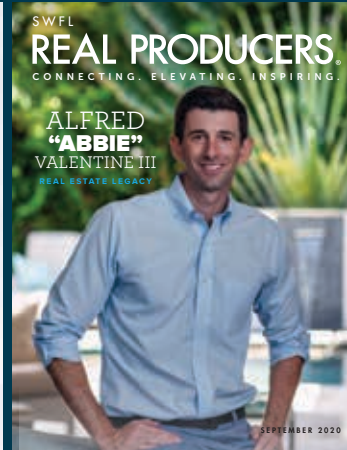


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Cover photo courtesy of John Paul Buchanan



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Ellen Buchanan
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Director of Marketing



Lindsey Wells
Writer



Dave Danielson
Writer



John Paul Buchanan
Photographer



Derick Moreno
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Welcome, New Top 500 Agents!

Dear REALTORS® and Partners,

This has been an amazing past year! In spite of all the things you have had to deal with and overcome in 2020, this remarkable SWFL real estate community adapted and has been an incredible inspiration to me and to all of us here at *SWFL Real Producers*.

I'd like to welcome the new Top 500 agents to our magazine and platform. Congratulations on making the top 500 agents in SWFL for the calendar year 2020. Despite the challenges, so many of you forged ahead, making a name for yourselves and capturing market share. This publication is designed for you. Please see our FAQ

page for commonly asked questions. And if there is anything else you'd like to know, please don't hesitate to reach out to me personally. I look forward to getting to know each and every one of you in the coming months.

Our next in-person event, that you have been seeing and hearing about, is on March 11, 2021, from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Ferrari of Naples. I cannot wait to see you all again!

This past first year in print for *SWFL Real Producers* has been simply amazing. I am humbled and honored to have taken this journey with all of you and am looking forward to more growth and exciting times ahead!

Very respectfully yours,

Andrew Regenhard
Owner/Publisher
SWFL Real Producers
239-290-0692
andrew.regenhard@realproducersmag.com



FAQ

ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

By Andrew Regenhard



Real Producers is celebrating our first anniversary in SWFL this month. If you just made the 2021 Top 500 producers in SWFL list and are new to our publication, you may be wondering what it's all about. "FAQs About This Magazine" answers the most commonly asked questions around the country regarding the *Real Producers* platform. My door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100 percent designed to be your voice and to connect, elevate the industry, and inspire!

Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The top 500 agents in SWFL. We pulled the MLS numbers (by volume) from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, in the SWFL area, cut the list off at number 500, and our new 2021 Top 500 distribution list was born. This magazine is free exclusively to the top 500 agents in the area each year. The minimum production level for our group is \$12.9 million, based on data reported to MLS for 2020.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: It's really simple — every feature you see has first been nominated. You can nominate other REALTORS®, affiliates, brokers, owners, or even yourself! Office leaders can also nominate Realtors. We will consider anyone brought to our attention, because we don't know everyone's story, so we need your help to learn about them.

A nomination currently looks like this: You email us at andrew.regenhard@realproducersmag.com with

the subject line, "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)," and explain why you are nominating them to be featured. It could be they have an amazing story that needs to be told — perhaps they overcame extreme obstacles, they are an exceptional leader, have the best customer service, or they give back to the community in a big way. The next step is an interview with us to ensure it's a good fit. If it all works out, we put the wheels in motion for our writer to conduct an interview and for our photographers to schedule a photoshoot.

Q: WHAT DOES IT COST A REALTOR®/TEAM TO BE FEATURED?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing, my friends, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share real stories of Real Producers.

Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

A: Anyone listed as a "preferred partner" in the front of the magazine is a part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our quarterly events, and be a part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have recommended every single preferred partner you see in this publication. We won't even meet with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for the best Realtors in the area, but the best affiliates, as well, so we can grow stronger together.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A PREFERRED PARTNER?

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▶ MASTER THE MEDIA



Have You Made a Media Pitching Plan?

By Christina Daves

How did you fare with your visibility in 2020? Did you land in the media? Many REALTORS® took advantage of the accessibility to journalists and learning how to pitch the media and they landed on television and in print. It's never too late to get started. If you haven't done so already, take the time to lay out a calendar for pitching the media in 2021. There is no greater way to get in front of hundreds of thousands, even millions, of potential sellers and buyers without paying for advertising.

You should have at least one evergreen topic every month. "Evergreen" means it doesn't change and is applicable year after year. Examples of this would be: National Neighbor Day in March, New Homeowners Day in May, National Safe at Home Week in August, and Roof Over Your Head Day in December. You want to find pitch ideas for every month for the rest of 2021 and then you will add in trending/timely topics, like how the market is doing and why. Remember to look at national studies and use the results and apply them to what's happening in your backyard.

Don't pitch stories like "Interest Rates Are Up" or "Inventory Is Low." Remember, your stories have to be valuable to an audience, so give them some "meat," some "wow." Make your story idea

something that is appealing to that media outlet's audience. Do a little homework and see what kinds of real estate stories they cover and how they cover them. The easier you can make their job, the easier it will be to get the "yes."

Carve out an hour of time and lay out a media pitching calendar for the rest of the year. The more you prepare for it, the easier it will be to pitch consistently. This keeps you top-of-mind with a journalist, and then don't be surprised if they actually reach out to you for quotes on real estate stories.



Christina Daves
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Christina Daves is the founder of PR For Anyone®. She has trained thousands of real estate agents in gaining visibility by using traditional and social media together for maximum effectiveness. Agents she has worked with have appeared in national magazines, newspapers, radio, television, and blogs. Book your free business strategy session with Christina at www.ChatWithChristina.com, and learn more about her at www.ChristinaDaves.com.



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A doctor and a lawyer are professionals. They are considered professionals because they have undergone extensive training in their field and, upon completion of their education, received the necessary licensing and certification required to conduct business in their chosen occupation.

We wouldn't dream of hiring a doctor that said she was pretty sure she could do our brain surgery because she saw it done on TV a couple of times, nor would we go to court with a man that assured us his legal training included binge-watching *Judge Judy* on Netflix.

So who does the license benefit? The license is for the benefit of the consumer — you and me. It tells us that the individual who holds the license has met the requirements necessary to practice in that field.

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As the owner of Tri-Town Construction and Seaside Bar & Grill, Marc Devisse utilizes his businesses as a conduit for community giving, funding children's charities and offering manpower and resources to help build a better Southwest Florida. To reach Marc, email him at marc@tri-townconstruction.com. You can also connect with him on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.



