

CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI

REAL PRODUCERS.®

CONNECTING. ELEVATING. INSPIRING.

TOP PRODUCER

Sandra
Ashford

AGENT ON THE MOVE

Ben Hill

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Trey DeLoach - MGC Landscapes

ICON IN THE INDUSTRY

Paula Ricks

Are You Ready for Some Football!?!

Photo by Abe Draper Photography

OCTOBER 2021

Your Home Loan Specialists



Brian Lott
601.214.0555
NMLS# 109405



Jennifer Walker
769.203.0784
NMLS# 367043



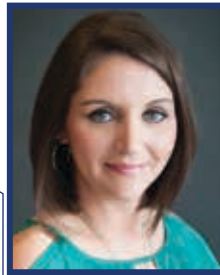
Chris Honea
601.624.3900
NMLS# 546371



Kathryn Walsh
601.946.0003
NMLS# 83104



Will Harris
601.596.5757
NMLS# 926522



Ashley Jones
601.467.5498
NMLS# 1506130



Garrett McMullin
601.497.1430
NMLS# 1954411



Adam Price
601.248.9110
NMLS# 1697723



Matt Root
601.341.9427
NMLS# 546753



Frances B. Cothren
601.392.1352
NMLS# 464594

NOLA Lending Group has the experience and expertise to guide home buyers through the financing process. With Loan Production offices across the state of Mississippi, plus all over the South, our lending specialists can assist your clients in determining which type of loan is the most appropriate and affordable.

Nobody knows Mississippi like NOLA Lending Group.

- VA Loans
- Conventional & FHA Loans
- Jumbo² & Condo Loans
- RD Loans – Finance up to 100% of home value¹
- Purchases & Refinance
- Local Lenders with Personal Touch



Mississippi Loan Production Offices:
Ridgeland · Vicksburg · McComb · Natchez · Hattiesburg
601.707.0101 NolaLending.com

¹Available only in select markets to qualified borrowers. Financing cannot exceed 100% of the subject property's fair market value. Consult your tax advisor regarding deductibility of interest. The services and products advertised are not approved or endorsed by HUD, USDA, the Department of Veterans Affairs, or any government agency. ²To qualify the minimum loan amount is \$548,250.00. Interest rates may increase after consummation. Additional restrictions apply. This does not constitute an offer to lend. All loans are subject to qualification, underwriting guidelines, required documentation, and credit approval. Not all applicants will qualify for all products offered. All loan programs, terms, and interest rates are subject to change without notice and are only available in select markets. Fidelity Bank NMLS Co. ID 488639

HONEST ASSESSMENTS • RE-ROOFING • REPAIRS • RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL

Don't wait until after the home inspection to call a roofer!

A FREE inspection the moment you list a home can be less stressful for the client and realtor!



Locally Owned & Operated
Residential Roofing Specialists



Watkins Construction & Roofing
601-202-0938
www.watkinsconstructioninc.com



FREE Inspection at Listing • Insurance Claims Welcome



Commercial
Advertising
Editorial
Real Estate
Event

abedraoper10@gmail.com
662.719.5707

MEET THE CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI REAL PRODUCERS TEAM



Dees Hinton
Owner/Publisher



Abe Draper
Photographer



Carolyn Foley
Ad Strategist



Susan Marquez
Writer



Kayland Partee
Videographer /
Photographer



Cindy Raborn
Assistant Publisher

If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at dees.hinton@realproducersmag.com.

TABLE OF

CONTENTS



10
Publisher's
Note
Dees
Hinton



14
Top
Producer
Sandra
Ashford



20
Agent on
The Move
Ben Hill



24
Icon In the
Industry
Paula Ricks



28
Partner
Spotlight
Trey
DeLoach,
MGC
Landscapes



32
Are You
Ready
for Some
Football?!



If you are interested in contributing or nominating a Realtor® for certain stories please email us at dees.hinton@realproducersmag.com

DISCLAIMER: Any articles included in this publication and/or opinions expressed therein do not necessarily reflect the views of The N2 Company d/b/a Real Producers but remain solely those of the author(s). The paid advertisements contained within the *Central Mississippi Real Producers* magazine are not endorsed or recommended by The N2 Company or the publisher. Therefore, neither The N2 Company nor the publisher may be held liable or responsible for business practices of these companies.

Hello

fast-track mortgages

Greg Shows, Mortgage Originator
NMLS# 746590
601.607.3725 | (c) 601.573.9262

Buy or refinance today.

“ We’re a local community bank with our own underwriter, so our mortgage turnaround times are lightning quick. ”

Citizens National Bank
The Power of Local™
Member FDIC

Castlewoods Banking Centre 102 Plaza Dr. | Flowood, MS
Madison Banking Centre 114 Grandview Blvd. | Madison, MS
Pear Orchard Banking Centre 744 South Pear Orchard Rd. | Ridgeland, MS

ARMSTRONG RELOCATION & COMPANIES

Agent for United

Jackson's Trusted Moving & Storage Company

- Safe, easy & convenient virtual survey option
- Local, long-distance, & international moving
- Short & long-term storage
- Full or partial packing/unpacking
- Crating & specialty item packing
- Home renovation moving & storage
- Organization & settling-in services
- Appliance & specialty item dis-/reassembly

1223 Highway 51, Madison, MS 39110 | 601.856.8504 | Jackson.ArmstrongRelocation.com



This section has been created to give you easier access when searching for a trusted neighborhood vendor to use. Take a minute to familiarize yourself with the businesses sponsoring the publication. These local businesses are proud to partner with you and make this magazine possible. Please support these businesses and thank them for supporting the publication!

