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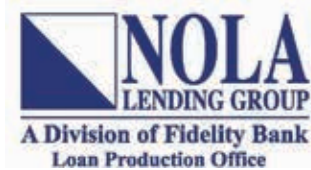


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# Stephanie

Listen and Learn **PIERCE**

By Brian Amend | Photos by Natalie Miller

**People fall in love, people fall into jobs, and sometimes people fall into jobs they fall in love with...**

Stephanie Pierce has had the good fortune of performing a hat trick in that game. Stephanie met her husband, Chad, when they were both matriculating at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana, as Communications majors. Stephanie's first class in that major was on radio communications, where Chad worked at the college radio station. He presented a talk to her class, and, to make a long story short, they are now happily married with three children, Jacob, 16, Caleb, 7, and Seth, 4.

Stephanie points out that both she and Chad are "transplants" to Baton Rouge but are now firmly established and permanently ensconced there. For fun, they like to travel to hiking destinations like Asheville, NC, and Roanoke, VA. Stephanie explains, "We're Louisiana bayou people turned hikers!" They take turns planning monthly date nights, with the planner obliged to surprise the other, often with a live concert.

**HOW CAN I HELP YOU**

Stephanie fell into real estate when she was selling advertisements for a Baton Rouge radio station, while

attempting to sell a radio advertisement to a new-construction apartment complex. They offered her a lease-management position with free rent as a perk, which appealed to the recent college graduate. The company that owned that apartment complex sold a piece of land to a developer, and that developer invited Stephanie to sell condominiums slated to be built on that land. Eventually, this led Stephanie to work on her REALTOR® license online while her children slept, becoming a buyer's agent for the condominium developers.

"At that time," Stephanie says, "I wasn't even thinking real estate. I was thinking, 'How can I help these people?'" That is "about a dozen" people who wanted to sell their houses and move into one of the new condominiums.

To accomplish this, Stephanie had to learn many aspects of being a REALTOR® by dint of hard knocks, "the stuff they don't teach you when you're studying to get your license."

Stephanie had, at that time, the support of many mentors, and was



Stephanie and her husband, Chad, with their children, Jacob (16), Caleb (7), and Seth (5)



...

later able to parlay her experience and knowledge into coaching agents for Keller Williams. She offered to both new and seasoned agents “formal training” that was a distillation of her experience and knowledge. For five years, from 2014-2019, she coached as many as 80 agents at a time, helping new agents get their systems and processes set up, and giving experienced agents a “30,000-foot view” of the systems and processes of their business.

“It was a blessing,” Stephanie says, “It allowed me to take a step back and still feel like I was fulfilling a purpose – helping the newer agents as they came through our office.” Stephanie helped these agents function at the higher volume her brokerage was doing, which requires transactions to be “systematized and scalable.”

The coaching group became very tight-knit, with its own book club, and the new agents gained confidence because they felt “an environment and a culture in which they felt comfortable, like they were in a very safe environment.” This coaching position was an outlet for her one-time desire to be a social worker, teaching people, “You have to listen a lot, but you have to take action.”

**PEOPLE FIRST**

Although coaching was fulfilling to her, Stephanie felt the need to get back into the job of being a

**“WE’RE LOUISIANA BAYOU PEOPLE turned hikers!”**



Every Sunday she relates, she and her husband attend worship with their “wonderful church family,” and Stephanie reads the Bible and other books in the morning and at night, finding that this “calms her. “With a house full of boys,” she says, “I need some quiet.” She also has become “addicted” to her Peloton bike and often does classes while one of her sons rides an adjoining spin bike. “I clocked in over 200 classes at the end of last year.”

**POSITIONED TO LEARN**

For new REALTORS®, Stephanie finds that the best advice comes from one of her former students, now “a major producer” in Baton Rouge. “Be the dumbest person in the room” so that you are in a position to learn. “I think this goes for experienced agents,” she advises, “because you can always find yourself in a rut. A lot of times you learn more from your clients than you do from real estate.” In a related way, it is important to surround yourself with people who know more than you because “your standards are going to rise based on the people you surround yourself with.”