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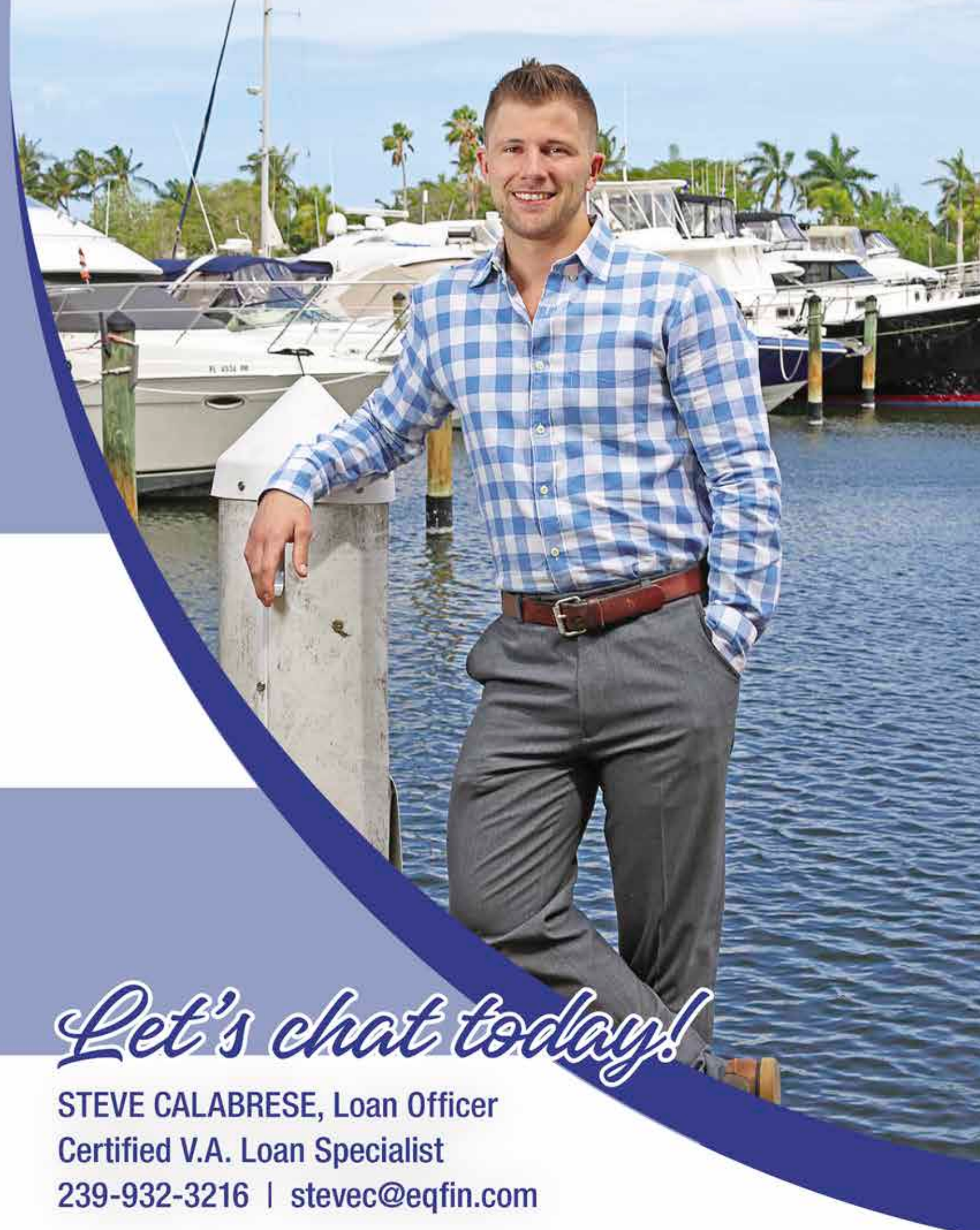


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Success IN SELLING

Girard's Law of 250

By Michael Dill

Success leaves clues, and Joe Girard left many on the art of selling and building relationships. Joe Girard knew how to sell cars. He's listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as "the world's greatest salesman." He has written several books on selling, including *How to Sell Anything to Anybody*, *How to Sell Yourself*, *How to Close Every Sale*, *Mastering Your Way to The Top*, and *Joe Girard's 13 Essential Rules of Selling*.

Joe Girard sold over 13,000 cars at a Chevrolet dealership between 1963 and 1978. He's recognized in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the seller of the most cars in a year (1,425 in 1973). One of his most valuable success clues is "Girard's Law of 250."

A short time after Joe entered the auto sales business, he went to a funeral home to pay his last respects to a friend of his mother's. At Catholic funeral homes, they give out mass cards with the name and picture of the departed. On that particular day, he thought to ask the undertaker a question about the cards. "How do you know how many cards to print up?" The undertaker replied that it was a matter of experience. "When you look at the book where people who've attended sign their names, after a while I noticed that the average number of names always comes out to about 250."

On another occasion, Joe and his wife were attending a wedding. Again, he thought to ask the caterer the same question. He asked, "What was the average number of guests that would attend a wedding reception?" The answer was, "About 250 on the bride's side and about 250 on the groom's."

This is where Joe Girard's "Law of 250" was created. The theory is that everyone knows about 250 people in their life. That's 250 people whose opinions and experiences they can potentially influence. This means that if you were to meet 50 people in a week and if, unfortunately, only two of those turned away unhappy with the way they were treated, those two poorly influenced people per week would have reached 26,000 people over a year's time.

This equation should act as an understanding of the fact that if we were to

turn away just one customer unhappy or dissatisfied, that person could then potentially influence 250 people away from your product or service. That's the type of marketing that none of us can afford.

Think about a business day in the past where, somewhere along the line, you reacted incorrectly to a customer. You could have been stressed or rushed at the time and, unfortunately, you simply reacted improperly to that customer. That one customer can now possibly influence 250 potential customers ready to buy who will no longer come your way.

This is an understanding that we need to drill into our minds to condition ourselves to be on our utmost A-game each and every minute of each and every day. We need to constantly remind ourselves of "Girard's Law of 250" when it comes to marketing our business and brand. I actually have one client who posted the "Law of 250" on his phone to remind himself of the importance of treating all customers and potential customers with grace.

Think about how the "Law of 250" can work in a positive way. That's marketing that will continue to spread far and wide to continually earn you loyal fans and continued business, not to mention all the great relationships you will gain along the way.

Joe Girard was "The World's Greatest Salesman." He wasn't successful for just being great in sales. He was successful because he simply knew the value of standing out and treating his customers right. Success leaves clues. Let's all take the lesson of Joe Girard and "Girard's Law of 250."



Coach Michael Dill is an award-winning, certified business coach, speaker, and trainer. He brings more than 40 years of business and entrepreneurial experience in his leadership, team training, and mentoring practice. Michael's passion is to both encourage and challenge business owners and entrepreneurs to become their best selves, both personally and professionally, to obtain all they want in their business and life. BusinessCoachMichaelDill.com

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One of the largest expenses for any top-producing agent is marketing. There is no shortage of ways to market. From mailing to your farm area to buying internet leads, and everything in between, you can literally spend unlimited amounts on marketing.

What if the companies you recommend paid most, or even all, of the marketing expense necessary to grow your business? That's right, businesses like your remodeling contractor, your interior designer, your kitchen company, your

painter, your landscaper...the list goes on and on. We've identified over 40 businesses that you probably already send business to.

You'd be surprised how much these businesses depend on your recommendations and would gladly partner with you. After all, if you are recommending them now and you increase your business, that means your recommendations will increase as well. Finally, advertising that works for everyone.

Recently, I introduced a remodeling contractor who specializes in luxury condo remodeling to a Realtor® who farms luxury condos. He does millions of dollars in remodeling from Realtor referrals. She didn't have a remodeling contractor to recommend. They struck a deal and he's covering a good portion of her mailing expense. In turn, she recommends him exclusively when a client needs work done. A true win-win.

If you are approaching your lender, your closing agent, and other settlement service providers (SSPs) that fall under RESPA guidelines, make sure you are following the rules. SSPs absolutely can co-market with you as long as they pay true market value and aren't doing it in expectation of referrals. Go to NAR's site and search RESPA guidelines. They have a very easy-to-understand description of who falls under RESPA guidelines and the do's and don'ts in that arena.

