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TABLE OF CONTENTS



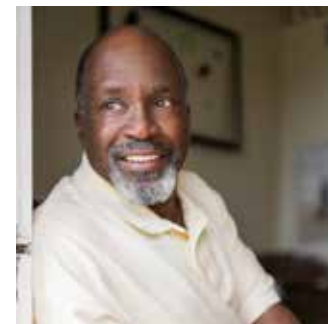
07
Preferred Partners



09
Meet The Team




10
Celebrating Leaders:
Jason Noriega



14
Partner Profile:
Eddie Davis



18
Star on the Rise:
Colin Clancy



23
Cover Story:
Lana Morin Pierce



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Jason Noriega

▶ celebrating leaders
By Zach Cohen



THE ART OF FAITH

“LIFE DOESN'T HAPPEN TO YOU; IT HAPPENS FOR YOU. DESPITE THE HARDSHIPS, DESPITE THE HARD TIMES, IT'S HAPPENING FOR YOU TO GROW THROUGH IT.”

“It's been a huge change in how I spend my time,” Jason Noriega begins.

At 43 years old, Jason has been in the real estate business for over two decades. And after more than 20 years selling real estate – and with two young children at home – he decided it was time for a change.

A CHANGE OF COURSE

Jason was single when he began his real estate career and met his now-wife, Megan, while he was entrenched in building his business.

“I was a real estate agent before she met me, so she knew what came with the territory,” Jason smiles.

Megan is a school teacher, so her schedule and Jason's schedule rarely lined up. “We really had to make an effort to develop our relationship, to keep our relationship healthy. Then you add kids in the picture,” Jason says.

After many years of balancing schedules, juggling young kids, and trying to find a way to keep their relationship alive and nourishing, Jason began to reconsider his position selling real estate.

“What I realized was that you blink and the kids are grown up. There is a sacrifice that comes with [selling real estate],” Jason says. “I looked at my kids a couple of months back and thought, ‘Wow, when did they go from babies in my arms to a young lady and a little boy?’ I reassessed some things, and thought, ‘Gosh ... what can I do?’ I was missing out on seeing my kids grow up. While I'm negotiating contracts at night, my kids' lives are passing me by.”

As a Christian, Jason voiced his prayers to God.

“One night, in earnest, I simply said, ‘I enjoy the work I'm doing, but if there is anything else out there, let me know. I'm open.’”

Only two weeks later, Jason received a call from another real estate company. They wanted to recruit him for a non-selling leadership position.

“It dropped in my lap. I was completely surprised and thought, ‘Gosh, that was quick.’”

The offer gave Jason something to consider. He was intrigued but didn't give an immediate ‘yes.’ He wanted to fully evaluate if it would be a good move – for his career, for his personal life, and for his family.

“I called Trap (Chris Trapani, Founder and CEO of Sereno Group) and said that I needed his advice. I asked him to take his boss hat off and be a friend and a mentor,” Jason recalls. Thankfully, Jason's boss was willing to be a friend and advisor, first, and put his role as his manager on the backburner.

“He said that it sounded like a great opportunity for me,” Jason explains. “He said he'd miss me, but wouldn't stop me from doing what was good for me and my family.”

Trap also reminded Jason to take a step back, to take his time, to gather the information that he needed to make the most informed and centered decision.

...

...

“He reminded me that if I take two weeks for the next 20 years, it’s worth it... That really saved me. I took that to heart,” Jason says.

At home, Megan asked Jason how his call with Trap went. That’s when he realized, “I kind of wanted him to talk me out of it,” Jason laughs.

A few weeks later, Jason received a text from Trap. He returned the text with a phone call.

“Jason,” he said, “I’ve really been thinking about our conversation. I’ve been praying about it. I’ve been meditating on it. We’ve decided we need to make changes in our company and put non-selling managers in our offices – and I think you would be an excellent candidate.”

“I was just about ready to accept the offer with this other company,” Jason says.

THE ART OF FAITH

Jason met with his bosses the next Monday. They affirmed that adding non-selling leadership roles was in their long-term plans, but, given the circumstances, they were willing to move quicker. They knew Jason was a valuable asset to their company.

Jason accepted the offer to become Sereno Group’s Vice President of Client Experience.