REALTOR® proper. In July 2021, Stephanie joined the newly formed Keyfinders Team Realty, a “boutique, local office with a passion for supporting its agents.” From that time until the end of the year, they had 165 transactions with \$50 million in volume. Stephanie believes a

REALTOR® has to put people before such metrics: **“You don’t calculate the commission first. You’re there to serve other people. The money will follow you after you serve other people and put their interests first.”** This statement suggests the faith that is central to Stephanie’s perspective.

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# newman



Facebook page, participates in the Denham run club, and promotes small businesses so she can help make a better life for the people and families in her community.

Although she was only 15 years old when she got her first job, Melody developed a strong work ethic and moved quickly to a position in management in the foodservice industry. She had to work for what she had, and it taught her to value both people and experiences. At the age of 17, Melody moved out of her parents' house and started her own life. She worked hard, paid her own bills, and looked for opportunities to challenge herself personally and professionally.

While her friends incurred college debt, Melody worked hard and followed her drive to move up in life. She met Clifton Newman, a diligent and motivated Marine, and they started a new life adventure as husband and wife. They moved to Los Angeles for a few years when Clifton was in the music industry, and Melody worked in accounting in Beverly Hills.

When Melody was 21, she developed a passion for a healthy lifestyle. After she and Clifton moved back to Louisiana to be near family, Melody earned positions as manager at a local Starbucks, CC's Coffee House, and Whole Foods. She oversaw concierge, hired, coached, and trained others. Soon her knowledge and compassion, as well as her ability to connect with people, led to a role as the Whole Foods healthy eating specialist. She helped customers with special diets, such as cancer patients and athletes, shop and learn to eat better.

"I loved my time at Whole Foods, and the experience that I gained from that," recalled Melody. "I learned from, and worked with, some amazing people. I made wonderful friends, and great memories, during my time there. I am grateful to have served, and served with, such wonderful customers and co-workers."

Melody was mentored by the Geaux CrossFit gym owner, Johnny Blount, who had served as a Navy SEAL. She was able to talk with lots of people through CrossFit training and her job at Whole Foods, and working retail hours was a good fit for Melody and Clifton. However, when their oldest son, Magnus, was born six years ago, the Newmans had a shift in her priorities. Melody still loved people, but she also wanted to be home to enjoy her family and make memories with them. Two years later, Odin was born, and Melody knew something had to change.

Because of her strong desire to help others, Melody thought about nursing training. As she talked with a close friend who was a successful REALTOR®, Melody knew she had found her true calling. Although she knew it could take some time to start earning an income, Melody left retail and enrolled in real estate school. She was ready to make a better life.

## MAKING A BETTER LIFE

**M**elody Newman didn't spend much time as a teenager daydreaming about a better life. She rolled up her sleeves and applied herself to make a better life. By using the skills she learned during her two decades of leadership in the customer service industry, she has become a multi-million-dollar producer and risen to the top 5% of REALTORS® in Greater Baton Rouge area in less than four years. Melody is making a better life for her family through real estate and by improving on herself. Melody is not only a sought-after REALTOR®, she also leads a monthly business book club, encourages others in their health journey through her blog and fitness



Melody earned her license November 2018. Her KW training coach connected her to a team where she worked from home while caring for her 6-month-old and 2-year-old. She became the only buyer's agent on the team in the Phillips-Miller Group and closed on her first house in March 2019. She had 14 deals in her first year and sold 26 houses in her second year.

2020 was a year of changes for everyone, including Melody. She took the boys out of daycare and worked from home. She changed brokerages and worked with Cherie Mack as a listing agent for nine months before she transitioned

back to Keller Williams Realty Premier Partners and went solo. In 2021 Melody helped 42 families!

Melody gives back to her community through her online presence and resources, including her Facebook fitness page and her health blog, and by posting shoutouts for local businesses on Yelp! Elite. She is also part of the Denham run club, which meets at Le Chien Brewing Company. She also participates in KW's "Red Day." She enjoys handing out school supplies and organizing supplies for those with disabilities.

