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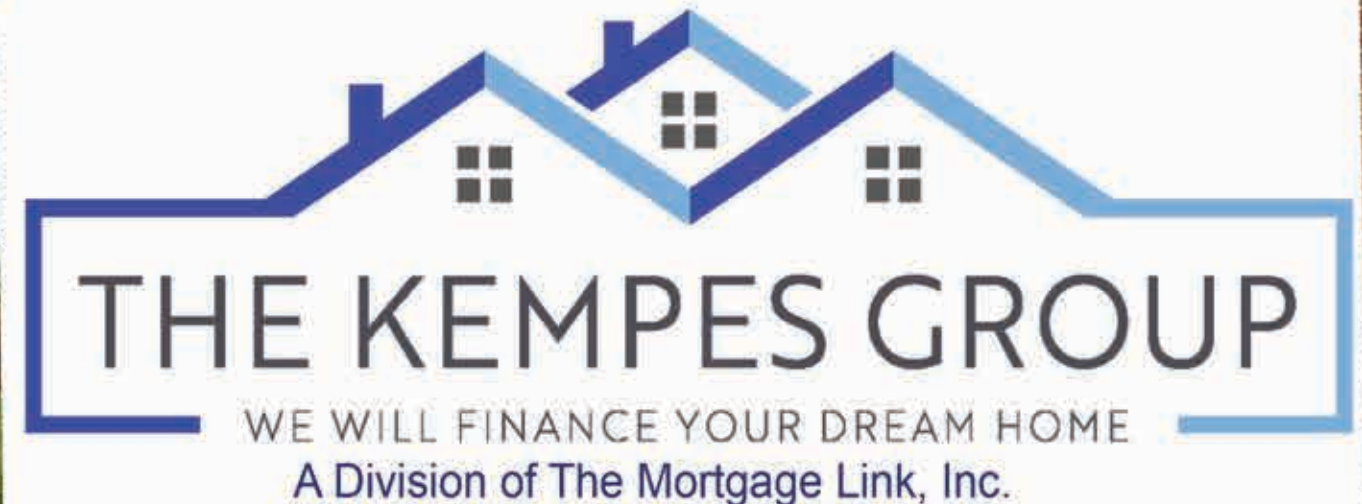




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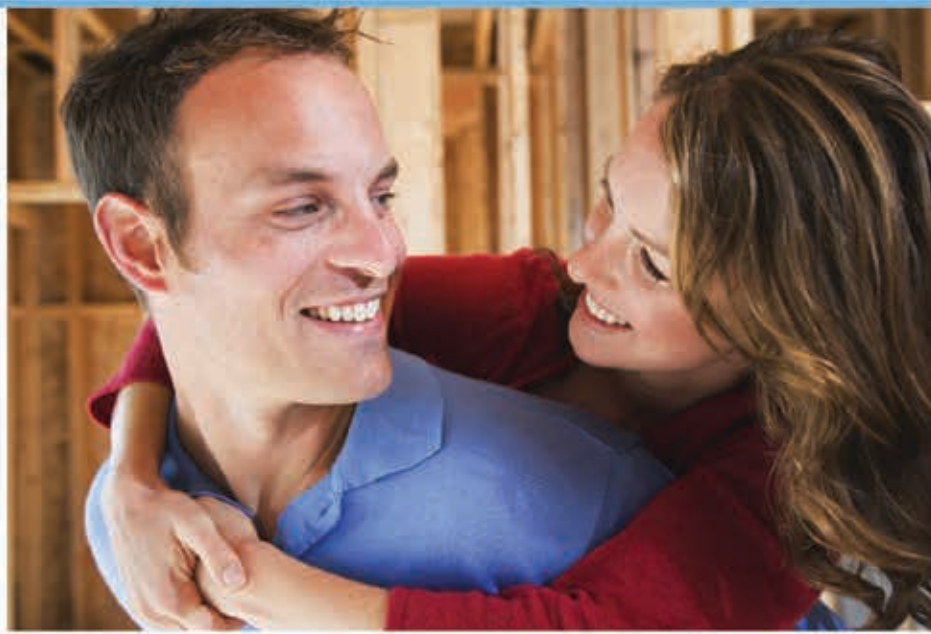
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publisher's note



If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.

—Isaac Newton

Dear DC Metro Real Producers,

What is a Legend? And, more specifically, what is a Legend in Real Estate?

The simplest way to describe a Legend is someone who is well known, who inspires others, and who creates a big wake as they go. A Legend in Real Estate is all of that and more. These are the movers and shakers, the icons in our community who have been in real estate 20-plus years and have made an indelible mark on the industry through their vision, persistence, success, generosity, and legacy.

We are incredibly lucky to have quite a few Legends in Real Estate right here in our *DC Metro Real Producers* community ... and are so honored to be able to celebrate several of these amazing people and showcase their stories in this month's issue. It was right around five and a half years ago that we featured one of our DC Metro Legends in Real Estate, Wendy Banner, on the cover of our very first issue of *DC Metro Real Producers*. And over the years, we've featured most, if not all, of the

other Legends you'll see in this issue. We've learned so much from all of them ... and are so grateful for their contributions and for allowing us to share their inspiring success stories with our entire *DC Metro Real Producers* community. It was great gathering these Legends together for their photo shoot at our June Magazine Party. So much talent in one room... It was awesome!

Speaking of events, thank you to all who attended our Casino Royale event in July! This community has such a fantastic time coming together at *Real Producers* events — and it's always so wonderful to see everyone. NOW, we're super excited about the BIG Game Day coming up on September 25th at FedEx Field, where we'll gather to enjoy each other's company and watch Washington trounce the Philadelphia Eagles! We hope to see all of you there!!

Till soon!



Kristin Brindley
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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What is your concept of Legacy? What would you most like to pass down or be remembered for?



SAVE THE DATE

DC Metro and NOVA Real Producers Present

GAME DAY 2022 AT FEDEX FIELD

SEPTEMBER 25, 2022
WASHINGTON vs. PHILADELPHIA EAGLES
9:30 a.m. – end of game

Most anticipated event of the season!

Join us at FedEx Field for this incredible, exciting, joint event with top producers from our sister community, *NOVA Real Producers!*

We will gather at FedEx Field at 9:30 a.m. for exclusive access to the stadium, where we will have 500 reserved

seats for members of our group. Pre-game, we will have food and beverages and the opportunity to network before the excitement starts when the players arrive.

This is a do-not-miss opportunity! Seats are limited, and with both *DC Metro Real Producers* and *NOVA Real Producers* invited, they will go fast! Please watch your email for your exclusive invitation, and if you haven't received it, please reach out to Kristin Brindley at Kristin@kristinbrindley.com for information.

We can't wait! And hope to see you there!



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What is the best advice a mentor has ever given you?



DAN HOZHABRI
Keller Williams Realty Centre

While attending a company-wide conference, Gary Keller said, "The first question I would ask myself at a listing appointment was 'Should I buy this house?' If the answer was no, then I would ask myself, 'Should I list this house?' Every deal that has ever been made has passed through our hands first." After hearing that, I looked at my listing appointments differently and have purchased a few investment properties this way.



ALEXES HAGGINS
Keller Williams Capital Properties

The best advice was not to pay attention to the success of other agents and truly focus on you and your business. This will keep you from self-doubt, any feelings of competition or any discouragement. (Eboneese Thompson)



NICHOLAS GRILLO
Tranquility Smart Homes & Security

"Don't be afraid to ask questions." "Many minds are better than one." "Understand that you don't know all the answers." "Pride plays no role in growth!"

This has been a pivotal mindset shift for me as a then-military member and now an entrepreneur.



BRANDON GREEN
Alchemy of Money

Related to finances (and a bunch of other things): "You can delegate the work, but if you delegate the understanding along with it, it's at your peril!"



ROBY THOMPSON
Long & Foster Real Estate

Going that extra mile, where other agents don't, has been a strong key to my success. Simple things, like setting up utilities for a new homeowner or having my assistant meet the movers while my clients sign at the closing table. That type of simple but appreciated gesture can result in many a referral as they see you as more of a friend performing a kind gesture than a REALTOR® looking to make a buck on you.

I really wasn't mentored ... self-taught. Mostly followed my father's work ethic and dedication. He had the most incredible work ethic; he went to school with Les Foster. Dad could have been a preeminent ortho surgeon... Could have gone into private practice. He always wanted to do the right thing.



JENNIFER LINDSAY
Goosehead Insurance

My first boss, Bill, who remained a mentor for many years, gave me "advice," although it was really more of a directive. On day one of being eligible, he had me sign up for the company's retirement savings plan. I have passed this advice on to many family members, friends and customers.

"Save unswervingly for retirement in a dedicated retirement account, such as an IRA, a 401(k), or a 457 plan. Whatever you think you need for retirement, it's usually not enough. Start saving early, even if it's small. Over 40 years, the savings and investment income add up."



DAN CUMBERLAND, JR.
Moyer & Sons Moving & Storage

"Sometimes, the hardest thing to do is to tell the truth, but it is also the easiest."



JESSICA OLEVSKY
JPAR Stellar Living

"Hire to transform your weaknesses," meaning, if you aren't good at something or don't like to do it, then leverage that piece of your job. For REALTORS® that hate the paperwork details, they would leverage themselves with a transaction coordinator. For some, it may be the lack of consistency with social media, so you leverage yourself with a company to post for you.

