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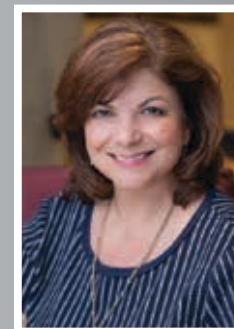
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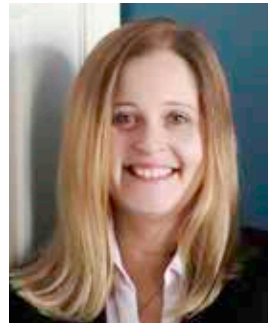
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Favorite Restaurant: Olazzo in Bethesda



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If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email Wendy@kristinbrindley.com.

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FAQ

By Kristin Brindley, Publisher

ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE



Ever since we launched *DC Metro Real Producers* five years ago, I have heard some of the same questions from many

of you. I figured it would be most efficient to publish the answers here in case more of you had the same questions. Remember, my door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100-percent designed to be your voice!

this: you email us at wendy@kristinbrindley.com with the subject "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)." Please explain why you are nominating them to be featured. It could be that they have an amazing story that needs to be told, perhaps they overcame extreme obstacles, they are an exceptional leader, have the best customer service, or they give back to the community in a big way, etc. The next step is an interview with us to ensure it's a good fit. If all works out, then we put the wheels in motion for our writer to conduct an interview and write the article, and for our photographers to schedule a photo shoot.

Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The top 500 agents in the D.C. Metro area. We pull the MLS numbers each year (by volume) in the Greater D.C. Metro Area: Washington, D.C.; Montgomery County, Maryland; FCAAR; and PGCAAR. We cut off the list at #500, and the next year's distribution is born. We did this again in January, based on the new top 500 agents in sales volume for 2021. So we have a few new top producers who have joined us – and everyone from last year's top 500 is still with us. Based on 2021's list, the minimum production level for our group is \$19.6 million. The list will reset again at the end of 2022 for the following year and continue to update annually.

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

A: It's really simple — every feature you see has first been nominated. You can nominate other Realtors (or yourselves!), affiliates, brokers, owners, and office leaders can nominate realtors, as well. We will consider anyone brought to our attention because we don't know everyone's stories, so we need your help to learn about them. A nomination currently looks like

Q: WHAT DOES IT COST A REALTOR/TEAM TO BE FEATURED?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing, my friends, so nominate away!

Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

A: Anyone listed as a "preferred partner" in the front of the magazine is part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our quarterly events, and be part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have personally referred every single preferred partner you see in here. We won't even take a meeting with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network not only of the best Realtors in the area but the best affiliates, as well, so we can all grow stronger together.

Q: HOW CAN I REFER A PREFERRED PARTNER?

A: If you know and want to recommend a local business that works with top Realtors, please email me at kristin@kristinbrindley.com, and let us know!

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▶ publisher's note

WELCOME, NEW TOP 500 REAL PRODUCERS!



Dear REALTORS® and valued Partners,

Breaking news alert ... *DC Metro Real Producers* is turning 5 years old this month!!!! (Yes, I thought this wonderful news appropriately deserved five exclamation points.)

And although our *Real Producers* cover changes each month, our mission remains exactly the same — to connect, elevate, and inspire industry professionals such as yourselves all over the D.C. metro area. Receiving this publication is a badge of honor as it means you are in the top 500 (top 2 percent) of your industry.

We remain forever grateful for our esteemed partners; without their generous participation in our community, neither our magazine nor our countless fun events over these past five years would have ever been possible! Even being featured is free of charge because of our amazing partners. We also appreciate all the *Real Producers* out there who have referred these top-notch vendors to us. Because these partners have been referred and vetted by *Real Producers* like yourself, everyone wins!

Our *Real Producers* are wonderful people who do great work in real estate and in our communities. Do you know an amazing agent who you'd love to see featured in the magazine? We are taking nominations for the rest of this year right now! Nominate in the private Facebook group, by email, text, or call us.

Check out our Save-the-Date on page 17 as well. We look forward to seeing many of you soon at one of our three upcoming large events! We also added four smaller, indoor/outdoor and virtual events. We look forward to seeing many of you soon at one of our upcoming signature events!

Reflections from 2021...

If 2020 made us all more resilient, 2021 only hardened this resolve to overcome any obstacle! I'm so grateful to be connected with the best Realtors and partners in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. We expanded to Richmond, Virginia, in 2021! This year, we are opening three more locations.

The world has slowly begun to open up again, and the pandemic has only reinforced priorities for what really matters. I am blessed to be surrounded by so many great minds in my life — from business to personal to spiritual and everything in between.

And as much as our community loves and enjoys the physical publication, we produce monthly, one of the main attractions to our platform is our live events. For those of you who have attended one, you have had the pleasure to experience firsthand what I mean. The caliber of people in the room, the camaraderie built, and the relationships that are forged are all ingredients that keep people anticipating the next event.

As humans, we are social creatures, and being able to reconnect again in person has felt like a breath of much-needed fresh air as we are now able to thrive again instead of simply survive. I am especially thankful we were able to safely hold our large *Real Producers* gathering this past fall and watch The Washington Football Team win on their home turf in a stadium filled with jubilant, cheering fans! It was magical.

It is our tight-knit community of both Realtors and partners that has kept me fueled over the past two years. I still remember all the flak I received back in

early 2017 for the vision of launching this magazine ... the mental battle, the friction of fighting off negative comments, etc.



Thank God I didn't listen to all the naysayers! I knew that anything with this much adversity early on would reap so many benefits down the road, and I was inspired to forge ahead by this vision of community. Thank you all for being a part of this journey with me, and a special thank you to my family and to my hard-working team who have helped make *DC Metro Real Producers* a huge success over the last five years! I appreciate you all immensely and intensely.