And, thanks to the internet and e-commerce web sites, presenting the opportunity and collecting payment are a snap. In fact, a company's marketing contribution can be automatically charged to their credit card each month and the net after expenses is deposited directly into your bank account.

A few hours spent putting together partners will substantially enhance your marketing capabilities and save you a fortune over the life of your real estate business.

By Tony Spano, a real estate marketer who works with REALTORS® to grow their businesses.



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▶▶ leader of the month

By Dave Danielson | Photos by LaCasaTour

JENNY

MOORHEAD

— ENERGY AND EXCELLENCE —

Leaders make a truly valuable contribution by creating a framework for success for others.

That’s exactly what Jenny Moorhead does.

As Broker/Owner of CornerStone Coastal Properties, Jenny leads with a selfless brand of energy and excellence, and helps others move forward in their careers.

On the Move

Growing up, it seemed her childhood was made for real estate.

“We moved a lot. In fact, I lived in 17 places before my high school graduation, and I had attended three schools in three different states when I was in fifth grade,” she says. “The positive side of all of that was that I learned very quickly how to make friends.”

After high school, Jenny and her family arrived in Southwest Florida. “We moved to the area for my dad’s job,” she remembers. “Shortly after that, I started working at a real estate office answering phones.”

That was just the start.

“The owner of the firm encouraged me to get my real estate license,” Jenny says. “I had planned on going to college, but he paid for me to get my real estate license, and I ended up not moving away.”

Entering the Business

Jenny attended college locally and continued working for the real estate office. In time, she moved into property management. By the time Jenny was in her mid-20s, she transitioned into real estate sales.



A bit of a connoisseur, Jenny enjoys attending wine tastings when she has the opportunity.

“

AS WE’VE GROWN, ONE THING WE’VE MAINTAINED A STRONG FOCUS ON IS BEING HYPER-LOCAL ... IN THE PROCESS, REALLY CATERING TO THE FORT MYERS MARKET.



Jenny Moorhead with her boyfriend John Prete, owner of HouseMaster Home Inspections in SWFL.

One of Jenny’s passions for real estate has come through the process of opening her own brokerage. She and David Cole opened a firm in 2007. “David was a tremendous mentor for me, and I’m not sure I would have had the courage to move forward without his partnership,” she emphasizes.

Two years ago, Jenny bought the business and has continued growing since then. “I felt the market was changing and I also had a specific vision for how I wanted to serve agents. I wanted to provide a service and culture that worked with what was happening at the time,” she says.

Today, CornerStone Coastal Properties has about 70 agents. Their growth has definitely come organically.

“I don’t recruit or try to bring on agents,” Jenny emphasizes. “The agents on our team have cultivated our growth through word of mouth. Part of that is the fact that we live by the Golden Rule. Our agents help each other, and I’m blessed to have them on our team. Another major reason for our growth is the incredible office staff through the leadership of Director of Operations/Office Manager Debbie Beaber, and Director of Training and Development for nearly 10 years, Vicki Baugh.”

Rewarding Relationships

One of the most rewarding parts of her career has centered on long-term relationships.

“As Broker, I get a lot of questions from some of my clients who were former property management clients ... many of whom I’ve known for 30 years,” Jenny says.

CornerStone Coastal Properties is an independent, non-franchised brokerage. And its story of success continues to grow. In fact, the firm consistently ranks among the top organizations in Fort Myers.

“As we’ve grown, one thing we’ve maintained a strong focus on is being hyper-local ... in the process, really catering to the Fort Myers market,” Jenny says.

Life’s Highlights

Away from work, Jenny looks forward to time spent with her boyfriend, John Prete, along with her children — 30-year-old daughter Jessica and her husband Stephen Murphy, as well as 28-year-old daughter Lauren Moorhead.

“My girls are my greatest accomplishments in life,” she smiles. “I’m very proud of the women they’ve grown up to be.”

In their free time, Jenny and John enjoy travel, wine tasting, hiking, and working out, as well as spending time with their cats, Rascal and Gracie. Jenny also has a heart for giving back to the community, supporting organizations such as Community Cooperative and Hope 4 Kids.

Those who get to know her see Jenny’s caring and empathetic nature and the way she uses her experience to foster confidence and achievement among her team members. “Maintaining strong relationships, no matter what, is very important to me,” Jenny explains. “I believe everything works well when everyone works together.”

Leading the Way

As she reflects on her career, Jenny has advice for those who are considering their own path in real estate. “One direction that I think is very helpful for people is if they get into property management. If you get into that side of the business and do a good job, you can build relationships with people who end up buying and selling, as well as those who have friends who will also be buying and selling at some point. In fact, I have one of my original property management clients I worked with beginning in the 1980s. I recently completed my seventh transaction with them,” she points out. “Also, one of the best things you can do is answer the phone and get back to people.”

With heartfelt energy and an ongoing pursuit of excellence, Jenny Moorhead makes a lasting impact on those around her. “I’m very thankful for those who have helped me along the way — people like my last broker and my former business partner,” she says with a smile. “I’d like to help other people in the same way, and help them get to the next level too.”

“

I’M VERY THANKFUL FOR THOSE WHO HAVE HELPED ME ALONG THE WAY — PEOPLE LIKE MY LAST BROKER AND MY FORMER BUSINESS PARTNER.



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“There’s no place like home.” Dorothy said it best in *The Wizard of Oz*. Home is our anchor. It’s our happy place, the one place where we can retreat after a long day. Homes are Sheryl Bleustein’s specialty.

For three decades, Sheryl Bleustein, owner and president of Interiors by SBI, has been creating customized luxury spaces for her clients, not only here in Florida, but worldwide.

To grasp how she achieved the level of success she has, one must go back to the beginning of Sheryl Bleustein’s story. Sheryl has always been an artist, even though she never originally

intended to use her creativity professionally. She was actually on her way to law school to become a judge before realizing her true passion for home design and decorating. It all started with her own home, an 11,000-square-foot oasis that she created and designed entirely on her own. The house was getting so much attention that people began seeking her out. Sheryl realized she possessed a raw talent for design.

At just 20 years old, Sheryl hit the pavement running and began soliciting new business. The first project that she was ever hired to do was for a wealthy client with several homes.

“She saw my talent and had me do all of her homes,” Sheryl says. “I did her home in Miami, I did her home in Chicago, I did her jet, and I did her son’s home. It all started by doing her projects, and word got around.”

Interiors by SBI soon attained a long list of clients, mainly comprised of multimillionaires and billionaires, including celebrities, athletes, and high-profile executives; and earned the label of a boutique designer, meaning every element used in a project is custom-designed.

“If I use a fabric, a sofa, a color, a wallpaper, I never use it again,”

...



Sheryl Bleustein is an award-winning, boutique designer who has been creating custom spaces for 30 years.

Sheryl explains. “Every client’s home, or whatever we’re doing — whether it be a condo, a jet, a yacht, whatever — is 100-percent customized.”

Before she knew it, her work was winning award after award. “I was fortunate ... but don’t get me wrong, I worked very hard. I worked 90 hours a week, as I still do. Thirty years later, and I’m still working.”

Sheryl never takes on more than she can handle, however. She has an excellent team of sub-contractors, most of whom have been with her for over 20 years. “I take very good care

of both sides — the guys that work for me and the clients that hire me.”