Finding the person that will do that work well isn't hard. Figuring out what you need to, or should, have leverage with is difficult. Ask those around you, "If I had an extra \$25,000, what do you think I should let someone else do for me?" It might be easy, like hiring a transaction coordinator to stop taking your own property photos. It might be harder to nail down to something specific, and that could mean you need to hire a coach.



CARA PEARLMAN
Compass

My dad, who is in real estate, has always told me to put my blinders on and keep forging ahead. I find this really sticks when I get distracted. Also, if you always put your clients' interests first, everything else falls into place.



TINA DEL CASALE
Sandy Springs Bank

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JUNE MAGAZINE CELEBRATION PARTY

JUNE 14, 2022



special events

Photos by **Ryan Corvello**

Our *DC Metro Real Producers Magazine Party* at Arlington Towers rooftop on June 16 was truly one for the books! It was an honor celebrating our featured agents and esteemed partners. We had a great time connecting with our *Real Producers* community while appreciating the city views and upscale, delicious food provided by Chef Shaun Longley. Our VIP DC Metro Legends in Real Estate joined us for a fun-filled evening.

A special thank-you to our amazing sponsors, **John Jones from Guaranteed Rate** and **Nick Grillo of Tranquility Smart Homes** — this was all possible because of you! Words can't express how grateful we are for you; we simply couldn't do what we do without your tremendous, ongoing support. Thank you for being such an integral part of our *DC Metro Real Producers* community.

We also wish to recognize **HD Bros** for capturing this event and testimonials on film. Last, but not least, thank you to **Ryan Corvello**, who snapped beautiful pictures, which you can find on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/kristinbrindleyrealproducers.

To all of our Real Producers who attended — be sure to join our private Facebook group and tag yourself and your teams! We can't wait to see everyone again soon!

For more information on all DC Metro Real Producers events, please email us at info@dcmetrorealproducers.com.





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VIDEO CONTENT IDEAS

for a Shifting Real Estate Market

The market is shifting. Do you feel it? It's pretty clear that the market of early spring, where we saw sellers making more money on home sales than ever and buyers willing to do almost anything to get into a home, has changed. Ever since late spring, with the rise in interest rates, would-be sellers who were on the fence started to come out and list their homes, seeing the max window of opportunity potentially closing. The rise in inventory comes with it in certain markets, longer days on market, and the dreaded price reduction... I mean, "price correction." As the market shifts, so do most REALTORS® marketing strategies.

I want to discuss video content ideas when marketing to your ideal client in a changing market.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Sellers are usually behind the market curve, from a standpoint that they think selling today or in 30 days is the same as their neighbor's experience 90 days prior. We know that the real estate market is like being in a boat in the ocean, where inclement weather and other factors can change your experience pretty fast. With that in mind, the marketing messages on video, social media, and direct mail need to also change. When I say the word "change," think

of "setting realistic expectations." You have sellers that get upset when they only have one offer on their home, or the offer is only at "list price." Approaching that thinking is what you need to have in mind in creating these new expectations for sellers.

VIDEO CONTENT IDEAS

If any of you have been reading my articles over the past couple of years, you know that I think video is the best way to portray a valuable message to a target audience. These videos can be posted on YouTube, be Instagram reels, TikTok videos, and more. Here are some great video content ideas in a shifting market:

- What to Expect When Selling Your Home in the Fall
- Rising Interest Rates: What It Means for Buyers and Sellers!
- Does Inflation Affect Home Values?
- The Importance of a Good Pricing Strategy When Selling Your Home This Fall
- Top 3 Home Items to Upgrade That Increase Your Home Value for the Fall Market
- Why Waiting Longer to Purchase a Home Will Cost You Even More Money
- My (Your) 90-day Market Projection on Home Values in Neighborhood X or Y

expectations when selling in the fall/winter versus early spring 2022 is super important. Shooting these videos, telling your stories, and providing helpful information is important. There will be a large benefit from a self-serving standpoint of addressing objections and issues upfront with your buyers and sellers.

The opposite is also true. Not getting out ahead of setting the proper client expectations can lead to some potentially uncomfortable conversations down the road when some of these issues come up. Set yourself apart from other Realtors by creating a portfolio of educational content that paints you as the market expert in a shifting real estate market.

SHIFTING MARKET EQUALS

SHIFTING MINDSET

Taking the time to create effective content that educates your sphere and target audience on the new set of



Wade Vander Molen is the director of sales/marketing for Stewart Title in the Northern Virginia/Washington, D.C., area and has been in the title industry since 2005. Wade helps real estate professionals with all facets of their marketing and teaches a new, sustainable business model to help them grow their businesses. You can visit Wade at www.DCtitleGuy.com.

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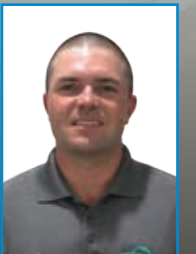
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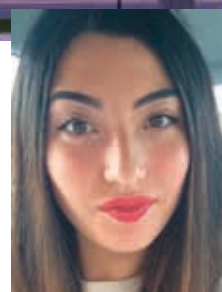
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By Jess Wellar
Photos by Ryan Corvello

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JOE ASAMOAH

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HOW TO
BUILD WEALTH
THROUGH REAL
ESTATE INVESTING



By Jess Wellar
Photo by Ryan Corvello

EILEEN ASAMOAH



ON TIME STAGING



Joseph Asamoah began real estate investing on the advice of a former boss and eventually was able to leave his corporate job altogether. (Photo by Ryan Corvello)



Eileen Asamoah staged a property for her husband in 2012 and found she had a real talent for it.

When Dr. Joe Asamoah starts dispensing advice, it's hard not to be a little star-struck. With almost 20,000 Instagram followers, a *Bigger Pockets* podcast personality that has graced the pages of *Fortune* magazine, and over 35 years in the real estate industry, Dr. Joe certainly knows what he's talking about when he proclaims, "A wise man learns from his mistakes, but a genius learns from other people's mistakes."

Dr. Joe admits his first foray into being a landlord didn't go exactly as planned.

"It was a total disaster actually," Dr. Joe recalls with a little chuckle. "I didn't know what I was doing when I bought that house. I was watching infomercials and fell for it. I was told the tenants were 'great,' and I actually believed the previous owner. I later found out there was a \$5,000 water bill being attached to the property."

Dr. Joe learned his lesson the hard way, but as a result, he now helps other would-be investors navigate the pitfalls of real estate to avoid similar headaches.

"Knowledge is key. You must surround yourself with other people that know more and learn from their mistakes, not your own. And always do your due diligence and get a third party who can verify information," Dr. Joe suggests.

Born in Ghana, Dr. Joe moved to England when he was 5 and later moved to the D.C. area to take a job in satellite communications. Shortly after starting his job in the U.S., Dr. Joe's boss was fired. Dr. Joe met up with his



Being married to one of the largest real estate investors in D.C. has its perks, especially if you've got the keen eye for stylish details that Eileen Asamoah was blessed with.

"It all started one day in 2012," Eileen recalls. "My husband, Joe, was listing an investment property in Capitol Hill, and the agent said to us, 'Hey, you're going to stage this, aren't you?' But the quote we received was too pricey, and so I said to Joe, 'I can go ahead and do this myself.'"

The agent was extremely impressed with Eileen's transformation of the renovation project's space. And, just like that, Eileen discovered her new calling, and On Time Staging, her D.C.-based boutique firm, was born.

Prior to staging, Eileen worked as an office manager, but she notes it was a stressful commute navigating the daily Beltway traffic. Also, her kids were still young, so she wanted to be home

more. She decided to help Joe with his Clearview Properties investment business, although that wasn't really her cup of tea either. But full dedication to her staging craft, timely execution, and cost-effectiveness carried Eileen to quick success with On Time Staging. A decade later, she says she still loves what she does.

"We are a small operation, only four employees, but we focus on exceptional customer service and creating inviting spaces that reflect a contemporary, lived-in home," Eileen explains. "I really enjoy giving a vacant house more appeal by showing buyers what is possible and by showcasing room designs to help buyers see how they can live in the space. We





former boss for coffee shortly after the firing and was informed his old boss would be fine; he had 10 houses for passive income and wasn't worried.

"I just couldn't fathom how it would be possible to own more than one house at a time back then," Dr. Joe recalls. "But my old boss also warned me to always have a Plan B because I could be fired like that someday too."

Dr. Joe took this advice to heart. After his first real estate experience turned sour, he learned from his mistakes and purchased another property, and then another. By 2003, his rental income equaled what he was making at his corporate 9-to-5 job, so he quit and committed fully to real estate investing and education.

"My advice to anybody in the DMV is simple: 'Buy real estate and KEEP IT!' It's always going to be expensive, but it's also an appreciating market. This is a local economy that is always generating jobs, and there's a fixed amount of land available. The reality is, you just have to understand that and then hold your investment and let time work its magic."



Photo by Ryan Corvello

“**MY ADVICE TO ANYBODY IN THE DMV IS SIMPLE: ‘BUY REAL ESTATE AND KEEP IT!’ IT’S ALWAYS GOING TO BE EXPENSIVE, BUT IT’S ALSO AN APPRECIATING MARKET.**”

Now an industry veteran, Dr. Joe's commitment to investing in people and properties is central to his approach toward buying and renovating neglected homes in prime locations. The majority of his properties are rented to tenants with government housing vouchers. These low-income families would not otherwise be able to live in affluent areas where Dr. Joe champions preserving neighborhood diversity.

