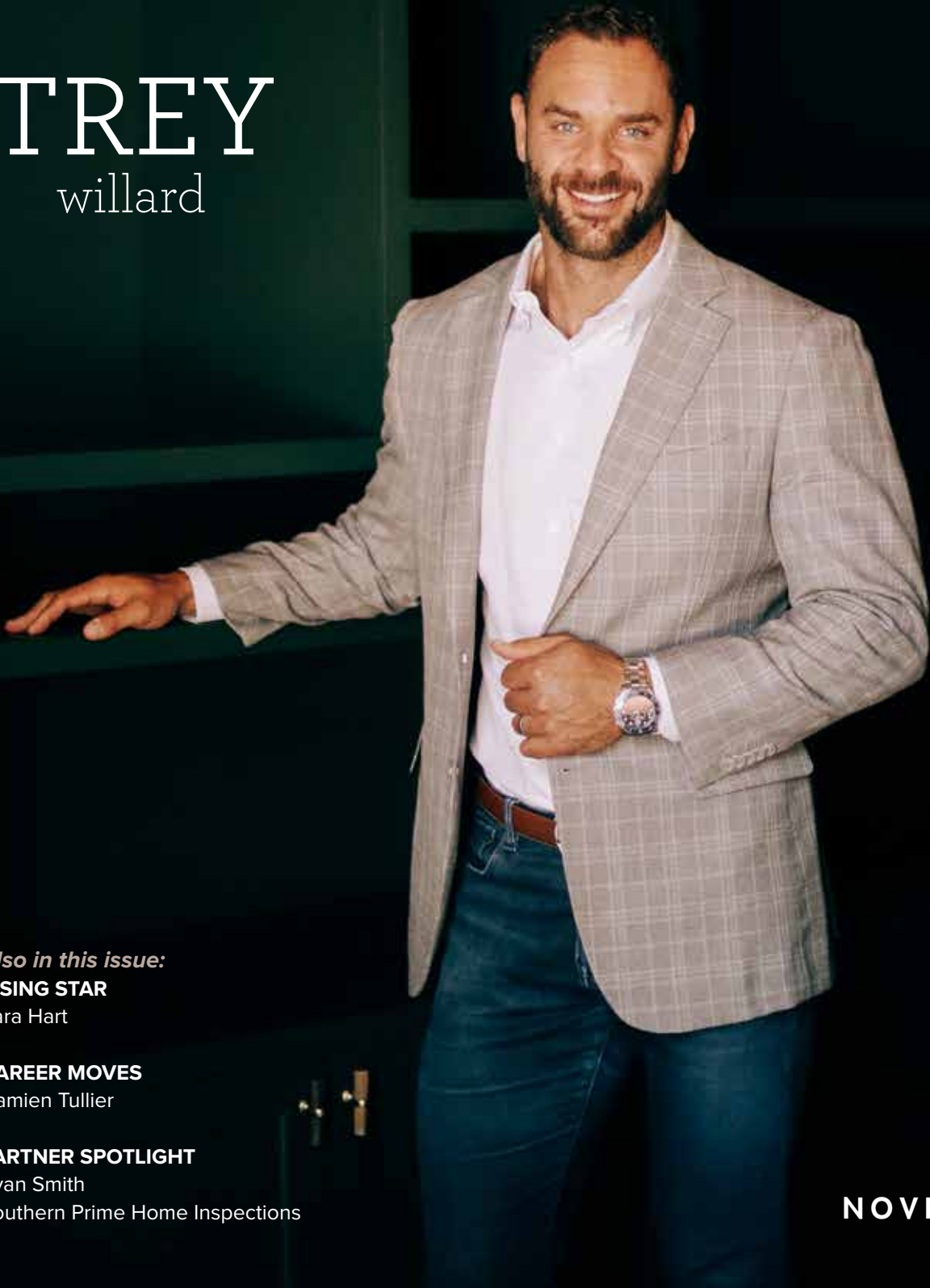


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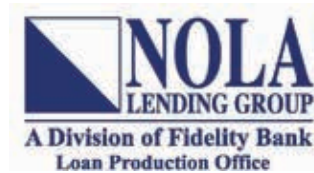