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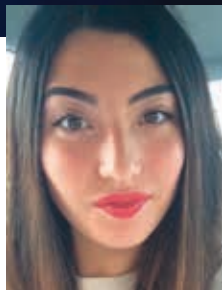
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MONIQUE VAN BLARICOM
RLAH Real Estate

I am from the suburbs of Chicago — they dye the river green. They take boats and run back and forth with safe dyes over hours of time, and the river stays green for a few days.



MEGAN MEEKIN
Compass

I used to be a bartender and I worked at The Barking Dog in Bethesda. The owner was crazy Irish and served green beer all day. The Bethesda Fire Squad would come and do a full bagpipe thing on St. Patty's Day.



ISAIAH HAZWARD
Keller Williams Capital Properties

Best luck ever: I beat out 30 offers and won a contract.



KAREN ROLLINGS
eXp Realty

Best luck ever: a buddy of mine said we could buy 28 townhouses, and we did. We fixed them and flipped them in six months. Right place, right time.



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I don't see things as luck. Hard work pays off. Everything is fate.



JENNIFER KNOLL
Compass

When I first moved to D.C. in 1997 to work as a journalist, I ended up renting a condo. After a few years, my landlord offered me the opportunity to buy it. I did. A few years later, I was ready to sell it and decided to get my real estate license and do it myself. I passed the tests and became an agent, and then listed my place for sale. My open house was flooded with people, many who asked if I could be their agent. I agreed and that is how I ended up switching from a career as a journalist to being an agent. If I hadn't rented that first condo from a landlord that wanted to sell, I'd probably be in a different career today. I love my job, so what can be luckier than that?



DELANEY IRENE BURGESS
RE/MAX United Real Estate

When I was going from assistant to full-time REALTOR®, the builder I worked for gave me a position at a model home. That was the luckiest moment because I didn't have to go right to straight commission.



MELINDA ESTRIDGE
Long & Foster Real Estate

About St. Patrick's Day ... I love the holiday, as my husband Bob O'Toole is Irish and just received dual citizenship. We went to Dublin for St. Patrick's Day. Naturally, they celebrate in a big way. There is a huge parade and there is traditional Irish music being played on the streets and in the pubs. It was really a wonderful experience. Guinness reigns!



YVES JEAN BAPTISTE
Keller Williams Realty

Anytime I think of luck, this quote from the Roman philosopher Seneca comes to mind: "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." One time where I do feel a bit lucky was in January 2020, when I was blessed with an opportunity to go on a two-week trip to the Philippines for a good friend's wedding. What ensued was the greatest trip of my life. The Philippines is so rich in culture. In addition, the time I got to spend with my friends was priceless. We went island hopping, cliff diving, snorkeling, rented a private boat ... every day was one adventure after another in a tropical paradise. By the end of the trip, two weeks didn't feel long enough. I feel so lucky that I was able to say yes to that trip. I have a travel fund stocked year-round for vacations ... all I needed was the opportunity of a lifetime.



TINA DEL CASALE
Sandy Spring Bank

My best St Patrick Day ever was the day I adopted my girls, Jezebel and Samantha, the sweetest kittens you've ever seen. They were huddled under the sofa the first day, but by day 2, they were racing up and down the stairs ... and our house was never the same.



SUSAN SONNESYN BROOKS
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words by wade

By Wade Vander Molen



How to Reach *thousands* with Your Real Estate Blog!

Working with REALTORS® throughout Northern Virginia over the past nine years, I get asked a lot of questions about technology, blogging, websites, and more. Having an online presence is important, and there is no better way than an informative blog on your real estate website. It's a huge tool, especially for those agents who understand why creating effective content results in online leads, clients, business, and commissions.

Why Do I Need a Blog?

A blog is a HUB or an online platform that allows you to broadcast your vast real estate knowledge, what you do, how you do it, and why someone should work with you. A blog is where you get to “show off” and tell the world about your value proposition. A blog also lives forever online, just waiting to be discovered by your ideal client — especially those prospects searching for answers to

real estate-related questions on Google, Yahoo, and Bing. Your blog also can be shared on social media channels for greater reach. When this content is shared and syndicated, it has the power to reach thousands of people!

Having the ability to grow viewership and an interested audience is important. When your blog is updated with new content, the subscribers receive an email with your content. It keeps you

fresh, relevant, and valuable to clients and future clients.

Discoverability

Imagine having hundreds of ways to be discovered online 24/7. If you have a hundred blog posts about different topics, that means you more than likely answered a hundred different real estate-related questions or covered topics. Every new blog post with the proper “meta-tags” can be several added pages of indexable content to the search engines. If you also shoot and post videos on YouTube (Google owns YouTube), that factor multiplies. This is where it gets fun.

Imagine having people from around the country either reading or watching the content you created — all the time. It is the perpetual wheel of real estate marketing. Most agents don't take these steps to grow this type of exposure, which is exactly why you should.

Top Blogging Tips

Write your blog on a website you own, like a custom WordPress site. The SEO plugins and abilities are extremely powerful. Set a schedule and post content on a regular basis. This means, once a week, but more often is better as you begin. Most of the work is in the front because you need to build up your portfolio of content. Syndicate your blog to social media channels, email to your database, and more.

Once you start to grow an audience, *tell them to subscribe to your blog and why they should*. Make sure your blog is full of educational content that makes your target audience smarter and adds value to you. Boring content is death. Lastly, take the time to learn some SEO (search engine optimization) basics because as you are spending the time to create the content, it makes sense to learn basic steps to have it live on the top of a Google search result. Happy blogging!



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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marketing matters

By Todd Lebowitz

2. Use a List Manager

Successful agents will use a list manager for their direct-mail campaigns. A list manager will allow you to keep track of who you're mailing, create mailing lists for your targeted campaigns, and organize your contacts.

List managers will also make it easier to send direct-mail campaigns to the same areas you've sent them before, helping you keep your marketing consistent.