"I realized there were a lot of families out there that were fed up with Section 8 housing. They have the same aspirations as I do ... but they



Dr. Joe coaches alums of his JV Renovation-to-Rental program.

didn't have those same chances. So these folks were kind of stuck. I knew I could attract these 'tier one' tenants that would take care of the property and stay a long time."

Dr. Joe doesn't just rent to anyone, though. His screening process is *exceptionally* thorough, as he sagely notes it's easier to get someone into a house than out of it.

"Turnover is expensive. I actually go to people's homes and look around. As Ronald Reagan said, 'You trust what you can verify.' Credit checks, background checks, current landlords are contacted, previous landlords before that, social media checks too... You'd be surprised what people put on there," Dr. Joe laughs.

"If you screen well, though, you eliminate 80% to 85% of issues. And if you



Eileen Asamoah was born in Dominica, an island in the Eastern Caribbean Sea, and came to the U.S. to attend Loras College in Iowa over 35 years ago. She later moved to New York and eventually Maryland, where she met her husband, Dr. Joe Asamoah. Dr. Joe was born in Ghana, West Africa, and lived in England until graduation from college, when he was transferred by his job to the Washington, D.C., area.



competitive pricing advantage over other staging companies, as the company owns both the warehouses and the furniture itself — and is always keeping the inventory updated according to the latest fashions.

"Interior design and staging tastes are continually changing and evolving. As a result, we have to keep up with trends and update our inventory accordingly," Eileen points out. "A lot of people get their ideas from HGTV, and what was trendy a year ago might not be as desirable today. I am part of several Facebook groups to trade ideas, and I also use Pinterest and magazines to stay current too."

Eileen also notes that On Time Staging will gladly work with a client, whether they want one room staged or the entire house or condo.

"I am happy to provide partial staging and consulting services for walk-throughs, even decluttering. With my

pride ourselves on accomplishing this all at an affordable price. What gives me great pleasure is knowing that when our clients' houses are placed under contract and sold, our staging services assisted them in the process."

On Time Staging works with some of the top real estate companies in the DMV and has built a strong reputation and client base. Eileen Asamoah is recognized as a superior staging expert with an ability to tailor interiors to her clients' specific tastes. Her high standards and keen attention to trends give homes an exclusive sales advantage.

Based in Bowie, Maryland, On Time Staging has two small warehouses where the company stores its inventory of staging furniture and related items. Eileen notes this is the key to their



•••

pick the right family, all the things you're looking for as an investor can be realized while also making a difference in a family's life," Dr. Joe explains.

In 2018, Dr. Joe formed the Legacy Investment Network, a free, community-membership platform for thousands of investors and industry professionals who have access to Dr. Joe's expertise, relevant topics and real estate opportunities. In addition to the "Joint Venture Program," Dr. Joe offers numerous training, coaching and consulting opportunities for investors and students alike.

"Most of us are trying to pursue financial independence," Dr. Joe says. "But I find it most fulfilling when my students are able to complete a real estate transaction and leverage that property to derive residual income and long-term wealth."

"I've taught over 800 people, so I have a considerable network of buyers that have been through my program and are ready to connect with brokers. If I can develop a relationship with an agent, we have buyers that are trained and ready to pull the trigger," Dr. Joe notes.

When Dr. Joe isn't busy helping others invest in real estate or doing podcasts, he loves spending time with his wife, Eileen, and their two children.



Photo by Ryan Corvello

"As a family, we really enjoy spending quality time together, especially traveling to different countries and learning more about their cultures, norms, and ways of life," Dr. Joe says.

Dr. Joe also notes he's busy writing a book that could be out by the end of the year.

"I want to make a contribution... It's not just about me, me, me," Dr. Joe points out. "I can teach people

how to build wealth and accomplish this by allowing people to look over my shoulder as I complete a transaction from beginning to end. By seeing, in real-time, the good, the bad, and the ugly, people learn what it takes to complete a project. Through this process, most people, at some point, realize they, too, can do this. In short, as I try to help others, the good comes back to me."

To learn how Dr. Joe Asamoah can help you reach your financial freedom by investing in real estate, go to JoeAsamoah.com and check out his livestream, "Wealth Wednesday," every Wednesday at 7 p.m. EST on Instagram @drjoeasamoah.



Photo by Ryan Corvello

•••

staging eye, I can come in and blend the colors and draw attention away from what might otherwise be an unattractive feature of a space as well."

As Eileen's husband suggests, staging is also imperative for emotional appeal, not just aesthetic value.

"A lot of agents think they don't need to do staging, but people buy on emotions, and you have to create that appeal and desire. Sometimes, you have awkward rooms, and Eileen is good at detracting attention away from that room and more into the beauty of the entire home," Joe notes. "And staged homes usually sell faster and at a higher price point."

As Eileen looks forward to the next decade in her staging career, she notes trends may come and go, but her best practices will never change.

"I always do a walk-through of the property first and consider the demographics of the area to keep the prospective buyer in mind. Then, I tastefully furnish the home to make it look high-end with quality products but without the high price tag that other staging companies would normally charge," Eileen concludes. "The ultimate goal is to have potential buyers enthusiastic and eager to make an offer."

When Eileen isn't busy with her staging business, she loves spending time with family and traveling, especially overseas. She also considers herself somewhat of a movie buff and loves a good binge, but says she really does enjoy keeping busy with her business now that her children are all grown up.

To dress up your listing with Eileen's eye for style, visit www.ontimestaging.com.



Eileen Asamoah, owner of On Time Staging.

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DALE MATTISON



» special feature

Written by Jess Wellar

LEGENDS IN REAL ESTATE

On the following pages, *DC Metro Real Producers* is honored to recognize Legends in Real Estate — icons who have each contributed significantly to the culture and milieu of our D.C. Metro real estate community through their hard work, perseverance, dedication, and mentoring in over 20 years in the business. Congratulations to these special agents. You truly are legends to us, and our community is better for your years of service!

The Mattison Group
Long & Foster Real Estate
48 years in real estate

Dale Mattison has been in the real estate business for almost five decades and arrived in the industry “by accident.”

“I was in the gas station business prior to real estate with a partner and we decided to go our separate ways,” Dale explains. “I did not know what I wanted to do but liking houses and people, I decided to try real estate ... and here I am, 48 years later.”

Before Dale became a real estate legend, he enjoyed drag racing cars. He says he went into the gas station business because he needed a place to keep his race car, to work on it and to fund the operation.

In addition to receiving a myriad of real estate achievement awards, Dale has served as president of the District of Columbia Association of REALTORS®, president of the Greater Capital Association of REALTORS®, as regional vice president for the National Association of REALTORS®, and District of Columbia Real Estate Commissioner from 1993 to 1996.

Dale has also served as a volunteer for the Washington Tennis Foundation, as a school board member for the Blessed Sacrament School, and currently serves on the master faculty for training at Long & Foster Real Estate.

Dale notes there are two big lessons that new agents must learn if they are going to be successful in this business. “Work hard while staying very focused, and pay attention to the people you are working with — it’s not about the bricks and sticks but about the people and their feelings, concerns, and lives,” he explains.

When pressed for his most memorable deal, Dale recalls, “I once met a client that viewed a shell property with a tilted stairway; he was inebriated during the viewing, said he wanted to buy it and trade in his Porsche 011 to do so. I suggested he go home and think about it and let me know his thoughts in the morning. In the morning he called, still wanted to buy it and trade in the Porsche, and he did so.”

Given Dale’s expertise, he shares some great advice for agents young and old alike: “Sharpen your saw by earning continuously. You can never obtain too much skill. And listen more

than you talk, that is why we have two ears and one mouth... Really listen to your clients, make sure you understand what is important to them.”

When pressed for his secret to success, Dale says it’s simple. “I believe in treating others the way I want to be treated while maintaining the highest standard of ethics and professionalism.”

Dale notes that the most important successes in his life are the reward of having a great family and a great business, too, as real estate seems to run in the family.

“First, there is my wife Sharon of 38 years. Years ago, we decided to work together, she got her license, and after six months, we decided to stay married instead... (Dale laughs.) My daughter Danai is also a Realtor, was a NAR 30 Under 30 designee, president of GCAAR, and a DC Real Estate Commissioner. And my son Daris is a mortgage lender with Wells Fargo Private Wealth in Manhattan, and a top producer.

As Dale looks towards the future, he adds, “I want my legacy to be that I touched some lives as I went through my own, acted as a mentor to many others, and was an impact to our industry.”

MELINDA ESTRIDGE

**The Estridge Group
Long & Foster Real Estate**
43 years in real estate

Melinda Estridge finished law school in the 1970s and says she quickly determined that, for women, it was a difficult business in which to advance. Now in her 43rd year as a real estate agent, she credits her father, who was in commercial real estate at the time, for urging her to get her real license instead.

“I started in 1978 and the business took off. I could see that, for women, there were many more opportunities for an entrepreneurial career path,” Melinda recalls. “I think, over the years, I have learned that drive, determination, and consistency are key in any commission business. Through the years, treating the business as a business was always a key to success.”

Melinda has served on numerous committees with her local board and her company over the years, including as president of Long and Foster’s Gold Team, the Grievance and Ethics Committee for GCAAR, and as a member of her company’s Advisory Board. She has also volunteered for Habitat for Humanity and the Rock Creek Conservancy.

“Over the years, I have been an active member of real estate conferences, both speaking and instructing,” Melinda notes. “I was fortunate to be chosen as a Star Power star with Howard Brinton, who was one of the leaders of real estate training for years. He is responsible for much of my success... Hiring a coach is invaluable. I have had coaching most of my career and still do.”