Melody earned a commendation as a military relocation specialist and loves to help veterans. She also has a heart

for first-time buyers and has many clients who are upgrading because of growing families and those who prefer new construction. She connects and relates easily to moms over the joys and struggles of parenting and balancing work and family. She enjoys bringing her sons along, and is very transparent and active on social media. Her clients also love to talk about her involvement in improv, and the joy of watching her perform after she enrolled in a workshop on stand-up comedy.

"I love what I do; I love helping people!" beamed Melody. "I measure my success by the people I help. My why is family; my family and the families I serve in my community. Clifton is proud of my nomination as a Rising Star and that I can find homes for clients that others have given up on. I

have put systems in place because I don't ever want to be too busy to handle more and help more people."

Clifton and Melody are excited about 2022. They moved into their newly built home in February. The boys are becoming more independent, and they can afford to make memories together as a family. Follow Melody on social media to stay motivated on your health journey, hear about hidden dine-ins and dives, to see photos from the family's first trip to Disney with the kids, and to hear about Clifton joining her in real estate and truly making this a family business!



“  
I love what I do; I love helping people. I measure my success by the people I help.  
”

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# What are the TOP Three Things you notice first when showing your clients a house?



**PHIL DEBIN:**

- 1. Neighbors' yards
- 2. Traffic noise, or lack there
- 3. If there's a smell, the smell.



**MARCY MAURER:**

- 1. The surrounding homes as we pull in/feel of the neighborhood.
- 2. The curb appeal
- 3. How decluttered it is! (So important.)



**LISA THOMAS:**

- 1. Front yard and surrounding houses' yards.
- 2. Smells (*good and bad*)
- 3. If home is dirty and cluttered. *Sometimes it's so bad it feels like they didn't know you were coming and you are trespassing.*



**RACHAEL TAYLOR:**

- 1. Overall appearance of the neighborhood and if they are well maintained.
- 2. I always smell, then look at baseboards when I first walk in to see if they're clean, then I look at ceiling fans.
- 3. If the home is clutter-free. I cant stand clutter! Less (just enough) is more!



**CHERIE MACK:**

- 1. Overall aesthetic/upkeep of the neighborhood
- 2. The smell of the house - *good or bad*
- 3. If they have cameras



**KELLY MITCHELL:**

- 1. Surrounding area
- 2. Curb appeal (especially landscaping and a good wreath)
- 3. Cleanliness of the home (return air vent is always a good place to look!)

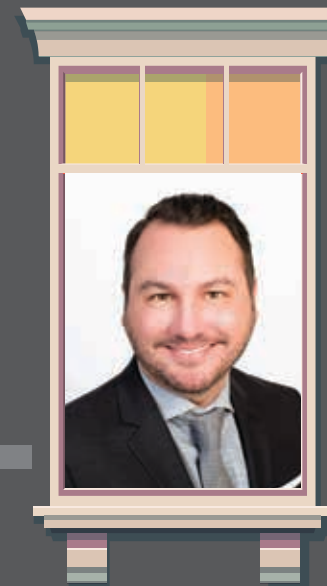


**KAYLYN WARD:**

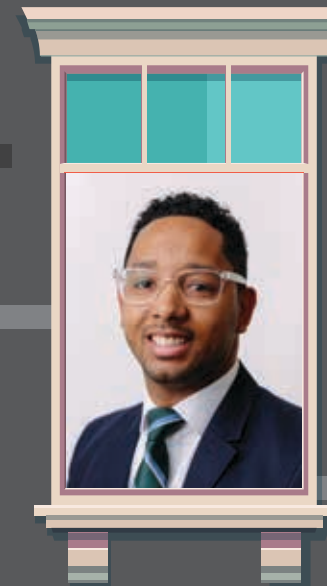
- 1. How well-kept the surrounding properties are
- 2. Smell
- 3. Cleanliness/clutter on countertops/night stands/tables