3. Create a Well-Rounded Marketing Strategy

Direct mail is a handy tool for real estate marketing. Round out your campaigns by including email marketing and social media aspects to make them even more helpful. Reaching out to your clients in different ways will help keep them engaged.

4. Stay Connected

Part of effective communication is consistency and creating a personal connection. Stay in touch with past clients with newsletters or emails. Clients who may not be looking to buy or sell at the moment will still be interested in local news, community updates, and the current state of the real estate market.

Another benefit of staying connected with past clients is referrals. When someone is able to trust you, they feel confident when recommending you to a friend, colleague, or family member who might be looking for a real estate agent.



With more than 25 years of experience, Todd Lebowitz is CEO and Owner at My Marketing Matters, which he runs with his business partner

Ram Devaguptapu. Together, they have grown the company to be a recognized leader in real estate marketing with more than 20,000 clients locally, regionally, and nationwide.

ABOUT MY MARKETING MATTERS

Since 1982, My Marketing Matters (MMM) has helped clients create and implement effective marketing solutions to reach their business goals. MMM is a full-service real estate marketing firm located in Gaithersburg, Maryland, with clients across the Mid-Atlantic region and nationwide. MMM has grown to be a leading marketing vendor offering innovative print products and custom, on-demand marketing materials through their design portal.

How to Reach Clients MORE EFFECTIVELY

Reaching your clients effectively can be tricky but is essential for expanding your reach and growing your sphere of influence. There are many ways to reach your clients, including email marketing, social media, and direct-mail campaigns.

However, you must make sure these connections are influential.

Here are some of the best ways to reach your clients more effectively.

1. Send Targeted Direct-Mail Campaigns

Direct mail is familiar and is routinely one of the most effective ways to reach clients, especially in neighborhoods. To make your direct-mail campaigns even more effective, send them to a targeted audience. You can focus on reaching a new farm, owners of certain home types, or clients you have worked with in the past.

Your direct-mail campaign should be eye-catching, informative, and helpful to the recipients. Always be sure to include contact information so recipients know how to get in touch with you when they're ready to buy or sell.

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KALONJI FOREMAN

Compass

"Without an evolving system in place, you can plateau as an agent. Top-producing Realtors are there because of the systems they have in place to generate that level of performance. You don't rise to the level of your goals; you fall to the level of your systems."



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"The media, scheduling, and partnership teams are with you every step of the way to ensure you are getting top-quality content for your brand. We want to know what you're looking forward to next year and how we can help you achieve that goal." —John





HD BROS

HELPING AGENTS **GROW**

“Our goal is to help our customers win more business. So what does that mean? Win more listings? Great. Get more agents on your team? Great. We can help you do any of those things through the use of professional content and video.”

Vice President Bobby Cockerille’s words explain one of HD Bros’ core values: to help their clients and partners win more business. Since the company was founded over a decade ago, HD Bros has made a name for being more than “just a photographer.” They are focused on helping their clients improve and providing services that go far beyond the norm.

“We grow with folks. We’re not a huge corporation, and we don’t have long-term contracts. So when people use us, they choose us every single time they hire us. We have to give a high-level service and a top-quality product every time,” Bobby says.



Vice President Bobby Cockerille



● ● ● Partnership Director John Schwartz



The HD Bros team provides expert real estate photo and video content creation.

...

“
WE DO WAY MORE THAN YOUR STANDARD PHOTOGRAPHER. YOU CAN GET ALL YOU NEED TO MARKET YOUR LISTING IN ONE PLACE.”

”

More than Photography

Since its inception, HD Bros has focused on real estate. That means they are not only well-prepared to handle listing photos and video, but they also have a multitude of additional services they provide within the industry.

“We do way more than your standard photographer,” Bobby explains. “You can get all you need to market your listing in one place.”

HD Bros guarantees next-day deliverables and has a 95-percent success rate in returning edits within four hours. Their streamlined system frees up more time for agents and allows them to hone in on how they market their listings.

“We are promoting the idea of winning more business by using this content. When you go to the next listing

appointment and show our work, and all you’ve done to successfully market your other properties, you’re going to be in a better place to get that listing,” Bobby explains.

Bobby is careful to note that HD Bros won’t be the cheapest option out there, and he’s okay with that. Because when there is bad weather, HD Bros will reschedule the shoot quicker. When the homeowner doesn’t move their junk out of the way, they’ll edit the photos faster. They are equipped to deliver in the often-tight circumstances of a real estate transaction.

Above all else, the HD Bros team leads with integrity.

“If we didn’t quite get the job done, if we deliver a less-than-perfect experience, part of the HD Bros guarantee is that if, at any point, we are not



Riley the Golden Retriever (@hdbrosriley) is HDBros’ mascot.

“
WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU’RE LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS YEAR AND HOW WE CAN HELP YOU ACHIEVE THAT GOAL.”



achieving the goal, we’ll refund you, credit the next shoot, or whatever it takes to make it right. When a team member asks, ‘Hey Bobby, what do we do here?’ I say, ‘Do the right thing.’”

The D.C. Metro Experts

HD Bros has made a name for themselves in the D.C. and Northern Virginia markets. Justin Kime manages the Northern Virginia team, while Carlo Russo manages the D.C./Maryland group. Throughout the D.C. metro area, HD Bros has around 20 photographers.

“Diversity is one of our strongest characteristics, with team members coming from all walks of life. We work hard to get you the content your brand needs to win more listings,” Partnership Director John Schwartz explains.

John believes that the D.C. metro area is a unique market, different

from any other in the country. With continual political turnover, the real estate market takes on a more transient feel.

“It gets shaken up every four to eight years and continues to boom,” John continues. “We expect prices to continue to rise and the expansion of the suburbs westward to keep on growing.”

The D.C. metro and Northern Virginia HD Bros team brings a unique approach to the real estate content market. They blend the customer service of a small business you can trust with the systems of a large corporation.