Melinda points out it is hard to choose just one memorable transaction since she’s been in the business for so long, but there is one transaction that is humorous that always comes to mind. “When I was new to the business and money was tight, I had a listing whose home inspection contingency asked for gutters to be cleaned. Those were the days when there were home inspection contingencies,” she points out. “My seller, who was a bit difficult, refused, and the buyer was willing to walk based on this small item. In order to hold the transaction together, I offered to clean the gutters myself. I used their ladder and climbed onto the slate roof. When I was done I could not reach the first rung of the ladder and so was stuck there! The owners were out of town and so I called out to the neighbor, who happened to be in their backyard. They ended up calling the fire department... It was so embarrassing. The fire truck arrived with the lights flashing and three firemen to help get me down. The neighbor did say, ‘If I ever list my



home, you are the agent!’ I guess he was impressed with my level of commitment. He did sell his home five years later and I represented him.”

Of her greatest success, Melinda says it has been building a wonderful group over the years, noting, “When I started in the business, no one had assistants or buyer agents. I was one of the first. Over the years, I have had numerous agents with no real estate experience become very successful due to our group’s mentoring and training. I also learned early that staying in touch with past clients regularly and prospecting every day was the absolute recipe for success. Many agents still work seven days a week and do not set boundaries for their clients. I was guilty of this early in my career, but when I was coached to remain diligent about my own time and life, it was a game changer.”

Melinda is married to her best friend and work partner, Bob O’Toole, noting they love to travel and experience new cultures. “We enjoy spending time together and with our very good friends, many of whom are in real estate,” Melinda points out. “They are our chosen family.”

Favorite quote/motto: “Job well done!”

MARJORIE DICK STUART

Coldwell Banker Realty
42 years in real estate

Marjorie Dick Stuart has been in the real estate business since 1980. Her father died very young and Marjorie promised her mother she would stay home for six months afterwards. On day 183, she packed up her beat-up, yellow Toyota Celica and headed to D.C.

It was 1979, and she was shocked to discover that restaurants in D.C. only hired women as cocktail waitresses, not servers at dinner. Marjorie wasn’t about to let that stop her. She grabbed a newspaper ad for a ‘waiter’ at the Top of the Town in Rosslyn, overlooking the Iwo Jima Memorial.

Marjorie announced, “I can do anything your men can do. Get me a cart!” And she showed them, flaming entrees, table-side and all. She got the job.

One day, she noticed her roommate’s boyfriend, Dave, reading a book, *Real Estate Principles and Practices*. “Dave said he was going to be a real estate agent and make a lot of money. That sounded like a good idea, so I signed up!” she recalls with a laugh.

When Marjorie first started in real estate, she rolled up her sleeves and got to work, making 19 sales her first year.

“Anyone can do it... Just do it! Choose where you want to build a business and do that,” Marjorie notes. “Our business is all about service — above and beyond is just where it starts, and goes up from there.”

Marjorie is a past board member and continuing fundraiser and donor for Friendship Place, a local charity helping our neighbors experiencing homelessness. She has received their Ben Cooper award for community service; is a member of the Director’s Circle at SAAM; a member of the WBC (accelerating women leaders in business); currently a board member, donor, and volunteer with



Cleveland & Woodley Park Village; and past chair of the MLS. Marjorie is also currently the top Coldwell Banker agent in D.C. and the entire Mid-Atlantic Region.

Marjorie says of her family life: “My husband Bill, we live together, work together, travel, enjoy just being together! My son Rhett is my heart! The three of us always did everything together. My family has grown over the years to include Bill’s family, my close friends, my Villagers, and many of my clients. To me, family isn’t all about blood relations, it’s where my heart is, and just keeps growing!”

Given Marjorie’s expertise and success, she has some terrific advice for new agents.

“Don’t live in a box. Be creative, have the guts to step out and be who you are, be rejected and accepted. Tell clients what they need to know, not what they want to hear. Master the listing appointment! Buyers will always come, listing well-priced properties is a skill that will always pay off. Learn how to negotiate. Find a mentor who’s been where you want to go. And get rid of the word TRY in your vocabulary. Exchange it for DO!”

Favorite quote/motto: “Be who you are; everyone else is already taken.”



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Favorite Restaurant: Olazzo in Bethesda



CYNTHIA HOWAR



Washington Fine Properties
36 years in real estate

Cynthia Howar obtained her real estate license in 1986, and has been fully engaged in real estate since 2004. She notes she was attracted to the business having grown up around it from a young age as her father and grandfather were developers of residential and commercial properties.

Cynthia is also a licensed attorney in both D.C. and California, and notes her legal background has been a major boon to her real estate career.

“My training in law has been immensely helpful in my business practice. The depth of knowledge I have brought to the table from over 30 years of diverse business and government work gives me an edge, I believe, that has been appreciated by my clients over the years.”

Prior to real estate, Cynthia dabbled in telecommunications and had the pleasure of working for Vice President Al Gore and his wife Tipper during the expansion of the internet in business, healthcare, and military applications. Prior to becoming a full-time REALTOR®, Cynthia also was a health care consultant in emerging technologies like telemedicine and health informatics.

Cynthia’s service includes being a member of the board of Visitors of Childrens’ National Medical Center for 12 years and president of the Hillandale Homeowners’ Association for nine years. She also tutored elementary students whose schools were part of the I Have a Dream Foundation.

When asked what was her most important lesson learned when she was just starting out, Cynthia notes, “The basics are the most important; communicate with your clients by phone, if necessary, and do not leave anything to chance. Stay on top of

details so that you cross the finish line of a successful transaction. Anticipate, and don’t promise what you cannot deliver.”

Cynthia recalls her most memorable deal, saying, “It was the largest transaction in D.C. in 2016. I located an embassy residence for my purchasers off-market for \$14 million. I had worked with two prior ambassadors of this country who were interested in a new residence in Massachusetts Avenue Heights.”

Cynthia notes her most important successes in life have come from being adaptable when faced with adversity. She also advises new agents to “stick to the basics” and points out “there are no shortcuts and no substitute for experience.”

“My secret sauce for success is that I return every phone call within 20 minutes and answer my phone whenever I am able,” Cynthia explains. “I never promise what I cannot deliver and am straightforward with my clients.”

When Cynthia isn’t busy fielding client phone calls, she enjoys spending time with her extended family in the D.C. area and says they are all quite close, and her son and fiancée visit often from Los Angeles.

Cynthia says she most wants to be remembered for her “reputation as an honest broker” and for having made a difference in people’s lives.

“My father and grandfather lived by the motto ‘Your word is your bond.’ There is a lot of meaning packed in that phrase,” she concludes.

JEREMY LICHTENSTEIN

RE/MAX Realty Services
36 years in real estate

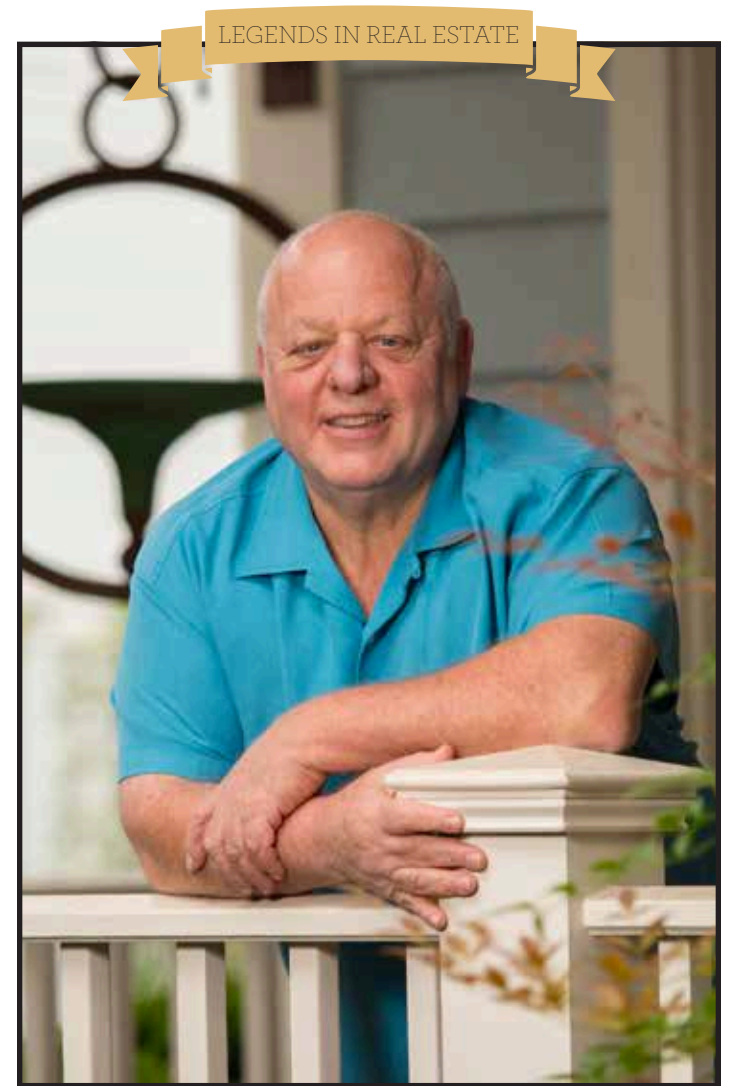
In the business now for 36 years, Jeremy Lichtenstein says he was attracted to real estate long ago, not just for the money, but also the opportunity to work in a controlled environment that isn’t subject to the whims of Mother Nature.

