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FEATURE STORY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	05 Meet Your Real Producers Team		06 Preferred Partners		10 Celebrating Veterans
	14 Cover Story Dave And Kim Panozzo		20 Veteran Agent Rising To The Top Lorri Conley		24 Sponsor Spotlight Michael Brandenburg

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HONORING OUR MILITARY VETERANS IN REAL ESTATE



November is a month most associated with Thanksgiving and Black Friday deals. Thanksgiving is hands down one of my favorite times of the year. I can only hope everyone reading this is able to spend quality time with the ones you love during our challenging times.

This month also contains Veterans Day, a very special holiday to honor those who have served. I wanted to take this issue to help shed a little attention to a few very special REALTORS® who served our country. Also, let's not forget some of the current sponsors who have also served in the military.

While I never deployed to combat, I, too, served in the Idaho Army National Guard as a Black Hawk mechanic. I definitely did some cool training missions, but more than anything, I developed tremendous respect for all the men and women in uniform.

Enjoy this issue of *Scottsdale Real Producers!* Get to know a few of your fellow agents on a deeper level. Next time you get to meet one of the amazing people we've featured this month, you can thank them in person for their service. Who knows, maybe you can thank them during an escrow that you're involved with them in.

Thank you, veterans!

Contact me directly to update your mailing address:
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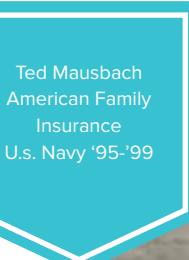
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THAT TRANSITIONED IN REAL ESTATE AND RELATED FIELDS

OUR PAST ALUMNI AND MILITARY VETERAN BUSINESS PARTNERS



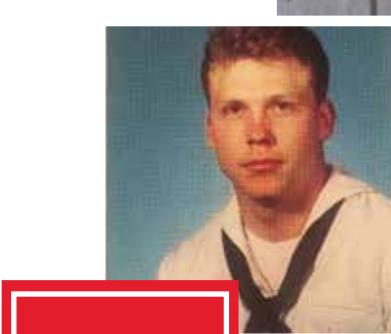
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THE LIFE OF SERVICE

Throughout their lives, Dave and Kim Panozzo have been at the service of others. "We're a four-generation military family," Kim says. "Both our daughters are currently serving in the Air Force," Dave adds. "Our youngest daughter, Nicole, is stationed in Montana, and our older daughter is an officer stationed in Monterey, CA." This created a natural transition to

real estate. "I get to change people's lives, and I know that sounds cliché, but there's some emotional attachment to people when they get the keys to their house."

ENLISTING

At 14, Kim overheard her parents discussing how they couldn't afford to send her to college. This was the moment she decided to take charge of her own life. "What

“ I get to change people's lives, and I know that sounds cliché, but there's some emotional attachment to people when they get the keys to their house. ”

I figured was a way I could do it myself and not be dependent on anyone. I knew I wanted to join the Air Force." Dave didn't know he wanted to join the service until later. He gave college a shot but didn't make it back after spring break. Upon returning home, he considered the military, and having a father that served, I asked if his parents encouraged him to enlist. "No, my parents weren't very supportive about it," he says. "I was a pretty bad kid most of my life. They were probably more concerned from the standpoint of, 'Is he going to be able to pull that off?'"

ONCE UPON A TIME IN GERMANY

Dave was an Army man stationed on Kim's Air Force base in Germany. "His job was to protect our base if we went to war," Kim explains. "We were a fighter base. We had F-4s

and F-16s — *Top Gun* type stuff but on land." "I was like the red-headed stepchild," Dave thinks about it for a second. "Air Force and Army, they don't mix too well," he settles on. "One day, [Kim and I] ran into each other, and I asked her out. One thing led to another, and here we are." With the competition between the branches, I thought there'd be drama at the center of their relationship, but Kim never cared about it. To her, it wasn't a problem. "Not a big deal," Dave confirms. "But I did get in some fights over her. Dudes start drinking, and here I scooped up one of the cutest Air Force girls on the base. You know, I had to defend my rights," he says with a laugh.