“The media, scheduling, and partnership teams are with you every step of the way to ensure you are getting the top-quality content for your brand,” John says.

As John and Bobby look ahead, they see continued growth — for HD Bros, their REALTOR® partners, and the greater D.C. area.

“We want to grow together. Whether it’s a solo agent, their first day on the job, or an agent with a team doing a thousand listings in a year, we want to be there to mastermind and grow with you. We want to know what you’re looking forward to this year and how we can help you achieve that goal.”

For more information, please visit www.hdbros.com.



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Kalonji Foreman is like a machine — when he puts his mind to something, an uncanny level of focus, drive, and determination gets triggered inside of him and he doesn't stop until his objective is achieved.

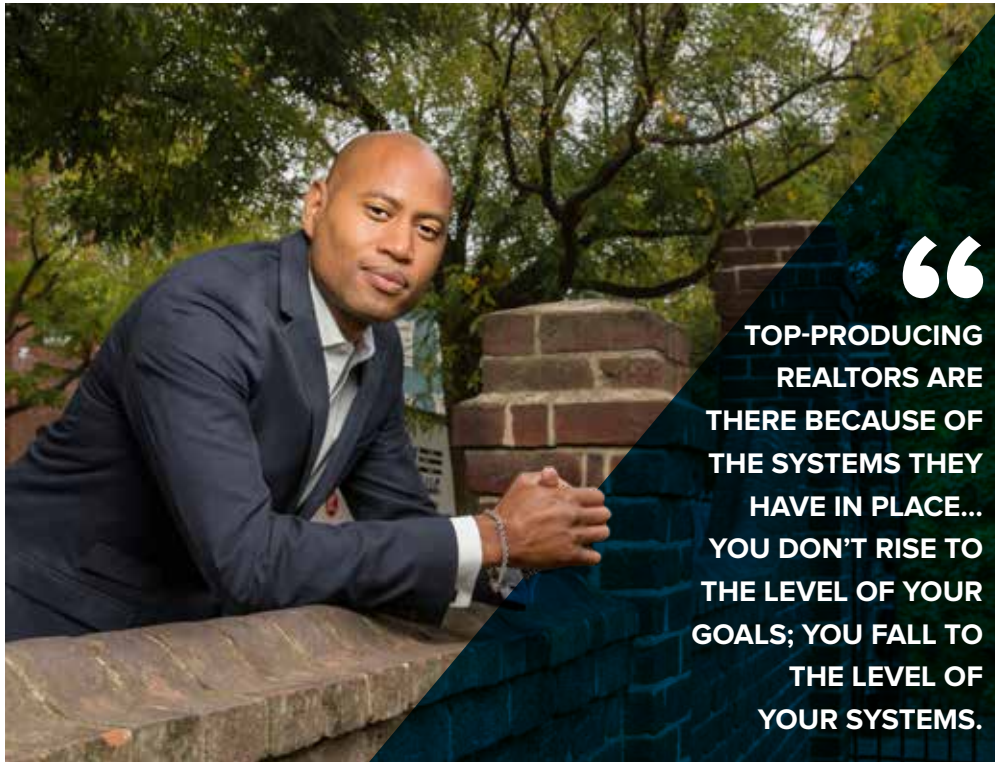
These qualities were cultivated in Kalonji at a young age, growing up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It started when his mother introduced him to boxing in his freshman year of high school and he went under the wing of his coach, Leroy Harris. Kalonji's mother, Dr. Darrel Steward, also provided an example of diligence, sacrifice, and commitment to personal growth and development that was a continual source of inspiration to him.

"I owe everything I am to my mother for the lessons she taught me in life, in addition to her example of sacrifice, hard work, and growth. Coach Harris also played a huge part in shaping who I was and who I was to be," Kalonji explains. "My discipline comes from boxing and my time with Coach. He helped cultivate the drive, determination, and focus that I took from boxing and now apply to all other aspects of my life."

Kalonji did exceptionally well as a boxer and earned a college scholarship. While boxing in college, he was approached by a friend to do a modeling gig for a billboard. After the billboard launched, his career as a model took off. As his life became inundated with photo shoots, traveling, commercials, runway shows, and billboards, he ended up leaving school to pursue a career as a model.

Inspired by his mother earning her Ph.D., however, Kalonji decided to return to school and obtained a degree in communications from Temple University in 2005, and later earned his master's degree in multicultural education from Eastern University. Kalonji's mother was a teacher, and she planted the seed of education in him early on, which, in addition to Coach Harris' mentorship, inspired Kalonji to become a teacher as well. "I became a teacher to give back to the community that raised me. I wanted to invest in the youth the same way my mother and my coach invested in me," Kalonji explains.

...



**“
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REALTORS ARE
THERE BECAUSE OF
THE SYSTEMS THEY
HAVE IN PLACE...
YOU DON'T RISE TO
THE LEVEL OF YOUR
GOALS; YOU FALL TO
THE LEVEL OF
YOUR SYSTEMS.”**

Kalonji Foreman founded Foreman Properties Group at Compass in 2019.

Kalonji was teaching science at a middle school in Philadelphia when a long-time friend of his, a real estate agent in the D.C. metro area, encouraged him to become a REALTOR®, giving him an opportunity to come work at her brokerage, A-K Real Estate.

Although Kalonji had been investing in real estate since his modeling days, his initial reaction to becoming a Realtor was, “Why would I do that? I went to grad school to become a teacher.” But the more he thought about it, the more he liked the idea of teaching people about real estate, helping them achieve the American dream of home ownership and creating generational wealth.

Wanting to make sure he could survive in D.C. as a Realtor, Kalonji left everything he had in Philadelphia and moved into his cousin Shawnda’s one-bedroom condo, where he slept on her couch for several months. He used the Metro and Uber for transportation to showings, sometimes renting a car if he had multiple

properties to show clients. “I was always very calculated and frugal, so purchasing a car was not my priority, and my old car could not make the trip,” he recalls. “I had to be creative and resourceful.”

