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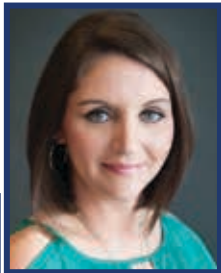
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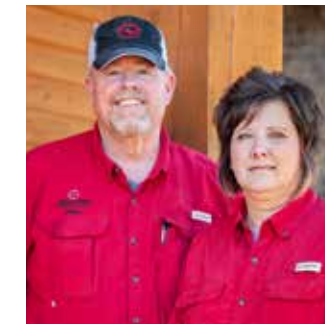
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After some research, we have condensed networking into "Three Easy Steps to Successful Networking" that will benefit and grow your business:

1. Identify the people who will help you grow your career and business. *We do that for you!* We have identified the top 300+ REALTORS® in Central Mississippi and the various industry leaders (our ad partners) who help get them to the closing table.

2. Look for opportunities to network. *We provide that for you!* We invite the top 300+ REALTORS® and our Ad Partners to Social

Nights to meet and get to know one another on a personal and professional level. We also invite just a dozen of these same professionals to our monthly Magazine Reveal Parties to provide a more intimate setting for networking.

3. Stay connected to those you meet. We help you do that! Our events are ongoing, you just have to come and you will have the opportunity to see those you have met and meet new people every time! Our monthly publication has a list of our Preferred Partners with their contact information so that you can reach out to them anytime. It also has feature articles that let you get to know the top-producing REALTORS® and Ad Partners even better. Our social media celebrates and promotes those in the industry on a daily basis.

So let's network! Our next Social Night is Tuesday, March 22nd, at Babalu in Fondren! Follow us on Facebook and Instagram! Enjoy reading our publication in print or online at Issuu.com!



We hope to see you soon!

Dees

Contact us to recommend REALTORS® to features, article ideas, preferred partner prospects or just to chat!

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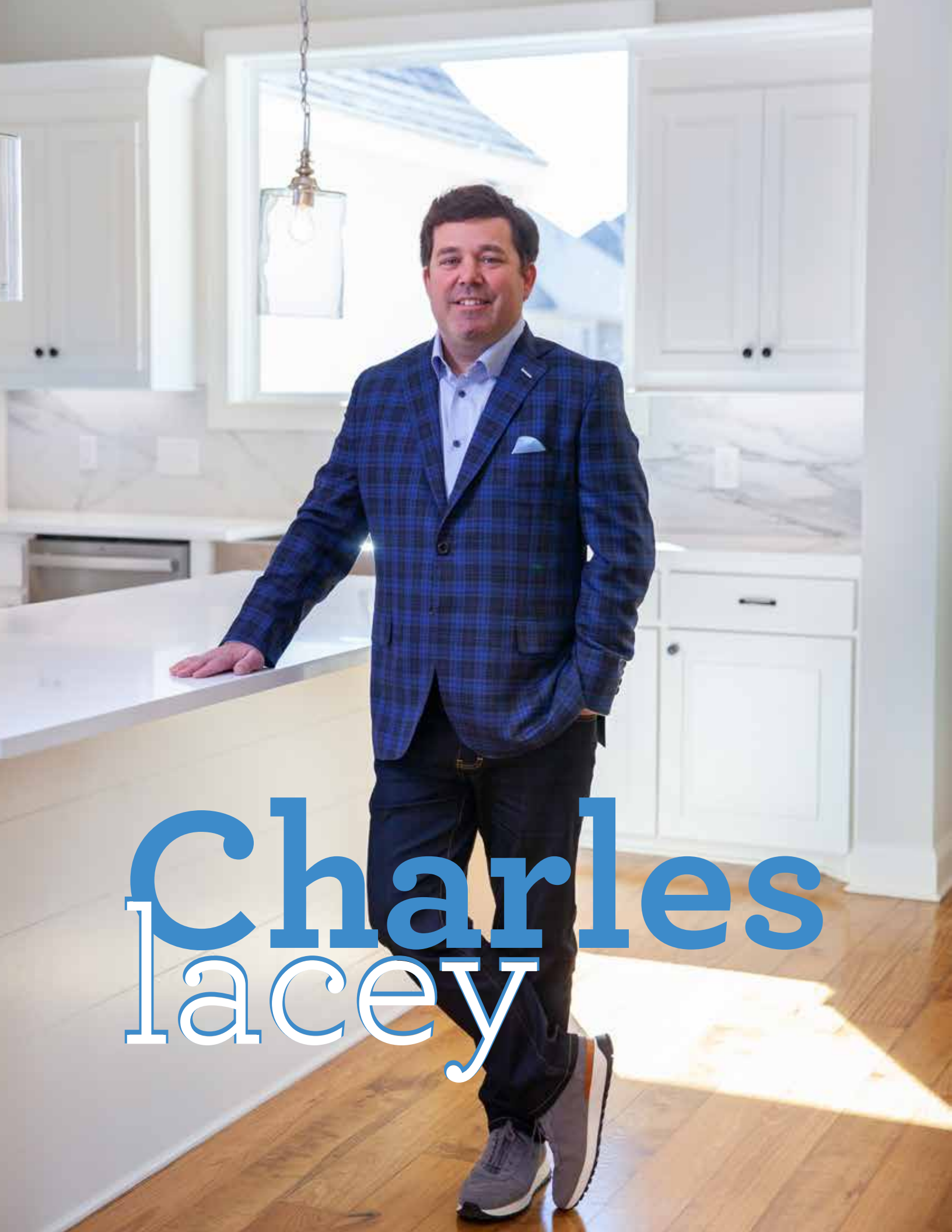