AFTER THE SERVICE

When they finished their military service, they found themselves in Columbus, Ohio. Dave thinks back on the time. "We were there for about a year and got bored," he says. "At the time, we had a



Photo by Red Hog Media



six-month-old daughter, and we were like, 'Let's be adventurous. Let's go to Chicago.' They spent a year there but soon felt a pull to move on. In 1994 they visited friends in Arizona and, by the end of the first day, decided this was where they wanted to live. "I got a job at a car dealership, and 30 days later, I came out and started working. We haven't looked back since. This is home." In the time since they've lived here, Dave changed his life majorly. Sixteen years ago, he decided once and for all to become and stay sober. One night, Dave came home and crashed into his neighbor's parked car, effectively totaling it. Dave wasn't hurt in the accident but also wasn't aware there'd even been one. Taking advice from someone she met at Al-Anon, Kim presented Dave with an outpatient rehabilitation center. "That was the heaviest phone call I ever made," he tells me. "This or the door," Kim adds. Thankfully, Dave chose life, and the rest is history. "There's always a way. No matter what you're going through, there's always a way to figure out a better outcome."

FINDING THEIR WAY

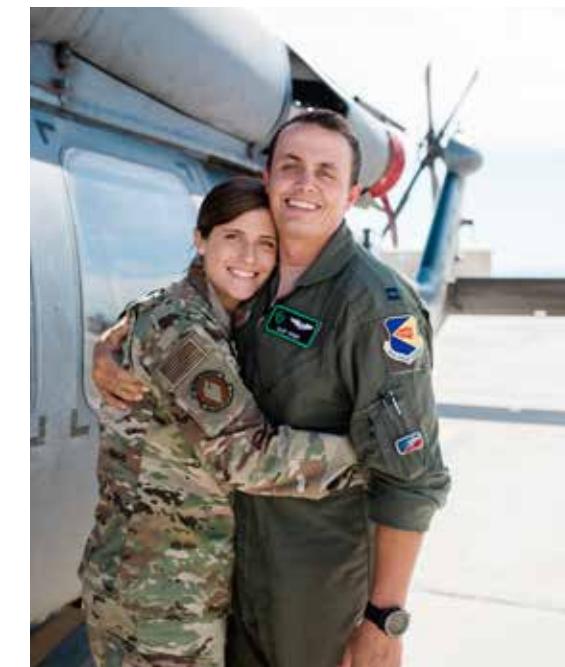
Kim was an accountant for 10 years, but it didn't feel like the perfect fit. "I was

always told I was so outgoing and friendly, why was I an accountant?" Kim's mom was an accountant, so she grew up around the job. "It's something, for me, that was just easy and comfortable to do." Then Kim's neighbor changed her life for the better. "She was a mortgage broker," she says. "Anytime we'd get together and talk, we'd talk about real estate. She and I became really good friends, and

FOUR GENERATIONS OF MILITARY SERVICE

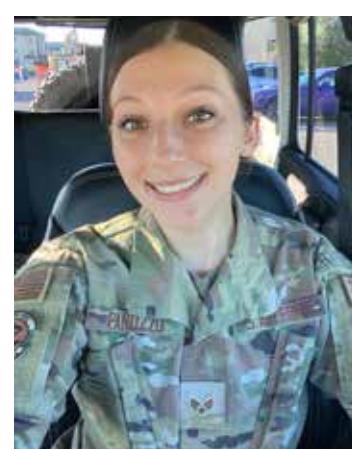


Dave and Kim's only photo in existence of them in uniform together.



I said, 'OK, as long as I don't have to punch numbers, I can show houses.' She gave me the courage to want to do it." Kim's been in the industry now for 20 years and couldn't be happier. She and Dave work as team leads at HomeSmart, and after 33 years together, they understand how to work together. The main approach is their simple motto: clients first. "I know that sounds vague, but it's all about the client's experience," she explains. This straightforward approach is what makes their future so bright. From here? "The sky's the limit," Kim says.

I said, 'OK, as long as I don't have to punch numbers, I can show houses.' She gave me the courage to want to do it." Kim's been in the industry now for 20 years and couldn't be happier. She and Dave work as team leads at HomeSmart, and after 33 years together, they understand how to work together. The main approach is their simple motto: clients first.