“The opportunity to continue working with Trap and Ryan was the best option. I never wanted to leave. That was my biggest struggle,” Jason says.

“If you’re faithful, if your heart is in the right place with the right motivation, I believe God can even one-up what you think is best for yourself,” Jason continues with a smile.

Jason has an impenetrable faith, the type of faith that cannot be touched, felt, or seen, but he knows it’s there. As a Christian, he firmly believes in the power of prayer.

“I believe there is a higher being out there that doesn’t necessarily reward us because we’re such great people. However, I believe in the fact that there is a will out there for each one of us. A purpose. If we find ourselves in the center of that will or purpose, that’s when those things happen to us,” Jason says.

“For me, I felt God knew my heart. If God wanted me somewhere else, he would give me the opportunity to put me where he needed me. When I verbalized my hopes, I don’t think it’s ironic to see what happened. The doors were opened for me. I was led down this path.”



GENUINE FULFILLMENT
 Today, Jason’s goals have shifted from helping clients to helping agents on his team build their businesses.

“If I can help agents see the potential they have, if I can help them know, think and feel that they are good – good people, not just good real estate agents – if I can help people see the good inside of them and their potential, they will do good in their business and out in the world,” Jason says.

Jason has found a way to stay within the industry he loves, with the company he loves, and transition to a role that better serves his personal and family life. It’s a win-win-win.

“There is a soul-level fulfillment I have now. I’m deeply satisfied,” Jason beams. “It’s turned out to be a wonderful career.”



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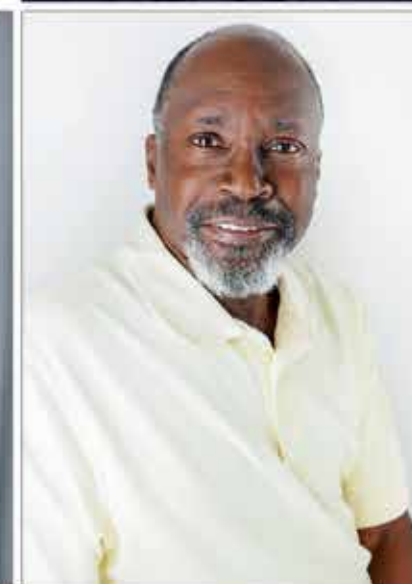
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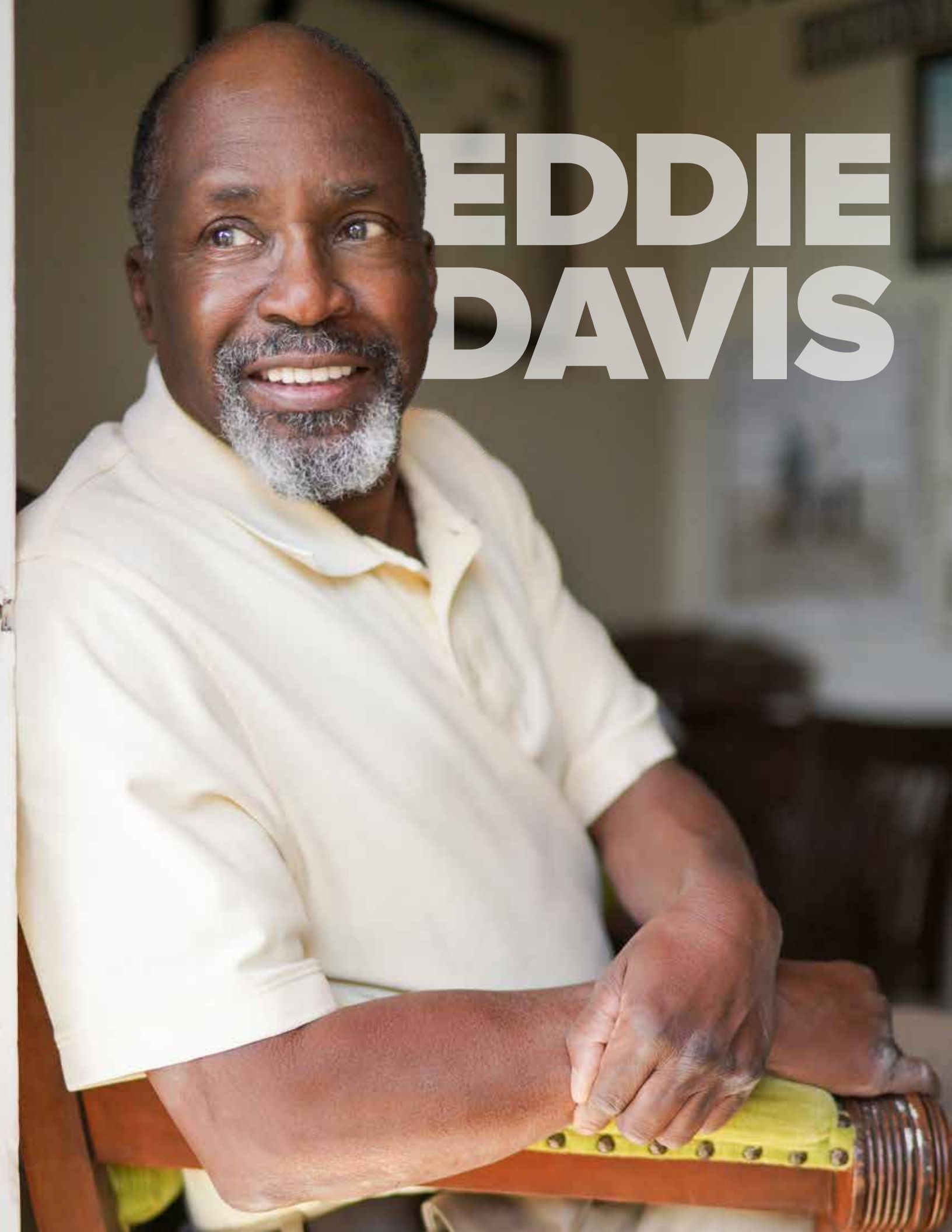
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EDDIE DAVIS

