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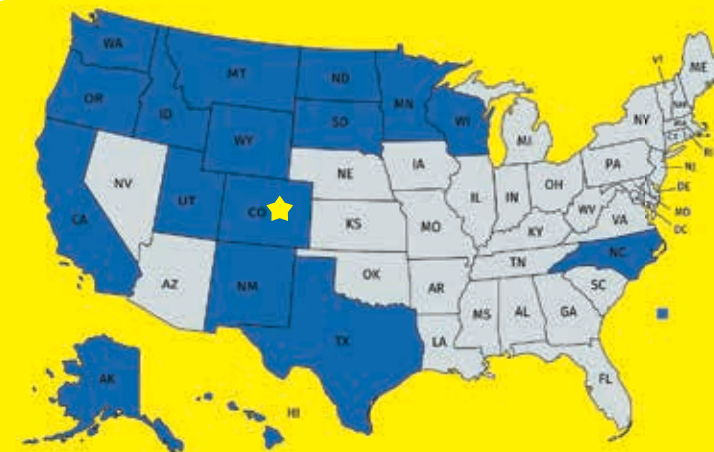


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OWN ANOTHER BUSINESS?



publisher's note

I'm thrilled to present our May edition. Some of these articles have been in the works for over a year! After reading about your colleagues, I hope you feel a stronger bond with our real estate community.

This month, we're welcoming a new advertiser: The On-Call Assistant. The On-Call Assistant is basically the "Uber" of real estate assistant tasks. It was co-founded by Michael Shenuk, an agent with Keller Williams Partners. Bringing Michael's business aboard helped me realize that there are a lot of real estate agents who own additional businesses outside of their primary real estate business.

If you own an additional business, we welcome you to reach out to us for an advertising consultation. Advertising in Real Producers is a great option if you think other agents would benefit from what you offer. Our goal is to be the premier, local vendor resource for the real estate community.

Further, if you ever have the opportunity to utilize one of our advertising vendors, be reassured that each of them was referred to us by another real estate agent. We know that by referring a roofer or a home inspector to your client, you're putting your own name on their work, so we don't invite anyone into our publication that isn't already trusted by your peers.

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Stephanie

HAWTHORNE

Making Her Own Yellow Brick Road

Cultural diversity and inclusion are essentials for Stephanie Hawthorne. Her father was from Kansas, and her mother was from Korea, and they raised Stephanie and her older siblings to look past the surface to find true value in others. Growing up on a military base in Germany, far away from extended relatives, taught Stephanie to expand her definition of family. It also helped her learn how to create a strong, diverse team culture, which is precisely what she is doing now as a REALTOR® in the Opportunity Zone, aka "OZ." Stephanie's dream is to create opportunities for culture and experience in OZ in a space where everyone belongs.

▶ around town

Written by **Ruth Gnirk**
Photos by **Casa Bay Photography**

At the age of 19, Stephanie started working for a home builder. Seeing others invest in real estate helped her realize that homeownership would provide stability and help her start creating a future for herself. Loans were readily available, and Stephanie bought her first home before she turned 20. She was hopeful for her future as she worked on her bachelor's degree at a college in Denver. Then, suddenly her life came to a crashing halt.

"Being diagnosed with a pituitary adenoma, and having brain surgery in my early twenties, gave me a new appreciation for things," shared Stephanie.



Stephanie Hawthorne & Wahid Hafsaoui, owner of Paris Crepe

"Even though it was one of the scariest things I've been through, it gave me a new perspective. I was very aware that I was alive for a reason and that my life had a purpose. My experience helped me prioritize what was important in my life: people and relationships."

Working as part of the team at US Homes, formerly known as Lennar Homes, was a great fit for Stephanie. The training she received there helped her learn to quickly and accurately identify clients' core needs. She was enjoying her present while investing in her future. Stephanie worked for the construction company for six years, and the first four houses she bought were new builds.

She and her adoring husband welcomed their children Haven and Jackson into the world, and Stephanie transitioned into a job in business development for Empire Title. She loved identifying needs and helping agents build their businesses. Interacting with REALTORS® and seeing the joy on their faces planted a seed of inspiration.