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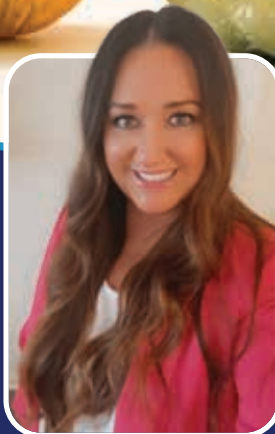
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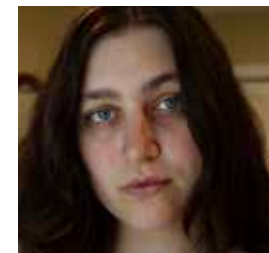
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►► publisher's note

the 5 Cs of Real Producers

Top producing real estate agents, brokers, team leaders and the Preferred Partners who invest in this publication through advertising submit their nominations for the features you enjoy each month.

Of those nominated, our Real Producers team carefully selects those to be featured in each issue based loosely on the following "Five C" criteria:

- **COLLABORATION.** The number of nominations is usually an indicator that the individual is respected by their peers and works well with other agents.
- **COMPETITION.** Production numbers speak volumes. Let's face it — the name of the publication is Real Producers, so folks need to be top producers to make it into the magazine.
- **CHARACTER.** Although most in the industry have great character and integrity, we will not feature anyone — agent or business — who has not been nominated as a person or business operating with integrity.
- **CONTRIBUTION.** We love to highlight those who are making a difference by giving back to real estate and the community.
- **COMPELLING STORY.** Experiences and journeys that solidify our mission to connect, elevate and inspire our readers.

Our nominations committee also gets to know the agents who are engaging in our private Facebook group. Send me a PM if you would like an invitation to that page. Membership is limited to the top 300 agents, past and present, plus team leaders, real estate brokers and current preferred business partners.

To nominate your favorite agents and businesses, use the QR code located at the bottom of this page to access a submission form. We seek content for rising stars, broker spotlights, difference makers, overcomers, industry experts, local legends and our "Get To Kneaux" feature. Top agents and current business partners can nominate as many agents and businesses as they want.

Remember, our featured agents do not pay anything to be in the magazine. Although other programs out there may look similar, we are not a "pay-to-play" model. We select most articles six to 12 months in advance and notify everyone two months before their feature appears. Please don't be discouraged if you have met with us and have not received the call to be featured.

Nominations are what keep Real Producers going strong. We look forward to receiving your nominations so that we can continue to soar.



Wishing you a happy, healthy and productive fall!