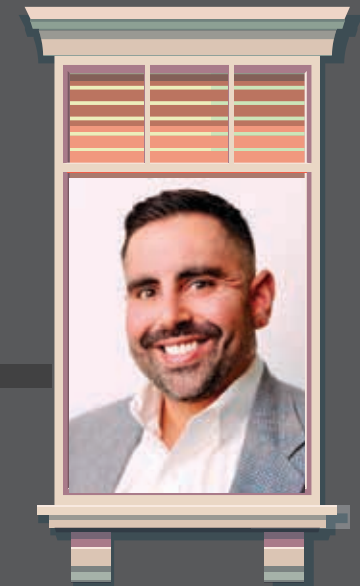
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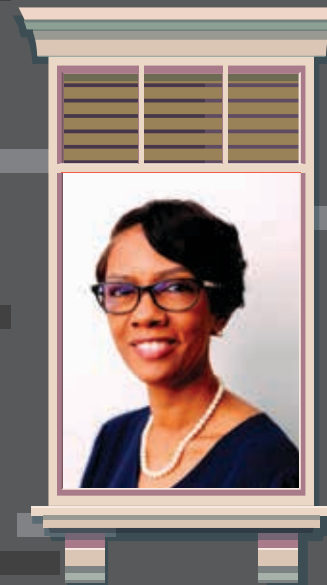
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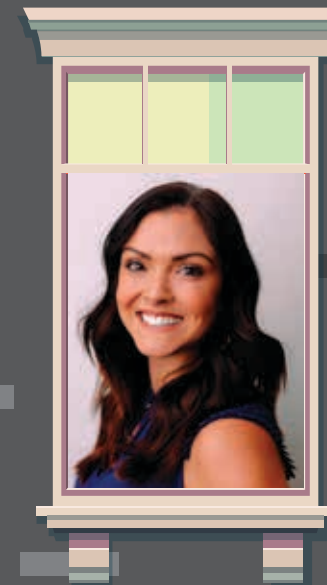
**CHRIS LEWIS**  
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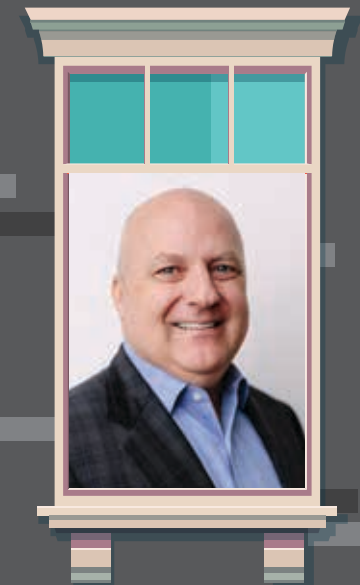
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# meet RYNN JONES



cover story

By Brian Amend | Photos by Rebecca Jones

## GAME PLAN

Ryn and architect husband, John, are grounded in Baton Rouge and are very much an LSU family. Both LSU graduates, Ryn and John have four children, the oldest of whom, Anna Kathryn, 22, graduated from LSU in May 2021. Their second daughter, Benton, aged 19, is currently attending LSU. They reside near the LSU lakes with their two sons, Preston, aged 15, and Carter, aged 12, along with three dogs, Kate, Ramona, and Otis. As a hobby, Ryn likes to run the LSU lakes near her house. They enjoy tailgating and attending LSU basketball and football games, and at the invitation of LSU announcer Dan Borne, Ryn spotted a game for the football team. This required intense but fun concentration, as Ryn had to use binoculars to watch the game and relay in real-time to the announcer the plays happening on the field together with the numbers of the players involved.

Ryn has serendipitously developed a game like this in real estate. “I’m not a stager, but I have things that I can bring to help supplement, to make things look better for pictures,” she says, a bowl of artificial green apples being among those things. Friends and clients will often call to let her know they have spotted that bowl in her latest listing’s photographs. “It’s like a game of Where’s Waldo?” she laughs.

## WHAT AN HONOR

Ryn started out in real estate working at the same brokerage as her father, who, along with a family friend, had offered encouragement to become a REALTOR®. “So we had a chance to spend a lot of time and work on projects together,” she relates. “That was a real highlight for me, to get that chance to work together and spend time with my dad.” Although the two no longer work together, Ryn promises, “He’s gonna stay busy; I’m gonna make sure of it.”

