Photography

Life is meant to be enjoyed. The same can be said for business ... using our talents and gifts to help those around us achieve their grandest dreams.

That's where Crystal Espinosa excels. As a REALTOR® for Crystal's Homes with Nikkel & Associates, Crystal embarks on a new journey each day — in turn, taking others on a positive adventure with her.

“When my clients tell me they are happy with going on their next adventure, that makes me happy. Something that means a lot is when another agent says they were happy to work with me,” Crystal says.

“I like when everyone is positive at the end.”

MOVING FORWARD

Crystal earned her real estate license four years ago. That moment represented another in a long line of important milestones in her life.

“My dad was a builder, and when I was younger I worked at times on his homes. I would pick up cigarette butts for 5 cents apiece. He told me that he always wanted the homeowner to be happy with what he saw,” Crystal says.

“My dad was who I learned a lot from about the work environment and what to do. I liked to go to work with him.”

NEXT STEPS

As she came of age, Crystal graduated with honors and plans to go into accounting or social services.

“I never expected to be a real estate agent. I went to college and got four different degrees,” she says.

“A couple of my friends are REALTORS® or worked with a title company. I was intrigued with what they told me and got my license, and since then I wish I would have gotten into it sooner.”

REWARDING WORLD

Since starting her journey in the real estate industry. In 2021, she closed 15 lots in a subdivision within just two months.

Crystal's world is made richer by family, including her husband, Steven.

“He has been a great support. I was a stay-at-home mom for a few years. I got into it to do part-time so I could still help with the kids' school. I didn't realize I would do so well,” Crystal says.

“I feel truly blessed. Steven has been a godsend.”

In her free time, Crystal looks forward to time spent outdoors. Camping and boating are two of her favorites to enjoy with her family.

When it comes to giving back, Crystal supports the Missing Children's Unit ... an interest that has been driven in part by the pain she has felt through time since the disappearance of her adoptive brother.



...

Those who get to know and work with Crystal appreciate the fact that they can rely on her to be there for them when it matters most.

“I form a true family-type relationship with all the clients I work with. I feel like a mother hen. I just want to be their friend rather than just a REALTOR®,” Crystal says.

“I want them to know they can contact me and ask me anything. I care about them and want to do my best to help them reach their goals.”

Congratulations to Crystal for the impact she makes each day ... for the positive adventure she brings to the world around her.



“
When my clients tell me they are happy with going on their next adventure, that makes me happy.
”





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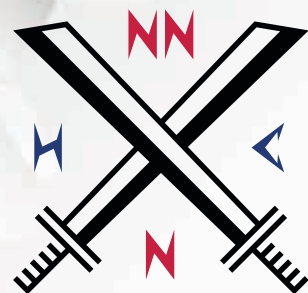
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PARK PLAZA REALTY

A FAMILY AFFAIR



Alyson Assaf never pictured herself as a REALTOR®. It just wasn't her calling... Or was it?

Alyson grew up in small towns around Wichita, first living in Derby then moving to Andover in 1996. Early on, she had a strong desire to work in the medical field since she had always been intrigued by medicine for both body and mind. In fact, her plans were to devote herself to working alongside men and women similar to those of the nonprofit organization "Doctors Without Borders," which are an honorable group of doctors and medical professionals who selflessly give their own time and resources to travel worldwide and assist the less fortunate with their greatest medical needs.

It was after high school that Alyson had a change of heart, and that's when she began her college career at KU with a new and intense interest: political science and psychology. She felt she had been drawn to political science as a result of her strong interest in world politics that were tied to her Middle

Eastern roots. She also longed to understand human behaviors of different cultures and how people react to their environments. After two years at KU, she transferred to Wichita State University and earned her degree in 2015 majoring in Political Science and minoring in Psychology.

2015 was monumental for Alyson. Not only did she graduate from college, but she also earned her real estate license and met her husband, Les Easterby, and their son, Lincoln. When the two met, Les was a single father and a very hard-working and God-loving man. Alyson truly admired him and how he was able to be such an amazing dad and excellent provider for Lincoln. They fell in love swiftly and married in 2017.

Obtaining her real estate license came as a suggestion from her father. He was very proud of what he had accomplished over the years and thought his daughter should give it a shot ... maybe over the summer ... to see what she thought about the





field. After all, he and his wife had just established their new brokerage, Assaf Team Realty, and who better to have on your team than the people you trust most.

Alyson grew up with deep roots in the real estate industry. Her parents have been in the business since 1991, and she fondly remembers going to appointments with them and spending time at their office almost daily as a child. She even used to role play as a real estate agent when she was little, lovingly mocking her parents.

