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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**08**  
Preferred Partners



**12**  
Top Producers:  
Gary and Trudi Owen



**20**  
Sponsor Spotlight:  
Tom Couture, Texas Tech Credit Union



**22**  
Spotlight REALTOR®:  
Chad Bridges




**28**  
Rising Star:  
Cindy Best



**34**  
Sponsor Spotlight:  
Brandon Sanders, West Texas Real Estate Inspection



**36**  
Up-and-Comer:  
Chris Brooks



**40**  
Sponsor Spotlight:  
Ashley Laycock, Texas Tech Credit Union

**43**  
FAQ



If you are interested in contributing or nominating Realtors for certain stories, please email us at [kathy.pettit@realproducersmag.com](mailto:kathy.pettit@realproducersmag.com), or call 806.368.1526

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# GARY AND TRUDI OWEN

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**T**

hey say opposites attract, which in the case of Gary and Trudi Owen, couldn't be more true. God knew what He was doing when he brought these two together almost three decades ago. Today, as Gary and Trudi celebrate almost 25 years of marriage and dedication to each other, this husband-wife real estate team is passionate about using their real estate business as a ministry for serving others.

Gary and Trudi both attended Texas Tech University, although their career paths following college were very different. After graduating with a degree in music education, Gary was a band director for six years before

transitioning to educational sales. "After working for a few different companies in sales, I decided I wanted to have more control of my own success or failure," Gary explains. "At the same time, I wanted to be in

an industry where I could utilize my passion for teaching and equipping people to make good decisions." He became licensed and started selling real estate in 2005 and has never looked back.





“

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Perhaps their success can be credited in part to the uniqueness of their team. While Gary and Trudi have nearly polar opposite personalities, they are unified in their core values. “Our diversity in personality is our strength, and our strengths and weaknesses offset each other,” they said. Gary is an analytical numbers guy while Trudi’s strengths are in staging and decorating.

When working with sellers and buyers, Gary provides detailed market analysis, and Trudi provides the expertise for preparing the homes for

Trudi’s degree is in restaurant, hotel, and institutional management. She held managerial roles at a Fortune 250 company and a local boutique prior to getting into real estate. “After having our second son, I had planned to be a stay-at-home mom for a season, but Gary’s real estate business had grown so much by that point that he needed help,” Trudi said. So, in 2008, she joined her husband in business. Since then, the real estate duo, known as the Gary Owen Team, along with their administrative assistant, Krista Brunson, has built up a thriving business.



Photo by Cheeky Munkee  
Photography by Robin Hawkins

market or envisioning the potential a home has. “When negotiating, we bounce our thoughts off of each other to try to give our clients the best counsel possible,” they shared.

A heart for ministry is another common thread between Gary and Trudi. They view their real estate business as a ministry. “We are fortunate that most of our clients have become friends,” Gary and Trudi explain. “With that, we have the opportunity and privilege to walk with them through their different phases of life. Not only are we there to help them achieve their real estate dreams and goals, but we also walk with them through the challenging times.”

“We help clients navigate changing chapters of their lives through marriage, the birth of children, divorce, and loss of loved ones,” they continued. “While real estate is a fulfilling career, it isn’t always an easy one while walking through difficult seasons with our clients. Nevertheless, we find great fulfillment in being available to try to offer support and good counsel to our clients through the various seasons of their lives.”

When they aren’t working, Gary and Trudi love

watching sports and spending time with their two boys, Braden, a college student, and Reagan, a middle-schooler. Braden is very entrepreneurial and enjoys running his own lawn-care business while Reagan is musical and plays the trombone in the top wind ensemble at his school. Gary and Trudi also have a Goldendoodle, Lucy, who adds joy and energy to the Owen family.

At the end of the day, Gary and Trudi hope to be remembered by their friends, family, and peers as caring, competent, and giving people who enriched the lives of those they touched. They both feel the most fulfillment when educating and equipping others to improve their lives. “I know it sounds cliché, but we are grateful for every day of life,” the couple said. “Through some life experiences, we have a new appreciation and value for life and relationships.

“Unless God has other plans, we don’t ever see ourselves retiring from real estate. We value impact over money. So, as long as we can help impact and improve the lives of others through real estate, we plan to do so.”