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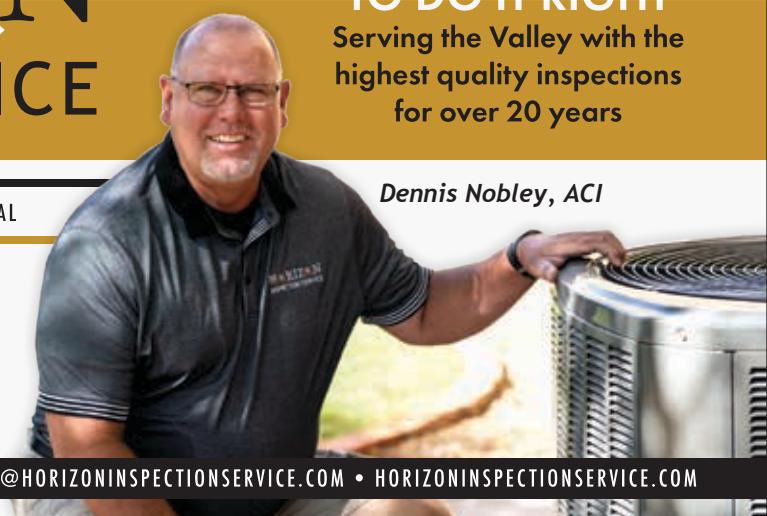
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LORRI CONLEY



A WARRIOR FOR WARRIORS

► veteran agent rising to the top

By Brent Barrett

USAF — MAJOR (RET)
Photo by Desert Roots Photography

There are warriors, and then there are the servants who fight for warriors. Arizona native Lorri Conley is a warrior for warriors.

Born into a military family stationed at Davis-Monthan in Tucson, AZ, Lorri learned two things very early: what it means to serve and the value of family. Both traits have formed and defined an astoundingly generous life.

Graduating from Rincon High School, Lorri had no hesitations about what she would do next with her life. "I finished high school ... and immediately went into basic training. I went to the Air National Guard at the age of 17 in 1983. I had my 18th birthday in basic training." She chose a six-year enlistment, all the while questioning whether she could make it through. She did that, and then some — gradually working her way up to the rank of master sergeant and eventually choosing to go to college to become an officer. The last 10 years of her career, she served as an officer, retiring as a major. "I'm very happy to have been on both sides because I feel like I was able to better help my comrades that way."

Working from both sides of the military allowed Lorri to experience a fuller range of that lifestyle, refining her insight and understanding of what kind of struggles personnel and their families go through. "It's hard to explain that I went from the bottom of the enlisted ranks ... up to a master sergeant, which is the upper echelons of the enlisted ... then all the way back down to the bottom of the officer ranks ... and rising again to the rank of major." The military was where she learned to serve not just her country but those who serve our country. This was where she practiced, for decades, what it looks like to be a *servant-leader*.

Throughout her time in the military, real estate was in the back of her mind to try — it was just never the right time. She may not have known it back then, but all of that work in the military was preparation for one of her current missions helping

“

Basically, what I did was transitioned from protecting lives to *changing them*.