“Prior to becoming an agent, I ran a design/build/landscape company and was part of a group that was building houses in Montgomery County,” Jeremy explains. “And my most important lesson learned, when I started, was to be punctual and accurate on contracts. As a ‘big picture’ person, I also quickly realized that I needed to hire a competent assistant to handle the details.”

Jeremy says his most memorable deal came during a client’s particularly nasty divorce.

“I was the listing agent for the wife, while another agent was the listing agent for the husband. During one particular showing of the house, there was a loaded handgun on the couch,” Jeremy recalls. “Fortunately, the husband’s agent and I got along really well, and we sold the house ourselves without any other agent, which simplified a very difficult transaction.”

Jeremy’s contributions include starting a charitable organization, Kids In Need Distributors (KIND), in 2012 to help alleviate the problem of childhood hunger in his community. According to Jeremy, KIND is currently feeding almost 2,600 kids every weekend of the school year, and works with over 175



volunteers, over a third of whom come from the real estate industry, including agents, builders, lenders, appraisers, and settlement attorneys. Jeremy also received the NAR Good Neighbor Award in 2018 for his impressive work with KIND.

“In addition to starting, expanding, and overseeing KIND, raising my kids (now 26 and 27 years old) has been the most important and rewarding success in my life,” Jeremy remarks.

“I have knowledge and expertise about the area and the niche I carved for myself,” he adds. “Newer agents need to find a niche for themselves, whether it’s a particular neighborhood, or clientele, or type of real estate (rentals, condos, developments, etc.), and get to know everything about that niche so no one else would be better than you in that space.”

Favorite quote/motto: “Don’t find fault, find a remedy.” —Henry Ford

ELAINE KOCH

Elaine Koch Group
Long & Foster Real Estate
35 years in real estate

Elaine Koch has been in real estate since she was 18 years old, and says this business is just in her blood.

“I’ve been doing this for 35 years now, and I was always attracted to real estate, growing up in a historic home that I loved,” Elaine explains.

“My most memorable deal was a past client who got out of \$160,000 in credit card debt by selling her house and then bought her dream home!” she recalls.

Elaine notes the most important lesson she learned when she started out in the business at such a young age was the crucial importance of communication.

“You must follow up — or your client will find another agent,” she points out. “And you get out what you put in when you start. Most give up... Don’t give up!”

Elaine says her most important successes in life have been dedication and loving what she does, while revealing her secret sauce:

“Knowledge is power, and doing my homework,” she notes. “And I just want to be remembered for my integrity and respect for others, as well as my honesty.”



Elaine is involved in several local charities, including the Wells Robertson House and Boys & Girls Club of Greater Washington, and she has one daughter, Cassie, who is starting her career in Los Angeles.

Favorite quote/motto: “Treat others how you want to be treated.”

ROBY C. THOMPSON III

Long & Foster Real Estate
35 years in real estate

Roby Thompson III has been in the real estate business 35 years and counting. He says he really just “fell into the business” after his father suggested he speak with one of his college buddies about it.

Roby studied at Gettysburg College and earned a degree in political science, working for an attorney for three years before realizing divorce law wasn’t his cup of tea.

Real estate certainly seems to suit Roby, though! He was the top solo agent at Long & Foster for sales in 2015, has been the number one agent in his office for over two decades, and has been in the top 1 percent of agents across the USA for over 10 years, breaking \$60 million in sales last year alone.

“Starting out, I learned that treating people with respect and gaining their trust is essential to making them comfortable to let you lead them through one of, if not the most, important financial decisions they typically make in their lives,” Roby notes.

“I have had many deals that were memorable and many clients that have become close friends throughout the years,” Roby continues. “But my most memorable statistic is selling the Adams Inn B&B four times over a 25-year period, which is a somewhat nostalgic thing, and I am hoping to resell it again in about a year.”

Roby notes the most important successes in his life include raising three wonderful children and establishing a strong career so he could afford to provide for his wife and kids. He also shares that his secret sauce has always been going that extra mile for his clients.

“It shows them you do actually care about them and are looking out for their best interests. Answering



calls and emails immediately also gains trust. Looking them right in the eye when you speak with them and having an innate knowledge of the market and being able to respond instantly gives people a strong sense of confidence in you,” Roby explains. “And always tell the truth to your clients... Telling them what they want to hear does no good for anyone and will typically result in a falling out and loss of the client and “bad press” about you to possible future clients. I’d rather lose a listing than waste my time, and the clients’ time, by overpricing it and having them get frustrated with me.”

Roby says he really enjoys spending time with his daughter and two sons when he’s not busy at the office.

“My boys and I play golf together, and all of us love to fish and travel; I’m taking them on a three-week safari in late June and I can’t wait,” Roby says. “I have always worked by myself until about three years ago, when one of my sons started working with me. A lot of close friends who are agents have asked me many times why I don’t go to the next level of business by creating my own team or brokerage. But honestly, I’d rather go on a trip with my kids, or friends, and throw lures for fish than work myself to death. There is only so much money a guy needs, and life is too short to not balance the finer parts of living with the work of life.”

Favorite quote/motto: “Work hard and learn to not work too hard; enjoy life to its fullest but know how to balance work and play.”



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WENDY BANNER

The Banner Team
Long & Foster Real Estate
35 years in real estate

Wendy Banner got into real estate in 1987 because, she says, “I didn’t have any other plan post-college... I figured, worst case, I’d learn something about buying and selling a home.”

Originally from Pennsylvania, Wendy moved to the D.C. area after college because her twin sister went to George Washington University. “I had to look on a map to get from my first office to get back home to Silver Spring,” she admits.

“When I started out in real estate, Lois Robins was one of, if not *the*, Queen Bee of real estate agents in the Washington, D.C., market. Having the honor and privilege of listing *her* home for the family years later (and selling it for a great price too!) was a personal highlight,” she adds.

Wendy notes her secret sauce to success includes keeping good company. “I surround myself with consummate professionals who share the same values of honesty, integrity, and working in the best interest of our clients... Oh, and staging homes has really helped too!”

For those agents just starting out, she suggests, “You can overcome lack of experience with market knowledge... Learn the market, preview homes, join a team if you’re able. Find a way to be accountable every day to working in and *on* your business.”

Wendy says of her greatest triumphs, “We try to help our clients do what’s best for *them*. Sometimes, that means not buying or selling right away or leasing their home instead of selling it. Ultimately, it turns out well for us — either they call us back when they’re ready or recommend us to others. Our team knows it takes years to build an excellent reputation, and not too much to tear it down.”



“The Banner Team gives a portion of each commission to charity,” Wendy adds. “Since we’ve been tracking, we’re over \$120,000 in donations with charities too numerous to mention. I have also done various volunteer stints with the GCAAR board.”

Married to retired builder Bob Banner, the couple has two adult children, Bernadette Banner, who lives in London and has a YouTube channel on historical dress with over 1.2 million subscribers, and Dani Banner, who lives in New York City and works in the art/graphic arts business.

Favorite motto: “Trust but verify.”

Favorite quote: “Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away.” —*Maya Angelou*

KAREN ROLLINGS

The Karen Rollings Team
eXp Realty
30 years in real estate

In the business for over three decades, Karen Rollings bought her first house when she was only 20 years old and hasn’t looked back since.

“After that, I was fascinated with all aspects of real estate and got my license a few years later. I opened up my own brokerage when I was 25,” Karen says. “I was so excited about buying my first home, I wanted to help other people become homeowners. I got a BIG tax break the next year, so I bought another home. I was fascinated that you could buy houses, rent them out, and build equity while someone else paid the rent, which paid the mortgage.”

Karen is a proud member of the Lions Clubs International, the largest service organization in the world.

“My daughter says it’s like Boy Scouts for adults, but it’s an amazing worldwide organization. I belong to the Olney Lions in Maryland and I tell everyone to join,” Karen smiles. “A lot of people doing a little makes the world a better place.”

Karen says her most important lesson learned as a new agent was from her first partner, Karen Coe.

“Karen said to me, ‘If you don’t list, you won’t last.’ So I started copying what she did, and then watched what other rock stars were doing, and did what they did,” Karen recalls. “Success leaves clues.”

“My most memorable deal was an investment opportunity in 2004,” Karen continues. “A friend of mine called me and asked if I would like to buy 28 townhouses in Silver Spring. The banks were a little loosey-goosey in those days, so I said ‘yes’ and somehow qualified with just one partner, Joyce. We bought all 28 and renovated and sold them in less than six months. Those were the days, my friend!”

Karen says her most important successes have been raising her children and staying connected with her extended family.

“I have three bio kids and three bonus kids,” Karen explains. “My late husband Jerry is the father to all six and I call them my six pack. He passed away from cancer when my youngest was 7, so I had to do some serious dancing to get them all up and out. But with a lot of help from God and my amazing family, they are all launched and doing just fine.”

“My family is amazingly cool,” she adds. “I moved to Olney 30 years ago.



At one point, there were 30 of my favorite relatives living in Olney Mill in my great town of Olney, Maryland. For fun, we travel in large groups or hang out at my daughter Maggie’s house (she has the pool). My sister Sherry joined me 35 years ago, and now my son Jeremy, daughter Maggie, niece Jess, cousin Kathy, son-in-law Tony and daughter-in-law Jennifer, and 50 or so other great agents all work together selling homes. It’s a lot of fun!”