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Charles Lacey

▶ top producer

Written by Susan Marquez. Photography by Abe Draper Photography.

Second Time Around in Real Estate Has Been the Charm for Charles Lacey

When Charles Lacey first began selling real estate in the metro Jackson area, he knew no one in town. "I had no circle of influence to draw upon," he says. "I didn't do well."



Charles grew up in Thomastown, Mississippi, where he attended Leake Academy. After graduating high school, he attended Mississippi State, and he admits he was not ready for college life. After a year and a half, he realized he needed a change of direction. "My parents had just moved to Patrick Farms in Pearl, and I moved back in with them and attended Hinds Community College." Still not content with sitting in a classroom, Charles pulled out of school and went to work for a Cingular Wireless agent selling wireless telephone service from a kiosk in Metrocenter Mall. When a position came open with another company at Northpark Mall, Charles made the move.



"That was a good opportunity for me to examine what I really wanted in life. I knew I wanted more, and I began thinking about what I was able to do with the education I had. I noticed that people who sold real estate seemed to be successful, so I looked into that field of work."



Charles took the real estate course and got his license in 2003. He went to work at Realty Executives, then Century21, where he met Lee Garland. "I got to know Lee well. He became a mentor to me, but still, I struggled." Charles left the real estate business altogether and went to work with his father. "My father and grandfather are both entrepreneurs," he says. "My grandfather had convenience stores and a trucking company. My father was a cross-country driver and he owned AAA Septic Systems, where I worked for eight years." Charles realized his dad was successful and had a good life. But Charles had an itch that needed to be scratched. "I knew that for us to make more money, we needed the company to grow."

Charles ended up going back to college, where he participated in the accelerated degree program at Mississippi College. "I went two nights a week, usually until 10:00 at night, for two years," he says. That time, Charles excelled in his college classes. "I was more mature, and I was ready to get my degree." Of course, having

...

•••

the encouragement of his girlfriend and family helped. “She was patient with me, because for two years, we really couldn’t do much. I was either in class or studying. But she stuck with me and became my wife.”



In 2015, Charles began listening to podcasts about real estate and learned lessons he needed to make a go of it in the business. “I listened to podcasts by top producers and podcasts about group teams. I knew I wanted to get back in and felt that being part of a team would be my best bet. I had let my license go, so I called the Real Estate Commission to see what I needed to do to get it renewed. I had to pass the state boards again, so I began studying.” Charles knew the fundamentals well. He passed the exam the first time out in 2003, and the second time in 2015.

Charles joined Lee Garland and Rita Jensen’s team. “I pursued that hard,” he recalls. “I ran into Lee in a convenience store and told him what I wanted to do, and he told me to come talk to him. When I showed up at his office, he took out a pen and told me to sell him the pen. I blew it, and I was sure he wouldn’t want me. Lee said, ‘Not so fast,’ and he had me take an assessment to determine my strengths and weaknesses. As it turns out, money was a big motivator for me, which he liked. He hired me and told me he knew I’d figure it out.” Money was a motivator for Charles, who wanted to provide a good life for his growing family.



In his first year on the team, Charles serviced 24 to 26 clients. “It got bigger every year until I felt I had outgrown the team concept.” In 2019, he went out on his own at Keller-Williams. “The first few months were rough,” recalls Charles. “I knew for me to grow something, I needed to change. In January 2020, I hired a marketing company.” Then Covid hit. “I didn’t know how that would affect my business.” If only Charles had known what was to come. “By May 1st, the flood gates opened up!”

In 2020, Charles did \$6 million in business and more than doubled that last year. “It’s been life-changing for our family. My wife, Jenny, slowly transitioned from being a full-time nurse to part time, to PRN.”