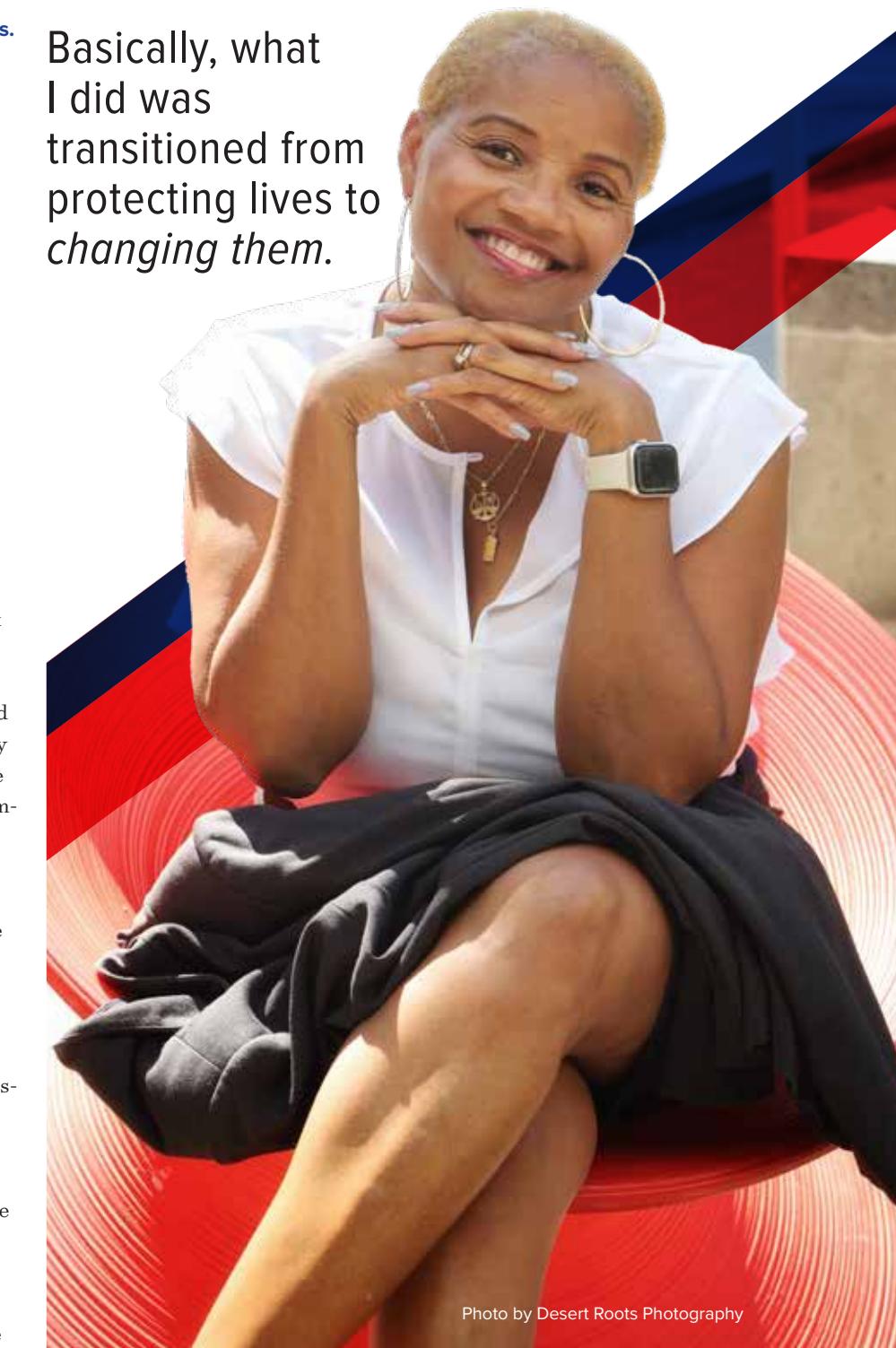


Photo by Desert Roots Photography

veterans and others find a safe place for their families to call home.

After retiring from the military in 2011, she decided to work with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The stress of a sluggish, bureaucratic

system impeding her ability to impact veterans' lives caused her to leave that role — but not before learning from her experience. While she was at the VA, Lorri became familiar with

...



“I have a wonderful team of highly skilled and intelligent women.

the numerous needs of veterans, their families and the benefits available to them. One of those benefits is called a Certificate of Eligibility (COE). “A Certificate of Eligibility tells you how much buying power you have and that the VA is going to back you with the guarantee of your loan. It is basically a guaranteed loan for the lender, and that’s why VA loans are such a great gift to veterans but also a very good business deal for the lender.” Having left the VA, the timing to finally become a REALTOR® made sense. “When I was in the military, I was too busy doing military stuff and taking care of the troops. And when I retired, that’s when God reminded me, ‘Well, now you can do your real estate business,’ so I immediately jumped in.” It is easy to see now how her life up to that point had prepared her for this new mission.

The real estate industry may not carry the immediate obvious honor inherent in such roles as military service, but

that does not mean that such distinction cannot be found. When asked about why she enjoys this business, Lorri’s heart as a servant-leader glowed. “Basically, what I did was transitioned from protecting lives to *changing them.*” There are two reasons why she finds this duty so fulfilling.

First-time home buying can be really overwhelming for anyone. Buying or selling a home rates as one of the top five greatest stressors of life — nearly as anxiety-inducing as death. Massive price tags, paperwork, buyer competition ... the list goes on! Lorri goes out of her way to educate everyone that chooses to work with her. “For me to be able to assist a first-time homebuyer with something as big as purchasing a home — it’s the largest amount of money they’ve ever spent in their life — and being able to change lives like this, that is an honor. ... I like to make it special.” Where many first-time buyers don’t believe

they can, Lorri prides herself on empowering them to do just that.