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## ▶▶ letter from the president

By Rich Eberhardt, Lubbock Association of REALTORS®

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# TOM COUTURE

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**After 45 years in the mortgage lending industry, Tom Couture has seen it all and knows the business like the back of his hand. He considers himself a lucky man to have the opportunity to help people achieve their dreams of owning homes and creating wealth through real estate investment.**

Tom started in the mortgage business within his first year after graduating from high school. He chose not to go to college and instead took a job at a large life insurance company in his hometown of Montpelier, Vermont. He started in the mailroom of the company's mortgage loan department in 1977 and steadily worked his way up the ladder.

While Tom had no premeditated plans to go into mortgage lending, he learned virtually every aspect of the business while working for the company in Vermont. "I realized that I loved the mortgage business and loved helping people," he said. After eight years with that company, Tom was offered an opportunity to move to Lubbock for a job with Plains National Bank (now Plains Capital Bank). So, in 1985, he packed up his family, and the rest is history.

Fast forward to today, and Tom is a top-producing mortgage loan officer (MLO) with



designations in the Scotsman guide of mortgage originators. He is also in the top 1% of mortgage loan originators in the United States. "The best part about my job is knowing that I have a small part in helping business partners like REALTORS® all over Lubbock to be successful by closing the loans to help them in their pursuit of listing and selling homes successfully," Tom said. "And, I get to help individual people in some small way to achieve owning a home for their family or building wealth through real estate ownership in the investment property space."

As MLO for Texas Tech Credit Union and the leader of Team Couture, Tom and his team set themselves apart in the industry by viewing mortgages not as transactions, but as opportunities to help those they serve. "With that in mind, it's very rewarding to know that we here at Texas Tech Credit Union have the

opportunity to be a positive influence in people's lives every single day," Tom said.

Tom has five grown children (one daughter and four sons) and seven grandchildren. Three of the grandchildren live locally in Lubbock while the other four live in Austin and Hobbs. Tom enjoys spending time with the three Lubbock grandkids weekly and takes every opportunity to see the other four as often as he can. "The ones here in town get together nearly every weekend, and we enjoy time together eating out or having a home-cooked meal at my house," he said.

Tom loves sharing experiences with friends and family, regardless of what they're doing. "That is what I love to do in my not-so-abundant 'free time,'" Tom added. "We all hang out whenever we can all be together. We put a premium on family relationships!"



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Story by Lindsey Wells • Photography by Angela Diamond Photography

If you know Chad Bridges, you know he's just *that* guy — the guy who lives life with passion, the guy who tries his hardest to make everyone around him better. It's hard not to smile after an interaction with Chad, a well-known fact among his clients.

Chad began his real estate career in 2006 after moving to Texas. Before that, he graduated from Oral Roberts University with a Bachelor of Science degree and sold copiers for many years with Ricoh. His desire to work for himself and serve others prompted him to change professional gears and start his journey into real estate.

Now, he can't picture himself doing anything differently. "I love the flexibility of real estate and what it allows me to do with my lifestyle," Chad said. "I think I'll keep working and serving clients for many years to come. I love setting goals and watching them come to life. Things can move rapidly in real estate — the dreams we have set for ourselves become reality quickly."



Chad credits his mother and father with shaping him into the man he is today. "I'm so grateful for my parents and the sacrifices they made to help me get started and go to college," he said. "Neither of my parents graduated high school, and they wanted a better life for me and made sure I had what I needed to make it."

Always looking for unique ways to serve, Chad is a REALTOR® in both Texas and New Mexico. He also works in foreclosures with VA foreclosures as a listing agent. "With my background in sales, I have experience in negotiations and closing larger types of transactions," Chad explains. "I love the negotiating side of real

**“ I LOVE THE NEGOTIATING SIDE OF REAL ESTATE & FIGHTING FOR MY CLIENTS WHILE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR A WIN-WIN FOR ALL PARTIES. ”**

# MODEL

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NEW AGENTS LAUNCH  
THEIR CAREER HERE AT  
KELLER WILLIAMS,  
& I ALWAYS  
ADMIRE THE ONES  
I SEE HUSTLING.”

”



estate and fighting for my clients while always looking for a win-win for all parties. I love helping people transition through all of the life stages and moving from one home to the next.”

Given his status and expertise in the industry, Chad shared this piece of advice for the up-and-coming agent: “We get to see a lot of new agents launch their career here at Keller Williams, and I always admire the ones I see hustling,” he said. “I would just say put your head down, outwork everyone else, and you’ll get results, no matter your level of experience.”

