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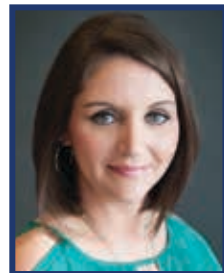
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▶ publisher's note:
dees hinton

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

IS OUR GOAL

I'm sorry I missed Social Night at Babalu! The pictures look like it was another great night. I enjoy seeing everyone getting together like old friends and meeting new friends.

As you know, the main purpose of *Central Mississippi Real Producers* is to introduce and encourage relationships between people working in and with the real estate industry. We want to help each of you to get to know one another better, which in turn will help your businesses grow and run more smoothly.

We believe our feature articles are a big part of us getting to know one another on a personal level. The articles tell about that person's business, education, experience and accomplishments, but the articles also let you get to know them on a personal level. We get a look at their lives outside of the business. We read about their spouses, children, pets, hobbies, sports teams, and dreams for the future. After you read the articles, if you do not already know them, you feel like you do. We seem to be able to find common interests or backgrounds with everyone. When you do get an opportunity to meet them in person (maybe at one of the Social Nights), it's like they are already a friendly acquaintance!

One of the common grounds that many of our REALTORS® and Preferred Partners have are that they are mothers. We want to take a minute to show appreciation for all the mothers that are doing amazing things in the real estate world and at home!

Another common ground we sometimes find is that some of our REALTORS® and Preferred Partners have served in the military, like this month's Preferred Partner Feature, Derek Carroll. Derek spent 10 years in the military before going to law school. Thank you Derek and to all of our *Central Mississippi Real Producers* family members who have served our country. We truly appreciate you!

I hope you enjoy your May!
Happy Mother's Day and
Happy Memorial Day,

Dees

If you would like to recommend someone as a feature or as a Preferred Partner, let us know!

Contact us at:

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Schneika N. STOKES



▶▶ top producer

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

A Heart for Education, A Mind for Business, Schneika Stokes Has it All

Schneika Stokes is a born educator. A product of the Jackson Public School system, she graduated from Murrah High School before attending the University of Southern Mississippi. “I started out as an accounting major but realized that wasn’t for me. Then I thought I’d be a computer programmer, so I changed my major to management information systems, before finally graduating in 2001 with a degree in business administration. I thought that was a broad enough major to have different job options after college.”



After college, Schneika had an epiphany. “I decided I wanted to teach. I’m not sure why, but it was a strong calling.” She enrolled at Mississippi College to get a master’s degree in business education. “About that time, Canton High School needed a business education teacher. I didn’t have a teaching license, but because I was studying business education, I got the job.” She went on to get her teaching license, and Schneika’s life in education

took off. She taught at Canton High for the next four years. “In the first couple of years I was there, I got a master’s degree in education.”

In 2005, feeling the need to leave Mississippi, Schneika moved to Dallas to teach. While she was there, she received a leadership certification from the University of Texas at Arlington. But after three years, she

felt the pull back to her home state, where she got an administrative job at a school in Carthage.

Schneika married a fellow educator, Jamison Stokes. She spent another 14 years in education, including working at Virginia College and ITT Technical as Dean of Education. But eventually, she was no longer satisfied in the field. “I felt like I had lost my place. I



... needed a change. I had a friend in real estate, and she seemed to have such a great career life, with more free time than I had ever had."

In 2014, Schneika took the weekend course at the Mississippi REALTORS® Institute. "I passed the test and jumped right into it. I joined ERA Real Estate Professionals, and they were great." Schneika didn't get off to a strong start. "The first year, I sold three houses. I had to rely on my teaching license to get me through. I did a lot of substitute teaching to supplement my income. But I was determined not to give up. I got involved in committees and volunteer work on the local and state levels, and I tried to attend every meeting. I have been chair of many committees, and I currently serve as president of Central Mississippi REALTORS®. I also serve on the Housing Opportunity Committee at the National Association of REALTORS®. I have learned that it is all about connections and relationships."

In 2017, Schneika participated in Leadership MAR, which she describes as a "wonderful experience." In 2019, she got pulled back into education, teaching at the REALTORS® Institute. That same year, she opened her own brokerage, Premier Living Realty, based in Madison. She opened a real estate school last year, the Academy of Real Estate and Business Development. "It was truly divinely inspired," she says. "God gave me this assignment, and I had to answer His call."

With eight agents, Schneika is still selling, and she is still teaching real estate classes. "I'm built for it," she declares. "One of my best decisions was hiring agents. And I still enjoy selling. Homeownership is the American Dream. I like being a part of my clients' lives and helping them attain that dream. It's not like buying a pair of shoes or a car. Owning a home is what we work for. It's what we all look forward to. We know the value of real estate and what it can do to your bottom line. I feel like I'm doing something really grand."

...