One of the greatest honors in Ryn Jones’s life as a REALTOR® is adult children referring their parents to her: “That really just speaks volumes to me, that they would entrust the care of their parents to me, who might be older or moving into an assisted living facility.” That specific honor is of a piece with her general sense of connection to the greater Baton Rouge real estate community: “It’s just an honor to work with all of these professionals, the REALTORS®, the lenders, the photographers. It takes a whole team of people to get it done, and we have a great group of professionals here. It’s an honor to get to know all of them and to work with them on a daily basis.”

...



The Jones Family  
Carter, Anna Kathryn, Preston and Benton, along with Ryn and John and the family pets, Ramona, Otis and Kate



Ryn and John standing in what was once their kitchen, reviewing the plans of what will soon become a butler's pantry.

•••

Ryn has enjoyed her past seven years of working as a REALTOR®, not only because of the great success she has had. “You have friends that become your clients, but yet I have clients who I didn’t know before who have become friends through the process. That’s success when you can build those relationships and know that you’ve helped other people.” In those seven years, Ryn has won awards such as the 2016 and 2017, Re/Max 100% Club; the 2018, 2019, and 2020; Re/Max Platinum Club Award; and the 2021 Re/Max Chairman Club Award. Ryn is as well a Re/Max Hall of Fame Member. In 2019, she won the Greater Baton Rouge Association of REALTORS® Most Cooperative REALTOR® of the Year. Probably closest to Ryn’s heart is the Children’s Miracle Network Miracle Agent Executive Club Award, she has achieved year after year since 2015, which recognizes portions of commissions donated to the Children’s Miracle Network.

**KNOWLEDGE APPLIED**

Ryn is actively involved in raising money for Louisiana Public

Broadcasting and Baton Rouge’s Big Buddy Program. “If you’re watching Celtic Woman, I’ll come on and ask for money.” She has applied her background in dancing and teaching dance to raising money for the Big Buddy program. Ryn has danced ballet with her daughters in performances of The Nutcracker, and at a previous time in her life helped run Silly Goose Creative Dance, teaching dance and creative movement at pre-schools and after-school programs.

In 2015, before television cameras and a large crowd, she danced a salsa routine with Adam Knapp in the ninth annual Dancing for Big Buddy in the Pete Maravich Assembly Center. **These activities are in line with her definition of success as being “not a dollar amount” but instead “using the gifts and talents God gave you to benefit others.”** By either measure, Ryn has been successful, with a career volume of \$78,599,386, and 2021 having been her biggest volume year yet.

**SOUND ADVICE**

Ryn recommends that anyone desiring to get into real estate find

“encouraging mentors,” who can help with what can be a lonely business and finding ways to also be that encouraging mentor when others need it. This helps to keep one’s attitude positively aligned so that one can “get up every day and keep working hard, being honest, being humble and helpful” so that “success will come.”

Another habit she strongly encourages in an age of technology is to “pick up the phone” and talk to people instead of relying on technology and texting for communication. This advice explains so much of her approach to being a REALTOR® along with her response to this writer’s request for an elevator pitch: *“I’m your person. Once you’re in my life, I’m there. I’m loyal and honest, all of these things. It’s a partnership, and it is hopefully a lifetime relationship.”*



Ryn in her storage unit filled with items that enhance the showing factor for her clients. “I’m not a stager, but I have things that I can bring to help supplement, to make things look better for pictures.”

“

You have friends that become your clients, but yet I have clients who I didn’t know before who have become friends through the process. That’s success when you can build those relationships and know that you’ve helped other people.



# The Life of a Single Mom

IMPACT A SINGLE MOM. IMPACT HER CHILDREN. IMPACT A NATION.

giving back

Jennifer Maggio is happily married to long-time mortgage lender, Jeff Maggio, and they share three children... So what led to her interest in the single mom?

At 19, Jennifer Maggio found herself a single mother with two children, living in government housing, and utilizing food stamps to make ends meet. Homelessness, abuse, the death of both parents, and a strong sense of overwhelm culminated into an almost unbearable plight. Years later, she had climbed the corporate ladder and met her husband, but she never forgot a moment where she huddled on a bathroom floor as a young mom, contemplating taking her own life. Her faith became the catalyst that changed everything, leading to her passion to help moms today.