Alyson's father came to Wichita from Lebanon in 1979. He didn't know much English, nor did he have a lot of money, but he had faith in himself, a fire in his belly and determination to succeed. He obtained his master's degree in Business at Wichita State University, and that's when he dove into real estate. At first,

he felt alienated in the field, but he didn't give up and eventually found his niche. Her parents, whom she lovingly refers to as her role models, worked the business together, did a lot of networking and marketing and kept striving for success. At the time, her mother was also a Special Education teacher, as well as a mom to young children. Yet, they found a way to grow the business despite their already busy schedules. And, boy, did it grow. One December, the pair ended up closing an impressive 54 transactions. That, they say, was the icing on the cake. They had become successful REALTORS®.

When Alyson first began working as a real estate agent, she was doubtful it would take off and wasn't sure if it was she really wanted to do with her career. For her, it was her parents' thing, and she still had goals of her own. She did, however, thrive working

under her dad's brokerage, even though she was still just "seeing how she felt" about the industry. Then, as things do in life, one thing led to another. She had a client and friend hire her as their REALTOR®, and she did a wonderful job for them. She was pleasantly surprised by how fulfilled she felt after helping them achieve their dream. That client eventually referred her to another, and then another and the ball was rolling. This was her calling. So much so that she convinced her husband, Les, to become a REALTOR® in 2019. They now co-list countless deals and are a well-oiled machine as a team. Even though Alyson ended up a REALTOR® rather than a psychologist or doctor, she's still very thankful that she originally took that path. The skills she learned during her college years were vital to her success in real estate. They helped her to listen, understand and empathize with people and clients of all walks of life.



Alyson also has many hobbies and joys outside of work. She loves being a wife and mother, and is a new mom to 4-month-old Leo, whose hobbies she said are listening to music, carrying on a conversation, loving when mom, dad or brother reads to him, and being the "cutest, sweetest and smartest baby in the world." She and her family really enjoy just being together, going on nature walks, listening to concerts at Riverfest, and even attending wrestling events together. Alyson also enjoys art, traveling, yoga and just being active, in general. They are always trying out local restaurants and frequenting locally owned businesses. She describes herself and her family as "foodies" ... enjoying flavors and delights of the many amazing restaurants our city of Wichita has to offer.

When asked what is the meaning of success, Alyson says, "Success is being totally and completely satisfied with yourself and your life's work. If you can go home at the end of the day and be happy with the person you are or who you are becoming, to me that is great success."

“

SUCCESS IS BEING TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH YOURSELF AND YOUR LIFE'S WORK. IF YOU CAN GO HOME AT THE END OF THE DAY AND BE HAPPY WITH THE PERSON YOU ARE OR WHO YOU ARE BECOMING, TO ME THAT IS GREAT SUCCESS.

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HONORING Rod M. Stewart

Written by Ashley Streight

It was early in life that Rod Stewart stood out amongst the crowd. From his High School and college football years on, Rod “came to play”. He held numerous positions before transitioning into real estate, finding joy in each of them, just as he found joy everywhere he went. He served as a Senator in the Student Government Association at Wichita State University and graduated in 1968 with a degree in Political Science. His first job thereafter was at the Wichita Area Chamber of Commerce, where he was introduced to the community’s power structure.

Three years later is when real estate was set into motion for Rod as it was introduced to him by his WSU advisor and it was in 1983 that he inaugurated Rod M. Stewart REALTOR®. Throughout his highly successful real estate career, he brought his grit, determination and love of life with him. One of his greatest accomplishments was being told by the Certified Commercial Investment Members (CCIM), perhaps real estate’s most prestigious organization, that he had been chosen as the winner of CCIM’s Lifetime Achievement Award.



Tony Utter, president of Utter Commercial Real Estate Inc., said Rod was a “well-rounded commercial real estate broker practitioner with extensive knowledge about commercial property sales and has been heavily involved in the educational and marketing services provided by the Kansas CCIM Chapter — and it’s fitting that Rod received this award since it was his brainchild in the first place. He was completely caught off-guard by this and was very hesitant to accept the award. When you look at the complete body of work that

...

...

comprises Rod Stewart's experience, expertise and political know-how and savvy, I can't think of anyone else who compares as it relates to all of those characteristics."

A quote Rod's mentor taught him early on and something he then taught those who he mentored is: "If the deal isn't a good deal for everyone, then it's not a good deal". It's a quote he lived by on a day-to-day basis.