Though Interiors by SBI can do everything in the interior of a space, right down to the ornaments on the Christmas tree and the hand towels in the bathroom, the company also specializes in exterior areas. Landscaping, pool design, new construction ... you name it. “I have a full turnkey firm,” Sheryl says.

Something that sets her apart from most — if not all — designers is that she does not have a physical office. If Sheryl takes on a project, she will

only be found on the site of that job. “I’m the designer that has her hair in a ponytail; there is no fanciness about me. Suppose the client comes by; I’ve got sneakers on, and I’m on the roof, or I’m up in the attic checking to make sure the insulation is right. I do my paperwork at night when everyone is sleeping so I can be physically on the job during the day when the trades are working.”

Although she’s been doing this for 30 years, Sheryl never ceases to be amazed by the “wow factor” from her clients when they see a completed project for the first time. “That’s



“
I have a
blessed life;
I really do.”



Sheryl Bleustein was chosen to design the bedroom of the Sausage Tree Cottage for the Junior League of Miami's 2016 Showhouse at The Kampong.

what gets me through all the juggling and getting up at 4 a.m.," she says. "I juggle it all with no help. It amazes me that, after 30 years, I still have the energy to do it all."

Sheryl also has a heart for giving back to the community. She has donated to The Kampong, a National Tropical Botanical Garden in Miami, and is heavily involved in the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Sheryl and her friends have also taken it upon themselves to make PB&J sandwiches on weekends and deliver them to those in need. "If we see someone on the street who might be homeless, we just like to

stop and say, 'Hey, share a peanut butter and jelly sandwich with me.' We do that almost every week," she says. "It allows us to have girl time and do something productive for somebody else who's hungry. Nobody should ever be hungry."

Sheryl has two grown children, Phillip and Alexa, who attended college and are now living their own successful lives in New York. While she doesn't have a lot of down time, Sheryl makes it a point to exercise seven days per week. She also enjoys paddle boarding, and is an avid football fan.

"I have a blessed life; I really do," she says.

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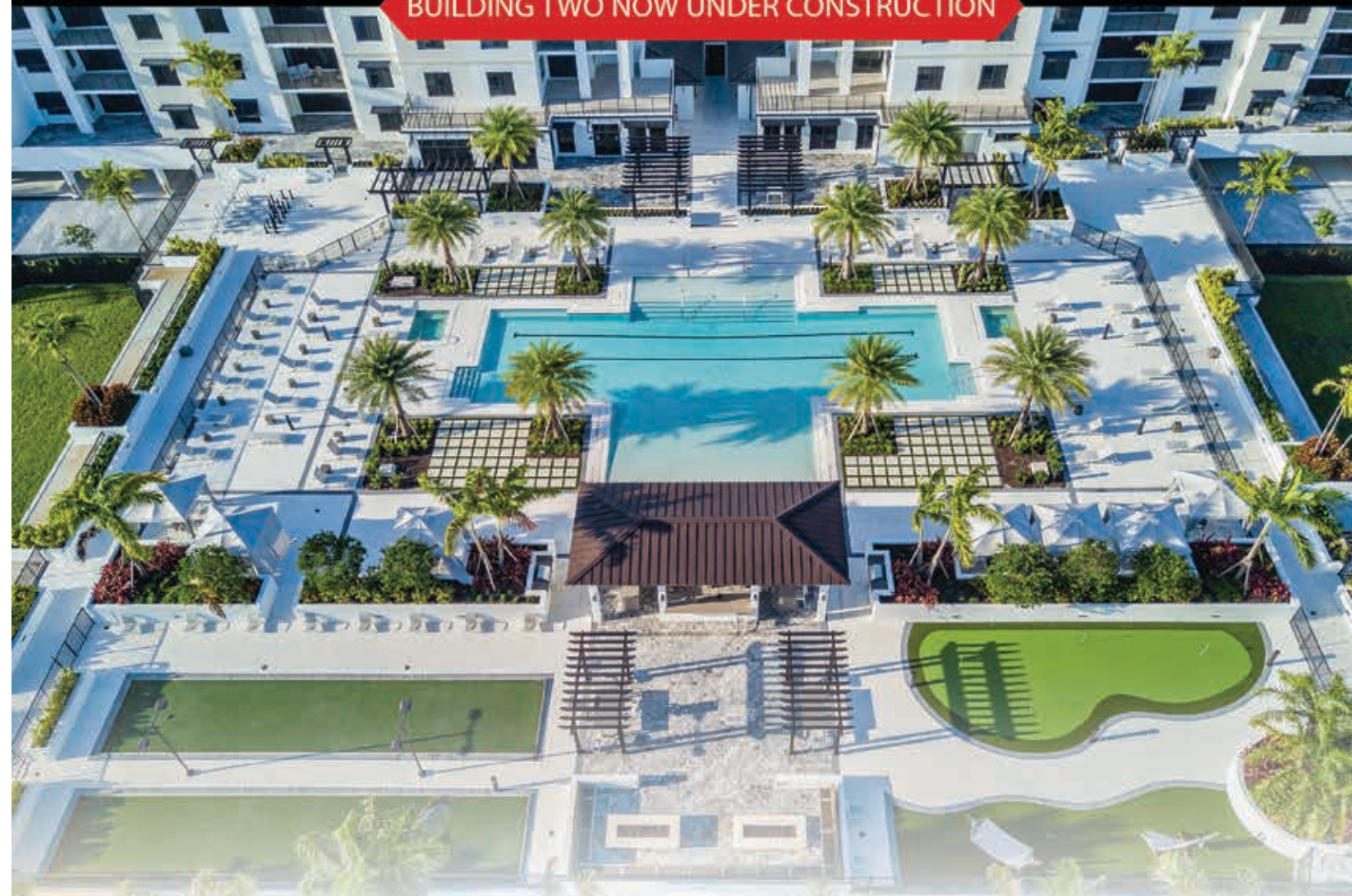


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MICHAEL JORDAN

► featured agent

A Heart for Real Estate ... and Paying It Forward

By **Lindsey Wells** | Photos by **Jon Kreider**

Everyone in this industry has a story about how they were first introduced to real estate. However, not many can say their interest in real estate was piqued before they even graduated from kindergarten. At the tender age of 5, growing up in LaGrange Park, Illinois, Michael G. Jordan Sr. and his father spent Sunday afternoons visiting real estate open houses — just for fun. Michael bought his first property from a government auction at the age of 23 and was instantly hooked after making a sizable profit. He began buying and selling homes in the Chicagoland area but didn't make a career out of real estate until years later.

After college, Michael worked for an accounting firm selling audit services for two years before becoming a licensed financial advisor, which he did for the next 17 years. But, Michael says, "While my career focus was on financial services, my heart was and always will be with real estate." In 2000, he visited Naples to do some estate planning for a wealthy Naples resident. During his down time, Michael drove every street in Park Shore, Moorings, and Olde Naples, and quickly realized the value of owning property in Naples. He bought a home that very weekend in Moorings and flew back home to gather his family and announce the news.

Within six months, Michael and his family were Naples residents. He immediately began buying and selling homes until 2005. "When property values escalated tremendously, I couldn't justify the values and got out of the real estate market," Michael says. However, after suffering two of his three heart attacks and enduring the financial crisis of 2008, he decided in early 2009 to leave the financial industry and get his real estate license. His business started slowly, as he was mostly doing short sales. "I became known in our company as the short-sale expert; it wasn't uncommon for me to be working on 10 to 15 short sales at one time. I spent two years working 60 to 70 hours a week and, during that time, I learned a lot about this side of the business."