Although Kalonji was new to the area, new to this aspect of real estate, and didn’t know anyone, he was determined to make it. He became a student of the business, developed strong negotiation skills, and started forming lasting friendships with his clients as he committed to being their “Realtor for life.” “I want to get the best possible deal for my clients, to help them create generational wealth and build their investment portfolio,” he says.

Kalonji’s background in teaching was an inherent boon to his real estate business, as he was going from teaching children to teaching adults about interest rates, return on investments, first-time homebuying, property appreciation, and investment properties. The teacher in

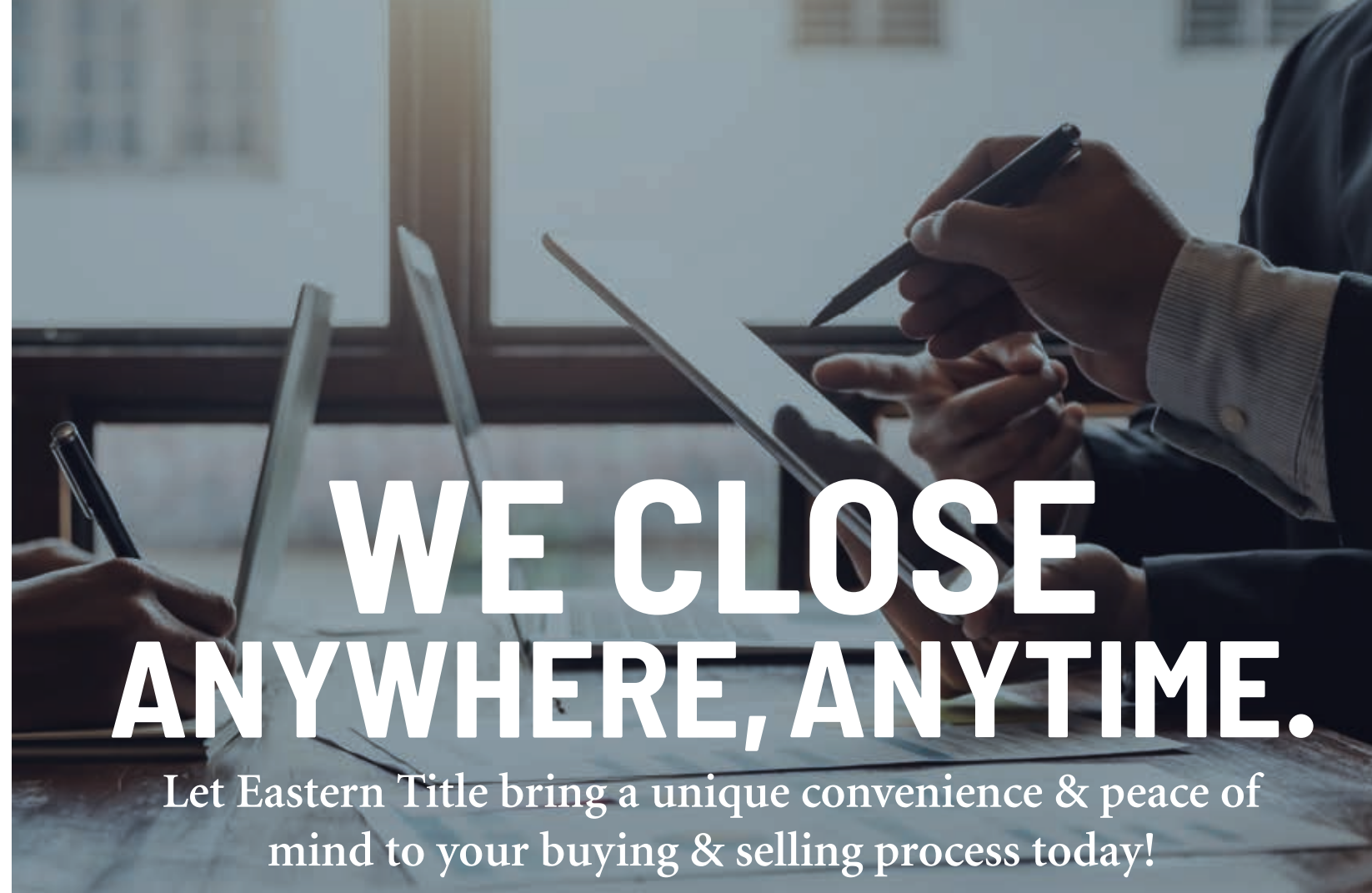
him also led Kalonji to starting his own team, where he could begin mentoring and teaching other agents. The Foreman Properties Group was formed with Compass in 2019 and, today, consists of seven agents, including Kalonji’s cousin, Shawnda, whose sacrifice early in his career made it all possible.

Passionate about his team members’ continued growth, Kalonji continues to educate himself by taking classes to learn new things that he can then take back to his teammates. “I want things

to be seamless for my team, to have a streamlined and refined system that will allow them to thrive in any market,” he explains. “Without an evolving system in place, you can plateau as an agent. Top-producing Realtors are there because of the systems they have in place to generate that level of performance. You don’t rise to the level of your goals; you fall to the level of your systems.”

When Kalonji isn’t trying to help others find success in life through real estate, he enjoys playing chess with friends, and finds cooking to be very therapeutic. He always has team meetings at his place so he can cook for everyone.

As Kalonji continues to aim his focus and determination towards his team and clients, committing his mind and heart to their personal and professional success, he will continue to achieve great things doing what Coach Harris and his mother did for him — providing a system of success that will forever change a life.