Stephanie earned her real estate license in 2012 and started making a difference in her community. Because of the incredible experiences she'd had in her childhood, Stephanie chose to earn a designation as a military relocation specialist. She really enjoyed



Stephanie Hawthorne & Lena Stephens

helping diverse people and families find the right home in the right neighborhood. She started thinking about what she wanted to leave as a legacy for her children and her community.

In 2019 Stephanie had an epic breakfast at Omelet Parlor. Stephanie's "work wife" and backbone, Lena Stephens, introduced Stephanie to fellow REALTOR®, Jesse Scott. Jesse had a history in property management and invited Stephanie to consider commercial real estate investing, starting with a restaurant building. The only "catch" was that the property was at South Tejon and East Mill Street, close to Springs Rescue Mission. To the untrained eye, the building looked like an extensive and expensive project. To Stephanie, the entire block was an amazing Opportunity Zone!

She and Jesse bought the building in August 2019 with the hope of inviting Algerian business owner Wahid to open a third Paris Crepes in the Opportunity Zone. Wahid, who had received his culinary training in France, made amazing food and had created a wonderful multicultural environment in his creperie in Manitou Springs. Wahid's initial hesitation turned into excitement as he saw the renovated building during the open house that fall.

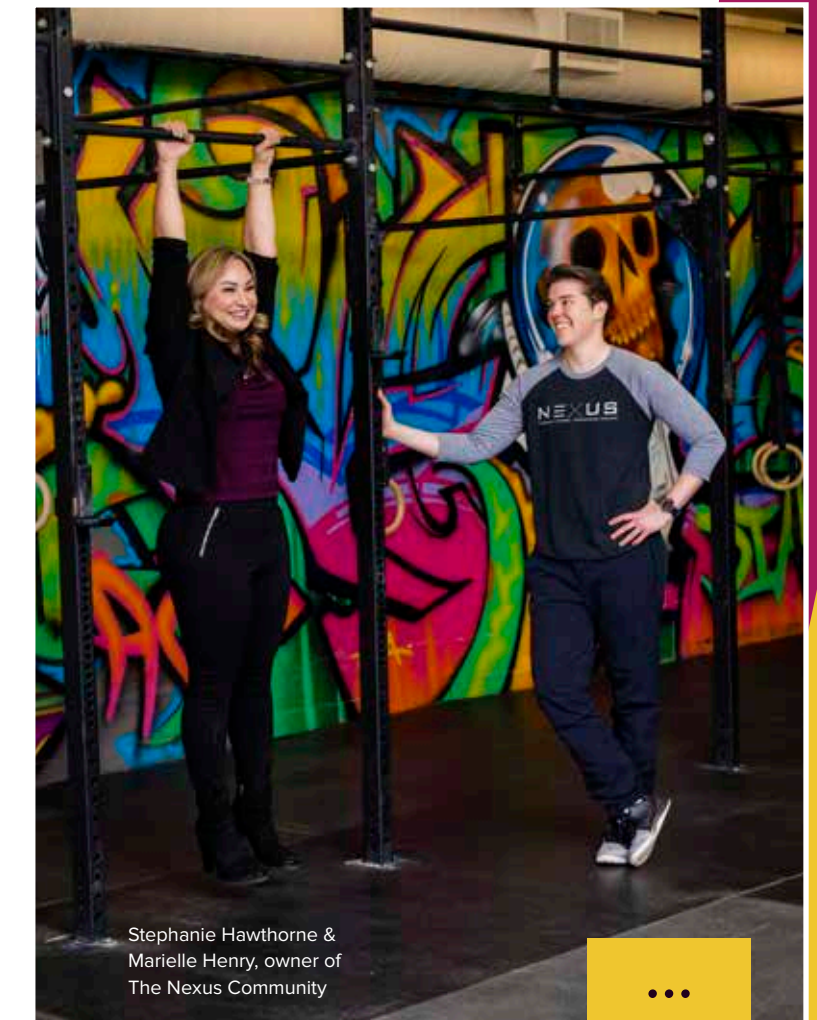
Wahid opened Paris Crepes in OZ, and it became so successful that he closed his Denver and Manitou locations in 2020! In early 2020, Stephanie and Jesse bought their second OZ investment property, the building across the street from the thriving Paris Crepes. They had already started remodeling it when Covid shutdowns were initiated. They didn't let fear or frustration discourage them from moving forward with their plans. They knew that what they had started would change lives and legacies.