“
Homeownership
is the American
Dream. I like
being a part of
my clients' lives
and helping
them attain
that dream.
”





There have been some challenges the past couple of years with Covid. "A lot has changed about the way we do business. The housing market is so different now with so many multiple offer situations. New forms and guidelines have been developed, as well as Covid safety forms. It all took me by surprise and I had to step back and adjust to this new way of doing business."

Schneika says her husband is her number-one supporter. "During the early days of my real estate career, when times were tough, he encouraged me. He wrote little motivational notes for me every morning, and I still have them. I'm so thankful for his support." With no children of her own, Schneika says her "bonus children" give her much joy. "Jamison Junior is graduating from Northwest Rankin, and Jameria will soon graduate from Jackson State and already has a job with Wells Fargo in Charlotte, NC. Soon we'll only have our 11-year-old Akita/Lab mix, Kita, at home to keep us company."



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DEREK CARROLL

FLEUR DE LIS LAW AND TITLE



▶▶ partner spotlight

Written by Susan Marquez. Photography by Abe Draper Photography.



DEREK CARROLL AT FLEUR DE LIS LAW AND TITLE
REVOLUTIONIZING REAL ESTATE CLOSINGS



Derek Carroll has a knack for recognizing something that works well when he sees it. When he learned that Fleur De Lis Law and Title did over 5,800 closings in Louisiana last year, he called some friends he went to school with at Loyola and told them he wanted to open his own title company in Mississippi. “My response was to reproduce what they were doing in Mississippi.”

A graduate of St. Joseph Catholic School in Madison, Derek attended Ole Miss, then spent ten years in the Army, flying a AH-64 Apache attack helicopter on

missions to Iraq. “I went to college on an ROTC scholarship and joined the Army when I was 19, following in the footsteps of my brother. I had a four-year commission after college to be an officer.” Derek enlisted in 2000, and the September 11 terrorist strike was in 2001. “That meant we were all deployed.” Derek was in E Troop, First of the 104th. “It was an air cavalry unit, and my radio call sign was Punisher 36. The initial flight school was intense, but it was the best year of my life, besides meeting my wife. It was extremely difficult, like nothing I’ve ever done before, even prepping for the bar.”

Derek says that looking back, he is amazed that as a 26-year-old, he was in charge of other people’s lives. “That instilled me with a lot of confidence. I learned that I could handle situations, so it has made life less scary for me. And I know that no matter how bad a situation is, no one is shooting at me.”

After his 10-year stint in the Army, Derek attended law school at Loyola in New Orleans, then opened Carroll Law Firm in Jackson. After inquiring about opening his own title company, Fleur De Lis offered him an opportunity to join them.

“They wanted to move into the Mississippi market, so the timing was perfect.” Derek says that Fleur De Lis has revolutionized the way closings are approached. “When there is a contract for a home, you aren’t just hiring me, but a whole team of professionals. Just like Henry Ford revolutionized the car production industry, this has changed the way closing attorneys operate. Attorneys, by the nature of the job, take care of what needs to be taken care of today. But with this system, the process is streamlined. For example, I look at abstracts, but others on the team will look at it as well, to make sure titles are in the clear. Aren’t 12 eyes better than two?”

“

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••• Derek says he also oversees the civil side of the law. “We are a one-stop shop. If curative issues come up, we can manage that. We can open estates, handle quick claims, and take care of all manner of situations in house.” He can also handle the legal work in opening franchises, LLCs, and business planning. Derek says he enjoys working with REALTORS®. “I understand that getting to closing in a timely manner is important to them. I give my cell phone number to everyone I work with. If they have questions, they can contact me any time. They have full access to me and to our team.”

The original Fleur De Lis office in Mississippi is located on North State Street in Jackson. Their new office has recently opened in Ridgeland at 207 Jackson Street, above Krylakis.

Derek and his wife, Francesca Senior Carroll, live in Fondren. Francesca is a professional equestrian. “She does hunters and jumpers, English-style riding,” explains Derek. “She trains horses, teaches riding, buys horses and goes to shows.” When he has free time, Derek enjoys working on his golf game at the Lake Caroline course.

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Allison BOHON

▶ rising star

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



*From Biology to Hospitality to Real Estate:
Allison Bohon's Interesting Journey*

As the child whose father served in the Air Force, Allison Bohon moved a few times in her life, but her “home base” was always Baldwin, MS. After leaving the Air Force, her father went into insurance sales. “He wanted me to get into the business as well, but I never saw myself in sales.”

In fact, Allison chose a major in college that is as far removed from sales as possible. “I have a biology and chemistry degree with a concentration in marine biology from the University of North Alabama,” she says. “I wanted to do research, with no face-to-face work with other people,” she laughs. Allison spent summers in college taking classes at a sea lab on Dauphin Island and working for one of her professors diving for zebra mussels in the Tennessee River.