Outside of work, Chad enjoys watching football and following the Bay Area teams (49ers, Giants, and Warriors). He also has two little four-legged girls, Chihuahuas named Khloe and Belle. On Fridays, Chad can always be found getting a fresh haircut at The Dapper Den. Chad gave a quick shoutout to Dandy, The Dapper Den’s canine mascot and the star of the show there. However, Chad says, full disclaimer: “Dandy is not my dog — Belle and Khloe would be jealous, for sure.”

So, what does the future hold for Chad? “The future is very bright,” Chad says. “The sky is the limit for what God has in store for me. I love serving Him, and I believe He has a master plan that He gets to reveal every day. Professionally, I’m already doing what He designed me to do in serving others in my field of real estate.”

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# CINDY

## B · E · S · T



**When did you start your career in real estate?**

I took my real estate exam in March of 2020 and became active with WestMark later that month.

**What did you do before you became a REALTOR®?**

I graduated from Texas Tech University in 1993, danced in a ballet company, and then started a 25-year career for a large financial services company. I traveled all over the country and managed an \$80 million market in a very competitive industry. It was great preparation for real estate.

**What life events led you to become a real estate agent?**

In October of 2019, my entire team was reorganized. I had always said that I would love to try real estate if the opportunity presented itself, and I just decided to go for it. I took the classes in January, studied in February, and was live with WestMark in March.

**What do you find most fulfilling about your work?**

Helping people. I have always loved to help people. Work-life balance is the key.

**How does real estate fit into your dreams and goals?**

My husband and I are empty-nesters now, so I am able to travel with him and work from anywhere. We are having a great time! We always say we are dating again now that our kids are grown.

**Given your status and expertise, what advice would give to a new agent?**

I would say find your people. Find a broker that feels like home and offers great training programs and then be loyal. I am so blessed to work with everyone at WestMark, and I am thankful for the REALTOR® who recruited me, my friend and colleague, Rania.

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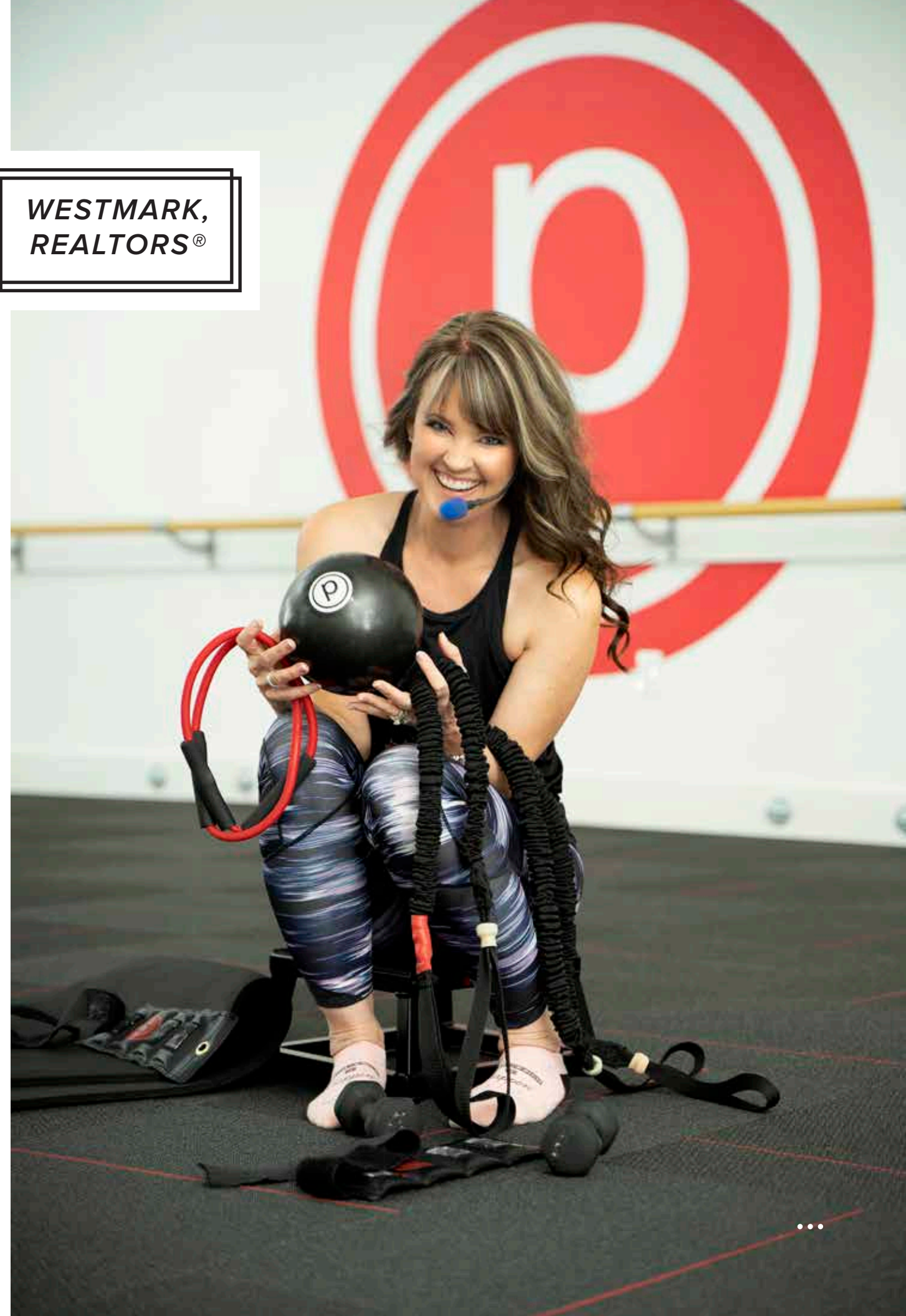