Fast-forward 12 years, and things have vastly changed. Now an agent with William Raveis at the Seagate office, Michael is an award-winning REALTOR® in the industry. His last five years

...

have been record years, and Michael is committed to continuing that trend each year in the future. He's also passionate about mentoring.

In late 2019, Michael brought on a partner/assistant, Lex McKinney. "She's allowed me to teach her what I know while pushing me to do more in my own business," he says. "She's a vested partner in my business, and I couldn't be more proud of her or excited about where we're headed."

Michael hopes to be remembered as someone who always paid it forward. In fact, he said the movie *Pay it Forward* changed his life. For those



Michael Jordan at Grey Oaks Country Club with Molly and Matt Lane, Senior VPs & General Managers at William Raveis Real Estate, Naples.

unfamiliar with the film, it's the story of a social studies teacher who gives an assignment to his junior high school class to think of an idea to change the world for the better, then put it into action. "I've been a better person since the day after I first watched it. I watch it once a year and will continue to do so because the message is so compelling. Maybe one day I'll be able to watch it without bawling at the end," Michael says. "On a lighter note: I can't watch any horror films without jumping out of my skin, even when I know exactly what's coming next. I'm a romantic comedy kind of guy."

Michael is currently dating his wonderful girlfriend, Brooke Boyd, a physical therapist and personal trainer. He has three adult children, Kendall, Michael Jr., and Johnny, and Brooke has one 4-year-old daughter, Aria.

For the up-and-coming real estate professional, Michael offers this advice: "Find a mentor or a successful team to learn from. It's worth the pay cut. Never stop asking questions or attending education seminars, particularly those put on by NABOR or local attorneys." And to other Realtors, in general, he says, "Help your fellow Realtors be better; we all benefit from working with professional agents. Be kind to new agents who are trying to do things the right way. Most of us start at the bottom and have to work our way up. And during that journey, we've all relied on the kindness and generosity of those who knew more than we did and were willing to share."



“My heart was and always will be with real estate.”





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Keller Williams Realty Marco Island
April 2020 Cover Story

“A day without
my clients feels
incomplete.”



CHRIS LECCA
Downing-Frye Realty, Inc.
May 2020 Cover Story

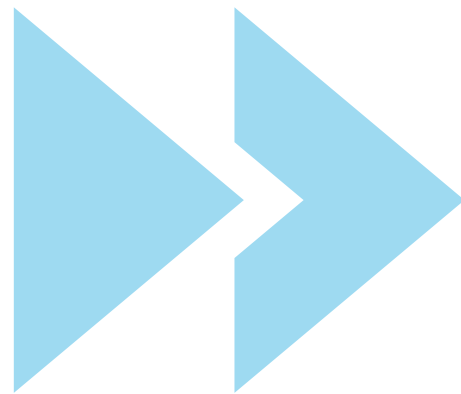
“There are garden spots around the world. But this is one of the best anywhere.”



BILL EARLS
John R. Wood Properties
June 2020 Cover Story

...

“ I absolutely love what I do and can’t imagine doing anything else. ”



JOE PAVICH JR.
Realty World
July 2020 Cover Story

“ You can leverage your time better on a team than you can as an individual agent. ”



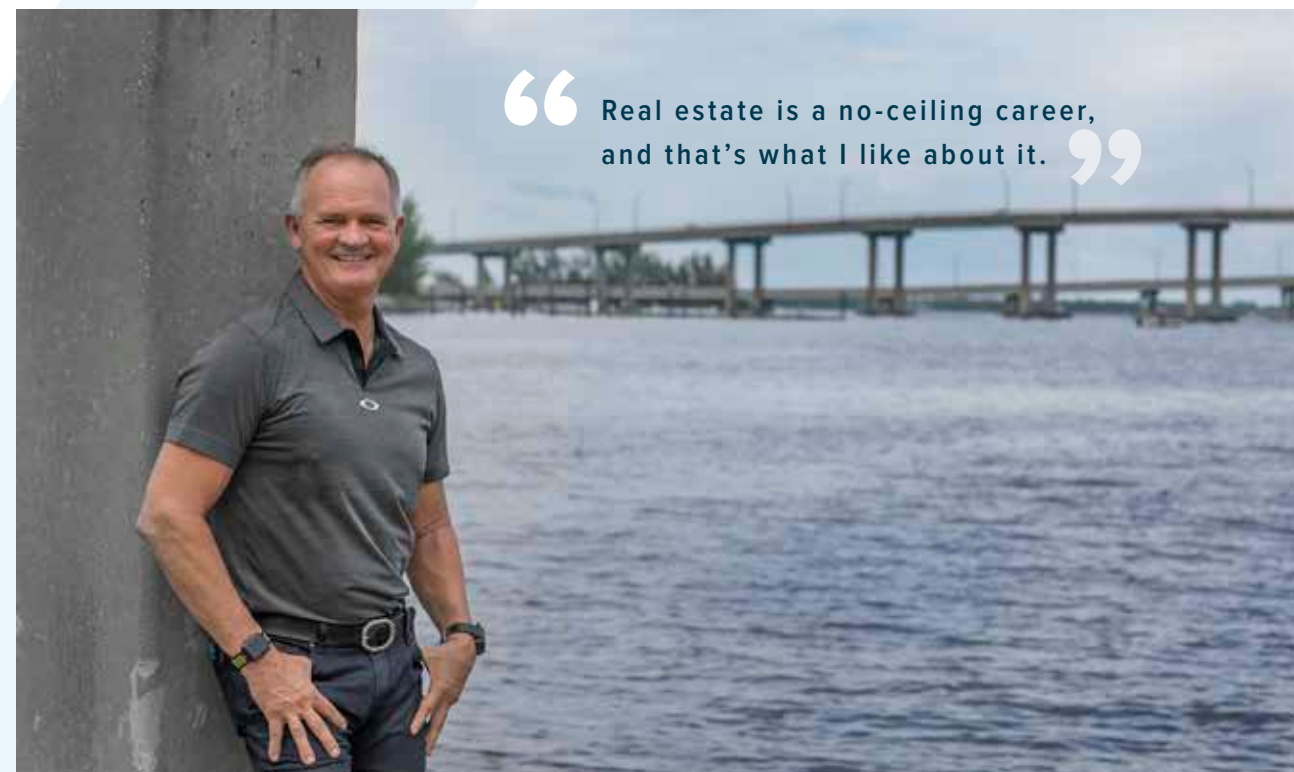
ALFRED “ABBIE” VALENTINE III
Alfred Robbins Realty Group
September 2020 Cover Story

“ We wrote down our wildest dreams, including having our own business, working together, and having a house in Florida. ”



ANGELA LUTZI DELLATORÈ & SCOTT DELLATORÈ
The Dellatorè Group
August 2020 Cover Story

“ Real estate is a no-ceiling career, and that’s what I like about it. ”



DENNY GRIMES
Keller Williams Realty
October 2020 Cover Story

“
I don't care if my clients
call me at 2 a.m. I should
probably take some time
off, but I'm addicted to this.”



DAVID GRUNINGER
Engel & Völkers Olde Naples
November 2020 Cover Story

“
Every day, we strive to learn something just
as much as we strive to sell something.”