ALL NATURAL SOAPS

Magnolia Soap and Bath Company
2305 Jackson Avenue West
Oxford, MS 38655
(662) 255-2870
www.MagnoliaSoapandBath.com

CARPET CLEANING

Executive Carpet Services
(601) 436-6000

CLOSING LAW FIRM

Renfroe and Perilloux
(601) 932-1011

GENERATORS-SALE & SERVICE

Generator Technologies, LLC
(601) 291-7899
www.Generator-Tec.com

GUTTERS

Dun-Rite Gutters, Inc.
(601) 605-0000

HOME INSPECTION

Benchmark Home Inspections
(601) 813-6287

Smith Home Inspections
(601) 310-3199

HOME WARRANTY

First American Home Warranty
(601) 212-4441

Home Warranty Inc.
(260) 433-4027
homewarrantyinc.com

Home Warranty of America
(601) 572-7522

Old Republic Home Protection
Caren Messina
(707) 580-2460
www.ORHP.com

INSURANCE

Adam Ryan State Farm
Adam Ryan
(662) 251-5106

Andy Eaton
Insurance Agency
(601) 939-0102

Jeff Zachary -
State Farm Insurance
(601) 362-4100

LANDSCAPING

MGC Landscapes
(601) 906-2593

LAW

Herr Law Firm, PLLC
Lindsey Herr
(276) 732-8670

MOLD TESTING & REMEDIATION

Green Home Solutions
(601) 988-7840

MORTGAGE LENDER

Citizens National Bank
(601) 607-3725
www.yourcnb.com

Mississippi Mortgage
(601) 316-7326
www.mississippimortgage.com

NOLA Lending
(985) 612-2132

Planet Home Lending
(601) 421-9667

Success Mortgage Partners, Inc.
(601) 213-7559

MOVERS/RELOCATION

Armstrong Relocation,
United Van Lines
(601) 856-8504

PHOTOGRAPHER

Abe Draper Photography
(662) 719-5707

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

Partee Photography
(601) 566-4568

REAL ESTATE TITLE/ ATTORNEY

Luckett Land Title
(601) 622-8191

REAL ESTATE/TITLE/ MORTGAGE

Jernigan Copeland Title, LLC
(601) 427-0021

ROOFING

No Drip Roofing LLC
(601) 573-7323

ROOFING & CONSTRUCTION

Pro - Shield Roofing and Construction
(601) 559-1758

Watkins Construction & Roofing
(601) 966-8233
www.watkinsconstructioninc.com

ROOFING CONTRACTOR

Dickerson Contracting, LLC
(601) 502-4032

T&M Contractors
(601) 927-4556

TERMITE & PEST CONTROL

Abel's Premier Pest
(601) 874-1187

Family Termite and Environmental Inc.
(601) 933-1014



Open Houses, Closed Deals

Financing a home is a big deal — and your clients should have access to quality resources and support. Borrowers need expert guidance, competitive rates and fees, and loan options that work for them. You can count on Brian Creely's industry experience and Success Mortgage Partners' long-standing reputation to get your clients financed and into their dream homes.

LET'S GROW BUSINESS TOGETHER

- Quick turn times
- Variety of loan programs
- User-friendly digital loan application
- Lead activity tracking
- Open house automation
- Single property websites
- Co-branding materials
-and more!

Contact Brian Creely today!



Brian Creely
Branch Manager
NMLS# 409170
Office & Efax: 601.658.9567
bcreely@smprate.com
232 Market St, Ste 214,
Flowood, MS 39232

601.213.7559
WWW.BRIANCREELY.COM



Success Mortgage Partners, Inc. supports Equal Housing Opportunity. NMLS ID# 130562. This is informational only and is not an offer of credit or commitment to lend. Contact Success Mortgage Partners, Inc. to learn more about your eligibility for its mortgage products.





Pro-Shield
Roofing & Construction

YOUR **REAL** PARTNER FOR
ALL YOUR ROOFING NEEDS

Pro-ShieldRoofs.com
601-559-1758 | 769-237-3004



Roofing Installations & Replacements | Roof Leak Repair | Gutter Installations

PARTEE

PHOTOGRAPHY

Portraits
Events
Weddings
Real Estate
Videography

Kayland Partee
Owner
Photographer
Videographer

f @ParteeFilms
@ParteePhotography



601-566-4568 | ParteePhotography.com



Adam Ryan FSCFP, Agent
115 Laurel Park Cove Ste 204
Flowood, MS 39232
Bus: 769-251-ADAM
www.adamryan.net

Get great service & great rates.

You know I'm always here with Good Neighbor service. But I'm also here with surprisingly great rates for everyone. Call me for a quote to see how much you can save. You might be surprised.

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.®

Individual premiums will vary by customer. All applicants subject to State Farm® underwriting requirements.




Luckett
LAND TITLE INC

REAL ESTATE CLOSINGS
TITLE INSURANCE

601-414-4141

Protection of Property Rights

Jackson • Brandon • Madison • Hattiesburg

www.LandClosings.com

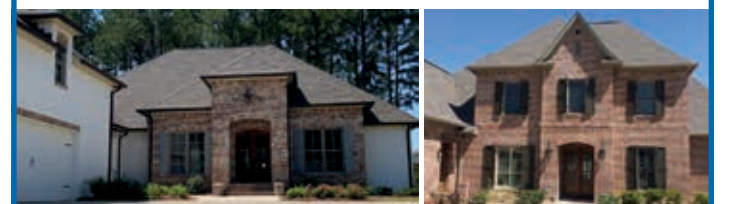


FAMILY TERMITE & ENVIRONMENTAL

601-933-1014

www.family-termite.com • office@family-termite.com

 **Dun-Rite Gutters, Inc.**
Have it Done Right by Dun-Rite
We specialize in 6" half round Aluminum & Copper



- Top Quality Gutter Installation, Repair & Cleaning Services
- Competitive Prices from Copper Gutters to Leaf Guards
- Free Estimates & Professional Consultation
- 2 Year Warranty on Installations

Mark Dungan, Owner
601-605-0000
Madison, MS

www.DunRite-Gutters.com

► publisher's note: dees hinton

October Is Here

October means cooler weather, pumpkins, Halloween, and football! After a very hot summer, hurricanes, and more Covid, October is giving us some good things to look forward to!