"Playing it safe is easy," said Stephanie, matter-of-factly. "Creating positive change to make a difference, even if it's hard, is how you become more impactful," said Stephanie.

“

Creating **POSITIVE CHANGE** to make a **DIFFERENCE**, even if it's hard, is how you become **MORE IMPACTFUL.**

This particular Opportunity Zone had been labeled "low income," and passers-by had expressed concerns about the area's homeless population. Stephanie and Jesse knew that with the right servant-leadership helping to attract diverse but inclusive businesses, they could help to re-create the culture in that district. Their vision was to renovate the buildings and then bring in local entrepreneurs who would not only increase their business footprint but would add value to the area as it was being built up. OZ had great potential, and Stephanie knew the reward was worth the risk.



Stephanie Hawthorne & Marielle Henry, owner of The Nexus Community



Stephanie Hawthorne & Muji Rieger, owner of Muji Art

“**THIS IS WHO I WAS ACTUALLY DESIGNED TO BE, helping people make their DREAMS COME TRUE.**”

The owners of Grey-ish Hair Studio have been in the hair industry for years but were working for others. These amazing entrepreneurs opened their own businesses and now serve others on their own turf, honing their craft proudly. They are also promoting like-minded entrepreneurs by renting out some space in their shop. Miranda Hernandez owns and operates her own business-consulting practice, called Solutions By Miranda in a Grey-ish space. Another booth in their shop displays the amazingly detailed artwork of Muji Rieger, Executive Director and master artist of Knobhill Urban Arts District. His creativity brings a personal flair to the business space.

There are several other amazing new businesses in OZ, with more to follow soon! Latisha Hardy Dance & Co. is a competitive Latin dance studio that brings a fresh style and an inviting, non-judgmental environment. Latisha's dance studio shares the building with a gym and physical fitness center owned by her fierce female friends. Business owners Ashely Coffey and Marielle Hendry of The Nexus Community make working out, and training hard, feel like fun. Many who utilize the dance studio also participate in group workouts or individual training at the gym, and vice versa.

“Some people ‘fail’ into real estate as a ‘last resort,’” Stephanie shared, “but I sort of fell into it by accident. Over the years, I have discovered that this is who I was actually designed to be, helping people make their dreams come true, too. Everything that we do impacts everyone and can break barriers. OZ is about creating a safe and energizing place for people to connect over music and art experiences while they enjoy the amazing products and services from amazing people. But don't take my word for it: come and check it out yourself; you won't be disappointed!”

“We are so proud of what we are creating in OZ right now! What we are doing in the Opportunity Zone will change the city's legacy while it changes the lives of the business owners and customers!”

Stephanie and Jesse now own four of the eight buildings in the Opportunity Zone, and they are thrilled that one of the other building owners is joining them in their cultural rebuild of OZ. Their four buildings are occupied by up-and-coming entrepreneurs bringing culture to OZ, along with the amazing services they each provide. The OZ business owners support each other like a family and are creating an ecosystem of their own. Stephanie, Jesse, and the entrepreneurs have created a bond of trust with those who frequent Springs Mission by showing care and respect. The owners and buildings have never experienced any theft.

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About us:

Michael Shenuk is the co-founder of The On-Call Assistant and a REALTOR® at Keller Williams Partners. Michael's start in real estate was challenging, building systems and doing everything himself. His vision for The On-Call Assistant is to help agents overwhelmed with admin tasks (like he was when he started) reclaim their time and elevate it to the next level. While real estate remains his primary business, Michael hopes to grow The On-Call Assistant on a national level. Outside work, Michael loves traveling, skiing, mountain biking, and off-roading.

Aimee Garske is the co-founder and COO at The On-Call Assistant. She has worked with Michael for the past year, and her efficiency was part of the inspiration for the concept. She loves connecting clients with agents and helping agents get more time back. Outside work, Aimee loves raising her children.