“My advice to newer agents is to follow my ‘Seven Habits to Success,’ which you can find on my website. But in a nutshell, you are in sales. Real estate is your product. You should be prospecting two hours every day until your earnings are what you want them to be,” Karen notes. “And my secret sauce is to treat everyone the way you would want to be treated. If you can’t do that, then treat everyone the way you would treat your favorite person.”

Favorite quote/motto: “Do unto others as you would want done unto you.”

NANCY SHAHIN ITTEILAG

The Itteilag Team
Washington Fine Properties
30 years in real estate

In the business of real estate since 1988, Nancy Itteilag says she initially got licensed to assist cohorts who turned to her for input on where to buy.

“So many of my friends from the U.S. Department of State and IBM were always asking my advice on where to purchase when they relocated back to D.C. from their assignments abroad or elsewhere in the U.S.,” Nancy explains. “My background includes being one of the top teams at IBM specializing in banking and associations, and many of my clients include my former colleagues and bosses at IBM.”

Nancy’s accolades include ranking number 11 on the 2021 *Washington Business Journal’s Book of Lists* for agents in the metro area; 2007’s *Wall Street Journal/RealTrends* Top 10 agents in the U.S.A., and multiple years as a top agent in the *Washingtonian Magazine*.

“My most important lesson starting out in real estate was, as in any sales-oriented business, to learn to listen well and be patient,” Nancy recalls. “For newer agents, learn to listen and learn from a team. Take responsibility for your actions and also your mistakes. Do not disparage the competition, and do not ever misrepresent a situation. Finally, if you make a mistake, own up to it.”

Nancy says she is extremely grateful and humbled by her successes and a supportive family.

“I could not have accomplished what I have without incredible guidance, knowledge, and love from my family, especially my grandparents and parents,” Nancy declares. “My grandfathers and dad were all successful because they had an intuitive and honest work ethic and an incredible understanding of people’s needs and



problems. My grandmothers and mom were equally smart in their own businesses as well.”

Nancy continues, “Our family background in the Air Force and Army taught us discipline and respect for family, friends, clients. We have tried to instill this in our children. And my husband is an amazing man, with an incredible background in commercial real estate appraisal. He is one of the most generous and caring individuals I have ever met. His circle of friends are like family.”

In closing, Nancy points out her team’s secret sauce is not a secret at all.

“We have a great team that includes my son, my daughter, and my daughter-in-law,” Nancy concludes. “And we always go above and beyond by working hard, underpromising, and then we overdeliver.”

HELEN TRYBUS

Helen Trybus Real Estate
Long & Foster Real Estate
30 years in real estate

“I fell into real estate by accident but was attracted to the relationship-focused business. There are relationships between you and your client, you and your industry colleagues, and, ultimately, you and your community,” Helen Trybus points out. “I knew I was never going to find career fulfillment sitting at a desk all day, and home selling and buying is truly a different experience every time.”

Now approaching three decades in the business, Helen says she had moved back to the U.S. after several years working in Australia after graduating from college.

“My mother was determined to keep me closer to home and set me up for some career coaching with a friend of hers who was a real estate developer in Naples, Florida. I was instantly hooked. When we moved to Kensington in 1998, I knew nothing about the D.C. area, so I sold pharmaceuticals for a while. It didn’t take me long to realize I missed real estate, so I focused on learning the local market inside and out and got back into it.”

Helen is active in the Lilabeen Foundation, which raises money for childhood brain cancer research, and says she is honored to have been awarded placement among *Washingtonian Magazine’s* Top Agents, Long & Foster’s Gold and Platinum Teams, and in her Bethesda Gateway Office as a “Top Dog” (top producer).

“I think the most important lesson I learned when I started is to listen, care, and be mindful always that you are responsible for your client’s largest financial investment. I have fun in this business, but I never forget the seriousness of that responsibility,” Helen notes, adding her secret sauce is a genuine love of meeting new people and learning their stories.

“I think that interest, combined with the love of problem solving, is what has helped me succeed,” she muses. “The transaction is never about me or the commission, it’s about keeping their best interests and goals in mind.”



“I don’t set sales goals or keep track of my numbers,” she explains. “I don’t even know my volume until the end of the year when my company releases it. I’m focused on helping my clients... There is nothing more gratifying than truly helping someone reach their end goal.”

Helen declares her twin boys, Sam and Andrew, are, hands-down, her most important life success, and she and her husband are really going to miss them when they both leave for college this fall.

“My family is my everything. My husband Tim and I have been married for 25 years, and our boys, Sam and Andrew, are 18 and seniors in high school. They are two of my favorite people, who I not only love, but like. I’m happiest when we are all together. They are off to college in the fall, but I hope that Tim and I have shown them the value of hard work, and I hope that they’ve seen how important it is to maintain balance in their lives, always look for the good in everything, and make good choices. And I thank God that I have real estate to keep me busy!”

Favorite quote/motto: “I tell my boys all the time, ‘There’s good in everything. Sometimes, you have to search a little harder, but it’s always there.’”

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JIM BASS

Jim Bass Group
Real Estate Teams
29 years in real estate

Now in his 29th year as a licensed REALTOR®, Jim Bass had a great reason for getting into the business.

“I had a very bad first homebuying experience,” Jim explains. “And I wanted to ensure no client I worked with ever had an experience like ours.”

Prior to real estate, Jim was a master electrician with his own company.

“I sold my business and got my real estate license to see if investing in a new real estate brokerage company was a good investment while I went back to college to see what I was supposed to do with my life. Then, I started assisting clients, they started referring friends and family... next thing I know, 29 years have passed!”

Jim served on the MRIS board of directors for nine years and is actively involved in many charities, including: the Mental Health Association, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Scouts, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), and Young

Life. He is also a big supporter of all resources for the Advocates for Homeless Families in Frederick County, Maryland, and has been honored with the Frederick County Philanthropy Award and the FCAR Community Service Award.

“It blows me away that we still struggle with homelessness in this day and age,” Jim remarks.

As Jim looks back on his career serving nearly 3,000 clients, he says his most important lesson learned was how “real estate is an all-consuming business — not a job, but a lifestyle,” and has made it a priority to live a balanced life. He also learned, over the years, that there is a buyer out there for every property, regardless of condition.

“Early on, I sold a house that had 14 broken windows, flaking paint *everywhere*, termites, and it also had an active spring underneath the center of the house. Not only did we find a buyer who loved it, we got it financed through VA. In that moment, I learned there is a buyer for every house. The more challenging the property, the more rewarding the experience!”

“My family, without a doubt, is my number one passion, priority, and success,” Jim continues. “Without them, I am nothing, and I never take them for granted, once I found balance early in my career after meeting Michael Gerber, author of *The E Myth*.”



Jim is also a national speaker and real estate coach helping agents grow their business with world-class systems for organization, saving “after tax” profits, and balancing their lives through gratitude-based living.

Jim has been married to his sweet wife Cheryl for 34 years, and has three children: Brittany (31), Mariah (27), and Christian (16). He notes they all love to do “anything competitive and outside!”

As Jim looks to the future of his industry, he hopes agents young and old alike will continue to be lifelong learners.

“I think it is important to remember that technology can’t replace us,” Jim points out. “However, we need to continue to improve our professionalism and cooperation. I feel the barrier of entry into our profession is too low and continuing education should be expanded and increased.”

Favorite quote/motto: “Treat people the way you want to be treated.”

VINCENT EKUBAN

EXIT Realty Enterprises
25 years in real estate

In the real estate business now for almost 25 years, Vincent Ekuban says his father had a profound influence on his decision to become an agent.

“My father, Alfred Ekuban, has been in the business for over 47 years,” Vincent explains. “He is the main reason I’m in this business today. He started in real estate back in 1974 at what was then known as Shannon and Luchs, now known as Weichert, REALTORS®.”

“I honestly never wanted to get into real estate because I saw how much my father worked, so that’s why I chose another path, initially, in home improvement,” Vincent admits. “Ultimately though, my father convinced me to get my license. My first client was a single mother with three kids who never thought she’d be able to purchase a house. We were able to assist her in buying a home with little money out of pocket, and her mortgage was less than her rent.”

Vincent recalls that emotional first settlement like it was yesterday. “The mother was crying and hugging me. It was the greatest feeling of gratification I ever experienced in business. It was then that I knew real estate was for me and why my father was so passionate about the business.”

Vincent says he has learned many important lessons as an agent, but namely, that patience is a virtue.

“I had to learn to be patient with the business and patient with my career growth. This is definitely a business you have to nurture and can’t expect immediate, long-lasting results. It’s a relationship business,” Vincent notes.



Vincent further advises new agents to always “be coachable” and “do the work” by investing in their training and education.

When Vincent isn’t busy closing deals, he enjoys spending time with his fiancée, Christina, and his two boys, Landon and Zeke. He is also actively involved with the Prince George’s County Association of REALTORS®, a current member of the Professional Standards Committee, and former chair of that committee when it was known as the Education Committee.

“I just want to be remembered for being a fantastic agent and well-referred by my clients, as well as being a great teacher to my agents,” Vincent remarks. “But my most important successes are my two sons.”

Favorite quote/motto: “No excuses, only results.”

SAMER KURAIISHI

The Samer Kuraishi Group
The ONE Street Company
23 years in real estate

Paulo Coelho once said, “Impossible is just an opinion.” And it’s no wonder Samer Kuraishi regards this as his favorite quote, considering his achievements.