“

I did a lot of things that took a lot of faith.
GOD HAS TAKEN CARE OF ME.

•••

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The timing was great because with Covid, Jenny soon became a stay-at-home mom and began homeschooling their oldest son, Paxton (8), while also staying home with younger son, Ozzy (2).

“Paxton has excelled in that environment,” says Charles. “He loves to read. We keep him involved in activities such as Taekwondo, art classes, field trips with other homeschooled kids and Awana. We have several homeschooled kids in our neighborhood that just make it an awesome community.”

The Laceys moved to Madison in 2021, and Charles moved to EXP Real Estate. “That has opened many doors and opportunities for me,” he says. “For one thing, it will allow me to add a license to sell properties in other states if I want to.” The team approach still intrigues Charles. “I must get a broker’s license to have my own team,” he says.

When not working or being a dad to his two sons, Charles says he and Jenny enjoy traveling. “We haven’t done much of that since Covid began, but we are hoping we feel

comfortable enough to travel again soon.” Staying home hasn’t been so bad, as Charles is a self-proclaimed “foodie,” who loves to eat tasty food. “I also love watching TV. I watch a lot of streaming shows such as *Ozark* and *Versailles*. I also love movies and football, more college than NFL, but I enjoy watching them both.”

Charles credits his success in real estate to the support of his family and his faith in God. “I did a lot of things that took a lot of faith. God has taken care of me.”



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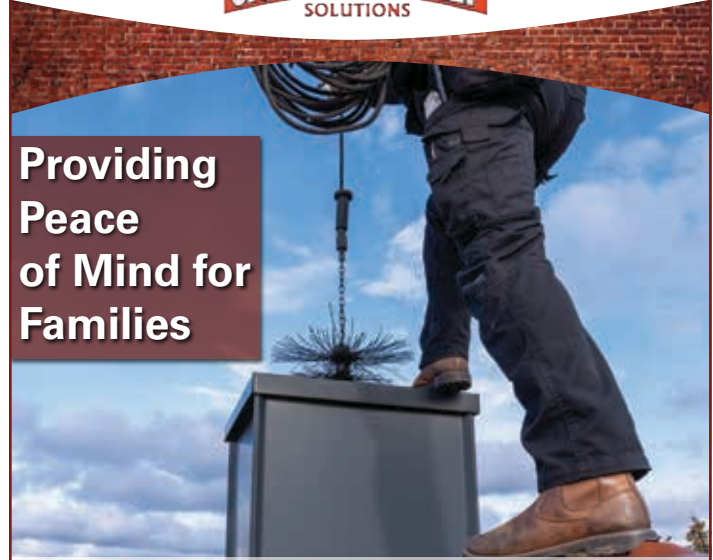
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LeKeita Braddy has always been good with numbers. She grew up in Jackson, and after graduating from Callaway High School, she enrolled in Mississippi College where she majored in accounting. She even earned a master’s degree in accounting. “I thought I’d end up being a CPA somewhere,” she says.

After college, LeKeita got jobs in the accounting field. She married her high-school sweetheart, and the couple purchased their first home in 2012. “My husband, Robert, has always been savvy when it comes to business transactions,” says LeKeita. “I took two real estate courses when in college because I wanted to make my electives count. That made me eligible to take the real estate exam. I knew it was something I could do one day.”

LeKeita got her real estate license in 2017, and in 2019 she took the broker’s exam and opened her own company, Bradmoore Realty. “I started my real estate career at a boutique brokerage and liked it,” she says. “It helped me know how I wanted my company to be.” Bradmoore Realty has a strong team of agents that work great together. “I like being a broker. It gives me the opportunity to help guide others in their career which is extremely important when it comes to successfully maneuvering the real estate industry.”

The first thing LeKeita says she learned when she went into real estate was everything she didn’t know. “I learned that when you don’t know, you ask. That’s the only way to get answers. My husband’s expertise in real estate investments helps me. He is my number one supporter and is always there to reassure me and that gives me the confidence I need.” LeKeita admits that real estate is not an easy profession, “but success will always follow when you treat people the way you want to be treated.”





Each real estate transaction is different, which is what makes the profession interesting for LeKeita. “I try to pick up on what a client needs as quickly as possible,” she says. “I try to look through their eyes. And I don’t look at it as just another transaction. I am building relationships with

my clients. They don’t ever want to think you have forgotten about them, so I focus on communicating with them often, being genuine.” Walking her clients through each step of the process is important for LeKeita. “I’ve built relationships I feel will last forever and that’s priceless. It’s a great affirmation for me when I get a call from a client a couple of years down the road when they’re ready to make another move. And the ultimate compliment is when I get a referral from a client.”

