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a note from the NEW Publisher

Hello, Charlotte Real Producers!

I'm your new publisher, Kristin Brindley. I look forward to meeting you all in the coming months as my team and I begin heading up *Charlotte Real Producers*. It is a badge of honor to be a Real Producer. Receiving this publication means YOU are in the top 0.05% of the industry in your market. Congratulations!

Our mission at the Kristin Brindley Team is to connect, elevate and inspire our Real Producers communities. I've had the pleasure and privilege of starting near the very beginning of Real Producers, founding *DC Metro Real Producers* five and a half years ago, Northern Virginia four and a half years ago, *Richmond Real Producers* just a year ago and *Long Island Real Producers*, coming soon. I'm excited to now bring our experienced and successful team to *Charlotte Real Producers*, as well, and look forward to learning about you, your market, your challenges and your goals. Each community we serve is unique and has its own personality!

Visit www.kristinbrindley.com to learn more about me and our team.

We are excited to hear your opinions on what you would like to see in the magazine and with events moving forward ... content, event themes, locations and, of course, who you would like to see featured. How may we uniquely serve our Real Producers Charlotte community?

November is a month of gratitude... It's a time to reflect on the current year and the year to come and to say thank you to all the important people in our lives. Veterans Day is also this month. Thank you to all of our veterans!

Thank you to our preferred partners, without whom none of this would be possible. We are thankful for their support and for the Real Producers who referred them. As you know, all of our preferred partners have been referred and vetted by other Real

Producers, giving us the most well-curated list of top industry partners in the area. If you would like a personal introduction to any of our partners, please feel free to contact me. I'd love to help!

We look forward to meeting many of you at our Winter Mixer on December 1st, and in March at our first quarterly event with you!

Scan the QR code below to give us your thoughts on events, venues and content.



Happy Thanksgiving to you all!

Your Publisher,



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KRISTIN BRINDLEY
ENTREPRENEUR, CONNECTOR, PUBLISHER

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
What are you grateful for?



By **Eli Pacheco**
Photos by **Kelly Klemmensen Photography**



NC FARM BUREAU INSURANCE GROUP

A Strong Team with Top-of-the-Line Service

Since 1953, NC Farm Bureau Insurance Group has served the community with its insurance needs. Historically, this grassroots organization gave farmers a voice on agricultural issues. Today, it provides insurance for auto, home, and life.

Monica Burke is the agency manager at NC Farm Bureau Insurance in Matthews. She's a third-generation Farm Bureau manager, following her

father and grandfather. Burke has been an intern, associate, assistant, and agent. She became agency manager in April 2021.

"I saw how passionate my family was about the business," says Monica, a North Carolina State alumna and Winston-Salem native. "I saw them build meaningful relationships. Being here has been wonderful. This business is in my blood, and I'm jazzed up about it. I'm happy to work every day, and I'm very blessed."

Burke is quick to bring up her team: Tim Fincher, George Payne, Lewis Ritter, and Zack Souther. Together, they provide the kind of service that automated businesses can't. They're the Chick-fil-A of insurance.

"You get an agent who represents you and can answer your questions," Monica says. "You have their cell number and email. Imagine contacting a utility company and having a direct line to one person. That's what you have with us."

George Payne has been with the agency for more than eight years. He appreciates the enthusiasm and professionalism Monica brings to the office. He's learned a lot from her "about efficiency efforts, policy enhancements and opportunities," he says. "And also about having a positive attitude more often. Farm Bureau really cares for their employees a lot."

Lewis Ritter says working with NC Farm Bureau is special.

"It gives me the opportunity to work with folks in our community and build a relationship with them," he says.

Zack Souther is a new addition to the team and has had "a blast" integrating, he says.

"It is clear they care about each other and work together," he says. "People ask about family or what they did over the weekend and are genuinely interested. There is a lot of experience in the office, and everyone is always happy to lend a helping hand."

It's not an easy business to work in, but the challenges of it are also its rewards.

Monica says her phone is on every day of the year to help clients. NC Farm Bureau Insurance's motto is "Helping you is what we do best." And Monica takes that to heart.

"I'm treating them like I'd want my family treated," she says. "When they call me, it's because something is going on. When you get into insurance, you

must know when you're signing up for it. We're the people that people call on the worst days. I'm their first call. It's a huge responsibility."