Our October issue is also full of good things! Each of our features has interesting and diverse stories about how they started in the real estate industry and what makes them love and succeed at what they do! Their stories may also inspire you to try new things and do what you love to the fullest!

Our Top Producer, Sandra Ashford, is not only an extremely successful Top Producing REALTOR®, but she is also an artist who designs and creates custom garments for clients.

Our Agent on the Move, Ben Hill, is also a Top Producing Real Estate Agent and Rising Star who took two weeks to do something many of us have probably dreamed of doing – traveling from the East Coast to the West Coast by car – exploring new places and meeting new people along the way!

Our ad partner, Trey DeLoach, took a leap of faith opening his own landscape company and trusting God to beautifully blend two families – his and Lori's – after both of their first spouses passed away from cancer.

Our Icon in the Industry, Paula Ricks, opened her own real estate firm after a career in the travel industry and is an active member of the Jackson

Yacht Club. She will be taking sailing lessons this fall!

We also had a little fun this month collecting some football pictures to share! Be sure to check out the "Are You Ready for Some Football?" article! There are some great pictures of football fans and players – past and present!

Lastly, we want to start celebrating birthdays in the publication! If you have not already emailed us your birthdate, please do!

Enjoy your October!
Dees



Providing closings for the tri-county area and beyond.



7736 Old Canton Rd, Suite C
Madison MS 39110
601-856-8225
Lindsey@herrfirm.com



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS:

- 5th - Drew Evans
- 15th - Barbara Richardson
- 25th - Cindy Johnston
- 27th - Paul Hopper
- 27th - Stephanie Williams
- 31st - Lindsey Herr

Save the Date!

Holiday Social Night
Tuesday, November 9, 2021
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Watch your email for more information coming soon!

@realproducers

HOME BACKUP POWER
COMFORT | SECURITY | CONVENIENCE

GOT POWER?

601 862 3419

CALL US TODAY!



NEW WEBSITE SOON!



"We Are Power!"

Locally owned and operated

2187 Hwy 51, Ste B, Madison, MS 39110 • Phone: 601-862-3419
info@generator-tec.com • website: generator-tec.com

Let Us Work for You and Your Clients by Providing the Best Home Insurance Rates Possible

We have many different companies to shop and compare rates



ANDY EATON

Andy Eaton Insurance Agency
Local Agent • Personal Service • Over 35 Years of Experience
601-939-0102 • aeaton9300@aol.com



Licensed & Bonded • Insurance Claims Specialists • Financing Available • Free Estimates • All Types of Roofing Systems • Serving All of Central MS



Contact info:
info@dickersonllc.com | (601) 502-4032
website: www.dickersonllc.com



BENCHMARK

HOME INSPECTIONS



Trusted Home Inspection Services

Offering home inspection services for buyers, sellers, and agents.

Stephen Bryant | Owner

601.813.6287

benchmarkinspections@yahoo.com

MHIB #0780

www.benchmark-inspections.com



LICENSED & BONDED | FREE ESTIMATES | FINANCING THROUGH GREENSKY
INSURANCE CLAIMS | ALL TYPES OF ROOF SYSTEMS | FAMILY OWNED



ROOFING & CONSTRUCTION

FULL SERVICE ROOFING AND RENOVATION
CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

601-371-1051

5625B 18 West • Jackson, MS 39209
nodriprooingcomp@gmail.com

FOR ALL YOUR ROOFING NEEDS.



T&M CONTRACTORS

ALL TYPES OF SHINGLES • METAL ROOFING (COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL, STANDING SEAM)
EPDM • TPO • MODIFIED • COPPER AWNINGS • COPPER DORMER
COPPER CHIMNEY CAPS, TEE-PEES, CRICKETS • SPECIALIZE IN FINDING ROOF LEAKS

TYRONE KEYES • 601-927-4556 • RBC2TYRONEK@GMAIL.COM

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED • IN BUSINESS SINCE 1996 • LICENSED / BONDED • FREE ESTIMATES • INSURANCE CLAIMS



Your Local Resource

Mary Allen Bennett

601.212.4441

mbennett@firstam.com

"Your Clients are My Clients"

No Tricks, Just Treats!

This Halloween, don't let your clients get spooked by scary home appliance and system breakdowns. Instead, order them home warranty treats from First American to help protect them from ghoulish repairs.

Contact me for details.

firstamrealestate.com

Phone Orders:
800.444.9030



First American
Home Warranty®

CREATING Beautiful Spaces, SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR YOU



Sandra Ashford

“A Good REALTOR® is the key to making both the buyer and seller happy”

Sandra Ashford has proven her business acumen time and time again. She created a successful heirloom apparel business as well as enjoyed tremendous success as a top real estate producer.

Originally from Pontotoc, in northeast Mississippi, Sandra’s life was altered when she was only five weeks old. “My father was killed in an automobile accident, and as a result, the whole town raised me!” Sandra lived the first years of her life in a three-story home on Main Street in Pontotoc with her mother and grandmother. “We were in the middle of it all,” she recalls. “We walked to church, the swimming pool, shopping, and more.” Her mother remarried when Sandra was 6 years old, and the family moved to a dairy farm on the outside of town. “That was a different kind of life for me. But I would stay

with my grandmother in town during the week and go to the farm with my mom and dad on the weekends, and at some point, I realized that I had the best of both worlds.”