Samer started in real estate when he was fresh out of high school, and has since built his company, The ONE Street Company, into a real estate juggernaut in the Washington, D.C., area.

As president and founder, Samer has led the way for over \$2.1 billion in sales since 2013. But he hasn’t always been building businesses... Samer started out working at a pizza shop for just \$4.25 an hour when he was 13 years old, a far cry from being recognized since 2015 by *RealTrends* and *The Wall Street Journal* for leading the top team in Washington, D.C., in sales volume and units sold eight years in a row, and ranking as one of the top 70 real estate teams in America in 2022! Samer was also named “Top Male Producer” by *DC Metro Real Producers* in 2020.

According to Samer, the key to success is marked by patience, persistence, personality, hustle, and grit, and he certainly lives that advice. While working as a waiter at the age of 18, he received his first real estate client, quit his job, and went on to have tremendous success — but not without his share of bumps in the road. He notes, however, that each failure taught him something unique and essential.

“Looking back, one of my biggest mistakes was actually giving up my restaurant job too soon because doing so put me under cash-flow pressures,” Samer explains. “Cash flow is king.” But Samer admits that those pressures were something he thrived on, and caused him to further develop his ability to hustle and work hard.

Samer’s success has allowed him to help others as well. Part of company revenue goes to Children’s National Hospital, Ronald McDonald House, and the Humane Society. In addition to his financial contributions, Samer prides himself on helping his agents become better and to add time back into their lives.



Regarding advice to new agents, Samer suggests, “Have money for reserves for at least six months to a year. And get on a team where you can get training, leads, and tech, so it can help you build your foundation.”

In terms of his business mindset, Samer says staying positive and focused are keys to success. “I believe in closing off all the noise and staying focused on my own goals,” he explains.

After 23 years in the business, Samer concludes: “I want to be remembered most for changing the real estate game from being mainly transactional into a more client- and agent-optimized experience built on real relationships; and for living my company’s message with my direct and honest approach and people-focused attitude: ‘We are real people doing real estate.’”

Favorite quote/motto: “Impossible is just an opinion.” —*Paulo Coelho*

HANS WYDLER

Wydler Brothers
Compass Real Estate
21 years in real estate

Hans Wydler says real estate was a perfect fit for the work he enjoys doing, and given his background in media and internet start-ups.

“I’ve always been an entrepreneur, and I like helping people,” Hans explains. “I’m a natural connector and was attracted to the idea of helping people find a home.”

Consistently ranked one of the top teams in the United States, The Wydler Brothers are also the number one Compass team in the Washington, D.C., region, and have repeatedly been voted the Best Real Estate Agent by readers of Bethesda and Arlington magazines. Perhaps one of their greatest achievements occurred when Inman News named Hans and Steve’s team the “Most Innovative Real Estate Agent in America” in 2014.

Hans has been in the business for 21 years and says his most important lesson was realizing how people think about their real estate purchase.

“People are often precise but not accurate, meaning the key decision is the home you’re purchasing needs to be a happy home for you and your family for many years to come. But people often get caught up in the details and negotiation and miss the big picture,” Hans says.

“There have been so many happy moments, but one that stands out recently is that we helped a client in her mid-80s transition out of her home of 50 years,” Hans continues. “It was a delightful



experience, and I was honored to be a part of such a big transition. I really enjoyed getting to know her, learning about her family and the history of the home, and finding a new family who will love it as much as she did.”

Hans says his most important success has been raising two amazing children with his wife Ginny, as well as building a great real estate business full of passionate, talented professionals with his brother Steve.

“To be successful as an independent real estate agent, you need to be able to pass the Dorothy Test,” Hans advises. “You need to have heart (take care of your clients first), brains (be smart and add value), courage (be able to overcome rejection), and a little bit of magic, which is really the spark and energy to generate business. The best advice I have is to do a realistic self assessment, and if you have some of these elements but not all of them, there are still opportunities to still be successful in this business, but focus your career on the areas that speak to your strengths.”

Favorite quote/motto: “Do the right thing.’ When we had our brokerage, we had this displayed on the wall, and I strive to live by it in every interaction.”

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NURIT COOMBE

The Agency DC Metro
21 years in real estate

In the real estate business for over 21 years, Nurit Coombe says she became attracted to real estate after first serving as a former soldier in the Israeli Army and building up a successful career in the defense industry.

“I have held various positions throughout my career, which has fostered my ability to think outside of the box in all facets of the job, including marketing innovation, leadership style, and troubleshooting. After the military and a brief stint with the Israeli Embassy, I began working for RAFAEL, Israel’s largest defense technology company,” Nurit explains. “I was going to school at night and on weekends and earned my master’s degree in international business management at the University of Maryland. There, I met my husband Dave, and we got married.”

Over the past two decades, Nurit has been recognized for countless real estate awards, including ranking as the number one real estate team in Montgomery County and North Bethesda, and as the number six RE/MAX team in the country.

“In 2020, I was offered the opportunity to become a managing partner of The Agency and jumped at the chance to be part of this exciting, growing company that is redefining the business of real estate. After less than two years, we are ranked number 14 among real estate teams nationwide and number one in

Maryland by The Wall Street Journal. Last year alone, we closed over \$300 million in sales,” she notes proudly.

Nurit says her most important lesson learned in real estate was to love the people she was working with.

“No matter what you do in life, I always recommend surrounding yourself with intelligent, committed, and driven individuals,” she points out. “Very early on, I recognized the importance of the people around me, so I learned to surround myself with an amazing team! I have developed a very detailed interview process for members who join our team at The Agency DC Metro, and once you get through the interview and are hired, you are practically adopted.”

Nurit says recent life successes include partnering with The Agency and bringing their global brand to the D.C. area.

“I’m honored that they chose me and my partner, Alex Martinez, to



launch their flagship East Coast office — The Agency DC Metro. They’ve allowed us to bring their global network and cutting-edge tools and technology to D.C.’s thriving real estate market.”

“This week, my partner and I launched another franchise with The Agency — The Agency Frederick. It’s amazing. The Agency has rapidly expanded its presence across the globe throughout the past year. In 2021, they launched a record-breaking 11 new franchises, making it one of the fastest-growing luxury boutique brokerages in the world.”

When Nurit isn’t busy building out The Agency’s franchise and helping clients, she says she enjoys living her life to the fullest, and notes nothing beats motherhood. “I have the most amazing family. I am a mom, and it’s the most rewarding thing in the world.”

Favorite quote/motto: “Every day is a brand new, beautiful day! I say this to myself every morning. What happened yesterday is over, and there is only the bright future to look forward to. I see every day as an opportunity to better myself and the people around me.”

LEGENDS IN REAL ESTATE

CHERYL ABRAMS

RE/MAX United Real Estate
20 years in real estate

A native Washingtonian, Cheryl Abrams has been licensed in Maryland since 2002 and in Washington, D.C., since 2006. Cheryl left her corporate job as a human resources director at a law firm in 2006 to become a full-time REALTOR® and quickly obtained her GRI, CRS, and CDPE designations.

“I’ve always had an affinity for real estate,” Cheryl recalls. “The tragedy of 9/11 made me think about the position that I held at that time and question what I envisioned for my future. It was at that moment that I knew that my value was worth more than corporate America’s ceiling.”

A partner, manager, and top-producing Realtor at RE/MAX United Real Estate in Upper Marlboro, Cheryl is also an RPAC President’s Circle member for the past several years and serves on the BrightMLS board of directors. Her service includes: PGCAR past president 2018, past board member Maryland REALTORS® and National Association of REALTORS®, serving on the Federal Financing and Fair Housing Committees at NAR, Maryland REALTORS® RPAC vice chair, Maryland RPAC Hall of Fame, Maryland REALTORS® Conference Committee vice chair, and RE/MAX’s Hall of Fame.

Cheryl holds a bachelor’s degree in business management from Trinity College, Washington, D.C., and is a 2011 graduate of the Maryland REALTORS® Leadership Academy. Now entering her 20th year in real estate, she notes how important it still is to her to continually give back to her community.

“I donate a portion from every commission earned to the Children’s Miracle Network, and I earned the title ‘Miracle Agent’ in 2021,” Cheryl remarks. “I also participate annually in my neighborhood’s Salvation Army Angel Tree program.”

Cheryl offers some terrific advice for newer agents in what can often be a rough business: “The most important lesson I learned when just starting out was to fact-check anything the agent on the other side of the transaction told me. I assumed that agents who had been in the business longer than me would know more

LEGENDS IN REAL ESTATE



than me. That was an inaccurate assumption at that time,” Cheryl explains. “And if you focus on the business, the money will follow.”

Currently residing in Prince George’s County, Cheryl is married to a retired Air Force veteran and describes her family as ‘a blended multicultural family of five children from 15 to 40 years old, with two grandchildren as well.’ “We love to celebrate family milestones together,” she adds.

Cheryl notes her secret sauce includes many ingredients: “I bring added value to the process, am responsive and timely, trustworthy, reliable, and solutions-oriented, and I mix it with a sense of connectivity and commonality, all while being my true authentic self, with a dash of ‘own it if you misstep.’”

Now entering her third decade in real estate, Cheryl says she wants to be remembered for her genuine care for humanity, sticking to protocol, service to the real estate industry, and doing her best to live by the essence of her true being. Given Cheryl’s passion for serving others, there is no doubt she’ll get her wish.