The industry, like most of society, is always changing. Not only from COVID-19, but today, the price of cars, rebuilding homes and insurance rates are rising. It takes more money to rebuild now.

Through it all, NC Farm Bureau Insurance's focus is on people.

"We don't look at people as transactions," Monica states. "We must consider each individual as a person, with a family behind them. What matters most to them? Our job is to protect

...

You get an agent who represents you and can answer your questions. You have their cell number and email... You have a direct line to one person with us."





The NC Farm Bureau – Matthews Office leadership team (from left to right: Lewis Ritter, Zack Souther, George Payne, Monica Burke, Tim Fincher)

“It’s a business, but it’s also a huge family ... clients, coworkers, and all people that I’ve met along the way.”

them in the best way they need. We strive to make it a great experience.”

Lewis Ritter has been with NC Farm Bureau for 28 years. He started working there out of college. Why did he stay so long?

“It’s because of the great relationships I’ve enjoyed with my clients and co-workers,” he says readily. “Farm Bureau is a great company to work for that provides a valuable service to policyholders.”

The Future: Personalized Service
Change comes fast. Businesses such as NC Farm Bureau Insurance must adapt. They’ve been in business for many years, not by ignoring change, but also by not wavering from their values.

“It’s a business, but it’s also a huge family,” Monica says. “We all have each other’s back. I’ve never experienced a culture like this.”

NC Farm Bureau Insurance is delivering on promises and forming strong relationships. That’s how the agency stays essential.

“I’ve made my best friends because of my career,” Monica shares. “They’re clients, coworkers, and all people that I’ve met along the way. Many times, we get calls because this horrible thing happened. I can look it up and say, “You have coverage. We’ll take care of you.”

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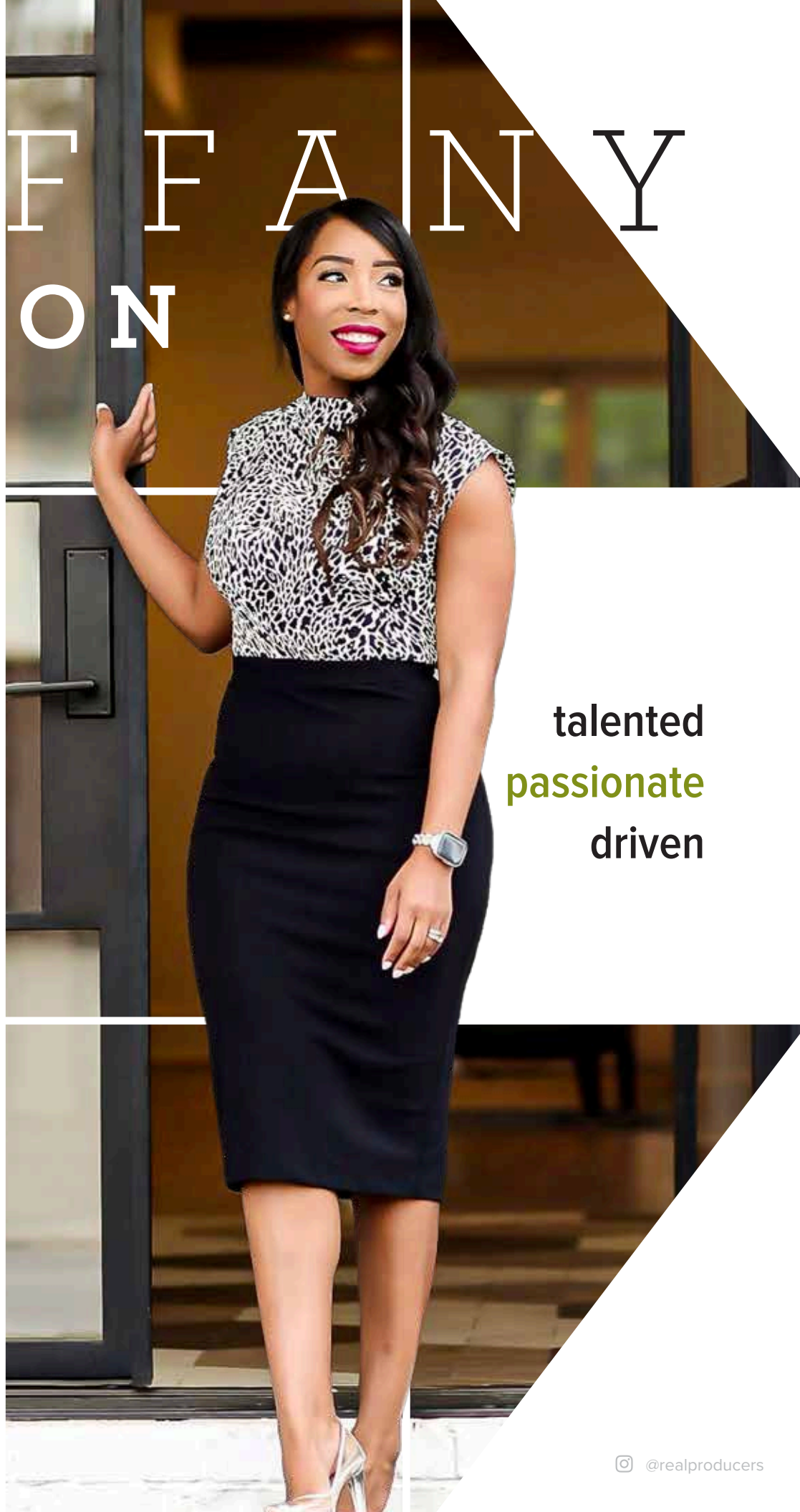
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TIFFANY MOTON