▶ partner profile

By Zach Cohen

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Solid Impressions Appraisals

Real Value

Buying a home is one of the largest – if not the largest – investment most people will make. Whether the home is a primary residence, a second house, or an investment property, understanding the property’s valuation is a critical element in the purchase process.

Eddie Davis’s job is to provide a supportable and defensible opinion of the property’s value. The reason for obtaining this opinion varies. When the purpose is to obtain a mortgage loan, his job is to analyze all current and recent market and property data. It is his responsibility to provide the lender with information and an unbiased value opinion that allows them to assess their risk.

“An appraisal is an unbiased estimate of what a parcel of real estate’s market value. It is important to note that the definition of market value does not mean that it is necessarily worth what a party is willing to pay,” Eddie explains.

Rewind: Silicon Valley’s Printing Broker

In the ‘80s and ‘90s, Eddie was a printing broker. Back before the availability of the software that makes at-home printing more available, Eddie was responsible for connecting technology businesses with independent printing companies.

“I would go out and find companies in the Silicon Valley that needed various forms of printing for their business, then place the order with independent printers that didn’t have a sales force,” Eddie explains.

Eddie found success in the printing business, but in the early 2000s, the market evolved to where his role was in jeopardy. Adobe came out with a suite of PDF generation software, allowing small

businesses to take on a larger portion of the design work. With the printing process streamlined, Eddie saw the writing on the wall. Eliminate the word small.

“I had to find something else to do,” Eddie remembers. “Most of my business came from startup computer companies, things of that nature, and when Adobe made it possible to put documents in a PDF file, it changed a lot.”

Relationships Lead to Opportunities

At the time, Eddie was playing racquetball several times a week. He had a friend that was an appraiser, and the idea of a new career path intrigued Eddie.

“He said, ‘Take a look at what I do.’ So I did, and, as they say, the rest is history.”

Eddie joined his friend in business as a trainee and independent contractor, learned the ropes, and in 2001, opened Solid Impressions Appraisals. For almost two decades, Eddie has perfected his craft as an appraiser.

With Solid Impressions Appraisals, Eddie wears all the hats. He’s a customer service rep, a bookkeeper, a marketing director – and, most importantly, an appraiser. With almost 20 years of experience under his belt, he’s proven himself more than capable of handling the load. Eddie is reliable, experience, and enjoyable to work with.