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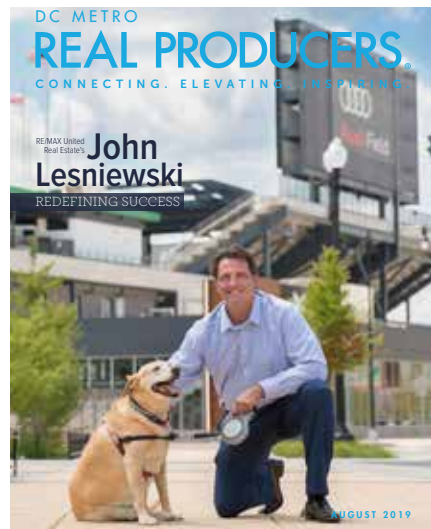
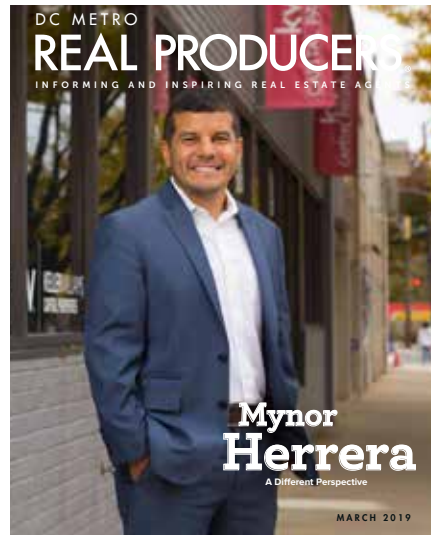
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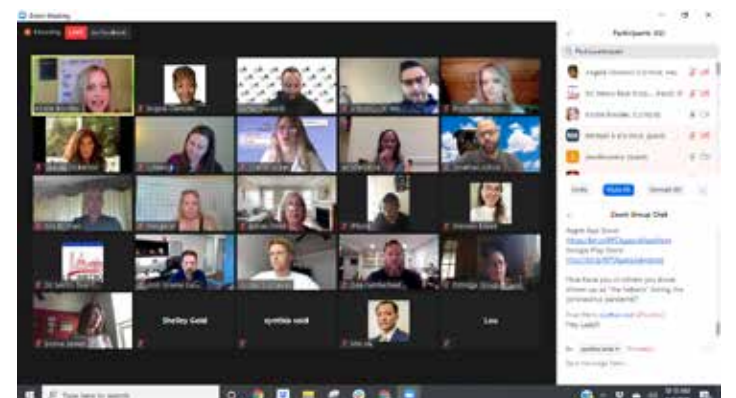
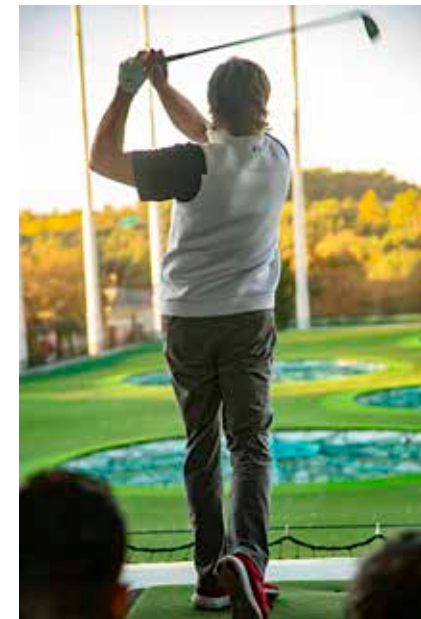
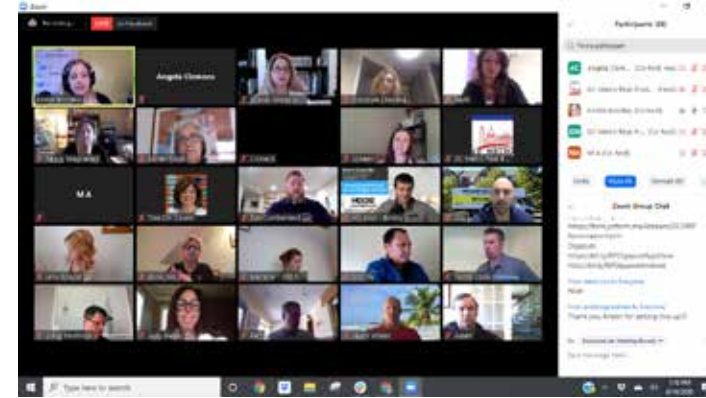
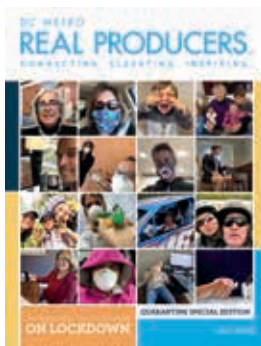
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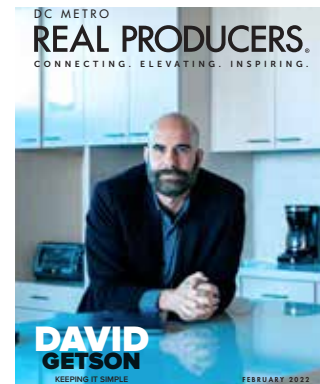
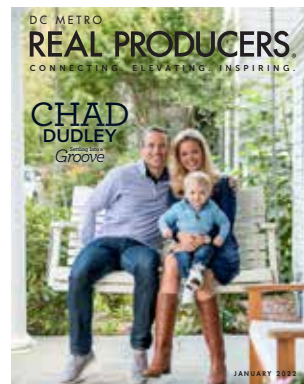
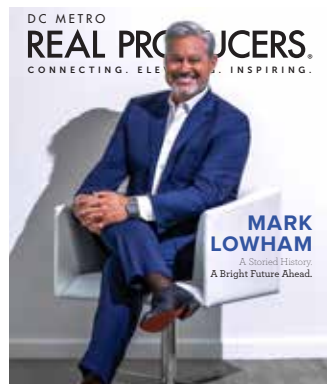
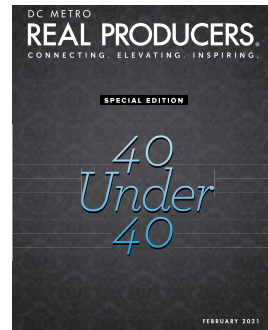
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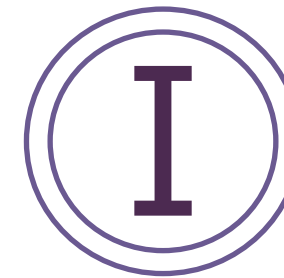
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Breaking
Ground