ML MEADE
Premier Sotheby's International Realty
January 2021 Cover Story

“
We're more like real estate consultants
and advisors than we are salespeople.”



STAN & SCOTT WHITCOMB
Premiere Plus Realty
December 2020 Cover Story

“
That's the reason I'm here in
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▶▶ partner spotlight

By Dave Danielson
Photos by LaCasaTour

JOHN PRETE

HouseMaster

Paving the Way with Partnership



John Prete, Owner/President of HouseMaster in SWFL, with girlfriend Jenny Moorhead.



When it comes to serving your clients and making things happen in a positive way, there’s no substitute for building strong relationships and coming up with collaborative solutions.

That’s exactly what you get when you work with HouseMaster — a home inspection organization that is paving the way ahead with partnership.

John Prete is Owner/President of the HouseMaster franchise in Southwest Florida. When you talk with him, you know you’re in the presence of someone who lives and breathes service.

“What we do as home inspectors really begins with the fact that we do a really good, thorough job,” John emphasizes. “But wait ... there’s more! On top of that, we’re the only company that offers a guarantee on our inspection.”

Made to Last

HouseMaster delivers a brand of expertise that is made to last.

“We’re involved before, during, and after for the people we work with,” he says. “We offer after-hour availability, our inspectors show up professionally in uniform, and we take advantage of the latest technology and software to get the job done.”

Along the way, John says there’s no substitute for partnership.

“Our success depends on REALTORS®. Through the course of working with agents, we try to educate them about what an inspection is and isn’t. Every effort is made to be sure all parties understand that our agreement with the client is very different than the agreement between the buyer (our client) and the seller. As part of that, we encourage them to understand what we do and how it relates to their contract,” John explains. “We really try to do an above-and-beyond job for Realtors who we’ve formed such close relationships with.”

Excelling Through Partnership

John credits his Realtor partners with helping him hone his business as well.

“Through the course of doing business over time, our reporting that we provide has literally been shaped by the constructive feedback and comments we receive from our partners,” he says. “Sometimes that arises out of an issue or some misunderstanding of the language within our report. During our conversation about it, one of our partners will say, ‘Have

you ever thought about writing it this way?’ It’s been a very constructive process to have good, productive Realtors work with us that way. That has been a tremendous help.”

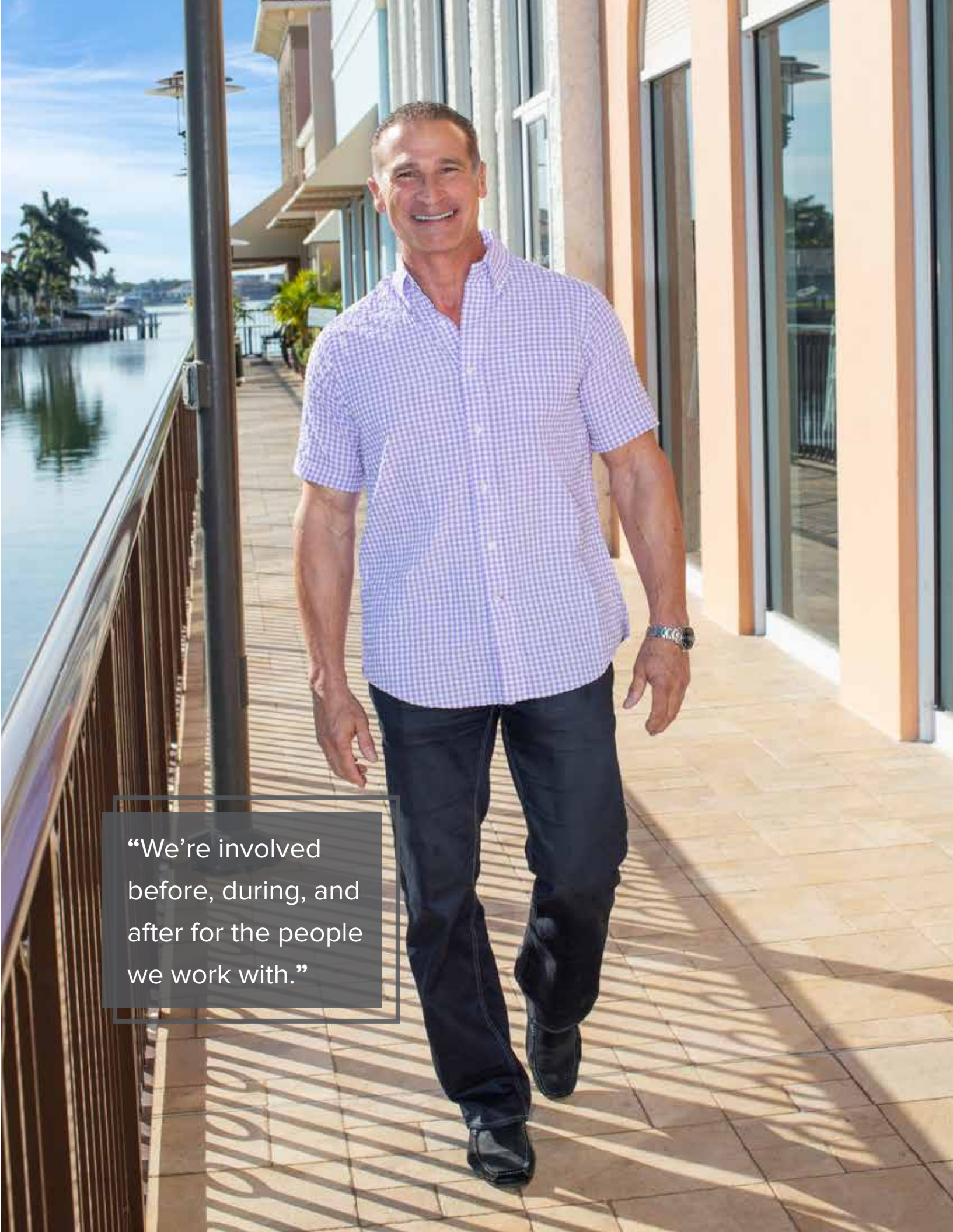
That sense of partnership goes both ways.

“We really enjoy working with Realtors and we lean on them to let us know about things that we can do to better support them and the sale that they’re involved with. We are very mindful about our role. We know that, through the process, people have fallen in love with a home. We aren’t there to scare the living daylights out of people. We’re here to support the deal and also to tell the buyer anything we can about the property before they move in. We’re here to help, point out and answer questions, and also to assuage their concerns.”

Team Pride

John’s pride in his team is strong.

“We have a tremendous group on our team, including our front-of-house administrative staff members, Alice and Theresa, who handle calls that come in and making contact with



“We’re involved before, during, and after for the people we work with.”



John Prete ran the HouseMaster franchise his father bought in 1995 with him side by side before ownership passed fully to John.

clients. Alice has been with us for 25 years, and Theresa has been part of our team for the past 15 years. Plus, Jim Snyder, a former inspector for us who moved into a more administrative role, is a member of our team who is an invaluable resource answering a wide range of questions that come in when the inspectors are not available during the day,” John says. “We also have a separate team of five inspectors in addition to myself who apply their experience in providing high-quality inspections. I have tremendous faith in them, and I feel very blessed to have the team I do.”