Opinion Matters

“For a lot of people, the appraisal is a mystery,” Eddie continues. “A lot of people think that if I tell you your house is worth \$500,000, that’s a fact. But that’s an opinion. That’s the key thing people miss.”



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It's one person's opinion. Someone else, another appraiser could have a different opinion."

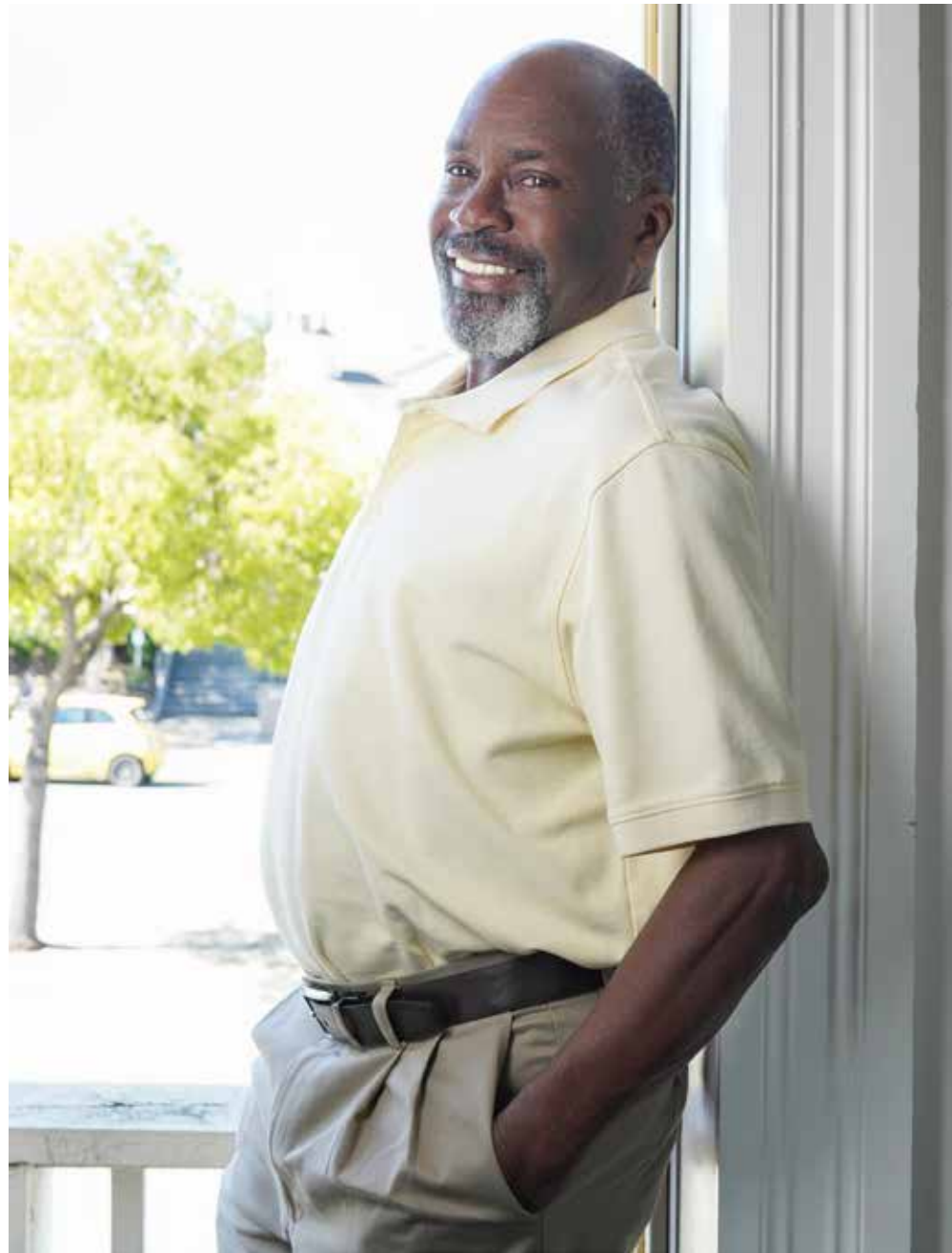
As a result, the appraiser that's brought in to assess a property's value is critical.