Gina



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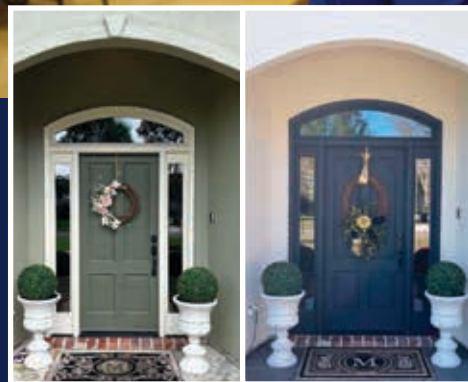
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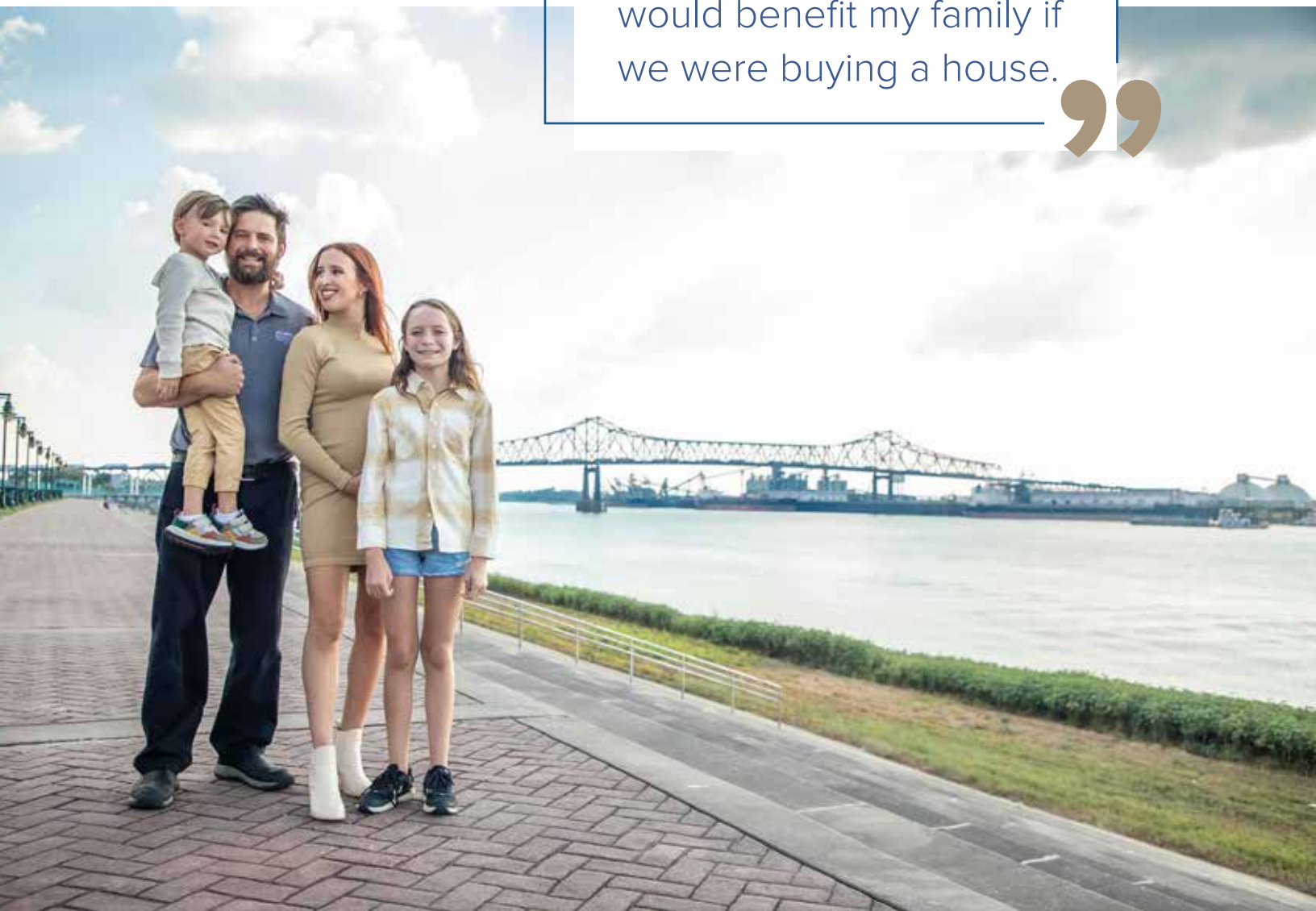
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If it's broke, fix it.

For Ryan Smith, the customer experience of both the REALTOR® and the person buying or selling the home is the focus. “I see my job as easing some fears and creating an experience rather than a transaction.”

A licensed home inspector since 2017, Ryan worked part-time at this vocation while still holding down full-time management positions. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, he decided to take the leap into entrepreneurship, opening Southern Prime Home Inspections. “That’s when I was contemplating making a jump anyway,” he stated. Also a licensed REALTOR®, Ryan has training and experience in seeing things from the perspective of both the REALTOR® and the client. The most rewarding part of his journey in being a full-time home inspector is being able to give people peace of mind: “Seeing people be able to breathe easy and say, ‘Now that we know what’s going on, let’s go ahead with the purchase.’”

Prior to inspections, Ryan managed restaurants for almost 13 years. “This experience taught me people skills and an understanding that when it comes to your business, the customer is always right.” During those years in the restaurant industry, he worked on the side for a plumber as well as a heating and air conditioning company. Ryan fixed and installed both air conditioning units and plumbing. Much of Ryan’s skill for recognizing construction issues was taught early on. “When I was growing up, we didn’t call someone to fix something when it was broken ... my upbringing was ‘fix it yourself.’” Ryan

believes you recognize an issue and find a way to solve it. This attitude has helped him build a solid reputation in our local real estate community.

The core values of Southern Prime Home Inspections are honesty, excellence and integrity. Ryan’s intentions are for this business to be “a one-stop shop” for buying real estate and provide service beyond “the sale.” Southern Prime Home Inspections not only offers home inspections with same-day digital reports, but also pool inspections, wood-destroying insect reports, mold and air-quality inspections, sewer cameras and, most recently, he added pressure washing and soft wash to his list of offerings. **“I try to add services to my business that I know would benefit my family if we were buying a house.”**

Southern Prime Home Inspections is more than the average inspection company. “You call me ... you want my attention ... you get it now.” Ryan wants his inspection clients to know that he is a phone call away even after the sale is complete. “Every time the phone rings, I answer it as quickly as I can.” He continues, “The phone rings, and I think, maybe I could help someone ... this could be another opportunity.”