A History of Helping

John’s father first bought the HouseMaster franchise in 1995. After a few years, John joined the business. His father introduced him to many veteran brokers and Realtors

that had been using HouseMaster. In time, after running the business side by side, ownership of the franchise passed fully to John.

“It’s so wonderful to help people through the transaction with our small part that we play. Along the way, I enjoy educating clients and helping them work through any concerns. Buyers can be overwhelmed with the process. The same holds true for Realtors,” he says. “We help to boil down what we do to more simplistic terms. And one of the best things about what we do is working with people who are so appreciative, and know that we’re there to help.”

Streamlined Process

The process of involving HouseMaster is an easy one.

“When we talk for the first time with a Realtor who is new to us, we share a copy of our sample report and we invite them to talk with us and check out our website. The main thing we want to do is make it easy. Once the Realtor makes a phone call and involves us, we pick up the ball from there. It’s like a relay race. You tell us the property, the location, and what special services may be needed (wind mitigation, radon, termites, etc.) and we move ahead. As soon as they book in the inspection, an email goes out with the time and date, along with brief instructions for the day of the inspection. Once the inspection is complete, we send the report the same day.”

Making a Difference

Away from work, John treasures time with his girlfriend, Jenny Moorhead.

In their free time, John and Jenny enjoy spending time with friends sharing a good meal and a glass of wine or craft beer. John is active, enjoying working out at the gym, where he has met many people and forged great relationships. He also loves animals. He supports and advocates mostly for cats — he believes they are often misunderstood and do not receive as much attention as dogs (nothing against dogs). He supports and regularly donates to cat organizations, mainly *For the Love of Cats*, an organization that fosters, adopts out, and coordinates spay/neuter programs.

With a straightforward, heartfelt approach to helping others, John and the team at HouseMaster go the distance to help deals reach the finish line.

For more information about HouseMaster, call 239-430-8220.

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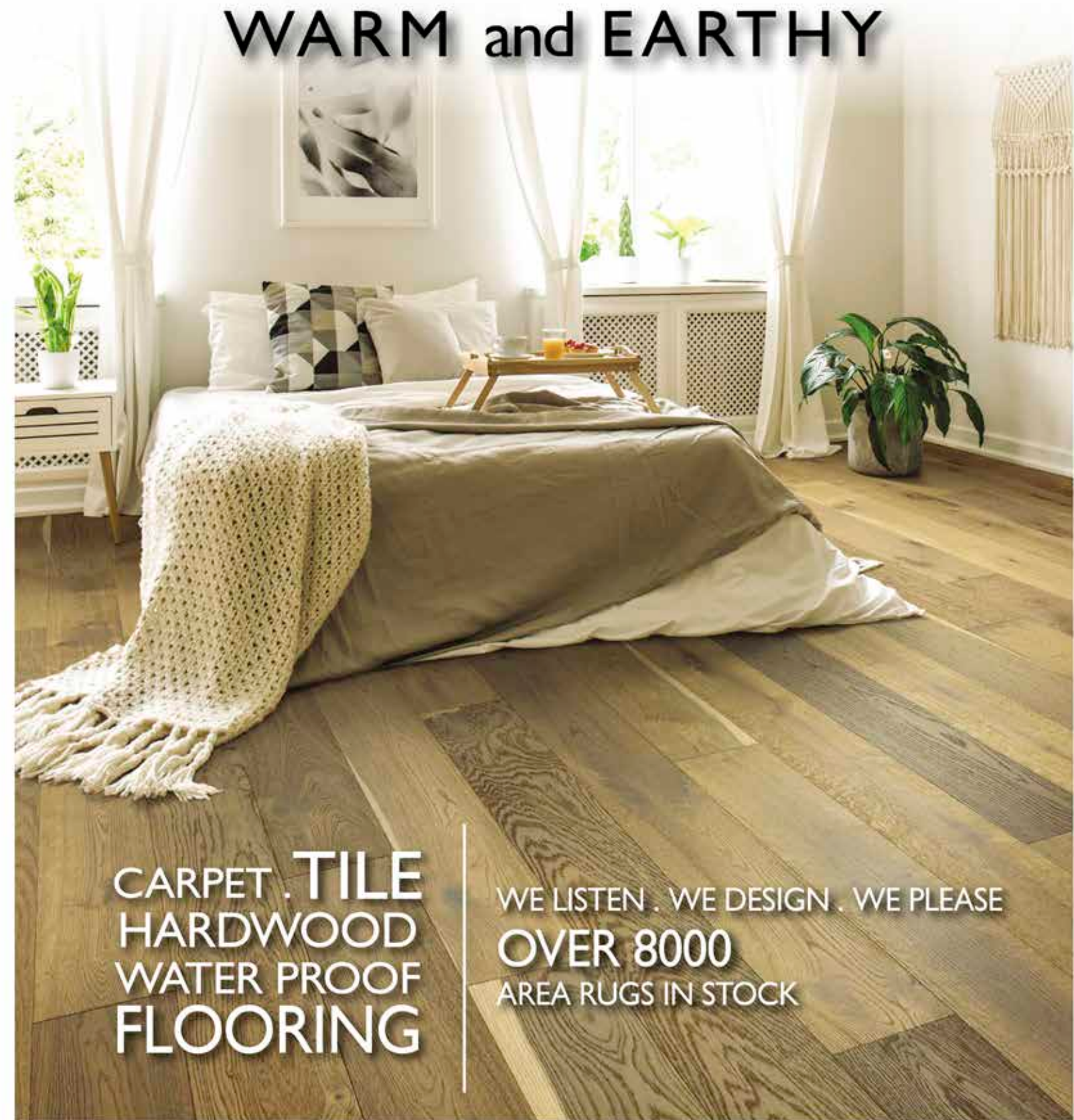
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Ginny Marles

Focusing Straight Ahead

They say when life throws you curveballs, you either learn how to hit them or let them knock you out. No one knows about life's curveballs better than Ginny Marles, and it wasn't long before she picked up a bat and began swinging back.

Ginny moved from New Jersey to Florida in 2013 in search of a fresh start. "I came here on vacation and decided I didn't want to live my old life anymore," she says. Ginny returned home, gathered her kids and belongings, and headed south. The first few

years in The Sunshine State were spent settling in. "I spent the first few years just getting my head right, going to the beach and gym, soaking up the sunshine, and just being a mom. My kids were little, and I didn't need to work at the time; I had enough to get by for a while."

Ginny was licensed and worked in real estate in New Jersey from 2005 to 2013, so, naturally, she pursued a career in the same industry when it came time to return to work. "My neighbor sold me a



The Selling Paradise Group at Domain Realty (From left to right: Lacy Stark, Ginny Marles, Sarah Burke).

house and then said, ‘Come work with us,’” Ginny recalls. “That’s how I ended up really getting into it big time.” She got her Florida real estate license in 2016 and began selling full-time in 2017.

Now, Ginny leads Domain Realty’s Selling Paradise Group, comprised of herself and two other agents, Sarah Burke and Lacy Stark. Although Ginny has always functioned as a solo agent, she opted to form her own group in mid-to-late 2020, when business started picking up. Ginny says she has always been focused on working with buyers and has done very well with it but plans to diversify that a bit in 2021. She also hopes to grow her team to include more agents in the future.

Early on, Ginny began specializing in waterfront and beachfront properties in the Vanderbilt Beach and Pelican Bay areas. “I realized it’s so much easier to sell in an area that you truly believe in and that you love,” she says. “This is where I want to live and this is what I love. It’s paradise. It’s my little niche.”