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Written by **Sonja Gumber**
Casa Bay Photography



MARISA LINDSAY

THE RESILIENT REALTOR®

The journey of veteran, mother, and wife from humble beginnings, with a passion for service. The harsh reality of our human experience is that suffering is required to produce resiliency and perseverance. Often, in our most painful moments, we're transformed and made better. Marisa Lindsay's success as REALTOR® is a reflection of that truth.

Marisa grew up in a military family with a rich history of service. She continued that legacy and joined the U.S. Air Force after graduating high school in 1998. But in 2007, after nearly a decade in uniform, her life began to unravel.

She was five months pregnant with her first child and stationed overseas in Germany when everything came to a halt. After suffering prolonged marital abuse, she left her promising military career for the sake of herself and her son after realizing that single-parenting would be too difficult with the increased deployment pace of 2006.

Her journey with her newborn son, Liam, post-military began in Ohio. With little money or help from friends and family, she was forced to build a life for herself and her child from rock bottom. She bought an old single-wide trailer for her and Liam to live



in, and using the benefits she had earned in the military, she enrolled at Bowling Green State University with the hopes of eventually becoming a service member again.

“There were countless situations where I was afraid that we wouldn’t have money for food. Going to the grocery store gave me such anxiety— I always wondered if we would have the money to pay for necessities,” said Marisa. “But I kept my eye on the prize, took care of my son, and worked hard to earn scholarships to help supplement my income.”

After graduating college in Ohio, Marisa moved to Colorado, where she was able to pursue employment opportunities at USAA. She felt right at home as she worked alongside veterans and cared for military members and their families. During that time, she met the love of her life, Michael Lindsay, an active-duty U.S. Army Green Beret stationed at Fort Carson. They married a short time later.

In 2013, Marisa and Michael moved to the state of Alaska after Michael was reassigned to his new duty station in the Last Frontier. That same year, Marisa re-enlisted into the service and became a Soldier in the Alaska Army National Guard. In 2017, she graduated from Officer Candidate School as a second lieutenant.

“After pushing through and overcoming my hardships in Ohio, there was something about living in Alaska that fed my drive to continue to succeed and chase my dreams,” she said. “Suddenly, with four kids at home, I decided that I was going to join the Army, and not only join the Army, but go back to basic training at the age of 32. And then, at the age of 37, I decided that once and for all, I was going to earn my commission and become an officer— this was a lifelong dream of mine, to lead service members.”

She finally accomplished her goal, but it was short-lived. In 2019, Michael, who had recently retired, had an opportunity to move back to Colorado Springs, where Michael’s twin daughters lived. Although it meant leaving her career behind and having to start fresh, Marisa knew it was the right thing to do.