Favorite quote/motto: “The future depends on what we do in the present.” —Mahatma Gandhi

JOEL NELSON

Joel Nelson Group
KW Capital Properties
20 years in real estate

Joel Nelson says he was attracted to real estate in the late 1990s when he returned to D.C. with his wife and fell in love with Capitol Hill.

“I immediately began finding and renovating historic homes in the neighborhood,” Joel recalls. “As a REALTOR® and buyer and seller of D.C. real estate, I am passionate about the histories of our homes and architectural details. When I meet with homeowners and local developers, I am always dreaming about opportunities to enhance, preserve, or creatively adapt the historic facets of the home whenever possible, while planning updates for living and working in the 21st century.”

Joel originally moved to Washington, D.C., to attend American University, where he obtained a degree in psychology. In his first career, Joel lived in five cities throughout the Midwest and South managing group homes for residents with developmental disabilities.

Joel says he learned a lot of important lessons about real estate when he was still a teenager in Philadelphia, where he worked for several years on the maintenance crew of a classic 1912 apartment residence.

“The job taught me early how to work with building experts in every trade and how to keep residents happy with creative problem solving. These twin foundations—the physical and psychological/social— have been invaluable as an agent and consultant, as I lead people to align their competing objectives for mutual success.”

Joel has racked up more than 900 sales while serving over 700 clients in the past two decades. He is a founding member and shareholder of KW Capital Properties, and its charitable arm, the CPMG Foundation.



“It might sound cliché, but my marriage of 24 years to my wife Thonya and my efforts as a dad to Myles and Leila are the successes I hold most sacred,” Joel notes. “At work, helping clients through challenging personal and/or financial transitions to home stability feels like tremendous successes each time.”

Joel offers some sound advice to newer agents just starting out.

“My secret sauce is consistency, honesty, and trusting my gut. Be fully devoted to client service and take great pleasure in the act of fulfilling the particular mission of each client,” he suggests. “That focus will carry you through unpredictable obstacles, time delays, and other frustrations that can be part of this business. The path from meeting to closing is not always a straight line!”

Favorite quote/motto: “Declare less and inquire more.”

JUAN UMANZOR

Umanzor & Associates
Long & Foster Real Estate
20 years in real estate

Juan Umanzor has been in the real estate business for two decades and says he was initially attracted to real estate after the purchase of his first home.

“Prior to real estate, I worked in the restaurant industry — that’s where I was able to get my first job when I came to the United States, and it taught me the importance of customer service and building relationships,” Juan explains. “I became the most valuable worker at my restaurant by starting as a busboy and climbing the ladder to become the head waiter. In doing this job, I was able to purchase my first home, which piqued my interest in real estate, and the rest is history.”

Juan is president of the Salvadoran Chamber of Commerce, a nonprofit organization, board member for the Maryland Hispanic Business Conference, and a member of and volunteer with the Centro de Alfabetización en Español.

Juan notes his most important lesson, when he was just starting out, was to become his own best client.

“You must also be fearless, courageous, 100% committed, understand that you cannot rely on others for your success, and there is no other competition other than competing to become the best version of yourself,” he adds.

Being able to achieve the American dream is how Juan defines his greatest success.



“I was able to create a successful business, which has helped me create a strong foundation — not only for my wife and kids, but also everyone I have been able to help along the way, including all my team members.”

“And my secret sauce is a combination of many things,” Juan elaborates. “But it boils down to really understanding people’s needs and providing value to get the best outcome for anyone that I am helping.”

Juan’s family includes his wife, Andrea, and three precious children: Nicole, Samuel, and David. “We love to bike, travel, dine out, and watch movies at home,” Juan says. “And I just want to be remembered for giving back, being able to inspire others, and bringing the best version out of everyone I meet.”

Favorite quote/motto: “Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.” —Charles Swindoll

KYLE RICHARDS

Compass
20 years in real estate

In the business for two decades, Kyle Richards says she was drawn to real estate's flexible hours, unlimited income potential and being her own boss. She also happens to love houses!

"My dad was a Swedish immigrant who opened a successful shoe store in my small hometown of Madison, Connecticut, but he built wealth and was able to retire at 60 due to wise real estate investments. As a little girl, I would 'go cruising' and look at houses with him and he instilled in me a love of real estate and a strong work ethic," Kyle recalls.

Before real estate, Kyle worked in the banking industry and was also an international business and protocol consultant. She graduated from Yale in 1984 and became one of the youngest female vice presidents at JP Morgan Chase in her mid-twenties.

"My most interesting bank client was the World Wrestling Federation. We financed Vince McMahon, Hulk Hogan, and WrestleMania! But I didn't really love what I was doing, and the long, inflexible hours were so difficult once I had my first child," she notes. "I then ran a business and protocol consulting company and trained thousands of business leaders, young adults, and professional athletes to develop solid interpersonal skills to enhance their careers."

Kyle says she kept thinking about real estate, which was her passion and hobby, as by then she had purchased and restored several historic homes.

"Finally deciding to take the plunge into real estate was one of the best decisions I ever made! It has been a dream career," she notes. "When I was just starting out, I learned how important it was to ask other agents for advice and to keep learning new skills. I became a certified home stager in 2004 before most people had even heard of it. Some of the legends in real estate who have since retired were hard-working, honest, gracious, and never too busy to help a new agent. They were great role models."

In her spare time, Kyle enjoys volunteering for Habitat for Humanity and the Go Red for Women initiative of the Red Cross to increase women's heart health awareness.

"My mom had a massive heart attack at age 42 and thankfully was in a location with a defibrillator, which saved her life," Kyle explains. "I am also head of the Welcome Committee for the Town of Kensington and board member and chair of Special Initiatives of KTown Ladies, an organization formed to improve the lives of Kensington residents through social interaction, neighborhood sharing, and community support."

Kyle says her secret sauce is her unique skill set with a finance and marketing background, staging expertise, and ability to speak French and Spanish. "Clients tell me that they appreciate my professionalism and extensive market knowledge, combined with my energy and easygoing, calming personality. The greatest compliment is when they tell me they are really going to miss me after settlement!" she beams.

LEGENDS IN REAL ESTATE



"My most important success in life is raising kind children. Another success has been the true friendships I have made, nurtured, and maintain today. What really sustains us in life is not things we have but the relationships we form," Kyle points out. "To be loved, understood, and accepted, despite our flaws, by true friends are the most life-fulfilling experiences that will be treasured far more than financial or career success. I also appreciate my many good friends in real estate, and I want to be remembered as being a good mother and a good friend."

Kyle has been married to her husband Ken for 35 years and has two wonderful sons, Spencer (32) and Austin (30). Her family loves to travel and is looking forward to a family trip to Sweden that was postponed two years ago.

Favorite quote/motto: "Today is a good day for a good day!"

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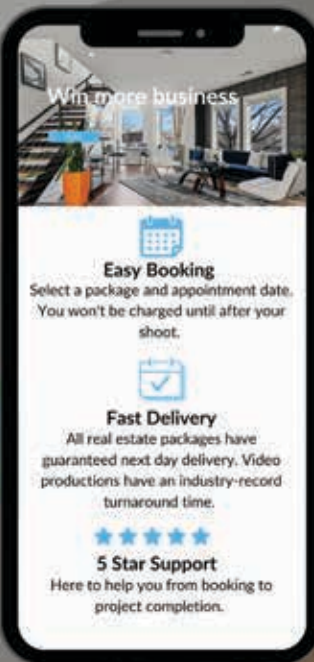
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By Shauna Osborne

Clever Ways to Cut Your Grocery Bill

American families are feeling the crunch at the grocery checkout.

According to CNBC, food prepared at home now costs about 10% more than it did at this time last year, with food prices continuing to rise month-over-month due to supply-chain issues, delayed harvests, and labor costs. Elevated food spending combined with concurrently rising gas and housing costs means shoppers must find ways to pinch pennies on budgets still impacted (for many) by the pandemic. Here are a few ways consumers can save — while still maintaining healthy eating goals — on grocery bills in the coming months.

- **Meal planning/shopping with a list:** Spend time mapping out the meals you plan to make in the next week or two, and familiarizing yourself with what's already in your kitchen. Then, make a shopping list ... and stick to it! According to the FDA, Americans waste a shameful 30% or more of the food we purchase each year. Shopping with a list discourages impulse purchases and reduces food waste, meal-planning stress, and shopping time.
- **Buying local:** The local goods available at farmers' markets, CSAs, and other home-grown venues is often much fresher, less wasteful, and cheaper than purchasing from a conventional grocery store. Add in the good karma of supporting your community farmers, and what's not to love?
- **Using store brands:** Generic and private label goods are almost always the same quality as name brands, just with different packaging ... and a lower price. In

- fact, name and store brands are usually manufactured by the same company, with a markup on the name brand to pay for advertising!
- **Stocking up during sales:** Consider the long game here, as grocery prices aren't expected to drop any time soon. Know which nonperishable items your family consumes most, and when you see a sale, stock up.
- **Reducing dairy and meat:** Dairy and meat items have leapt in price by almost 15% since last year and comprise the two most expensive food categories on a per-calorie basis. Here, small changes make a big difference: going meat-free for one or two meals per week; opting for cheaper meats and/or smaller portions for some meals; or incorporating plant-based options like beans and tofu, which are packed with protein and fiber and are better for your health, too.



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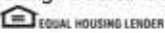
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RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL
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Teams and Individuals Closed Data from January 1 to June 30, 2022

RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL
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TOP 250 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed Data from January 1 to June 30, 2022

RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELL- ING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL
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RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL
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