Lorri works hard to help growing families find a safe place to call home, as well as improve their life status through real estate and investment properties. “Having been in the military, I know how hard it is and how often families travel and what it feels like to pick up your life every three years. ... It is extremely important for your family to feel comfortable where they are.” Feeling safe encompasses more than just the walls and roof that surround you! It’s the community, the schools and the neighbors. Such stability includes “the neighborhood, the people they can trust and count on or even call as a referral for something that goes wrong when your spouse is not around.” This Samaritan goes out of her way to support families in those types of situations. She has a small entourage of people to call when a crisis emerges — like a toilet

backing up or your air conditioning going out in the middle of a scorching hot summer! Lorri makes those calls smooth and easy for her clients.

If any reader is still doubting the servant-leader heart of this woman on a mission from God, you might not be surprised to hear this next point: Lorri is celebrating her 10-year anniversary as a REALTOR® this year, and God has gifted her with a new team. “I have a wonderful team of highly skilled and intelligent women.” Lorri was not successful in her first attempt at building a real estate team in 2019. “But with God’s timing, powerful systems and the right people in place, it has been a success. I had considered retiring last year, but that was before every teammate was literally *dropped in my lap.*” Now she is able to help more people and *change* more lives. This team of women has “paid in their dues” and is now making great impacts in Phoenix and the surrounding communities: Lynise Trice, retired after 30 years of service as an industrial engineer for the United States Postal Service; Marnicia Conway, serving with a bachelor’s degree of psychology and criminal justice before pursuing real estate; Tylesha Teruel, CEO of a local Behavioral Health Clinic with a master’s degree in business and health administration. Each is a delightful and accomplished woman.



You may ask what drives someone like Lorri, but to this writer, it’s clear: The people that raised her instilled timeless values of service for family and country from an early age. She has been privileged enough to carry on that legacy in her own way.

When Lorri is not educating homebuyers, closing homes or fixing toilets, she spends her time with her beautiful family and special friends. Lorri Conley says, “I take great pride in being a veteran of the United States Air Force and having the privilege to have served alongside many great men, great women and warriors. And because of their blood, sweat and tears — our country is better for it!”

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By Joseph Haeger

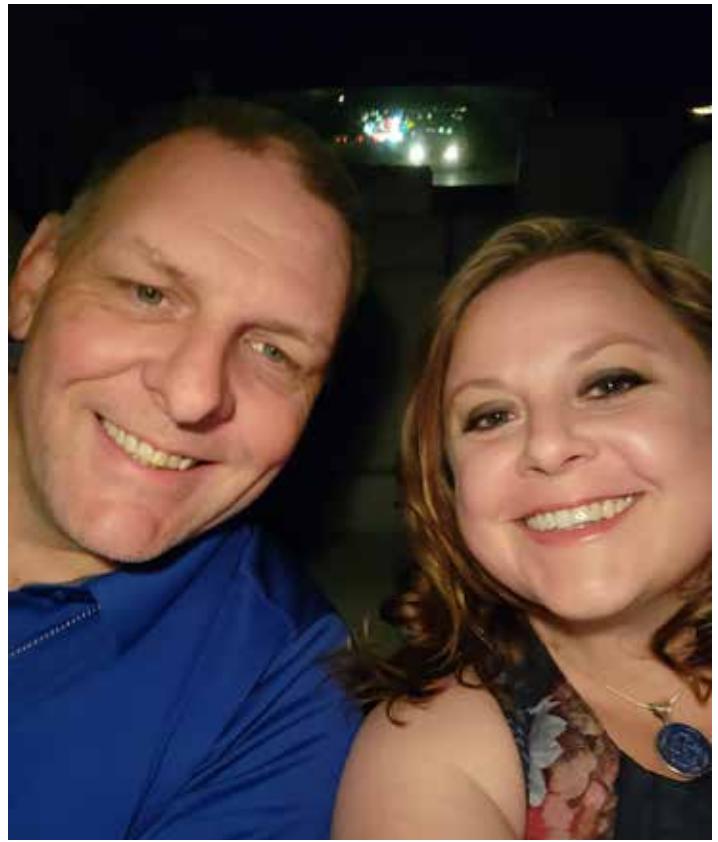
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For the last three years, Michael Brandenburg has been a shining example for how mortgage advisors should approach the business. His blunt honesty and solutions-oriented style builds an inherent trust with his clients, making it easy to believe his advice. Although, Michael tried on a few different hats before he got into the real estate game.