During college, Allison worked waiting tables, and she fell in love with the hospitality industry. “It was instant gratification, and it was kind of addictive. I loved that I could serve people and make them happy.” She ended up working in every aspect of the restaurant business, from serving to management to working with a French chef in Memphis. “While in Memphis, I was hired by a group of

international bankers to convert the old post office in Baldwin to a restaurant. That was right up my alley.” That project taught her a lot about what to do, and what not to do, in business. When the restaurant closed, Allison went into food sales with U.S. Foods. “I loved it.”

After a few life changes, Allison began looking at her options. “I have always been interested in real estate,” she says. “I like the design aspect of it, but honestly, it never crossed my mind to look at a career in selling real estate until my husband mentioned it. His suggestion made me really think about it, and I decided to take the real estate course online.” Allison got her license in June 2016, and she decided to jump headfirst into the water. “I talked with my friend, Bobby Morehead, who is a closing attorney. He owns a coffee shop in Ridgeland, and he was one of my customers when I was in food sales. He suggested I go with Paula Ricks at KeyTrust Properties. He felt that we would be a good match.”

Allison trusted Bobby’s opinion, and from her first meeting with Paula, she knew that was the right fit for her. “Paula was so easy to communicate with.” ...



But being in a commission-only job situation caused Allison to panic. “I went inactive for a bit and worked in a bank. I figured out pretty quick that it wasn’t for me. I went back to real estate and decided I was going to put all I had into it.”

The first year was a rollercoaster for Allison, but she actually did pretty well. “I learned that real estate sales is much different from other sales positions. It’s very service-oriented, which appeals to me. I like to orchestrate all the pieces of a deal to make sure it moves in the right direction, and it is different every day. I learn something new every day, too. Hindsight is amazing!”

Allison has a desire to learn more about the real estate business. “I want to continue my education to learn more.” She has already earned several designations, including Accredited Buyer’s Representative (ABR®), Real Estate Negotiation Expert (RENE®), and Military Relocation Professional (MRP®). She has just completed her



“
I like to orchestrate all the pieces of a deal to make sure it moves in the right direction, and it is different every day. I learn something new every day, too. Hindsight is amazing!
 ”



••• Seller Representative Specialist (SRS®) class, and she is currently taking the broker class.

Allison and her husband, Chris, live in Madison. “We have a blended family, with his two children and my two. His are grown, ages 26 and 28, and mine are 16 and 17. My son, Haden, will be attending Mississippi State in the fall majoring in software engineering, and my daughter, Abigail, will be a junior at Madison Central. She also plays club volleyball, so we travel a lot for tournaments.” Alison says that Abigail has shown some interest in real estate. “She has actually done some work in Paula’s office.”

If she could be anywhere in the world, Allison says she would be happiest in a flowerbed. “I love digging in the dirt. I could do it all day and be happy.” She also enjoys reading books online and studying about alternative health. “I am also running again. It’s so good for your health. I like to run with our collie, Lola.” When they are able to get away, Allison says her family likes to head to the beach. “We love to be anywhere near water. We are all actually very chill, and we are happy just being around each other.”



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Social Night at Babalu on March 29th was a great night! We had the biggest turnout yet!

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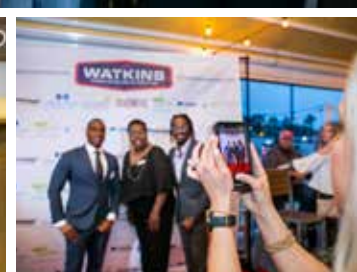
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▶▶ celebrating moms!

Did you know that approximately 68% of full-time real estate agents are women? And most of those women are mothers. We want to say **Happy Mother's Day** to all of our *Central MS Real Producers* mothers. This is a demanding field – late nights, long hours and weekends, but each of you are doing an amazing job – at home and on the job!

Some other famous mothers have said it best:

“For me, being a mother made me a better professional, because coming home every night to my girls reminded me what I was working for. And being a professional made me a better mother because by pursuing my dreams, I was modeling for my girls how to pursue their dreams.” – Michelle Obama

“I think every working mom probably feels the same thing. You go through big chunks of time where you're just thinking, ‘This is impossible—oh, this is impossible.’ And then you just keep going and keep going, and you sort of do the impossible.” – Tina Fey

“This struggle is real. The juggle is real. That's why everyone should hire working mothers. They are put in crazy situations all the time and are forced to problem-solve. They are some of my most resourceful employees.” – Sara Blakely

“I want her to know something that I feel is important. I love work. I love her and I love work, and I want her to know work's a good thing. It's not something you're dragged off to.” – Hoda Kotb

“She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.” – Proverbs 31:25



Cindy Raborn and family



Amanda Polles and family



Dianne Nelson and sons



Lekeita Braddy and daughter



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Mariclaire Putman and family



Dusty Hinton and Family



Jan Maselle, Monique Maselle Kelly and Doug Maselle



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Bethany Culley and her mother, Bethany Culley, who also had a successful real estate career!

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