Ryan and his wife, Kelsey, are blessed with two beautiful children, Kynlee, age 10, and Luke, age 4. Their family will welcome another daughter, Margot, this month. “My profession has allowed me the flexibility to take my children to school and spend time with them when they’re not in school.” Ryan’s daughter Kynlee is an avid reader who this past year not only achieved the most points in an AR Reading program for her grade but surpassed all points ever achieved in the school’s history. Family vacations to Lake Michigan, at least one whole week every summer, as well as shorter beach trips to Orange Beach, AL, are prioritized for Ryan and Kelsey.

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» career moves

By Ruth Gnirk
Photos by Ace Sylvester

DAMIEN TULLIER

Together EVERYONE Achieves More

An injury crushed Damien Tullier's dream of playing professional football, but it didn't change his love for sports or the power of accomplishing great things through team effort. As a coach and teacher for 13 years, he helped students learn to work as a team. Since becoming a REALTOR® in 2012, he has been teaming up with clients to help them accomplish their goals of homeownership and teaming up with the community to connect and celebrate the people of Baton Rouge.



Coach T.

Damien's parents taught him morals and values, and he saw a living example of diligence and entrepreneurship from his grandfather, a subcontractor who built his business on the Golden Rule and worked closely with his clients. His grandmother taught him to value people and relationships, insisting that Damien follow proper etiquette by sending handwritten thank you cards after he received a gift for his birthday or Christmas.

In 1995 Damien moved from his hometown of New Orleans to Baton Rouge to attend Louisiana State University on a football scholarship. Although an unfortunate injury ended his promising career, he earned his degree in kinesiology and education in 2000 so he could share his love of the game with others through coaching and teaching.



It is so rewarding to help former students buy homes. Having the heart of a teacher and coach helped me establish so much trust with the parents and with the students as well.

“You may never know how a word or act of kindness can make a difference in someone else’s life.”



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Damien faithfully served as a PE teacher and athletic director at Victory Christian Academy, pouring himself into the lives of his students and their families for 12 years. The only downside was that as his kids got older, the seasonal practice schedules and games cut into his family time before and after school. This made it hard for him to attend events outside of Victory after his children graduated and moved to high school.

A career in real estate was always of interest, and having the heart of a teacher and coach made him believe he could effectively assist clients with their housing needs, always putting their best interests first.

The REAL Work Begins

This summer, Damien celebrated his 10th year of serving the community as a licensed REALTOR®. He has lost count of how many of his clients are former students. He finds it very rewarding to be serving his community in a more impactful way. “It is so rewarding to help former students buy homes,” Damien smiled. “Having the heart of a teacher and coach helped me establish so much trust with the parents and with the students as well. I guide and advise; I don’t sell. My goal is for people to be well taken care of and have their needs completely met.”

Teaching and coaching taught him to seek wisdom from others and to keep a neutral perspective rather than being affected emotionally when things don’t seem to be working out smoothly in a transaction.

Loving My Neighbor

Damien was looking for a way to help connect and celebrate the people in his community. He had heard many people’s stories and wanted to find a platform through which people

could be heard and valued. Inspired by Brad Abernathy, a broker associate from Georgia, Damien started a website called The Faces OfSM Baton Rouge. His goal is to tell the story of the people of Baton Rouge one face at a time. People can nominate fellow residents, friends, students, servicepeople and business owners to have their stories featured so the community can get to know one another.

thefacesofbatonrouge.com

The Tulliers have a close-knit family. They enjoy going to their camp on False River, traveling and taking vacations together. They love their home church, Journey Church, on Greenwell Springs Road in Central, and their children have been very involved in the church youth group. Damien shared that his wife, Jamie, is his steady rock, and he is grateful that she helps him stay focused. This spring, they celebrated their 22nd anniversary. Their son is a business major at LSU, and their daughter attends Central High. Damien and Jamie are proud of their children for choosing to serve, help, love and give to others.