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By Eli Pacheco
Photos by Ariel Perry

Tiffany Moton has all the tools to become a standout agent, and her approach is a bit revolutionary.

An agent with the Allen Tate Charlotte-Center City office since 2018, Tiffany is not alone among top producers in her concern for fostering relationships. It's when she speaks of goals... She doesn't use words like "volume" or "money." For Tiffany, it's not about awards, it's about what she can do for people.

"My goal is to help as many people as I can," says Tiffany. "I would love to double the number of people I assist next year. I would like to help develop programs that provide resources to those less fortunate to assist them with homeownership."

That will take the form of a foundation Tiffany hopes to start soon.

Tiffany leads Moton Real Estate at Allen Tate. Her career of five-plus years sprung from her appreciation of architecture, along with the influence of her mentor,

Glen French. Glen saw, in Tiffany, all the characteristics a successful real estate agent needs.

Tiffany was recently recognized as one of Allen Tate's top 150 agents in closed volume. She attributes her success to becoming a trusted advisor too. She cites tools in place that afford her the time and energy to assist her clients.

"My client's real estate needs are my number one priority," says Tiffany, who began her career in Kernersville. "I am not only an agent, I am their resource for all things Charlotte and the surrounding area."

Alison Smith is Tiffany's broker in charge at Allen Tate. She calls Tiffany "amazing."

"She is extremely thorough and is always working hard for her clients," Alison says.

Tiffany is a wife and friend and is active in her community.

...

“My goal is to help as many people as I can. I would love to double the number of people I assist next year.”



“I’ve always been passionate about helping people and making a difference in people’s lives.”



...

“I am a food enthusiast,” she says. “I enjoy the arts, fitness and traveling. These other parts of me transcend and allow me to connect with people on many different levels. If you focus on the relationship as opposed to the transaction, you build trust and a connection.”

Not Afraid of Failure

Tiffany Moton does not like to lose. She’s quite Type A and likes to be in control of her processes. Working with Tiffany, you understand she’s transparent and expectations are clear.

“The biggest difference for me is that I am not afraid of failure,” Tiffany says. “In fact, I thrive in adversity. Each hardship allows me to learn and become a more rounded and improved advocate for my clients.” Setbacks motivate her, she says. “I’ve never been the conforming type. I like being different.”

Tiffany faced adversity from the start. She came to Charlotte and joined the fray without a local network. As a newbie, Tiffany feared people wouldn’t choose her because of a perceived lack of knowledge of the area. So she dove into the networks and numbers. She sharpened her communication skills, even with the most challenging clients.

“I provide information that helps them grasp the reality of our market,” Tiffany says. “Once we are on the same page, we can achieve their goal in a cohesive way.”

That Tiffany could sharpen her skills so quickly has impressed Alison Smith.