Photo by Ashlee Huff Photography

**Tell us about your family and what you all enjoy doing together.**

My husband, Eric, and I just celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary last August. We have two amazing sons and one beautiful daughter-in-law. Tanner graduated from Texas Tech University and is a civil engineer. He and his wife, Madelyn, live in Lubbock and have been married for a little more than a year. Ben is a junior at Texas Tech University and is still deciding what direction to go. We are blessed to have them all in town and love hanging out and traveling together.

**When you aren't working, what's your favorite way to spend time?**

I love working out and have been teaching classes at Pure Barre since 2018. I teach Foundations, Classic, and Empower and love helping people with their fitness goals. It also holds me accountable for my own health and workouts and is a great community to be a part of. A lot of REALTORS® are my Pure Barre clients also, which is fun.

**How do you define success?**

Happiness is whatever you want it to be. I think success is the same thing. If you are happy, then you are successful in life.

**What do you want to be remembered for?**

I want to be remembered for being a great and loving mom and wife and best friend, a caring sister, the cool aunt, a devoted daughter, a happy hard-working employee, a compassionate person and volunteer, a true friend, an inspirational teacher (Pure Barre), and a little bit of a sci-fi nerd. And, maybe someday, a grandmother or great-grandmother who spoils her grandchildren.

**What are you most grateful for?**

I am most grateful for God, family, our health, my friends, my work community, my country, my state, and my freedoms as an American.

**What is something that not many people would know about you?**

I LOVE Star Wars, Star Trek, Marvel, and DC Comics movies and characters. I still have a Darth Vader necklace my dad gave me when the first movie came out in the 70s, and I have worn it to all subsequent Star Wars movies.

**What does the future hold for you personally and professionally?**

No one knows exactly what the future holds, but I hope it is full of good health, family, great friends, trips, helping people, and champagne!



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# BRANDON SANDERS

WEST TEXAS REAL ESTATE INSPECTION



*Founded in 2016, West Texas Real Estate Inspection (WTREI) has quickly become known in the community as a one-stop shop for home inspections. The company can perform just about any type of home inspection one would need, from basic inspections to wells, septic tanks, water quality, swimming pools, lead-based paint, and radon, to name a few, and they offer a bundling discount for customers who need multiple parts of their home inspected.*

Need something more specific? No problem. For every inspection, WTREI brings along a team consisting of a roofer, plumber, HVAC specialist, electrician, pest control technician, and mold/mildew specialist to help reduce their time in the home and bring peace of mind to homeowners.

The company's owner, James B. Sanders, who goes by Brandon, was influenced to begin a career in the inspection industry after his own positive experience with another inspector. "I decided on this industry when I met with an inspector on a rent house I was looking to purchase," Brandon explains. "He was my inspiration and still is today."

Before that, Brandon worked in construction in his early teens with his family. After his grandfather suffered a stroke and had to rely on the family to finish up a home he was building, Brandon immersed himself in the business. From framing and drywall to electrical and plumbing, he helped his grandfather get the home nearly completed. From there, Brandon worked with his brother moving houses before running his own crew, for his dad, on the commercial side of things at only 21 years old.

After getting married and having five children, Brandon was searching for

a career similar to the work he'd grown up with. He signed on with a local inspection franchise and worked there for 18 months before starting WTREI in 2016. Brandon also owns West Texas Pool People (WTPP), which he founded in 2014.