In 2007, Jennifer walked away from a mortgage career as an 11-time Circle of Excellence winner. She did so for one reason – to see no single mom walking alone. That year, she began a small Bible study for single moms in her home through Healing Place Church. Rapid growth led to the birth of The Life of a Single Mom in 2011. This national nonprofit is headquartered in Baton Rouge, and its influence has been significant, both statewide and nationally. Having served 750,000 single mothers in its 10-year history, the organization is highly regarded as one of the largest faith-based programs for single moms in the U.S.

The organization provides a variety of programs, including offering over 1,600 support groups in



Founder Jennifer Maggio

churches (with new ones launching every day), offering 150 online life skills classes, hosting boot camps and conferences, providing counseling, and distributing much-needed resources. With over 469,000 Louisiana children being raised by single mothers, Maggio believes empowering, educating, and equipping single mothers with the tools they need to successfully raise their children is critical to Louisiana's future.

In late 2021, The Life of a Single Mom entered negotiations with The Caring People of Branson, Missouri and SingleMomzRock of Springfield, Missouri and has since acquired both ministries. "2022 is an exciting year, as we see all the doors God has opened," says Maggio.

#### HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- You can support a single mom by becoming a corporate sponsor for the Impact Luncheon to be held on May 11 at Crowne Plaza.
- You can consider starting a single moms' support group at your church.
- You can sign up to be the volunteer database for ongoing activities.

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## home matters

By Shauna Osborne

# Springtime HOUSEHOLD PESTS

(AND HOW TO EVADE THEM!)

Spring has officially sprung in all corners of the country! The sun is shining, and our outdoor spaces are coming alive with greenery, birdsong, and, yes, **springtime pests**. Just as we humans have been eagerly watching for signs of warm weather, these vermin, to survive winter's scarcity of food, have gone dormant, awaiting springtime's rising temperatures to revive ... and descend upon our homes. Learn more about common seasonal pests below and how to fend them off proactively.

### Ants

When temperatures start to warm up outside, ants wake up to forage, seeking new food sources to provide for their colonies. Your home – with its cozy nighttime temperatures and ready supply of snacks and water – is an ant's dream in the spring! Ants have a strong sense of smell, and once an ant finds food in a place, it will surely keep coming back ... and bring its friends. To prevent an infestation, make sure food crumbs and spills are always cleaned from floors, sinks, and countertops, especially in the kitchen, and keep leftover food in the refrigerator or tightly sealed containers. Examine and repair all cracks or holes around pipes, electrical outlets, and HVAC units, and in weatherstripping and door screens.

### Flies

Many homeowners don't know that some fly species spend the winter dormant indoors – in homes' attics, walls, and other sun-facing areas – reawakening when outdoor temperatures start to rise. Key here is preventing flies' access to the dwelling in the first place, so seal any openings they might use to get inside – openings in screens, weatherstripping, vents, for example – and keep risk zones, such as food prep areas, garbage / recycling bins, and yard and pet waste piles, clean and tidy.

### Termites

Often called "silent destroyers," these wood-eating insects cause up to \$5 billion in damage to American homes yearly. Be on the lookout for warning signs of infestation, such as hollow-sounding or crumbling wood, sagging floors or ceilings, or mud tubes on exterior walls. To help deter termite houseguests, eliminate any outstanding moisture problems by diverting water from the foundation, keeping gutters and downspouts clean, sealing entry points, and removing wood / paper termite food sources from around the outside of your home.

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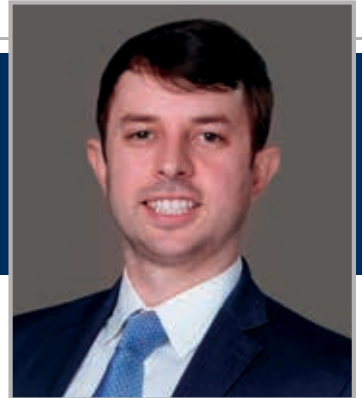
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