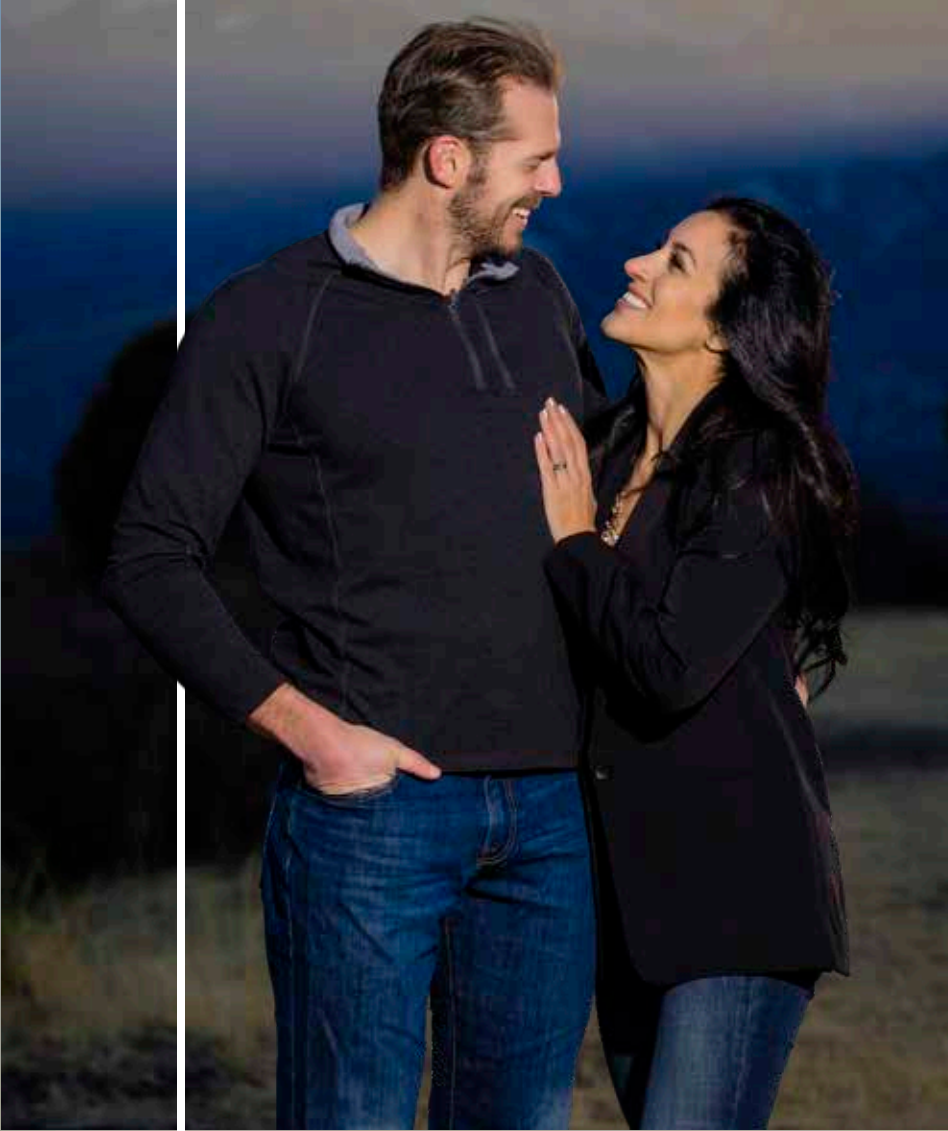
After spending most of her adult life in and around military service, Marisa stepped outside of her comfort zone and began one of the most exhilarating and challenging experiences of her life and pursued her real estate license. She passed her test in December of 2019.

When asked if there was a defining moment that helped her decide to pursue real estate school, Marisa said, “I just kept hearing a voice inside my head that told me to bet on myself. So, I did.”

Marisa described her first year as one of the busiest of her life.



“ To me, every client is family.



Particularly amongst my military families— I know what it’s like to be a dependent child, dependent spouse, and service member, and not know anyone at my new duty station, so I am fiercely protective of my military families

and work hard to educate and empower them on all their options.

“Like most non-agents, I saw real estate as an opportunity to work on a more relaxed schedule but quickly realized that my expectations were way off.” Marisa laughed, then continued, “Of all of my professional years of work, my first year of real estate was the busiest, hardest, and most rewarding I had ever experienced by far. But, I don’t think I slept for 365 days.”

To avoid burning out, it’s important for real estate agents to have a reason for keeping a positive attitude and drive. Client care is one of the major drivers that keeps Marisa going, particularly among military service members and veterans.

“To me, every client is family,” she said. “Particularly amongst my military families— I know what it’s like to be a dependent child, dependent spouse, and service member, and not know anyone at my new duty station, so I am fiercely protective of my military families and work hard to educate and empower them on all their options. I understand what it is that they may need while also providing them with community.”

Marisa’s experience with poverty as a single parent gave her a new appreciation for the grind. “I look at my past trauma as the best thing that could’ve happened to me,” she said. “I have such a burning desire, more so than ever before, to succeed— but it’s for my clients!”

Marisa has made major inroads with Keller Williams since the beginning of the pandemic. After being with them for seven months, she was able to start her own team.

“Keller Williams, particularly Walter Lee Hau, has pushed me so hard to grow in my business,” she said. “Joining Keller Williams gave me the opportunity and tools to do just that; it has been a total game-changer.”

When asked who she gives credit to for where she is today, she said: “God and my husband, Michael Lindsay. Faith has been such a big part of this process, and Mike is a big reason why I push myself so hard. Even when I joined the military, he said go for it! I’ve got the kids”.