“The fact that she’s grown to become a top producer in just a few years after she entered a market where she didn’t know anyone shows the dedication she has to our profession and her career,” Alison says.

In the toughest situations, Tiffany feels authentic and free. That competitive drive kicks in — “almost like a superpower,” she says with a smile.

Alison sees a bright future for Tiffany in real estate.

“Tiffany is driven and will accomplish anything she puts her mind to,” Alison says. “She truly wants the best for people and to help them however she can, even if it’s not real estate related. She loves being the “go-to” for her clients, from restaurant recommendations to fun things to do in the community.



Tiffany Moton joined Allen Tate Realtors® in 2018.

They trust her because she takes the time to really care for all of their needs.”

Previously, Tiffany worked as a program coordinator and business administrator for private schools. She taught a freshman experience course at the university level.

“I’ve always been passionate about helping people and making a difference in people’s lives,” she says. “It’s rewarding to assist people with homeownership and building generational wealth. For most people, that is the American dream.”

We know Tiffany has big plans on the horizon. She’ll approach those with a passion for success and for helping others.

“I will never give up on my passions or on anything I devote my time to,” she says. “I will continue as a businesswoman, trusted advisor, and local real estate expert.”

Changing The Customer Experience

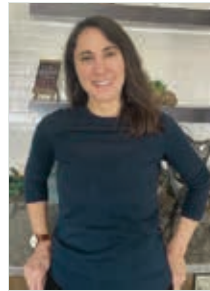


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MICHELE WEAVER

Anything Is
Possible

► agent spotlight

By Eli Pacheco
Photos by Kelly
Klemmensen Photography

For the active person, Lake Norman is a great place to be.

That's not even a sales pitch for someone looking for a home. After experiencing all 50 states, that's why Michele Weaver chose the area for her home and established Michele Weaver Real Estate with eXp Realty.

"In four hours, you can go from the Atlantic Ocean to the Smoky Mountains and Blue Ridge Parkway," Michele says.

Her knowledge and love of the area put Weaver, a veteran REALTOR®, in a good spot. And it extends beyond real estate. Michele wants her clients to not only love where they live, but also know all they can about the market and what is best for their family's financial situation.

For Michele, it wasn't your typical foray into real estate. She worked in an equestrian barn at age 15, then as a bartender and server after high school.

"My options were the food industry or a factory worker," Michele recalls. Instead, she ventured into real estate, and has never looked back.

"We are proof you don't need formal education or a fancy degree to make six figures, soon to be seven," Weaver says with a smile. "As a result, my mindset is different than most agents."

Michele helped her client Lauren Edwards not only buy a home but also ensure she could have everything she wanted in it — bringing a tape measure to ensure her dream of an eight-person dining table would fit, and meeting every inspector and surveyor during due diligence, no matter how many trips it took.

"These things matter when you're trying to buy a home in a competitive market," Lauren says. "I don't know of any other person who would've been more available for us than Michele was. She advocated for us and kept us informed every step of the way."

Another client, Mitzi Boles, says Michele puts her heart and soul into making dreams come true.

"After working as an admin in the real estate industry for several years I have met a variety of agents, but never one as dedicated and caring as Michele," Mitzi says. "She will get things done and get them done right! Not only is Michele an amazing REALTOR®, but she went above and beyond the call of duty."

This included feeding chickens that came with Mitzi's house, meeting a fencing company for a quote, and driving more than an hour to rescue the family when their RV had a blowout on the way to their new home.

A Temporary Stay Became Permanent

Michele and her husband, Dana, took two and a half years off to travel the country. Michele is licensed to sell real estate in the Carolinas and Florida. As perfect as this area is for them, they might not be here if it wasn't for a temporary stopover made years ago.

The Weavers left Pennsylvania for Denver with two dogs to satisfy their adventurous side. Colorado wasn't exactly what they wanted, so they ventured back east and stayed with Dana's sister in the Charlotte area. It was meant to be temporary...

"Although we liked it out there in Denver, I now live in North Carolina, at Lake Norman," Michele says. "We have lived here for more than 30 years and have never looked back."

"We are very grateful for this turn of events," Michele says. "I love the area and am proud to work daily for my clients, helping them to be as happy as we are in the Carolinas."

“Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do anything... Anything you can dream of is possible.”

...

They are also grateful for eXp Realty. The company has afforded them training and contacts since Michele joined in early 2018.

“Anyone can do anything they put their mind to,” Michele says. “It took me a little bit longer to believe this. Working for a company that allows you to promote yourself is a game changer.

Contacts have become friends and mentors to Michele. She has a strong support system in place for whatever she needs. “They are always there to give me encouragement or even a good kick in the butt when needed,”

she chuckles. And she is a strong support system for others.

Building a Team

To build an agency, finding a building isn’t as difficult as finding like-minded people.

“You want to complement each other for strengths and weaknesses,” Michele says, “deciding which business model, splits, and values you would follow. It needs to be a win-win for both parties.”

Michele didn’t want to be like some other teams out there. She wanted people to buy in — and want to stay.

“I didn’t want to be a revolving door,” she explains. So she’s building a small but mighty team. They’ll soon add skilled and unskilled showing agents and buyer’s agents. The staff will have the Weavers’ knowledge and expertise to help them succeed.

“Success is when people think of you, they smile, laugh, and have nothing but nice things to say about you,” Michele says.

“In real estate or life, in general, don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t do anything,” she says. “Anything you can dream of is possible; you must work hard and, most of all, believe in yourself. It’s that simple.”



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▶ rising star

By Eli Pacheco
Photos by Kelly
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LEIZE WATKINS

A Big Risk Paid Off

Leize Watkins had her marketing degree from Clemson University and a job at an ad agency. Not a bad start to a career, by any measure. But she couldn't shake one pesky reality.

Staying inside all day just wasn't her.

"I realized I could not sit behind a desk for the rest of my career," says Leize, this month's Rising Star. "I needed to get out and engage with people. Social settings give me energy."

A Charlotte native, Watkins was right at home in her Queen City knowledge. She received her real estate license in August 2020 and immediately joined Jennifer Vick & Company with Compass.

"It was a blessing to have the guidance and experience the team offered," says Leize, who has been named a Five Star Real Estate Award winner twice. "I needed a team at this stage of my life and my career."

They gave me the assurance that my clients will be taken care of if I'm at a wedding, shower or family event over the weekend."

Her team leader, Jennifer Vick, taught Leize when she was a second-grade elementary school student and stayed close with the Watkins family over the years.



66

It takes guts to do it so young and without a spouse with a steady income, but it was the best risk I've ever taken.

...

"Leize was a wonderful student — kind, diligent and super responsible," Jennifer recalls. "And she has proven to be a phenomenal agent. She cares for her clients like they are family. She is conscientious and one of the most organized people I know. Plus, she is so fun to be around."

Jennifer has served as a guide for Leize, and also a therapist of sorts. "When I need her advice, she always steps in," Leize says.

Leize's father, Wes Watkins, though, is her ultimate mentor.

"He's the hardest-working man I've ever met," Leize beams. "He challenges my siblings and me, but not too hard. Some parents do that too hard. My parents raised us to be kind to everyone and work hard for what we have."

Wes Watkins shares that his daughter had honesty and kindness in everything she did.

"She was always the most compassionate and caring person in the room," he says.

Outside of Her Comfort Zone

The more you hear about Leize's life, the more you understand how a desk job wasn't a fit. She's been parasailing and did the world's highest bungee jump. She's lived on a cruise ship for five months, and her passport is well-worn, with stamps from 30 to 35 countries.

"Although it terrifies me, I love stepping out of my comfort zone," Watkins says. "I love to travel, and I'm proud of my passport, but I always love coming home to the Queen City."

Watkins is a Charlotte native. Most of her family is still in the area — and she has recruited them into real estate with her. She has a brother living in South Charlotte in a home she helped him find who is working on getting his general contractor's license, and a brother-in-law and nephew who live in Mississippi. Her family conquered their first flip last year with the help of Homer Construction.

"My family is my rock," Leize says.

She's proud of her Clemson Tigers ("I bleed Clemson orange," she says) and her chocolate Lab, Molly, who has made a few connections — and even a sale! — for Leize on walks in the neighborhood.

Never Stop Learning

Watkins is intelligent and curious, which is bad news for anyone trying to catch her.

"The way you stay ahead of your competition is to never stop learning in all aspects of real estate," says Leize.