With all of this experience and professionalism, Brandon and WTREI have built valuable relationships with local homeowners and REALTORS®, too. "I want REALTORS® to know that I will work for them and their buyer like my family and my life depend on it — because they do," Brandon said. "We will always work with their time schedule. I will work overtime to help them get out of a bind, and they can always depend on me to make things happen."

Brandon loves to teach and looks forward to meeting with buyers and educating them on their potential homes. He and Jed, another inspector at WTREI, take the time to thoroughly explain the issues they find and offer possible ways to resolve them. "The most important thing in walking through a home with a buyer is reading their reaction," Brandon explains. "My goal is to inform the buyer of the issues but at the same time feed them all of the good stuff about the home. A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down."

Brandon has been married to his wife, Lindsey, since 2008. They have five children ranging in age from 6 to 15 and several animals. Recently, the family bought some land, and they are currently building their own home. "My wife and kids have been a huge help," Brandon said. "My goal is to teach my kids some of the things I learned growing up. One day, we will have built up a ranch, and that is my end goal."

In their free time, the family enjoys camping, fishing, playing on their land, cooking together, playing board games, and watching the latest movies.

If you've ever had the opportunity to place a phone call to WTREI, you may have spoken to Lindsey over the phone. She helps Brandon in the business by answering

phone calls, scheduling appointments, invoicing, and doing whatever else is needed. "None of this would be possible without my wife," Brandon said. "She is the backbone of the family. Learning to homestead, gardening and collecting eggs, and homeschooling the kids keeps her busy, but she still finds time to help run the business."

The inspection company has been a lifesaver — literally — for Brandon and Lindsey's son, Asher, who was born with a complex heart defect. He has undergone two open-heart surgeries, one at 3 months old and one at 5 years old. "Inspections have played a huge role in his story because if it weren't for the inspections, we wouldn't be able to pay for the monthly health insurance premium,"

Brandon said. "I am grateful for my health and my family and the Lord for providing for our needs. If I can teach my kids to love the Lord, love each other, and raise their own kids to do the same, I will have lived my life successfully."



Call (806) 786-0849 or visit [www.WTREI.com](http://www.WTREI.com) for more information about West Texas Real Estate Inspection.



Brandon Sanders with team member Jed Zeman



▶▶ up-and-comer

# CHRIS BROOKS

Story by Lindsey Wells | Photography by Angela Diamond Photography



## EXIT REALTY

*"I enjoy helping families fulfill the American dream of homeownership. Whether they're purchasing their first home, upsizing for family, downsizing for retirement, or building a real estate investment portfolio for passive income, my goal is always to put them first."*

—CHRIS BROOKS

One quick conversation with REALTOR® Chris Brooks is enough to know that although he is young, he is passionate about real estate. Chris began his real estate journey while in college at a student housing apartment complex, advancing to the position of a residential leasing agent. "I have always been fascinated with commercial and residential architecture," Chris explains. "When I learned that college wasn't for me, I set my sights on becoming a real estate agent."

Learning from his father who owns a successful insurance business, Chris strives to base his business on



“  
**FOR ME, IT'S ALL ABOUT MY CLIENT.**  
*Treat them exactly like you'd want to be treated, and the rest will take care of itself.*”

When asked to give his definition of success, Chris shared, “Success is simply growth. When you refuse to stay stagnant in your life, whether personally, spiritually, or financially, you are setting yourself up for success. We all have the opportunity to grow and keep learning. Success is a natural result of growth.”

“I am so thankful for my salvation, my family, friends, and the relationships I build with my clients,” Chris added. “I’m also grateful for my country and owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women who’ve sacrificed and served in the past and those who are currently serving today to preserve our freedoms.” Having a brother who currently serves in the US Army, patriotism is a core foundation for Chris. His passion for real estate bleeds into his love for America and politics.

relationships, not transactions. He feels the most rewarded when helping others achieve their dreams and goals. The Golden Rule plays a big part in Chris’s professional and personal life. “For me, it’s all about my client,” he said. “Treat them exactly like you’d want to be treated, and the rest will take care of itself.”

Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and the Installation Banquet Committee.

Outside of the LAR, Chris continues to serve the community by actively participating as a Master Mason, member of John Sayles Masonic Lodge #1408 A.F.A.M. in Abilene. He is also a member of Valley of Waco Scottish Rite-32nd degree Mason.