•••

The Lindsay's, who are a blended family, boasts four children. Liam is the oldest at 15 years old and is an avid athlete who loves to serve others. He's currently a freshman in high school and wants to join the Air Force once he graduates. Evangeline is 12-years old, and you'll often find her with her nose in a book. She's an animal lover with aspirations to become a veterinarian or a military medic. Danica is Evangeline's twin sister, and when she walks into a room, she finds those needing a friend and makes a beeline to them. She's very artsy and likes to talk and draw, and she has the makings of being a creative writer one day. Esmarin, the youngest, is the perfect combo of Mike and Marisa. She loves hockey, horseback riding, and CrossFit, and once she gets her mind on something, she doesn't let it go until she gets it.

"We are a blended family, but our kids are best friends— it fills our hearts with joy," she said. "Daily, they drive Mike and me to become better people. They are our 'why.'"

When not working in real estate, her passions include physical activities and travel. Some of her favorite hobbies are CrossFit competitions, horseback riding, and hockey.

"I love activities that challenge me physically. Spartan races, marathons, and physical events that challenge my mind's

perseverance," she said. "Before real estate, I used to appreciate travel opportunities where I could get lost in order to explore. Now that I'm so busy, my ideal trip includes all-inclusive resorts where I can sit around all day and not talk if I don't want to," she laughed. "We are planning family trips to Yellowstone and Cancun this year – hopefully, experiences my children will never forget."

Marisa also supports the Green Beret Foundation, which provides for families of fallen green beret Soldiers. She recently joined the Women's Council of REALTORS® Pikes Peak: a network of women REALTORS® striving to be leaders in their field. Her long-term goal is to own her own brokerage firm within five years.



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The Michael Hendrickson Agency

Michael Hendrickson always had an entrepreneur's spirit. Growing up, his first job was selling newspaper subscriptions. He worked summers selling shoes at Athlete's foot. And his career before insurance was in the sales force with Bally Sports. Despite his childhood dream of becoming a baseball player, life took him in another direction.

Michael got his first taste of the insurance industry when a sales position opened up at a local firm. Burned out at Bally's, Michael applied for the position. And he got it. The job was with Maryland Insurance, and he was working in a call center. While it didn't fuel his entrepreneurial blood, it taught him insurance and how to communicate well with clients over the phone.

Maryland Insurance was eventually bought out by Zurich, only for Zurich corporate to close down the Springs location. Progressive Insurance was growing at the time and, in a stroke of fortune, hired all of Zurich's employees. Michael came aboard and worked in direct sales until the next opportunity to level up.

In 1997, Michael was recruited into Farmers Insurance. Four years later, in 2001, he finally

earned the opportunity to open his own agency. Finally, his entrepreneurial spirit could flourish.

Michael's vision for his agency is to be a resource for his clients. He wants him and his team to be professionals his clients can trust. And that starts with getting the right insurance to the right person.

So far, Michael's career high was hitting the Top Honor President Council in 2019. It was a milestone that took him 19 years in insurance to earn. Michael admits he would never have made it without his staff and his wife. He understands that no business can flourish long-term without taking care of its people. Beyond where he is today, Michael's goal is to become Agent of the Year for all of Farmers Insurance. And once it happens, it won't be a Michael victor, but rather a team victory.

...

Michael has a deep, professional respect for his staff, and he understands that no business can flourish long-term without taking care of its people.



...

Outside work, Michael's life revolves around his family. His youngest son is fifteen and plays baseball. His daughter is eleven and plays volleyball; she is also a bit of a foodie, discovering recipes on YouTube. They recently visited the Harry Potter theme park in Universal Orlando as a family. It was a dream for the kids! Michael also has a 28-year-old who is out on his own.

Michael's advice to real estate agents is to build a relationship with an insurance agent that you can trust. When it comes to your home, there are more important things than price.

Michael's advice to real estate agents is to build a relationship with an insurance agent that you can trust.