Sandra still has the best of both worlds with her niche fashion business The Ashford Collection and her real estate career. The Ashford Collection goes back to her childhood. “My grandmother’s forte was cut-work. My mother and I designed and skillfully made my wardrobe, from prom dresses to daily wear.”

Following high school, Sandra attended the Mississippi University for Women for two years and transferred to Ole Miss, graduating in December 1971 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in home economics, textiles, art, and chemistry. She received her teaching license at her mother’s

urging. After marrying and moving to Jackson for her husband to attend medical school, Sandra worked as a recreational therapist at the Crippled Children’s Center, a state agency for children with cerebral palsy. In that job, she used her talents in art and her skills in teaching.

Leaving the center to teach fifth grade enabled her to be on a semester system with her husband. “I was hired in August and had to tell my principal in September that I was pregnant, welcoming my daughter in late May.” In the interim, Sandra mastered the art of French hand sewing for her daughter, and later, her son. That led to Sandra teaching workshops on French hand sewing. “I originated teaching classes at the Heirloom Shops.” Always the entrepreneur, Sandra began attending apparel markets and before she knew it, Neiman



Sandra loves to sew, antique, travel, and celebrate all occasions with friends and family.

...

Marcus ordered \$40,000 in garments, mostly ladies' nightgowns. "The buyer at Neiman's said they'd never seen anything of that quality that was made domestically."

While Sandra's (Sweetie, as most people know her) real joy was designing custom garments for clients, she realized that she had the opportunity to do something big. But she needed help. "I saw an article in *The Clarion-Ledger* about Catholic Charities sponsoring Vietnamese refugees. I went to talk to the priest in charge and asked if they could come work for me. We started with four people, and eventually, I had up to 35 Vietnamese women working

on my production line." Sandra was selling her fine clothing from her storefront, The Ashford Collection, in Jackson. She traveled frequently to her showrooms in Dallas and Atlanta and showed her line in Chicago and New York. Sandra also owned a full-scale bridal and special occasion boutique, Celebrations, in Highland Village. She was also very actively involved in her children's activities, church groups, and civic organizations.

When her father became ill, taking care of him was her primary goal. "In order to do that, I could no longer travel as was necessary for my business." She scaled down her business

significantly and became director of marketing and sales at Mississippi Industries for the Blind. "I needed insurance and stability," she says. When she went to apply for the job, she walked into a big room of legally blind people sewing. "I knew that God had sent me to the right place!" The employees worked on government contracts to produce military uniforms and barracks bags. When the contract ended and employees were about to be furloughed before the holidays, Sandra put her creativity to work and got a booth at the Junior League of Jackson's Mistletoe Marketplace. "They made Christmas stockings, table runners, and



Sandra with her granddaughters Kaylee Ashford (18), a freshman at Ole Miss, and Jordan Ashford (14), in ninth grade at Jackson Academy.



“ I advise them to be objective, kind, and empathetic OF PEOPLE’S HOUSING NEEDS AND PRICE POINT.



pillows from local decorator's fabric swatches, which kept the production line working through the holidays!"

When Mississippi Industries for the Blind scaled down in size, Sandra's position was eliminated. Once again God opened a new door of opportunity. "Nora Walker, my neighbor and second mother, was a retired but well-known real estate broker in Jackson. She encouraged me to go into real estate. I knew people from a fashion standpoint, but I wasn't sure how that would translate into real estate."

As it turns out, it translated quite well. "I received my license in 2000 and interviewed with Charlotte Smith, whom I had always greatly admired. She welcomed me into her agency, Charlotte Smith Real Estate, and I've never worked for anyone else."

...

Charlotte was there to help me from the beginning. She appreciated my business savvy and professionalism.”

Sandra continues both real estate and The Ashford Collection full time, meeting all clients by appointment. The Ashford Collection primarily does re-styling and refurbishing of mothers’ and grandmothers’ wedding gowns for today’s bride, as well as making unique christening gowns from family gowns.

Sandra often helps new REALTORS®, offering them the advice she once received. “I advise them to be objective, kind, and empathetic of people’s housing needs and price point. Ask a lot of questions and in doing so you will receive the clients’ trust and friendships are formed. I think you need to be part psychologist to be in real estate! It’s really like a big puzzle, and I want to be the piece that ties it all together.”

The real estate business has changed so much since Sandra first began



Sandra’s business is return business. “I’ve sold them their first home, then scaled up, and now scaling down. It’s a tremendous responsibility that Realtors® are given – we work with people at one of the most important times – when they are making the most expensive purchase of their lives. I love to get up from a closing table where buyers and sellers are happy. A good REALTOR® is key to making that happening.”



selling homes. “I started out when interest rates were really high. Now we have historically low interest rates. It has always been paramount for me to attend seminars where I learn all facets of the industry, including home inspectors, insurance agents, and lenders. You need to develop a strong network of people and I have always attended state and some national conventions.” Most of




Combine Home & Auto. Save big.

Jeff Zachary, Agent
101 Lake Court, Suite B
Jackson, MS 39232
Bus: 601-362-4100
jeff@jeffzachary.net

Good things happen when you combine your home and auto insurance with State Farm®. Like saving an average of \$894.* Plus, you’ll have a good neighbor like me to help life go right.
CALL ME TODAY.



*Average annual household savings based on 2016 national survey of new policyholders who reported savings by switching to State Farm.