"The nine years before [real estate], I was a truck driver. Before that, I was in the medical field as a CNA (certified nursing assistant). Before that, I was in the Air Force." On paper, it doesn't really seem like there's a throughline from

one career to the next, but after talking to Michael, I realized it comes down to people. "The medical field is going away from focusing on patient care and becoming more customer service, business-based in the care plans," he says. "When I first started nursing, it was all about the patient and making sure they got the care they needed." But unfortunately, Michael saw a shift coming that he didn't like, so he decided to change careers.

After leaving the medical field, he drove trucks for a while before he ran into some short-term health issues. He wasn't prepared to sit around and wait for the results, so instead chose to transition to a career that would better fit the possible diagnosis. Before any of this happened, he had invested in himself and bought his first house, not realizing it set him on his future path. "The lender I worked with was also a veteran,



and he explained everything to me. When it came down to reviewing my contract, he was trying to break it down, but I told him, 'I'm a numbers guy; just show it to me.' Michael looked at the numbers and immediately got it. 'He brought up, 'If you understand these numbers, then you should be in this field.'" As a self-proclaimed lover of numbers and math, Michael made the switch and hasn't looked back since.

GOING INTO THE SERVICE

"I was in the Air Force for five years," Michael says. He enlisted when he turned 18 and when he filled out his dream sheet, they asked what his ideal station was. "I said, 'Somewhere not as warm as Arizona,'" he says with a laugh. "In all their sense of humor," he continues, "they sent me to four years in Alaska." He worked on F-16s there, then

finished up his final year in Mountain Home, Idaho. "I think the Air Force, if I'm being completely honest, matured me and allowed me to grow up. It got me to a point where I could start accepting responsibility for my choices," he tells me. "I did a lot of growing up in the military. It's something I definitely recommend every young man and woman do." After his service, he moved back to Arizona, where he started nursing.

THE REASON BEHIND IT ALL

"I love helping people," he says simply. "From my nursing background, I genuinely care about people. When they have an issue they need help with, I thoroughly enjoy trying to do everything I can to help them with that situation." This core value influences each step of his process. When I asked him how his approach to the

business is different, he was quick to tell me that he didn't rush clients through. "A lot of people want to run mortgages like an assembly line. 'Gimme this, gimme that, this, that, thanks.'"

"I'll have your pre-qual," he tells me. "I like to establish a relationship with the client. Buying a home is one of the biggest financial commitments that we make in our lifetime. I inform them about their different options and educate them on the process as well as what to expect as we move forward. I want to make sure when we close on that house, it's a house that's going to work for the client." It's this desire to help coupled with ambition that pushes him forward. In Michael's career, he's hungry and wants to work with people who are hungry. And it doesn't seem like he has any plans to slow down.

"In the real estate industry, your mind is your limit. A lot of people say the sky's the limit, but I don't think the sky's the limit. No, I think your mind's the limit. It's how much do you want? In this business, if your mind is set to close 10 deals a year, then you're only going to close 10 deals a year. The mindset of continuing to grow — when we keep building our knowledge, business relationships, self-growth, education — that's where I'm at and foresee a long future of continuing to grow." Michael's drive, honesty and integrity shows me that he's the kind of lender I'd want in my corner, and anyone who partners with him is lucky.



“

I love helping people. From my nursing background, I genuinely care about people. When they have an issue they need help with, I thoroughly enjoy trying to do everything I can to help them with that situation.



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Where to start! The entire house buying process what something I had been avoiding for years. It was not until we were forced to find a place to live in that we began. Time was limited and it seemed impossible to be able to get a place, as the housing market was very competitive and interest rates were rising from the record lows. My partner had started the search for a home months earlier without success. He was working with another lender and quite frankly, he was of no help. It was a Wednesday that I decided I would join him in the quest to find our home, but we needed to find a new lender. That is where Christian came in! A friend shared with me her home buying experience and told me how great and supportive Christian was. As any other person in this social media world, I immediately stalked her and found out we had several connections. I reached out to every single one and all of them had awesome things to say about her. After discussing changing lenders, Sunday night we gave her a call, she was everything we expected and beyond. By Monday morning we had our pre-approval, that same day we began looking at houses, we fell in love with THE ONE! and were placing a bid on it by Wednesday and week later Monday we had won the bid. I know it sounds crazy, but our home buying experience was seamless! Thanks to the help and promptness of Christian we are now living in our beautiful home! She really does go above and beyond for her clients! Thank you Christian!

- Zillow review by Cariño Barragan/ 07/22/22

SCAN ME

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