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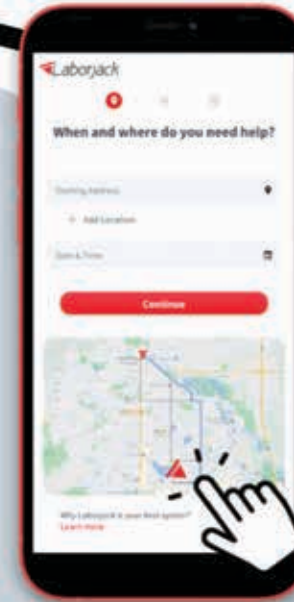
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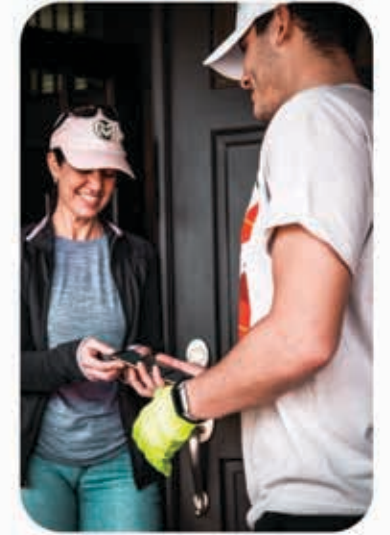
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The mother-and-son team of Lei Lonnie and Josh Watts brings a double-shot of love for people and a passion for excellence. Their incredible dynamic is fueled by shared faith, values, and experiences. Individually, they are good at what they do, but they are exponentially better together! They are able to find better solutions for problems, help clients have a better experience, and work toward better outcomes. After living in the Springs for three decades, the pair love it so much that they spend all their waking hours helping others move here too!

Lonnie lived out her dream of being a Colorado Springs mom and housewife for over three decades. She raised her sons, Josh and Tyler, to live by the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." In her free time, she fulfilled her life purpose by mentoring young women from seventh grade through high school and by using her skill and passion for interior design to bless others. She also hosted an annual cookie contest which has been enjoyed by her sons and their same core group of friends and families, plus new additions, for 38 years!

Josh has always been a connector. When he was young, he delighted neighbors with his random visits. He was raised with a strong sense of Southern politeness and responsibility, especially since his father owned a jewelry company and manufactured jewelry as well. Josh started working for his dad at age 12 and continued in sales, both personal and corporate, for years. He was very transaction-based, yet he was also good at connecting with customers whether he was selling jewelry, flowers, or organic soil.

JOSH & LONNIE

MAKING IT BETTER,
TOGETHER

Written by Ruth Gnirk
Images by David Gaston
Photography





Because of a change in situation, Lonnie found that she needed to sell her beloved family home of 17 years. She also needed to find a way to make some reliable income. She briefly considered getting into graphic design, but the experience she had with her real estate agent stirred something inside of her. She wanted to become a part of changing people's lives and making things better. Lonnie became a REALTOR® in 2009 and started selling real estate full-time in 2010, after her home sold.

"My favorite thing about real estate is that we help people transition through their good times and their bad times," Lonnie smiled, "because the closing table is just the first quarter of our relationship! Living through hard parts in my own life has made me more empathetic toward others and equipped me to comprehensively help them. My second favorite thing, and how I differentiated myself and built my business, was staging my listings. I knew that the house that won the beauty contest would be the first to get the offers! I love to make things look good, but I also love statistics and facts; if the numbers don't work, then nothing works."

When Josh's dad wanted to retire from the jewelry business, he offered to sell it to Josh. Although he was honored by the opportunity, Josh turned it down because he was drawn by the joy that he saw his mother had found in real estate, and he wanted to experience that fulfillment for himself. Josh became a REALTOR® in 2017.

"I didn't want to ride on anyone's coattails," recalled Josh. "I loved being with people and knew I was energized by meeting new people. I also knew that I wanted to help others accomplish their goals. Growing up in a family business, I knew that the buck stops with me, and I knew that I wanted to be able to write my own future. I had five other interviews, but RE/MAX Properties blew them all away."

Lonnie and Josh strive to make a difference in their corner of the world. They both have a shared standard of excellence, which brings meaning to their work together. They take the time to relate to their clients and know what buyers want. They walk through each house they are selling for a new client, pointing out the special, sentimental things that need to be packed away so that the buyers can more easily envision themselves in the space.

The Watts team serve their clients better, together, starting with daughter-in-law/sister-in-law Liz, who deftly juggles multiple tasks at the same time, at all hours, and is an integral part of the team. Stage-master Gentry helps to procure a higher sales price by helping potential buyers



LITTLE INVESTMENTS
CAN LEAD TO SUCCESS.