His talents were not kept to himself. He sought out others new to the business and mentored them every step of the way. As we spoke with Penny Johnson of Keller Williams Signature Partners LLC, we learned that despite his declining health, he worked until he was absolutely forced to the sidelines, which for Rod and his ever-lasting resolve, was very difficult.

In Rod's own words: "I am a Christian. God loves me and forgives me so that I will have a place in heaven." Right now, Rod is with his Maker and smiling down on each and every one of us, cheering us on just as he always did.



**I am a Christian.
God loves me
and forgives me
so that I WILL
HAVE A PLACE
IN HEAVEN.**



"I had no idea how huge the impact of Rod and Debbie Stewart joining our office at Keller Williams Signature Partners (KWSP) would have on me both professionally and personally. Rod told me often that he and Debbie prayed for Dennis, my husband, and me daily. We don't have the gift of many prayer warriors in our lives that pray for us that consistently in our lifetime and I know it was a gift from God. Rod was more than a business partner to me. He was like a brother and he loved our office and the Keller Williams culture of God and Family First, and then business. He even taught it in our training room to both our residential and commercial agents. After learning of his passing, one of his colleagues said, "Rod is dancing on the streets of gold today!". Rod hadn't danced for a while and it gave me great comfort in that moment. He had a huge picture of two bull buffalos fighting. Rod was like them for all of us, family and clients and he fought to stay with us as long as he could. Thank you, Rod! We will be forever grateful for knowing and loving the Stewarts!"
- Penny Johnson, Operating Principal, Owner, Keller Williams Signature Partners LLC

"They don't make them like Rod Stewart anymore. Rod had a larger than life personality and a contagious smile. In 2013, as a junior in college, I emailed Rod to sign up for CCIM education. When I first arrived at the class, knowing nobody, Rod was the first to greet me and I pulled a chair up next to him. He made it his mission that day to make sure a 22-year-old kid felt welcomed and comfortable because that's who Rod was. He was always in service to others. Rod took tremendous pride in helping others advance and was a wealth of knowledge always eager to share. It always shocked Rod that I could be a "professional real estate man" while wearing shorts around the office, as Rod was hardly seen without a tie on. In one instance, my dad was in town visiting and we stopped by Rod's office (assuming it would be 5 minutes because Rod had dialysis). I sat for almost an hour listening to my dad and Rod chat, like Rod had known him for years, all while his wife, Debbie was telling to him they needed to go. He'd yell through the office door that he was busy and then just smile at both of us with a soft chuckle, continuing the conversation. After he met my dad, he asked about him all the time - because that's who Rod was - he was genuinely and emotionally invested in those he cared about. Rod, I'll miss you man. I'll miss our Red Friday "Chiefs by 20" chats, I'll miss your ear to ear smile over even the smallest things, and I'll miss your larger-than-life personality. I'm comforted knowing you're up there with all of your buddies you've told me about and you're already slinging real estate up there with Darrell, Leo, and Jack. Thank you for your wisdom, your mentorship, and most importantly, your friendship. Cheers to a Wichita real estate legend & can't wait to see you again, my friend."

- Tyler Nepote, Managing Principal at Wedgewood Capital Partners at KW Signature Partners, LLC

"I started a lawn service over 25 years ago because I wanted a better life for myself than what I had encountered during my younger years. During my start-up when I was going door-to-door, I came upon what I now call my brother, father, friend and mentor, Mr. Rod Stewart. I remember my first encounter with him when I knocked on his door and asked if he needed his lawn mowed. I remember in detail how he said no because he didn't have the money and slammed the door. Though I saw hate in that moment, I also saw the love of God in him and I knew I had to help him and not expect anything in return. I cut the grass that day. I continued to return and cut the grass in the weeks ahead as well. After a few weeks of mowing and not seeing Rod, he opened the door and said "Why do you keep cutting my grass? I told you I did not have any money." I replied with "It's the love of God that I see in you." This time, the door closed much easier. Fast forward and we continued to get to know each other better. Rod and Deb took me out to dinner and at the end, he passed me a stack of cash and thanked me for everything with tears in his eyes. I knew there was something still heavy on his heart and he proceeded to tell me that he had just finished a real estate deal before he met me that was going wrong and it was a very bitter deal and he was angry at the time. He told me that when I said I saw God in him, it changed his heart. At the end of dinner that night, he said "I love you brother" and I said it back to him. From that night forward, we were tied at the hips. I will miss you my brother, friend, father and mentor."

- Mark Evans



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