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company • State Farm Indemnity Company, Bloomington, IL
State Farm County Mutual Insurance Company of Texas, Dallas, TX • State Farm Lloyds, Richardson, TX
State Farm Fire and Casualty Company • State Farm General Insurance Company, Bloomington, IL
State Farm Florida Insurance Company, Winter Haven, FL

1606203



Abel's Premier Pest
Keeping Pests in our Sites
601.874.1187

Residential and Commercial
All Inclusive Pest and Wildlife Company



John Abel, Owner

If you need need Pest Control, including Termite Control and WDIR, Traps or Removal Service, call us at (601) 874-1187. Emergency Service is available.

abelspremierpests.com

OLD REPUBLIC HOME PROTECTION



THE STARS ALIGN
when Real Producers work together!

You're committed to your clients, and we're committed to you! Add ORHP's home warranty to your winning team today.

Call or email me today to learn more!

Caren Messina
Account Executive
800.282.7131 Ext. 1347
C: 707.580.2460
CarenM@orhp.com
my.orhp.com/carenmessina



People Helping People

This is a paid advertisement.

BEN Hill

► agent on the move

Written by **Susan Marquez**.
Photography by **Abe Draper Photography**



Ben Hill's
Wanderlust
Takes Him
on Trip of
a Lifetime



With a passion for travel, REALTOR® Ben Hill is living his best life. Whenever he has the chance, he decides his destination, and off he goes. It's a passion that came from having a lot of downtime on his hands and thinking about what he would do when he was able. "I have always loved to travel. I went to places like Texas, Utah, Oregon, Seattle, Colorado, and Chicago. I loved going to new places and having new experiences." A bad health scare a few years ago after a major surgery helped Ben to realize that he only has a limited time on this Earth. "It put a lot of things into perspective, and it made me realize that I wanted to make each day count." During his time at home recovering, Ben thought of all the places he would like to visit.

A native of Meadville, Ben says he had an idyllic childhood. "Meadville is a great little town and a very well-kept secret." He went to community college before transferring to Mississippi State where he received his degree in communications with an emphasis in broadcasting. He got a job working as a multi-media journalist at WLBT-TV in Jackson. "I loved working at WLBT, and I loved the people I worked with there," says Ben. But producing the early morning newscast was limiting for a single young man. "I had to be at work around midnight. When my friends were heading out for the night, I was headed home to sleep." Ben also worked holidays, which was hard since he had to be away from his family.

Ben decided to take the real estate exam and sell a house or two a year to make some extra money on the side. "I spent a few months taking the real estate course online, taking the quizzes at the end of each chapter until I aced each one." He called on his circle of influence – friends, family, and co-workers, and realized that many of them were looking for their first home, a home to move up to or a home to downsize to. "I

realized then that real estate would be a good path for me. I really wanted to fall into a routine and have a somewhat normal life again."

Ben left his job at WLBT and for the next seven years, he sold real estate under the RE/MAX umbrella. "I sold for RE/MAX Alliance and RE/MAX Connection. I got good training there. ReMax offers a lot of online training that I took advantage of and I also attended one of their training camps." In January 2020, Ben made the move to Havard Real Estate Group. "I'm enjoying being at Havard," Ben says. "There are a lot of people there my age, who are all learning. Everyone is very tech-savvy, too, which I really enjoy."

Ben enjoys the flexibility and freedom selling real estate provides him. "I'm a go-getter and a busy-body," he laughs. "I can't sit still inside in front of a screen. I love to get out and meet new people each day. And I love what I do because I get to see people happy in their new homes. I've made a lot of friends through selling real estate, and many of my clients have become my friends." Ben has been in the industry long enough that roughly half of his business each year is from repeat clients. "When someone comes back to me, I know I'm doing something right."

Whenever he can swing a few days away, Ben loves to hit the open road. "I started easing into it again, driving to Birmingham, Atlanta, and sometimes on to South Carolina," he says. He travels solo, which is something he says his friends and parents haven't always understood. "I like having the freedom to sleep when I want to, eat where I want to, and go out and meet new people along the way." Ben began dreaming about driving across the country. "I began marking cities on a map that I'd like to visit. I plotted out the map over the course of a week, then picked the dates I wanted to travel." He made sure he



was covered at work. “I still worked from the road, but I paid some of my co-workers to show houses to clients for me while I was away.”

Ben set out on his adventure on June 14. He drove to Birmingham, then met up with a friend in Atlanta who took him to rent a car to drive on the trip. “I drove to Myrtle Beach and stayed at a hotel on the beach. I was wearing a Mississippi State t-shirt and a couple from Kentucky walked by and said they had friends who went to MSU. We ended up around a bonfire together on the beach, which was so much fun.”

His travels took him into North Carolina where he had lunch with a friend in Raleigh at the Duke University golf course, before driving to Asheville and touring the Biltmore Estate. He was only planning to eat dinner in Knoxville but was so charmed by the downtown area where a music festival was being held that he ended up staying the night. In Nashville, he heard live music on Broadway, and in Little Rock, he met up with a friend at a piano bar. In Oklahoma City, Ben stayed in a hotel/museum that was once an old Ford Motor plant. “I went to the Oklahoma City National Memorial on Father’s Day,” recalls Ben. “I was sad not to be

with my own dad, but I met up with a guy my age who was carrying his small son. He was pointing towards the building and said that’s where his dad was. Realizing that his dad had died in the bombing was very sobering for me.”