"I gather evidence and information to make a credible opinion. The reason it's credible is because I've analyzed various market data, I understand the local market and demographics, and I have compared similar properties," Eddie continues. "The number I come up with, even though it's an opinion, the bank views an absolute. I put in a lot of effort to come up with the value. I go a little farther to justify what I do. I look for little things that others may not."

Eddie observes that there is often friction in the relationship between real estate agents and appraisers, but he believes it doesn't have to be that way. His goal is to bridge the gap and provide exceptional service.

"I'm here to work with you, not against you," Eddie reminds us. "I hear some appraisers are not willing to consider agent-provided data. I can not guarantee I will consider their data to be valid or pertinent, or my opinion will make the deal go forward. Still, I'm willing to go that extra mile to gather and analyze all pertinent data... I believe I am among the best."

Eddie Davis is a Certified Residential Appraiser specializing in high-value and luxury properties in San Jose, Palo Alto, the East Foothills, and neighborhoods throughout Santa Clara, San Mateo, and the Bay Area. For more information, visit www.solidimpressions.com.



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COLIN CLANCY

Doing Right for the World

“Faith tells me that if I do right and do good, it’ll come back to me.”

Real estate didn’t cross Colin’s radar until life ushered in the opportunity – and necessity – for a change. For 20 years, Colin touched nearly all aspects of the printing industry. After graduating from the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada, Colin moved to Capitola, CA, where he started out running a quick print shop. From there his career took him to various positions at printing companies, and, ultimately, he ended up as the Director of Key Accounts at Graphics Microsystems, Inc. They had a closed-loop color control system that measured ink quality on paper for top-tier print publications like Time, Life, and Sports Illustrated.

“That company was great because the better job you did, the more opportunities they’d give you and the more experience you got. In that job, I did everything from customer service calls and writing press releases to giving critical sales presentations to execs and CEOs of some of the biggest printing organizations in the world. That job even took me all the way to Singapore for three days just to give a sales presentation.”

Although Colin enjoyed his printing industry career, he eventually got hit with a harsh reality of corporate life. Their product had done so well over the years that it became ubiquitous in the industry – i.e. they had less need for sales reps to promote it anymore. In 2006, they streamlined the business and laid off portions of the sales department, including Colin.

“That was my big wake-up moment because it didn’t matter how hard I worked or how good a job I was doing. At the end of the day, I was just a line item on an expense sheet, and removing me saved money.”

With a soon-to-be 1-year-old son, he and his wife had always planned for one of them to stay home

for the kids in the early years of raising their family. Colin’s layoff made the choice easy. From there Colin committed to being “Mr. Mom” and stayed home with his son and their newborn daughter for seven years – a time he’s immensely grateful for. His strong relationship with his kids is built on the closeness in those formative years.

Family is a huge part of Colin’s life, and he’s been devoted to his wife and kids from the moment they entered his life. Once his daughter reached pre-K, he was ready to dive back into a career again.

“Even though losing my job was painful, it was a blessing in disguise because it allowed me to rethink what I want to do and to reinvent myself.”

Although he’d not seen it before, real estate turned out to be a perfect fit and match for his skillset.

Creating a New Balance in Life

“I didn’t realize it until I got into the industry, but all the pieces for my passion for real estate were there. I just hadn’t put it all together.”

Looking back, it’s easy for Colin to see where the foundation for his real estate career was laid down. He’d grown up in New Jersey in a home that was built in the 1880s. Over the years, he witnessed scores of renovations on the home and was always involved in the process, budding his passion for home improvement and vintage architecture. Decades later, his printing career often required him to travel to small towns throughout America. He’d pick up a copy of the Property Pages whenever he ate at a restaurant and loved flipping through to check out the real estate, architecture, and styles of the area. He got his real estate license in 2014 and hasn’t looked back since.