LeKeita enjoys spending time with her husband and daughter. “My husband and I like to look at homes for sale in different markets. He invests in real estate properties.” Their daughter, Raina, is “3 going on 30. She keeps us busy. She thinks she is a

mini-REALTOR®. She asks me all the time if I’m going on a showing.” Striking that perfect work-life balance is always a struggle for a working wife and mother. “There is always something to do,” she says, but prioritizing helps a lot.”

When they’re not working, the Braddys enjoy traveling. “Our daughter has probably traveled more in her lifetime than both of us,” laughs LeKeita. “Making memories together that we can cherish is very important to us as a family.”





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JOHN ABEL

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Written by Susan Marquez. Photography by Abe Draper Photography.

John Abel's journey to owning his own pest control company has been a winding road. Born in Grenada, his father's role as a minister led his family all over the state. "We never lived in any one place very long," he laughs. After graduating from Warren Central High School in Vicksburg, John joined the military, serving in the Army for seven years.

"I moved to Yazoo City after my discharge from the Army because that's where my dad was living at the time," says John. "I became a police officer there and moved up to investigator before leaving after seven years to join Mississippi Chemical Corporation in security." After eight years, the company was restructured and downsized, and John's position there was eliminated.

"I was looking for a job, and a friend told me about EcoLab, a national pest control company that services commercial buildings." John worked his way up the ladder at EcoLab, becoming a regional manager before deciding to start his own pest control business in 2016.

Today he owns and operates Abel's Premier Pest, based in Flora. The company services homes and businesses in Yazoo, Madison, Hinds and Rankin counties. "I joined BNI to network and build my business. We started with two accounts, and now we service over 400 homes." John's cousin, Elijah Abel, recently came on board as a partner in the business after retiring from the Postal Service. "Elijah is also retired military," says John. "He served six years in the Army, so we are a veteran-owned business." After working at First Baptist Church in Madison for 20 years, John's wife, Angie, joined the business eight months ago. Elijah's wife, Melody, has joined Angie in the company's office. "They run the office,



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says he has a database of all the closing attorneys in the area that he has built over the years. “It’s not unusual for us to do 10 to 15, sometimes even 20 WDI reports in a week.”

Fighting unwanted pests comes naturally to John, who has a fighting spirit gained, perhaps, from the time he spent taking Taekwondo and teaching it. “I was at Jason Griffin’s Taekwondo Academy for 15 years,” says John. “Jason and I are good friends.”

John and Angie have been married for 32 years. “We met in Yazoo City,” he says. The couple has two daughters, Amber and Laura, who both work at BankPlus. They live in Madison, which is the place John has lived the longest. “I’ve been in Madison off and on for 22 years.” When he has time, John enjoys hunting and fishing as well as tinkering on old cars. “Regular guy stuff,” he laughs.

Now that their daughters are grown, John says he and Angie are starting to travel more. “I told her going into

our 30th anniversary that I would take her anywhere in the world, and she wanted to go to New York City at Christmas, so we went. It was Angie’s first plane ride. We stayed at Times Square and saw all the sights.” Their next trip was further away. “We went on a tour of Italy. It was an amazing trip, but it was cram-packed every day. We experienced a lot on that trip.”



handling scheduling, accounts payable and receivable, payroll and more so that Elijah and I can focus on customers in the field.”

A one-stop pest control shop, Abel’s Premier Pest can manage everything from insects and spiders to wildlife including bats, squirrels, mice, snakes and more. “If we can’t manage it ourselves, we will find someone who can,” says John. The company also does termite treatments and wood damage insect inspections and reports. “We still do WDI inspections. That means we are tied to that report for ninety days.” John says they go in and do a comprehensive visual inspection, which gives the homeowner confidence that their home is termite-free. If termites are found, Abel’s Premier Pest can get rid of them and treat the home to protect it in the future.

“That’s important to Realtors®,” John says. “I do a lot of work for Realtors® and they like that we are able to take care of problems in a timely manner. That’s important when they are counting on me for a closing.” John



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nell WYATT

HAS BUILT A REPUTATION OF EXCELLENCE

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

After a career in teaching, which she loved, Nell Wyatt made a career move to real estate. It wasn't something she planned on, but when the opportunity to take the real estate course presented itself, Nell realized she found her calling.

Raised in Lambert, Mississippi, Nell went to Southern Miss after graduating from Lambert High School, then transferred to Mississippi State where she graduated. She got her master's in English at Southern, then went on to teach for 16 years. "I taught at Madison-Ridgeland Academy for 10 years. I taught 10th and 12th grade English and was head of the English department at the school."