Alexes. Haggins



In China, there is a species of bamboo that takes five years to break ground. In year 1, the seed is planted and it germinates — yet above the surface, we see nothing. The same story unfolds in years 2, 3, and 4. And then, finally, in year 5, movement stirs. The bamboo breaks the ground and grows at an astonishing rate — up to 90 feet in a month.

Life works in a similar fashion. As we sow seeds, care for them, water them, and nurture them, the results may not flourish immediately. Yet, good work is still being done below the surface, and when the time is ripe, our dreams are ready to rush into life at an extraordinary pace.

Over the past three years, Alexes Haggins, a REALTOR® with Keller Williams Capital Properties, has witnessed this process unfold in her own life. In her first three years in the business, she produced precisely zero dollars in sales. She began to doubt herself, but her team leader encouraged her.

“One day, I was at the office and my team leader was there, and we were talking. I was telling him how I was doubting myself. He gave me a proverb that said something like, ‘While you’re not getting transactions, your roots are growing underneath and getting strong. And once you sprout, you’re going to grow past everybody else.’ That stuck with me and motivated me. And that’s what happened. I sprouted.”

Overcoming Obstacles on the Road to Real Estate

Before becoming a real estate agent, Alexes spent over a decade working in mental health. She spent 10 years at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and then transitioned to work for a mental health organization supporting young adults. During this time, Alexes went through an ugly divorce.

“When the divorce was finalized, I became a single mom, and my ex-husband did not provide any financial help or support. It was a really difficult time for me. It changed everything,” Alexes reflects humbly.

With four children at home — one of whom is autistic — Alexes needed a job that could provide financial wealth and flexibility. Her brother suggested she take a look at real estate. When Alexes showed interest, he introduced her to her future mentor, Eboneese Thompson.

Alexes took her rent money, signed up for real estate classes, and began her journey. She shadowed Eboneese and began to understand the business at a deeper level.

Growing Her Roots

Alexes was licensed in January 2018 but didn’t close a single deal in 2018, 2019, or 2020. Most agents would have given up, but not Alexes.

“I went through every emotion. I was second-guessing myself. I didn’t think I had it in me to be successful,” she reflects. “I was really trying to figure out what was going on. But I never gave up. I worked too hard for my license, so I continued to go to training, shadow Eboneese, and network.”

In January 2021, Alexes closed her first deal. “And when I got my very first deal, it went from there. My volume went from zero to \$7 million in a year. It was a domino effect.”



Alexes Haggins just reopened her late father's florist shop, Flowers by Alexes, a family business that closed when he passed away almost 20 years ago.



My father owned a store in D.C. for 40-plus years...I want to pour into the community as my dad did before me.

Growing Tall

Alexes is hoping to leverage her success in 2022 to take her business to the next level. She's also in the process of completing a project that is near and dear to her heart. "I was able to take my commission to not only create financial freedom for myself, but also open up another business, which I always desired to do," she explains. "My father owned a store in D.C. for 40-plus years. He changed the name to 'Flowers by Alexes' when I was born. When he passed away 17 years ago, I didn't have the means to buy it and keep it open. But now, the commissions have

given me that opportunity. I want to pour into the community as my dad did before me."

In January 2022, Flowers by Alexes officially reopened its doors at the corner of 9th and Upshur.

As Alexes steps into 2022, she does so with high hopes and a heart filled with gratitude. She is grateful for trusting herself, sticking with real estate when times were tough, and for being able to support her family.

"I'm grateful for how things have turned around. My entire life has changed."



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ANDRÉS SERAFINI

ROOTS RUN DEEP

When Andrés Serafini, a REALTOR® with RLAH Real Estate, got his real estate license in 2007, the market was booming. As he recalls, “Everyone

was on top of the world.” But, as we all know, the economy came crashing down in a hurry. Prosperity turned out fear, and Andrés was left to figure out his new career in the most trying real estate market in recent times.

Two years prior, Andrés had graduated from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, with a degree in political science and linguistics. He landed a job as a congressional liaison

for the Organization of American States (OAS), a multilateral organization on Capitol Hill.

“I thought I’d be a politician,” Andrés reflects. “Growing up in D.C., I thought that would be the track I would be on. My dad worked for the U.S. State Department and my mom for the Federal Reserve. And that was it. You live in D.C. and work in politics.”





Members of The Washingtonian Group (from left to right: Marina Sorbie, Daniel Kotz, Andrés Serafini, Daniel Esteban, and Yasmin Niktash. Not pictured: Christian Leo, Michael Marroquin, and Savannah Yingling.) (Photo by Kyla Jeanette Photography)

Just two years into his chosen field, however, Andrés discovered that he wasn't aligned with the cutthroat culture of politics. He had a close friend who was doing really well in real estate and began to get curious about making a transition.

"Right around that time, 2006 to 2007, I was in the market myself, flirting with the idea of buying something. He encouraged me to get my license and use my own sale as a method to gauge my interest in the business. So the first deal I ever did was my own. I bought a property in the down market, and I loved the process."

Overcoming Challenge

At 23 years old, Andrés began his career in real estate. He was faced with building a business amid a deep recession.