"Knowledge of social media, local business, marketing, neighborhoods and home updates are a few. Never stop learning to be the best representative for



Leize Watkins and her chocolate Lab, Molly

your client. Never stop learning to be your client's best in the industry and the best representative."

Wes Watkins takes pride in how Leize has embraced her career.

"Her maturity and knowledge of real estate are much greater than her actual years in the business," he says. "The understanding of the business seemed to come to her. It is special to watch your daughter succeed at something she is passionate about."

Like many agents, Leize faced the anxiety of quitting the steady income of a 9-to-5 job for the unknown. But it's working out.

"It takes guts to do it so young and without a spouse with a steady income," Leize admits. "But it was the best risk I've ever taken."

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I’m here to help one family at a time. I would say some agents focus on only getting the home sold quickly. I don’t see myself as a salesperson; I’m here to help families. It’s a very different mindset.



► cover story

By Eli Pacheco
Photos by Kelly
Klemmensen Photography

BRIGITTE PERRY

leadership with conscience

Brigitte Perry, broker in charge at Southern Homes of The Carolinas, is and will always be a social worker. It’s not only her background ... her way of thinking was developed as a social services director. The beneficiaries of Brigitte’s conscientious, serving mindset are the many homeowners who have worked with her over the years.

“I’m here to help one family at a time,” Brigitte says. “I would say some agents focus on only getting the home sold quickly. I don’t see myself as a salesperson — I’m here to help families. It’s a very different mindset.”

After graduating from Radford University with a bachelor’s degree in social work, beginning her graduate work in counseling at George Mason University and finally obtaining her master’s degree from Capella University, Brigitte became an investigator for Child Protective Services. She’s been a counselor for inmates in a jail, and when she moved to Charlotte, she served in social work with foster care. She became a team leader and state director for a local therapeutic foster care agency.

When her local office was set to close, Brigitte had a decision to make on what to do next. Knowing her people skills, another foster care state director suggested she look into real estate.

“In social work, I was on call 24/7 and I had reached the top leadership position,” Brigitte says. “That’s fine, but I also had no ability to go anywhere. I couldn’t go higher, I couldn’t go anywhere but back to direct service. In real estate, it’s a different 24/7 job that still allows me to use my social work skills and leadership skills, but a child’s



...

“

If you don't know, find out. Problem solve. Call the state, call the commission or the MLS. Somebody knows something. I've made great friendships with others in real estate, and I wouldn't hesitate to call them.”



Brigitte Perry became a broker in charge at Southern Homes of the Carolinas in 2017.

life isn't in crisis. That's a lot of stress. I wanted a way to help families without putting trauma on myself and as I was.”

As it turns out, real estate was a perfect fit for Brigitte. When she joined Keller Williams Realty, she was named Rookie of the Year. She became a broker in charge at Southern Homes of the Carolinas in 2017. She says the company allowed her to develop her leadership in real estate, working with her own team. “The structure worked well,” she says.

Kim Hankins, a senior loan officer at Movement Mortgage, met Brigitte when she became broker in charge. Brigitte's real estate knowledge and dedication to exceptional service struck Kim.

“She has a personality that draws you,” Kim says. “She exudes happiness and confidence.”

After she helped her sell a home, Laura Rysdon stayed in touch with Brigitte for five years. She also cited Brigitte's real estate knowledge as a strength.

“She was honest about the sale of our home, and she held my hand through the whole process,” Laura says. “I never had to worry about one thing; she answered my questions before I even had any.”

Beginnings

Brigitte was raised by a single mom who was a teacher. Brigitte dealt with a learning disability growing up, and her school didn't feel her mom should force her to go to college. “It's ironic,” Brigitte says with a smile. “I became a state director in social work. Don't ever let someone tell you you can't do something. It made me work even harder.”

Brigitte married Brian, her high school sweetheart, 10 days after college graduation. Brian also has his real estate license and is Brigitte's marketing director. He works with her part-time since he

also works full-time as a marketing strategy director for a top marketing firm.

Brigitte and Brian have fraternal twin girls at two colleges; Gabby is at Appalachian State, and Alyssa is at East Carolina. Brigitte and Brian live right here in the middle of the state and share their lives with Piper, their rescue dog. “So when clients talk about a need for a yard for dogs and having to be close to walking trails, I get it,” Brigitte says. “Our dogs are a big part of our lives.”