Nell had a child, and the family spent the summers traveling. One day, her mother, Bea Haynes, called and said she was taking the real estate course at Northwest Community College in Senatobia. "Back then it was a two-week deal," Nell explains. "She wanted me to take it at the same time because she knew I knew how to study." Nell took the course in Jackson. She and her mother studied together, took the test together, and they both passed. Her mother never did anything with it. But a friend mentioned to Nell that Sylvia Wright would sponsor her.

Nell joined Sylvia Wright Real Estate in 1980. "I did some real estate on the side," recalls Nell, "but I continued to teach. Each year, my headmaster begged me to give him one more year. After three years, I felt confident enough to give real estate a go full time, and he gave me his blessing to go." It was a little frightening for Nell, who was giving up a salary and benefits for a job that was commission only. But that was just the motivation she needed to be a success in real estate.



“

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When Nell joined Sylvia Wright Real Estate, it was a small, but highly reputable, local company. A few years later, it became the first Coldwell Banker franchise office in the state. Sylvia became not only Nell's mentor but her close friend. When Sylvia passed away suddenly in 1995, Nell took on the leadership role. She already had her broker's license. "I was happy to be top producer in that company. Sylvia's

death rocked my world. It was a tough decision, but I knew I could help continue the company's wonderful legacy," she says. Nell bought the company, and her desire was to emulate Sylvia and continue with her goals. When the franchise was up, Nell chose to be independent.

Nell Wyatt Real Estate is located on Northpark Drive in Ridgeland. It is where she trains and mentors agents.



“Training is important to me – I was a teacher, after all. I encourage my agents to take classes, either on the computer or in the classroom, to strengthen their knowledge and skills. And I’m on call all the time. My agents know to call me and ask before they do something, so we can make sure everything is done right.

That’s my reputation and because of that, I have agents who have stayed with me for many years. My agents and staff are like my family.” Some of Nell’s agents have left over the years to form their own companies. “That makes me so proud.”

Nell owns her company with her husband, Vic Wyatt, who has had a

43-year career in real estate and has owned several of his own companies in Clinton. “He became REALTOR® Emeritus in 2018,” says Nell.

Since her start in real estate in 1980, Nell has seen major changes in the way REALTORS® do business. Some things have made her job easier, but not all changes are good in Nell’s

opinion. “Computers have been great, but nowadays so many agents do everything by phone or computer. Some have never met their clients face-to-face! Real estate is a relationship business. I am accustomed to meeting with my clients, getting to know them, and learning their desires and needs. I sit with them to explain every document they have to sign,

going over them section by section. Now folks use DocuSign. A real estate transaction is always a monumental financial decision, and we take that responsibility to heart. That’s why our clients turn to us, for our knowledge and market expertise.”

Nell has been recognized for her work with professional accolades from



her industry. In 2015, she was awarded the Mississippi Association of REALTORS® Political Action Committee Hall of Fame, Central Mississippi REALTOR® of the Year, and the REALTOR® of the Year for the State of Mississippi. She has several designations, including Accredited Buyers Representative, Certified Corporate Relocation Specialist, Certified Residential Specialist, Certified Negotiating Specialist, and International Property Specialist. “I have had a good life in real estate,” Nell says. “I am still learning every day, and I love it.”

When she isn't busy with her real estate business, Nell says she and her husband love to go to movies and concerts. “Covid has really caused that to slow down, but we hope to do more of that in the future. The last big concert we went to was to see Michael Bublé in Nashville.” An avid reader, Nell is a member of her neighborhood book club. “I'm also renewing my interest in playing bridge, which I learned along with my mother when I was in high school.” Nell played bridge throughout college and in her early years of teaching. She and Vic collectively have three children, and they are “Papa Vic” and “Nae Nae” to four grandchildren. Vic and Nell are members of Madison United Methodist Church, where they have attended for “25 years or so.” The couple resides in Bridgewater in Ridgeland.

“ I HAVE HAD A GOOD LIFE IN REAL ESTATE. I AM STILL LEARNING EVERY DAY, AND I LOVE IT.”





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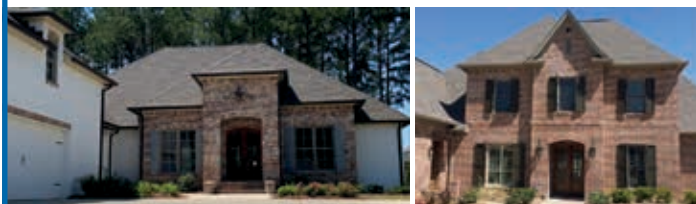
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