Two books have impacted Damien, and he highly recommends them to others. They are *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Steven Covey and *The Go-Giver* by Bob Burg. These books have taught him that we can control our reaction and response to stimuli we are faced with, and when you make others matter first, what matters to you will matter to them as well.

Hand-Written

Inspired by the lessons his grandparents taught him long ago, Damien treats others with honor and respect, the way he wants to be treated, and stays connected to clients through personal touches at meaningful times. He recognizes the value in others by sending a handwritten card that arrives in their mailbox on their special days and calls to personally wish them a happy birthday. Clients are delighted by his “birthday coffee cards” and calls.

A few years ago, the father of one of his former students posted a video of his son hitting a home run in one of the last high school

baseball games of his senior year. Damien saw the video on social media and sent a handwritten note to congratulate the young man on his accomplishment. Six months later, Damien found himself standing at the funeral of the student’s father, expressing condolences to the grieving wife and mother for the loss of her husband. She did not recognize Damien, but when her son reintroduced them, she wanted to know if he was the man who always sends her son encouraging notes. When Damien acknowledged that he was, the mother expressed her heartfelt appreciation for his meaningful gesture.

“You may never know how a word or act of kindness can make a difference in someone else’s life,” Damien reflected. “I have never met a person that I did not see value in, even if I had to look more closely. Every single person has value. We always need to love our neighbor as ourselves, and we can do that with every person we encounter. Ministry opportunities are everywhere, and we will see them if we are attentive to them.”



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SARA HART



A Part Of Your Story

Two years ago, Sara Hart found her ultimate job. She found a job that is different every day, full of challenges and even more full of rewards. She found a job that turned out to be her passion. Sara found real estate.

Growing up surrounded by real estate agents and contractors, Sara's family and friends often wondered when she would get bitten by the bug. It wasn't until she was encouraged by her boyfriend, Josh Derouen, that she finally gave in. "After hearing about how I should go into real estate for so many years, I told myself that I just needed to try it; it ended up being the best decision I've ever made," Sara said with a laugh. As it turns out, all that questioning from family and friends was because they saw the talent for sales Sara had inside her all along.

To Sara, though, real estate is not about sales. With a sparkle in her eye, Sara talked about her clients as her friends and how she values each and every one of them. "Most of my clients don't stay just clients. Even after the transaction is over, our relationship continues." Sara remarked that her favorite part of real estate is getting to know people's stories, and she considers it an honor to be a small part of that story.

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“Life is short. Life is about relationships and experiences, and I get a glimpse into different people’s journeys and lives.” As any agent knows, the path to having wonderful clients and success is not easy, and Sara wants to debunk misconceptions about what it’s really like to be in real estate. “What you see on TV with the designer cars and clothes isn’t what it’s like. Real estate is tough. If real estate was as easy and glamorous as it seems, everyone would do it.”

Sara credits her broker, Amanda Parfait with Engels & Völkers, as the person who gave her the best advice on how to succeed in this tough industry; Amanda told her that growth doesn’t happen in our comfort zones. Sara has taken Amanda’s advice and ran with it. “Persistence is the most important thing. Some days aren’t going to go well, but when you look back on the lessons you learned on those days, you’ll be happy you didn’t quit.”

Even with persistence, Sara knows that her success hasn’t happened without the guidance of those important to her. Sara’s late mother, Susan Hart, taught her that she could pursue anything she wanted as long as she was committed to the hard work of doing it. “She was my best friend and a big influence on who I am today. My brother and I didn’t grow up in a house where you were handed things; we were taught to work for what we wanted.” Sara’s brother, Franklin Hart, also taught her the important lesson of persistence. “My brother was one of my swim coaches growing up, and he instilled in me that I wouldn’t get better unless I practiced a little every day. Real estate is comparable to practicing swimming. It’s a little bit every day.”

Sara knows that she still has much to learn about real estate, and she’s excited to continue learning. “I just want to keep learning and growing. I never want to stop growing because if I do, it means I’ve hit the ceiling. I don’t want to hit that.” For Sara Hart, the ceiling of real estate does not exist. This agent, with heart and determination, will be an essential part of the Baton Rouge real estate industry for many years to come.

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WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES?

My top hobbies would definitely be traveling with my wife or family and playing music. I started playing the drums when I was a kid, and now play in church or with local bands.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE LOCAL RESTAURANT?