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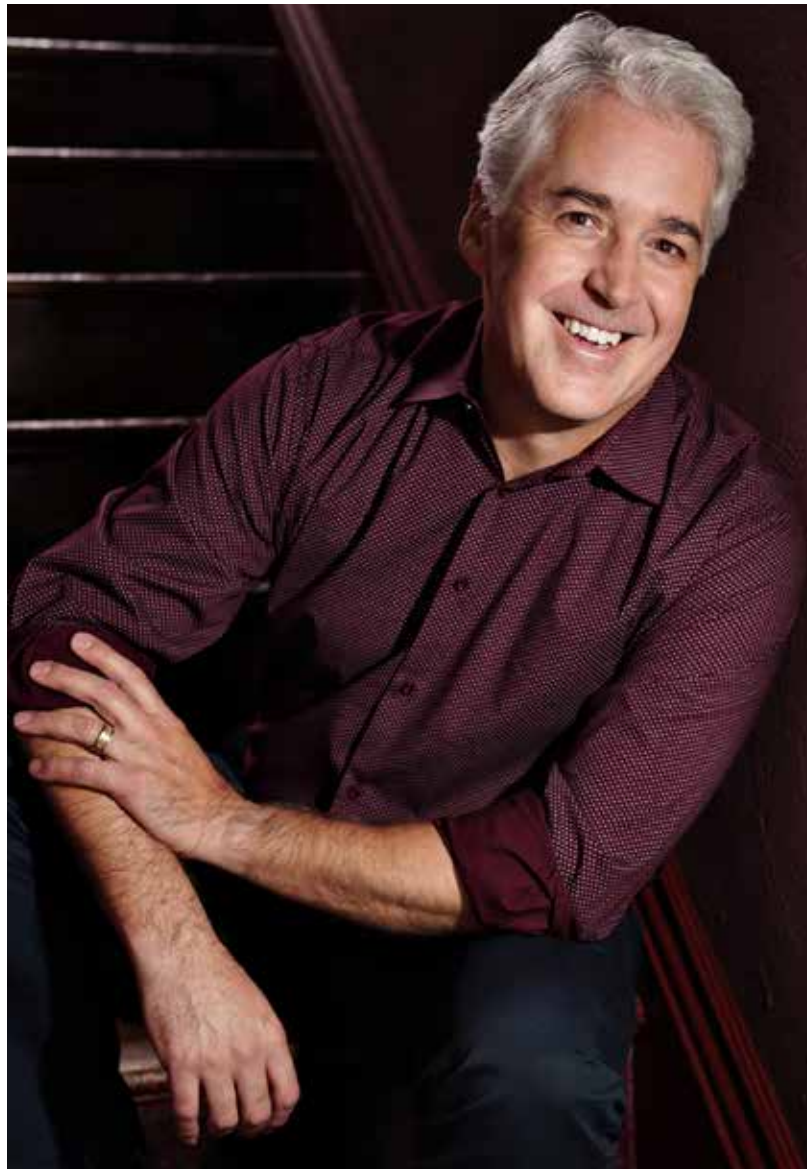
“The way I approach my business is to treat my clients like family. The basis of that approach is maintaining a high level of accountability. You can’t hide from family; you’re going to know them throughout your life. For me, that’s really the core of building a long-term relationship with clients and business partners.”

Colin’s days now consist of a fulfilling balance of work, volunteering, and spending time with his family. Real estate has given him the freedom to fit everything seamlessly. He’ll drive his daughter to school in the morning, work through the day, and pick his kids up in the afternoon.

“That was always my plan. I wanted something that a) I could be in charge of, and b) was flexible enough to allow me to manage that along with raising my kids and volunteering at their school.”

The COVID-19 pandemic hasn’t impacted Colin’s business too harshly. In fact, he’s keeping his sights on the bright side. The new restrictions have changed his weekly office meetings to virtual meetings, so now it’s much easier for him to attend and connect with the other agents at his office. Back home, he’s got his garage office set up to pop on the record player, write contracts, and continue to be there for his clients at every step of the way.

“
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Story By Zach Cohen
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Lana
morin pierce ...

Heart and Soul

•••

“When I was a teenager, I saw that you could create wealth through real estate. That was something that caught my interest,” Lana Morin Pierce begins.

Lana remembers her parents’ relationship with their real estate agent well. Lynne Meier had helped Lana’s family buy and sell multiple homes in San Mateo, and became more than a real estate agent; she became a family friend.