On his way to Amarillo, Ben stopped at the Cadillac Ranch and spray-painted his name on one of the cars. He then drove to Santa Fe, which was one of the longest hauls of the trip. “I drove through the desert, which was so surreal, and it was actually one of my favorite places.” Ben says Santa Fe was beautiful. “I stayed in a two-story adobe building that was very ‘on brand’ for the area.” He took a day trip to Durango and says the landscape changed from red to green as he crossed the border into Colorado. “I explored downtown Durango, which was fun.” He also drove through the red mountains in Zion National Park in Utah then into southern Utah, where seeing the white cliffs was breathtaking. “It was hard to believe that something like that exists in the country I live in.”

When Ben drove through Monument Valley, he says he felt like he was on another planet. One unplanned stop was Page, Arizona, which Ben says was a happy accident. “I drove through



the desert into the night, and for over three hours I never saw another car. “When I arrived in Page late that night, I decided to stay. The next morning, I was so surprised to walk out and see such a beautiful place.”

Ben then drove to Las Vegas. “I wanted to see it from the sky, so I checked into the Bellagio and took a helicopter ride. Seeing the city and all the lights at night was magical.” He decided to stay an extra day so he could sleep in. “I was beginning to feel the exhaustion from the trip at that point. I’m glad I stayed because I ate in some amazing restaurants while I was there.”

The next day, he took a helicopter ride over the Grand Canyon. “We flew through a thunderstorm, which was one of the most chilling moments of the trip.” The helicopter landed in a basin and Ben says he simply took in the magnitude of Grand Canyon’s walls rising all around him.

Ben then drove ten hours to San Francisco, which was the only place he visited that he wished he had others with him. “I was on foot so much, and there were so many neat things to see. It would have been fun to share that



with someone.” While there, the College World Series was taking place, so he asked the hotel concierge for a good place to watch the game. “He sent me to a little dive bar not far from the hotel. I walked in and all I could see was maroon shirts!”

He then drove down the Pacific Coast Highway to Los Angeles. “It’s an amazing drive, with mountains on the left and a thousand-foot drop into the ocean on the right, with no guard rails!” Ben drove through picturesque towns including Carmel and Big Sur. “When the fog rolled in it was difficult to drive. It took me three hours to drive twenty miles!” Of course, he pulled over a lot to take pictures. “I was surprised how cold it was.”

When he arrived in Los Angeles, his hotel had been overbooked, so he had to go to another hotel. “When I returned to the original hotel for the second night, they gave me a penthouse suite overlooking the Hollywood sign!” Ben visited the Griffin Observatory, Chateau Marmont Hotel, and some bars along Santa Monica Boulevard.

From Los Angeles, Ben drove south to San Diego, ate lunch with a friend and watched the Mississippi State game on television before flying back to Atlanta. “I got to the baggage claim area and

started hearing cheers. Mississippi State had won the College World Series!”

Ben says it was the trip of a lifetime. He was on the road for sixteen days, stayed in 14 hotels, and drove 4,817 miles. “It was so much fun to meet new people and to have so many new experiences in places I’ve never seen before. “I am fortunate that I have learned at an early age that time is the most valuable resource we have. We have to use it wisely and make the best of each moment we have.”



▶ icon in the industry

PAULA

Ricks

Written by **Susan Marquez.**
Photography by **Abe Draper Photography**



Believes Clients Come First



Paula Ricks believes each thing you do in life prepares you for the next thing. She is living proof of that, starting her career in travel with Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company and ending up as one of the icons in the Jackson area real estate industry with her own real estate brokerage firm, named Best of Mississippi.

Paula had a happy childhood, growing up in southern Hinds County. “I have one brother, Ron, and we lived on three and a half acres. My dad always had a big garden and a meticulously kept yard. My mother was a stay-at-home mom who canned and put up fresh vegetables for the freezer. She also did lots of home cooking.”

Paula went to work for Southern Farm Bureau Life where she learned about the travel industry working in executive convention and incentive planning. She moved on to Bryan Tours doing group and corporate travel and traveled extensively both internationally and domestically while working there. One of her corporate clients was Mississippi Farm Bureau, and they eventually wanted to create their own travel agency and hired Paula to do that for them. “We handled employee travel, meetings, and conferences and we offered discounts to Farm Bureau members.” Paula was then recruited by WorldCom to open their travel department. “That

one was purely for employees, nationwide. We oversaw the company’s strict travel policy and handled corporate credit cards and travel reimbursements.”

When WorldCom was preparing to close, Paula considered moving to Virginia “I even put the house I built in Wheatley Gardens up for sale.” Someone in her office suggested that she might enjoy selling real estate. “I had never even considered real estate as a career.” Paula talked with her realtor, Ruth Crawford, who agreed she should investigate it. “Ruth encouraged me to talk with her broker, Nell Wyatt, so I did.”

Because she was still working, Paula took night classes at the Mississippi REALTORS® Institute. “I told my boss what I was doing and because we were wrapping up things in our office, we had a lot of downtime at work. That allowed me to study some during the day.” Paula got her license and went to work for Coldwell Banker Nell Wyatt. “I started working for Nell in May 2002 and in July, the day after my last day at WorldCom, I had my first closing and I’ve never looked back!”

That closing was the affirmation Paula needed to know she was in the right business. “It was a big leap of faith for me. I gave up benefits like insurance, stock options, sick leave, vacation, 401K, and

...



more.” For nine years, she worked for Nell and loved it. “Nell taught me so much and I still adore her and look up to her. If I run into something I’ve never handled before, I know I can call on her to talk me through it.”