Being able to turn off the phone is a goal this foodie with a case of wanderlust is working toward. It's part of a pledge to herself to get away more often, ideally for two days each month.

“We have connecting time,” Brigitte says. “Some might ask, ‘Are you going away again?’ I say, ‘Yes, I am.’ I cannot show a house when I'm away, but I have a fantastic team that can.”

Brigitte is committed to serving families wherever she is and has been known to close a contract even when away.

She's All In

Despite her aspirations for more escape time, Brigitte always operates with a social worker's ethics and concern.

“It's important to be available for your client families,” Brigitte says. “They're in a stressful time of crisis, not just a transaction. It's not just a work day. They're uprooting an entire family to move somewhere new. Think of that first.”

That awareness and experience are tremendous assets, says Kim Hankins, when she gets to work with Brigitte.

“She's all in,” Kim says. “She moves with purpose. That matches my passion for ensuring

each client is ahead of schedule and excited to get to closing. She's also fun... You can tell she loves real estate, which is refreshing.”

It's clear that Brigitte loves people and especially loves helping them, regardless of obstacles. She is a big believer in problem solving and making connections with other REALTORS®, which comes in very handy when she has questions. She encourages new agents to stay curious and not be afraid to make those connections.

“If you don't know, find out,” Brigitte advises. “Problem solve. Call the state, call the commission or the MLS. Somebody knows something. I've made great friendships with others in real estate, and I wouldn't hesitate to call them. I'm not afraid to share ideas. They know I won't go after their clients or neighborhoods. We're sharing ideas and thoughts, and that's important.”





The air is crisp, the leaves are changing, and the holidays are just around the corner! The cheerful months of November and December always fly by, but a little advance cleaning and organizing can help keep holiday entertaining worries at bay. Here are a few home-preparation tips to make your space fresh, festive and ready to entertain!

Prep appliances.

Prepare appliances for the holiday cooking overload with a thorough cleaning and inspection.

- Check the temperature reading with an oven thermometer to ensure accuracy.
- Remove all food residue and build-up in the washtub, drain and around the door of the dishwasher.
- Sharpen kitchen knives.
- Clean out refrigerator and freezer, checking for blocked air vents.
- Replace worn flapper valves on toilets (and don't forget to provide plenty of extra toilet paper and a plunger)!

Organize living spaces.

Focus on beautifying areas guests will see most, like the front porch, entryway, kitchen, living room and bathrooms. Stash away easily decluttered items, which gives the illusion of clean space (even if it isn't).

Safeguard your home.

Here, an ounce of prevention prevents a pound of cure.

- Always keep windows and doors locked.
- Don't advertise big-ticket gifts by putting boxes outside the home.
- Lock away all medications, firearms and household chemicals.
- Never leave open flames unattended.
- Utilize light timers to regulate electricity usage for decorations.

Stock up on essentials.

A few days before having houseguests, inquire about favorite snacks and drinks, and stock up on those items, as well as coffee, tea, creamer/sugar and simple breakfast items, like cereal, milk, juice, fruit and granola bars. Stock up on essentials like paper towels, tissue, toilet paper, hand soap and toothpaste to have on hand.

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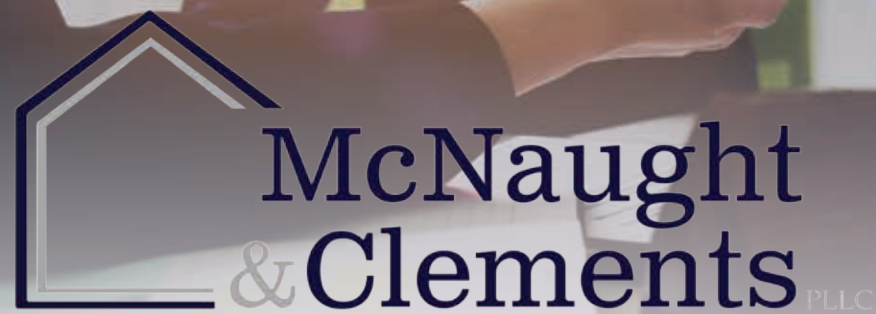
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