“Our real estate agent growing up – she was like a second mom to me,” Lana smiles. “I remember the days of her bringing us the MLS listing book (it used to be a book). She would bring it over, and we went to church with her. She was really close. She was a big part of our lives.”

After a decade-long career in the restaurant and hospitality industry, followed by a stint in the dot-com world, Lana turned back towards real estate. Deep down, she always held an interest.

“It appealed to me on different levels. I was able to bring my background in hospitality and caring for others,” Lana explains. “Then there’s the people component. I saw how my family friend became so close to her clients.”

Lana came out of an industry where there wasn’t a lot of money to be made. She worked long hours with little to show for it.



“In real estate, it was amazing what I could produce, what I could do,” Lana explains. “Real estate was something I had been interested in for a long time, and it was the perfect timing.”

In 2004, Lynne took Lana under her wing as she got her license.

“After college, I saved up and was able to purchase my first condo here in San Mateo. I did everything I could to make that happen. To see it turn into a rental property ... I started to see the value of what I could do with real estate as an owner. Then I thought about helping others achieve those dreams. It was exciting.

From humble beginnings to the present day, Lana has risen to become the Vice President and Managing Officer at Intero in Burlingame. She’s also a top-producing real estate agent herself.



Bringing Value to the Business

“My heart and soul is in it. I treat every transaction as if it were my own.”

Lana is in real estate for the long game. She’s not in it to make money; she’s in it to build relationships. She’s in it to help others.

Here in the Silicon Valley, Lana recognizes that many of her clients are highly skilled, deeply analytical individuals. She understands that it’s important to keep up with the details in any transaction. It provides a level of security to the client and feeds their needs for control and rational understanding.

“I love doing a great job for people,” Lana continues. “I really care.”

Lana believes that real estate agents get compensated at a level such that they should be providing the absolute highest degree of value and guidance to their clients. She’s out to provide that quality of service every day.

“I also don’t give up,” Lana reminds us. “If we have a challenge in front of us, I work hard to find a solution. No situation is super simple or easy. To be able to handle that and adapt pretty seamlessly without the clients feeling the pain – not feeling the stress of some of the things going on in the background – that’s something I really enjoy.”

The Heart of a Survivor

In 2010, Lana was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her battle with the disease has continued to shape her, even years after being given a clean bill of health.

“It really gives me a different perspective,” Lana explains. “I was first diagnosed in my late 30s. In 2015, it came back, and in 2016, I did the whole chemo and radiation thing. That was intense. I was in a situation where I had to work during that time.”

•••



“My heart and soul is in it. I treat every transaction as if it were my own.”

Lana's experience with cancer helped her realize the precious nature of life. "You never know what your time on this planet is going to be," she reminds us.

"It has also caused me to be efficient and very focused on what I do. I'm focused on what I want and want to achieve. I don't get caught up in drama because I don't have time for that. It's not interesting to me.

"It gave me perspective on what's important. I learned to let go and trust God. There is so much that we do in our daily lives that is unimportant. Don't get fixated on the small problems. It's not worth it. I'm more chill, less high-strung. I learned how to breathe during that time, and that has helped immensely."

Lana continues to carry these lessons into her life.

Living in Gratitude

"I'm most grateful for the fact that I get up every day and can enjoy what I do. We spend so much time every day working. Life is too short to be doing things you don't enjoy."

Today, Lana's time is taken up by real estate and the simple things in life: time with her daughter, Giuliana, community involvement, and theater.

"I wish it was more exciting these days," she says with a laugh. "My typical life: I am a single mom, I have a fifth-grader, and I'm a theater mom. We do musical theater together. I'm really active in the community and sit on the board for a few different organizations."

Lana is also the Past President/CFO and a current board member for the Intero Foundation, an organization that serves the elderly and children in the local community.

"And I work a lot," Lana quips. "I'm running an office, homeschooling my kid during COVID, being a single mom, and selling. There's nothing special about me other than that I'm doing what I need to be doing every single day. I start the day off on the right foot. I spend time in gratitude and preparing my mindset for the day. I make sure that I'm dressed and ready to go at any moment. And when someone needs me, I'm ready. I don't let the day happen to me. I take charge of how I want things to be."

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