In 2011, Paula was ready to go on her own, opening a small boutique real estate company, KeyTrust Properties Paula Ricks. “I enjoyed working with someone to create my logo (which I’m still very proud of), looking for the perfect location, and creating an agency based on providing superior customer service and helping clients through what is usually their biggest financial investment.” The company is located on Jackson Street in Ridgeland and there are eight agents, including Paula. “Most of our agents have specialties to better serve important segments of the real estate market.” Steven Smith is a certified professional builder who serves as president

of the Home Builders Association of Jackson, and he has won multiple Parade of Homes Awards in addition to being named the Best of Mississippi. Allison Bohon, an accredited buyers representative for real estate, focuses on buyer-clients at every stage of the home-buying process. Parrish Malouf’s specialty is new construction homes. She is a multi-million-dollar producer who understands the sophistication and specialization of the new home market. John Skelton specializes in residential construction and has his general contractor license. Tanya Brieger specializes in working with home buyers and sellers in the tri-county area. She has earned the seller representative specialist, accredited buyer representative, and seniors real estate specialist designations and she is a Ramsey Solutions-endorsed local provider as well as being named Best of Mississippi. Melissa Ellis is an accredited buyer representative

who works mostly with first-time home buyers. And Barbara Hicks is a member of the National Association of REALTORS®, the Mississippi Association of REALTORS®, and Central Mississippi REALTORS®.

Paula has a strong mission statement for her business that is client-centered. “Our philosophy is simple: clients come first. We pledge to be in constant communication with our clients, keeping them fully informed throughout the entire buying or selling process. We believe that if you’re not left with an amazing experience, we haven’t done our job. We don’t measure success through achievements or awards, but through the satisfaction of our clients.”

Real estate has proven to be the ideal field for Paula. “I love that I can have a flexible schedule. And let’s face it, I can take a call at the office or I can take one while sitting on a beach!”



There are sacrifices, however. “Early on, a couple called me to see a home. They had called their agent, but she told them she wasn’t working – it was Super Bowl Sunday! I took an hour to go show them the home and I got the sale! To be successful in this business, you must be willing to show houses on holidays and weekends. Prior to getting into real estate, I never thought about not working in an office eight to five, but now I can’t imagine having to do that!”

Giving back is important to Paula, who is actively involved with Madison Countians Allied Against Poverty (MadCAAP). “It is amazing what they do for people in Madison County,” she

says. “From cooking classes to teaching people how to tutor their own children, the impact they make is powerful.”

Paula enjoys travel, especially to beach and island locations, and is a huge football fan. “I love college football the best, but I also enjoy professional football as well.” And even though football is a fall sport, Paula says summer is her favorite season. “I was invited to go to the Jackson Yacht Club a few years ago and loved it. I became a member and have many wonderful friends there. I found that I love pontoon boats and sailboats and although I’ve always been kind of a sissy when it comes to anything athletic, I’m signed up

to take an adult sailing class this fall! I have been assured that I can sail a boat without being an athlete. I don’t really want to do the sailing, but I want to know how to help if I’m needed. I want to be a good crew member and a good passenger!”

While she never had children of her own, Paula has one niece, Brandi. “We are very close. She has a 22-month-old son, Layne, who is my angel darling! They live just down the street from me, and I enjoy taking them to the yacht club. Who knows? Someday, he may sail his own boat and let Brandi and me crew for him!”



Trey DeLoach

MGC Landscapes



Written by Susan Marquez
 Photography by Abe Draper Photography

partner spotlight

Trey DeLoach Has a Passion for Plants



As a boy growing up in Madison, Trey DeLoach learned early on how to mow a yard and do general lawn maintenance. “I always had a passion for landscaping,” he says. “Our neighbor had a lawn service business and I worked with him cutting yards. While in high school I worked for a home builder, putting in sod and shrubs when the homes were finished.” That gave Trey a real appreciation of how important landscaping is for the overall curb appeal of a home. “The first thing anyone sees when they look at a home is the exterior. Having clean, neat landscaping gives a brighter look to the home, which enhances the overall appeal.”



A graduate of Madison Central High School, Trey attended Mississippi State University where he earned both a bachelor’s and master’s degrees in forestry. “My first job out of college was for Texas A&M where I worked as a forester for a year,” says Trey. He then went to the Mississippi State Extension Service, where he worked as a forester for six years. “I took the research they did and passed it along to the local landowners throughout the state. It was a job I really enjoyed.”

But his passion for plants and landscaping led him back to that field. Partnering with Nick Thompson, the owner of Madison Garden Center, Trey started a landscape design company in the fall of 2007. A couple of years ago, he bought out the business from Nick and rebranded it as MGC Landscapes. A full-service design, install, and maintenance landscape company, Trey says they strive to develop and implement the best plan, tailored to each client’s needs. “Our

whole goal is to create beautiful outdoor spaces.” Trey is certainly qualified to do just that. He is a registered landscape designer, a Mississippi tree surgeon, an ISA certified arborist, and a certified professional nurseryman.

“At MGC Landscapes, we work with a number of REALTORS® to help make the homes they are selling as desirable as possible. We do that by figuring out a way to make what they are starting with look presentable, clean,



and neat. Most often, we do that by cleaning out the beds, adding fresh pine straw, and giving a yard an overall freshen up.” Trey says that sometimes there may be problems such as a draining issue that can make or break a deal. “A home is the biggest purchase most people will ever make and it’s important that it looks good and functions properly. Not too long ago, we had to fix a drainage problem at a home that was a big enough deal that the sale of the home did not go



through.” Trey says it is not unusual for new homeowners to call him to do a major landscape plan once they have moved into their new home.

Trey’s greatest supporter in business is his wife, Lori. The couple lives in Madison with their four children, Heath (21), Peyton (19), William (17), and Perry (17). “We are a blended family, and we love it,” he says. Both Trey’s and Lori’s first spouses passed away from cancer. “God was gracious enough to blend our families,” Trey says. The couple will celebrate their seventh wedding anniversary in January. The family enjoys traveling and spending time in the outdoors. “We love hunting and spending time together at the deer camp.” They are also big Mississippi State fans. The family attends Grace Crossing Baptist Church, where they are active members.