My favorite local restaurant or one that's close by would have to be St Francisville Inn. When they're not available my next choice would be Ruth's Chris. Something about those BBQ shrimp!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT BEING A MORTGAGE LOAN OFFICER?

I would say my favorite part about this job is definitely the fulfillment when you get to the finish line with every client, but especially the clients who NEVER thought they'd own a home one day. To be a small part of that accomplishment with them, probably means more to me than them.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR KIDS/MARRIAGE/FAMILY?

My beautiful wife and I have been married now 11 years come this November. We just welcomed our 5th child, that's right, five! We have four boys (Cohen - 9, Baylor - 5, Abel Knox - 4 & Judah - 1) and one girl (Willow Grace - 3 mths) who was final addition. So we have a handful that's for sure.

WHAT MAKES YOU UNIQUE?

If you've ever worked with my team and me, you'll know it's the relationship, knowledge, and most of all COMMUNICATION that makes us unique! Ask any REALTOR® that's had the chance to work with me what they remember, it would most likely be how well I communicated and kept things running smooth during the process. If I haven't worked with you, I would love to show you!

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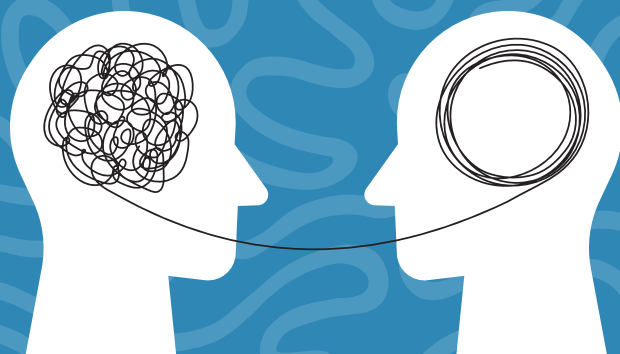




▶ honest to goodness

By David Madaffari

TMI



Recently, I found myself in a conversation with a potential client who is going through a divorce.

This person was referred to me by a friend of mine who had recently gone through a divorce. Even though we are friends, I was truly humbled that he felt I handled his delicate situation well enough to refer me to someone facing a similarly emotional deal. I take these referrals seriously, as their reputation is on the line as much as my own. In previous articles, I discussed the golden rule and having a “clean conscience” by approaching our businesses with our values. This situation once again gave me another opportunity to reinforce these value propositions both emotionally and professionally, albeit in a seemingly counterproductive manner. During the conversation, I learned there was another agent being considered to list the home, someone chosen by the ex-spouse. As

might be expected, distrust and accusations of favoritism were lobbed at each other and from there, they went straight to talks of commission rates (the other agent offered to charge less), sales data and who they could trust more to handle the deal. Clearly, this was not going to be a mutually agreeable situation. When asked by the client to provide data to show why I’m the best choice, I know I could have done this in two ways: promote only the good data about myself and cherry-pick my competition’s less-flattering data, or give the full picture with no edits. It was here that I made the choice to go with the latter. In doing so, I showed that the other agent actually had more sales activity than I had by comparison this year. However, I offered something besides just numbers and commission rates they hadn’t received before — I offered unfettered information. I offered honesty. Now, you might think, as competitive as things have gotten, that this just sounds crazy when trying to win a listing. Not surprisingly, though, this begged new questions, especially since she indeed wanted me to be her agent of choice (“Why would you show your competition’s success over yours?”). By showing them the truth, though, it made her confident to ask even deeper questions about who I am and what my values are. She also gained a little more perspective into how the real estate industry works beyond the numbers net proceeds. The conversation became more personal and relatable, and I was able to provide examples of my experiences in my career where I’ve failed AND succeeded and what I learned from both. This was not what she expected when she asked me for simple numbers. I could have used a scripted one-liner to one-up my competition right at the beginning to try and win the deal on quick wit. With my friend’s reputation on the line, though, I felt that offering a sense of vulnerability and honesty also offered my empathy to the client’s situation and that I wanted her to have all the information needed to do what’s best for THEM. Time will tell if my “gamble” earns the listing, but I can rest easy knowing that I have at least earned their respect.

Have something you would like to say? Email David, and let’s keep the conversation going: david@davidmadaffari.com.