When asked to define the word success, Ginny says she would consider herself successful when able to balance out her work and personal life. “When I have time to go to the gym, and be at every event for my children, and still make the same income ... when I have more time, that’s when I’ll know I’ve been very successful,” she says.

Ginny has two children, Taryn, 16, and Landon, 14. When they aren’t in school, the kids and Ginny can usually be found out on their boat or at the beach, living the typical Florida life. “Brunch, dinner, boating, beaching,” Ginny says. “When I have time, I like to run away to the Keys or Miami. Other than that, I raise kids and barely have time to do anything else.”

Ginny hopes that her story will inspire up-and-coming agents just starting out in the industry. “If I could get through it and become successful to the level that I’ve already gotten to, this fast and this quick, I feel that anyone can do it,” she says. “Just focus on what’s ahead of you, not what’s behind you.”



“If I could get through it and become successful to the level that I’ve already gotten to, this fast and this quick, I feel that anyone can do it.”



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Governor Ron DeSantis speaks to Florida Realtors® members during their 2020 Great American Realtor Days legislative event in Tallahassee.

Who's Got Your Back

When Lawmakers Meet This Year?

Florida's 2021 Legislative Session starts on March 2, 2021, bringing lawmakers together to create new laws that will impact your business.

While the annual 60-day event is always unpredictable, this year's session stands to be even more so given the multibillion-dollar budget shortfall created by the pandemic. With a deficit that large, anything is up for grabs, including programs that directly support Florida's real estate industry.

So, if you can't be in Tallahassee to advocate for your profession and the health of your business, who can you rely on to protect your interests? **Thankfully, Florida Realtors® PAC has your back.**

For more than 50 years, Florida Realtors® PAC has been looking out for you, and the 2021 legislative session will be no different.

Here are just a few of the issues that Florida Realtors® PAC will be advocating for on your behalf:

Protection from Unwarranted COVID-Related Legal Challenges

The current pandemic has created new challenges for Realtors as they seek to operate safely, limiting potential spread of the virus. These challenges have also created opportunities for attorneys who see the pandemic as a way to secure new revenue. Without any liability protections in place, Realtors and their businesses could be facing a slew of COVID-19-related lawsuits if a client, or potential client, contracts the virus.

To help protect Realtors from this type of legal action, Florida Realtors® PAC is supporting the passage of business liability protections for Florida businesses. The central focus of this legislation is to ensure businesses do right by employees and customers, the protections are consistent and simple, and that the need for justice comes before attorney profits.

Containing Property Insurance Premium Hikes

Property insurance costs are rising at alarming levels. Higher premiums are due to any number of factors: changes in underwriting guidelines; hurricanes and severe storm and natural catastrophes in other parts of the country or world; rising reinsurance rates; and the increasing litigation costs insurance companies are being forced to pay. Florida Realtors® PAC supports sensible legislation that seeks to reduce occurrences of unnecessary litigation while protecting the rights of homeowners to challenge insurance claims.

Affordable Housing Is Needed Now More Than Ever

The housing trust funds, which are supported by a portion of documentary stamp taxes on every real estate transaction, are the only way for thousands of Florida families to realize the American dream of homeownership. They are also one of the only mechanisms preventing Florida's affordable housing crisis going from bad to worse.

Although lawmakers are dealing with a significant budget shortfall, Florida Realtors® PAC is asking lawmakers to allocate all monies collected for the housing trust funds to home buying and rental assistance programs.

Preserve and Protect the Environment

Though the super-active 2020 hurricane season spared most of Florida, rising sea levels, blue-green algae, and other environmental issues remain a problem for many communities. To help address these environmental problems, Florida Realtors® PAC supports several solutions: funding for Everglades preservation

initiatives; legislation that addresses rising sea levels in Florida's coastal communities; and reliance on scientific and engineering expertise to determine vulnerable areas, prioritize critical work projects, and create a long-term plan that can address Florida's most pressing environmental problems.

Protect Property Rights

Many local governments have enacted new ordinances designed to discourage property owners from exercising their right to rent their property. Short-term rental ordinances, including local licensing requirements, mandatory inspections, and guest restrictions, can infringe upon this fundamental property right in significant ways.

Florida Realtors® PAC continues to seek legislation that creates a statewide, uniform system of regulations for vacation rentals. It also supports laws that give local governments the authority to pass ordinances related to residential properties, as long as they apply to all residential properties.

Keep Reducing the Business Rent Tax

Florida is the only state in the nation that charges a sales tax on commercial leases. Currently standing at 5.5 percent, this tax creates a financial burden for any business that leases space. Florida Realtors® PAC backs further reductions to this tax, which would provide businesses with some measure of relief as they work to stay open and eventually recover from the economic crisis created by the ongoing pandemic.

The Florida Realtors® team of lobbyists is a strong and powerful voice in Tallahassee. Your investment in Florida Realtors® PAC helps create a business climate where you can thrive and protects the interests of your customers and clients. If you don't support a robust real estate market, who will? Give today at pac.floridarealtors.org.





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CUTTING THE CORD:

THE LATEST ON STREAMING SERVICES

By **Shauna
Osborne**

Last year was truly the year of stay-at-home entertainment. Being locked down indoors for most of 2020 gave us ample time to explore what shows, performances, and films could be experienced from the comfort of our own living rooms. Particularly for those depressed by the closure of movie theaters and entertainment venues, streaming offered the ability to bond with other fans over live-streamed music performances, to stay in touch with box-office trends, and, importantly, to zone out from pandemic-related stress with endless episodes of *The Office*, *Gilmore Girls*, or *The Great British Baking Show*.

Unsurprisingly, 2020 saw video streaming activity increase by up to 40% in the U.S., with the average user streaming over three hours of content daily during the key months of lockdown, primarily on the most familiar and well-known, over-the-top (OTT) media services: Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, and Disney+. Each option provides instant access to a wide-ranging library of high-quality content – with a growing segment of original programming – at a variety of price points, devices supported, and simultaneous streams allowed. Newcomers to the streaming scene, like Peacock, Quibi, and Acorn, are moving toward niche content; for example, Quibi streams short videos exclusively to smartphones, while Acorn offers U.S. viewers programming specifically from the UK, Ireland, Canada, and Australia. Other recent streaming trends that will continue into 2021 include...

- **Nostalgia:** Streaming services are bringing back the '80s and '90s to capitalize on the nostalgia factor for millennials. In 2020, Netflix brought us the popular *Cobra Kai*, a *Karate Kid* reboot, as well as *The Baby-Sitters Club*, based on the beloved literary sisterhood from an erstwhile era.
- **Health and wellness:** Virtual fitness has become the “new normal,” as over 80% of U.S. households report they utilized live-streamed workout services during 2020. Yoga and HIIT (high-intensity interval training) / bootcamp classes topped the list. Notably, many consumers say they plan to continue to stream fitness classes post-COVID.
- **Docuseries:** Remember the *Tiger King* mania of spring 2020? The show was reportedly watched by over 60 million households in the U.S. last year. Documentary miniseries are growing in popularity, with more being released for streaming constantly.
- **Non-English original programming:** Step aside, Hollywood. Streaming services like Netflix and Prime have seen massive success this year with local-language series like *La Casa De Papel* and *Dark*.

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