MORTGAGE MONSTERS

BEWARE!

Mississippi MORTGAGE

Sean Cornwell
 Loan Officer and Branch Manager
 NMLS #145052 | NMLS #1760586
 4343 Lakeland Dr.
 Flowood, MS 38232
 c 601-316-7326 | o 601-987-0077
 sean@MSmortgage.com
 https://MSmortgage.com

601-316-7326

Are you ready for some Football!?!?

Fall means football weekends for many of us. If we are not at the games, we are watching them on TV. Some fans are all about college games, some just pro, and some of us fill their weekends with both! It's good to be able to get back to tailgating and being in the stadium. We wear our colors proudly and supporting our teams gives us time to relax and unplug from the busy work weeks we all have!

So whatever color you bleed...enjoy!



Abe Draper and family
Delta State fans!



Brooke Witcher's daughter, Alexis, cheering for the Rebels!



Jason, Ahmad, and Jeanhee Kang
Ole Miss Rebels!



Meisha Edwards and family cheer on
A.J. Edwards at Mississippi Gulf Coast
Community College! Go, Bulldogs!



Brooke and John Witcher
Ole Miss fans!

Leslie LeDoux
Geaux, LSU Tigers!



Dees Hinton Millsaps College
- back in the day!



Shari Lackey and family
Go, Saints!



Jennifer and Andrew Bush - Hail State!



Teresa Renkenberger and family!
Geaux, Saints!

Buying a home?

Get a great rate, fast online approval, and trusted advice from a five-star mortgage lending team.

★★★★★ Flowood, MS Team



RANDALL HARPER
Retail Sales Manager
601-882-0767
NMLS ID#1325728



MASON NOOE
Mortgage Loan Originator
601-882-0768
NMLS ID#1179797



RUSSELL HOOD
Mortgage Loan Originator
601-882-0769
NMLS ID#1538138



Five-star rating based on actual third-party customer reviews gathered by SocialSurvey on 3/15/19.
© 2019 Planet Home Lending, LLC | 321 Research Parkway, Suite 303, Meriden, CT 06450 | www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org | NMLS ID #17022



Tie Your Closings With the Best!



James E. Renfro
Renfro & Perilloux, PLLC
648 Lakeland East Drive, Suite A
Flowood, MS 39232
601.932.1011 • www.MSLawfirm.biz

- Residential & Commercial Real Estate Closings
- Title Confirmation
- Title Searches
- Title Litigation
- Wills and Estates
- After-hours Closings
- Mobile, STATE-WIDE Closings
- Certificates of Title
- Business Formations
- Bankruptcy

Keep an Eye on furnace maintenance

An annual furnace check and a home warranty will help keep the autumn chill outside where it belongs



**14-Month
Warranty**

- Choice of local service provider
- FREE, No-Strings-Attached* listing coverage
- Washer, dryer, kitchen refrigerator INCLUDED



Chris Gipson
District Sales Rep
(601) 255-8866
ChrisG@homewarrantyinc.com

Home Warranty

homewarrantyinc.com
(877) 977-4949

Please review the actual contract for specific coverage, terms and conditions of homewarrantyinc.com.



- ✓ MOLD ✓ ODOR
- ✓ DISINFECTION
- ✓ ALLERGEN CONTROL
- PLANT-BASED & EPA-REGISTERED

800-SOLUTIONS
www.GreenHomeSolutions.com

BUYER INSPECTIONS • SELLER INSPECTIONS • MOLD TESTING



Smith Home Inspections, LLC

With Smith Home Inspections, you will get a lot more than just an inspection. **The best part is it's Free!**



Joshua Smith
Certified Home Inspections
MHIB #0681
601-310-3199

**90 Day Warranty | MoldSafe | SewerGard | RecallCheck
a Full Concierge Service and More!**

To learn more, or schedule an inspection online,
visit www.SmithHomeInspectionsLLC.com



Whether you are
the agent, the seller,
the buyer, or the lender...
**We can help you
with your closing.**



*ALTA Best Practices Certified
*TRID Certified

**JERNIGAN
COPELAND**
TITLE, LLC

601-427-0015
970 Ebenezer Boulevard | Madison, MS

Cathy Finch
cfinch@jctitlellc.com

Guilbert Gibson
ggibson@jctitlellc.com

Magnolia Soap
AND BATH CO

1000 HIGHLAND COLONY PARKWAY, SUITE 5017
LOCATED IN THE RENAISSANCE

hand made & plant based

We do birthday parties!

www.magnoliasoapandbath.com

WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.

HWA 13 mo. WARRANTY
Home Warranty of America

- ✓ FREE Seller's Coverage
- ✓ No cap on refrigerant
- ✓ VIP concierge service for agents
- ✓ Online orders and claims
- ✓ Re-key service

YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE

Melissa Harmon
Account Executive
601-572-7522
Melissa.Harmon@hwahomewarranty.com

HWAHomeWarranty.com
Exclusions apply. See contract document for details. ©2019 Home Warranty of America, Inc.



YOUR LOCAL CARPET CLEANING *Experts!*



- CARPET CLEANING
- HARD FLOOR CLEANING
- UPHOLSTERY CLEANING
- TILE & GROUT CLEANING
- AREA RUG CLEANING



EXECUTIVE
CARPET SERVICES



"The Best Carpet
Cleaning Company Ever!"

Call Today For Your *Free Estimate!*

601 • 436 • 6000
executive-carpets.com