"It was mayhem. Every channel you turned on, the sky was falling. Every day, the stock market was less, there were more and more 'For Sale' signs popping up on every street. Short sales and foreclosures. It was nerve-racking. But I was focused on learning and understanding what was happening in the real estate market."

Andrés sold one home in his first year. He knew he needed to find a way to get creative, so he sought out veteran agents who had been through a down market before. The advice he received helped shape the future of his work.

"They were telling me that the people with money are taking advantage of this situation. So you need to network to see what you can do for people that want to invest."

With creativity and perseverance, Andrés found his way to his target audience and began to get his business off the ground.

“

IN OUR SEVEN YEARS, THE WASHINGTONIAN GROUP HAS HAD TWO GCAAR ROOKIE-OF-THE-YEAR RECIPIENTS.

For several years, he primarily sold rental properties for clients looking to take advantage of a down market. As the market began to turn upwards, Andrés shifted his business alongside it, and over the years, he has continued to achieve sustained success.

The Washingtonian Group

In 2013, Andrés founded The Washingtonian Group. His vision has always been to create a group of

“

MANY IMMIGRANTS COME TO THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY TO ATTAIN SUCCESS... AND TO PROVIDE A BETTER LIFE FOR THEIR FAMILIES. I HOPE TO BE PART OF HOW THEY ACHIEVE THAT DREAM.

Andrés Serafini founded The Washingtonian Group in 2013. (Photo by Ryan Corvello)



Andrés and Carolin Serafini with 2-year-old daughter Valentina. (Photo by Katie Tao)

thriving agents — and eight years into his journey, he feels he's accomplished that goal. In 2021, his team of six agents closed \$80 million in volume with 124 units.

“In our seven-year career, The Washingtonian Group has had two GCAAR Rookie-of-the-Year recipients. In my eyes, this is one of the most fulfilling accolades a team leader strives for and can receive indirectly.”

The Washingtonian Group is built on culture. Andrés prides himself on providing service to all types of clients. His team includes buyers' agents, a new construction division, a listing coordinator, and a strong support staff.

“We leave our ego at the door. Many agents are known to be out for themselves — to be the namesake of the team and to live by the self-proclaimed ‘I’ and not the ‘we’ mentality. But when I created The Washingtonian Group, the name itself would allow all team members to play equally.”

Drawing on His Roots

Andrés' parents are both first-generation immigrants; his father is from Italy and his mother is from Colombia. Like so many other immigrants, they paved the way for their children through hard work and perseverance.

“Their journey and their lives have taught me to take risks, the importance of hard work, to be solution-oriented, and to face challenges head-on, without room for excuses,”

“

I WANT TO HELP OTHERS — WHETHER IT'S MY CLIENTS, MY TEAM, MY FRIENDS, OR MY FAMILY. AND TO DO THAT, I AM COMMITTED TO A PATH OF CONSTANT GROWTH, CONSTANT LEARNING, AND ALWAYS STRIVING TO BE BETTER THAN YESTERDAY.

Andrés notes. “I have no other option but to strive for success because my parents did just that for me. Many immigrants share a similar narrative, a similar inspiring story ... and that is to attain success, to do better than their parents did, and to provide a better life for their families. That is what many people come to this beautiful country in search of. And I hope to be part of how they achieve that dream, whether it's to help them buy a home or help them build wealth.”

One outcome of Andrés' own success is a deep desire to give back to his own family and community. He and his wife, Carolin, have been together for nine years, married in 2018, and now have a 2-year-old daughter, Valentina, and another child on the way. Together, they are devoted to the service of others — Andrés through real estate and Carolin through her career in public health. In real estate, Andrés' desire to give back continues to drive him towards success. Whether he's helping a local charity or mentoring an agent to personal success, Andrés is fully devoted to others' fulfillment.

“I want to help others — whether it's my clients, my team, my friends, or my family. And to do that, I am committed to a path of constant growth, constant learning, and always striving to be better than yesterday.”



Photo by Ryan Corvello

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RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL
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19+ YEARS EXPERIENCE

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2233 Wisconsin Ave NW Ste 232 | Washington, DC 20007-4153 | NMLS #206900

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TOP 250 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed Data from January 1 to January 31, 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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Disclaimer: Information based on MLS closed data as of February 7, 2022, for residential sales from January 1, 2022, to January 31, 2022, in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., by agents licensed in our D.C. metro service area of Washington, D.C., and Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince Georges Counties in Maryland. Numbers not reported to the MLS by the date the information is retrieved are not included. MLS is not responsible for submitting this data. Some teams may report each agent individually.

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- FACEBOOK | LINDA B. | MAY 2021

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Branch Manager
NMLS ID 187868
443-377-1589



Erin Johnson
Branch Sales Manager
NMLS ID 215208
240-216-8824



Jay Franklin
Branch Sales Manager
NMLS ID 199740
240-463-1634



Jessica Enfinger
Sales Manager/ Sr Loan Officer
NMLS ID 513123
301-905-7773



Olu Ajayi
Loan Officer
NMLS ID 189732
301-343-5551



Jordan Eng
Loan Officer
NMLS ID 1217691
410-353-5693



Ryan Kurrle
Loan Officer
NMLS ID 1631310
410-504-7152



Blake Price
Loan Officer
NMLS ID 1423057
301-440-0789



Ben Driscoll
Loan Officer
NMLS ID 2066729
704-860-6226



Kyle Davidson
Loan Officer
NMLS ID 2102662
607-644-8440



Zac Rucci
Loan Officer
NMLS ID 1550645
301-535-3930

2200 Defense Highway, Suite 400, Crofton MD 21114 Branch NMLS ID 186980
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Greg Kingsbury
Senior Vice President
NMLS ID #: 476367
O: (202) 540-9999 Ext 101
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greg@vellummortgage.com
www.KingsburyMortgageTeam.com