MY FAVORITE THING
ABOUT REAL ESTATE IS
THAT WE HELP PEOPLE
TRANSITION THROUGH
THEIR GOOD TIMES
AND THEIR BAD TIMES.





Gentry O'Leary, Josh Watts, Lonnie Watts, and Liz Watts

envision what a home can look like at its best. Many times, clients have second thoughts about moving when Gentry is done staging their house. Team member Mike specializes in updating the seller's home to make it appealing to a broad range of clients and ready to hit the market. The finishing touch comes from David's HD twilight photos and cinematic video walkthrough tours, telling the story of what it's like to live there.

"Little investments can lead to success," said Josh. "And add an extra couple of zeros for our Seller," chimed in Lonnie. "We guide and coach our clients, helping them use key descriptive words about their home and area, which trigger Google analytics. Ideally, we get to know our clientele long before the sale, and we try to meet face to face with every past client at least three times a year."

The Watts have a goal of helping four to five families finalize a deal each month, and they average 50+ sales per year. Repeat clients and clients who initially bought their home through the Watts have an advantage because Lonnie works with them through the years to add value to their homes. She gives suggestions on paint colors, light fixtures, flooring, counters, and tile that the current owners and future owners will enjoy.

One of the local resources dear to the Watts family is CASA, court-appointed special advocates. To bless the community while raising funds to support the work done by CASA volunteers, Lonnie has been giving two-hour calligraphy lessons on Tuesday evenings, and Josh and Liz have been providing the dinner and drinks. Classes last between six and seven weeks and are given in exchange for contributions to CASA.

Lonnie and Josh have both been invited to be mentors through RE/MAX Properties AMP'd (Agent Mastery Program). They have also been awarded Best of Springs two years in a row. They have also been recognized as members of the Elite 25. Even when the stress levels are high, this mother-son team both readily admit that making a difference in people's lives fills them up. Lonnie has set a personal goal of owning eight to ten investment properties by the time she retires.

The hard-working team agrees that this is the most "helping" job they've ever been in. By supporting each other, their lows don't seem as bad, and their highs are much higher. They are honored to serve their Colorado Springs community, and each other, as a team. They are here to make it better together!



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While **BRYCE O'BRIEN** presents herself very seriously, she's actually really fun once you get to know her.



To read more about your fellow agents, add Brian Gowdy on Facebook. He posts short bios and fun facts about each agent to his personal page!

If you haven't met Brian yet, he would love to meet you! Brian's contact: **719-313-3028**, **brian.gowdy@realproducersmag.com**, or Facebook message him!

around town ◀◀



ERIC COUNCILL loves racing and drifting cars.

Bonus fun fact: Eric's calling card is Chiquita stickers. Growing up, his dad would put Chiquita banana stickers on stuff for good luck. Today, Eric has a client who custom-designs a new Chiquita sticker for every year, and he and anyone who gets one stick them places. Only, you can't buy a Chiquita sticker; you have to either leave a five-star review or donate to a charity to earn one.

KRYSTAL MUCHA works for Tarek El Moussa, the star of Flip or Flop on HGTV!



fun facts

ABOUT YOUR FELLOW AGENTS AND PARTNERS



Welcome new partners: **AIMEE GARSKE** and **MICHAEL SHENUK** with The On-Call Assistant!

Fun fact about Aimee: Aimee's honeymoon lasted three years—she and her husband traveled all over Europe!


Fun fact about Michael: While Michael loves to travel, he absolutely despises flying!



In her banking days, **TARYN SIMENTAL** opened a bank account for Flavor Flav!

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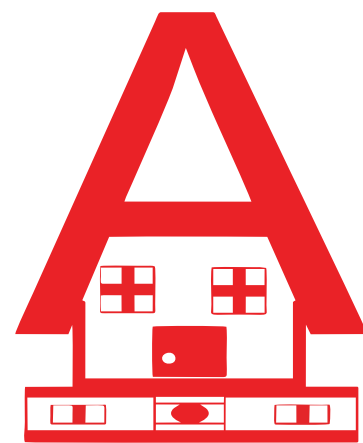


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