When he isn’t working or giving his time to the community, Chris enjoys all things social. “I’ve never met a stranger,” he said. “I enjoy being around people and getting to know them, oftentimes learning from their experiences by simply listening.” Outdoor activities such as hunting and skiing have been known to occupy his weekends along with his furry companion, Winston, a playful and energetic yellow Labrador Retriever.



Chris’s strong work ethic was instilled in him from an early age. He has been working since he was 15 years old, when he was still in school and participating in sports, 4-H, and FFA. That work ethic and desire to be involved in the community has certainly carried over into his present-day life. Today, he is involved with the Lubbock Association of REALTORS® and serves on five committees: the Luncheon and Program Committee, TREPAC Committee, Finance

Looking onto the horizon, Chris would like to take those passions for real estate, people, and patriotism and mold them into serving his community in a larger format, perhaps politics.

When asked if he had any advice to share with new agents, Chris responded, “You will fail to close a deal. Don’t let that stop or discourage you. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and get back out there. Always remember, for every no, you’re that much closer to a yes. Be professional and keep your reputation spotless. Your behavior matters, so act like a professional, both in public and private. I promise you, someone is always watching you, so set an example for others to follow.”



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# ASHLEY LAYCOCK



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## TEXAS TECH CREDIT UNION

Story by Lindsey Wells  
Photography by Alicea Jare Photography

**Everybody has a calling in life. For Ashley Laycock, mortgage lending is her calling, and she never misses an opportunity to honor the leap of faith she took to make her calling into a dream career.**

Ashley was working for another local bank (which remains near and dear to her heart) when a potential career in mortgage lending first landed on her radar. “The head of our real estate department asked me one day, ‘Would you like to try being a mortgage lender?’ I said yes, not at all knowing what I was getting myself into or what was coming my way,” Ashley remembers.



“I didn’t find mortgage lending — mortgage lending found me!” she said. “I have been very blessed to work with some of the best people in our industry and for companies that have supported my goals and vision for my career. I still think back about how different my life would be had that one leader not believed in me and taken a chance on someone completely inexperienced in the industry.”

As a mortgage lender for Texas Tech Credit Union, Ashley loves developing relationships and watching families grow through the stages of their lives. “I’ve been doing this long enough now that I have seen people into their first home and then had the

privilege of helping them purchase a new home when they’ve reached career milestones, grown their family, etc.,” Ashley said. “It means a lot to me that people trust me with something so important to their lives!”

Ashley has been married to her husband, Ben, for almost 10 years. They have a 15-month-old son, Ford. In their free time, the Laycock family loves Texas Tech sports, and Ashley lives for Saturday mornings when they take Ford to his gym class and then follow with a morning at the Wolfforth Farmers’ Market. “I love spending time with friends, but mostly, these days, I just look forward to any time I get with my son and husband,” she said. “I have been incredibly blessed. I am beyond grateful for my family and my business partners who trust me with their clients.”

Professionally, Ashley is passionate about building relationships with local REALTORS®. “If you ever have a situation in which I may be a ‘value add’ to your business, please let me know,” she said. “That is my true goal, and I would love to partner with you in your success!”

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# FAQ

## ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

**RP** Welcome to *Lubbock Real Producers!* Some of you may be wondering what this publication is all about, which is why we have created this FAQ page. Here, we will answer the most commonly asked questions from around the country regarding our program. My door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100% designed to be your voice!

### Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

**A:** The top 300 agents in Lubbock. We pulled the Lubbock MLS numbers (by volume) from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021. We cut the list off at #300, and the distribution was born.

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

**A:** The process is simple. Every feature you see has first been nominated. You can nominate REALTORS®, agents, affiliates, brokers, owners, or even yourself. Office leaders can also nominate real estate agents. We will consider anyone you bring to our attention because we don't know everyone's story, and we need your help to learn more.

A nomination currently looks like this: You email us at [kathy.pettit@realproducersmag.com](mailto:kathy.pettit@realproducersmag.com) with the subject line "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)" and explain why you are nominating the individual. Maybe the person has an amazing story that we need to tell, or perhaps someone overcame extreme obstacles, is an exceptional leader, has the best customer service, or gives back to the community in a big way. The next step is an interview with us to ensure a good fit, and then we put the wheels in motion for our writer and photographer.

### Q: WHAT IS THE COST TO FEATURE A REALTOR®, AGENT, OR TEAM?

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

### Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

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

### Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A PREFERRED PARTNER?

**A:** If you have a recommendation for a local business that works with top real estate agents, please let us know. Send an email to [kathy.pettit@realproducersmag.com](mailto:kathy.pettit@realproducersmag.com).

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