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TREY WILLARD

Go All In

► cover story

Photos by **Katie Coffee**

While Trey Willard was working in the service industry, his work ethic and charisma could not be ignored. REALTOR Tim Houk took notice and offered Trey a job as an assistant, and so began his passion for a career in real estate. Early on while working as a buyer's agent, Trey learned the operations of the business and began diligently studying the ins and outs of the real estate world. Now, managing The W Group Real Estate Team with 27 agents and 8 people serving on his support and administrative staff, the idea that Trey would be "good in real estate" has proven well founded.

A Baton Rouge native and LSU graduate, Trey's passion for his community parallels the passion he has for his career. Though you would consider him a veteran agent, Trey is a forever student of the real estate market, of business, and of leadership. His knowledge of the real estate market encompasses not only the understanding of economics, financing, and trends but also the understanding of hyper local markets as well as the bigger picture with national markets. As a leader, mentor, and coach, he believes the most important thing one can do is overcome one's own limiting beliefs. "I work very hard on my mindset," he related.

Trey understands that real estate is "a contact sport" and has the work ethic of a top tier "athlete". He is not afraid to pick up the phone and put in the work necessary to succeed in the competitive world of real estate. "The difference between successful people and unsuccessful people," he stated, "is execution." One can know everything, but without execution, there will be no success. Success for Trey is defined as the ability to provide for and spend

time with his family. Married in Napa, California in 2014, Trey and his wife Whitney have two daughters, Rowan, age 12 and Sloane, age 7. Rowan plays volleyball and is a member of the middle school cheerleading squad at U-High and dances at Hip Hop X. Sloane does gymnastics and cheerleading with the LSU Bengals and plays soccer with Baton Rouge Soccer Association. The Willards love to travel every opportunity they get from the beaches of 30A, to the slopes of Vail, to the valley of Napa. Trey's "Why" is being able to give his children experiences he was not afforded as a youth.

Trey maintains his successes by creating disciplined habits. As an advocate for nutrition and fitness, he knows that consistency is key. He is a firm believer in a regimented morning routine and when creating his daily "to do list", knows that his most important tasks must be completed before noon. The success of the W Group Real Estate Team can be seen in its expansion into Covington/Mandeville this year and into New Orleans in the first quarter of 2023. The group completed 334 transactions in 2021

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with a total volume of \$91,000,000 with the goal for 2022 of 500 transactions and \$150,000,000 in volume.

Trey participates in Club Blue of the Boys' and Girls' Club of Metro Louisiana, promoting networking events and volunteer opportunities in service to young people. He also participates in many events with the American Cancer Society; a cause dear to him since losing both of his parents to cancer over the past 2 years.

For those considering a career in real estate, Trey's advice is to "go all in," learning everything possible and becoming a master of each different component of a REALTOR's career. He finds one of the most rewarding aspects of his career is the leadership and mentorship he provides to the agents on his team while maintaining and emulating a positive attitude that "comes from a place of abundance."





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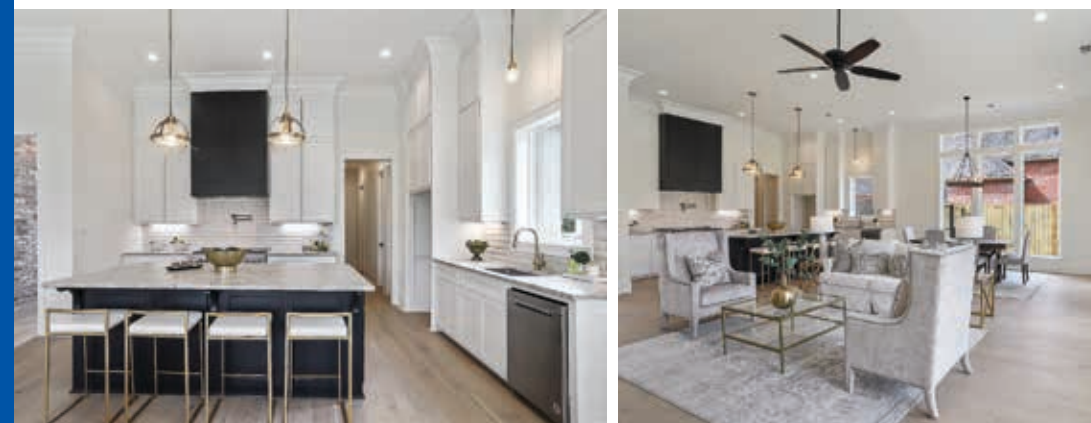
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