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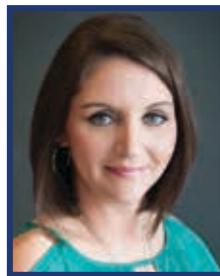
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► publisher's note: dees hinton

Let's Talk Preferred Partners!

We routinely get messages and emails from business owners with the questions – How do I get in your magazine? or Can I come to your events? So I wanted to take the opportunity to talk about our Preferred Partners again!

How do I get in your magazine?

Our Preferred Partners are the best in their respective industries. The majority of them are referred to us by the top-producing Brokers and REALTORS® in Central Mississippi. Our criteria is that each preferred partner has to come to us recommended and have a reputation of experience, integrity and success in their field.

Can I come to your events?

Our event guest lists are made up of our Preferred Partners and the top-producing 300+ REALTORS® in Central Mississippi.

What is the benefit of being one of our Preferred Partners?

Businesses who work in the real estate industry and would like to have their business identified as one of the top in their industry – then *Central Mississippi Real Producers* may be a good option for you. Also, our monthly and quarterly events bring together the top REALTORS® in Central Mississippi and our ad partners in a fun, relaxed social atmosphere so they can meet and develop relationships.

Our ad partners know how important the real estate industry is to the growth and success of their businesses. At the same time, REALTORS® can rest assured knowing if a business is one of our ad partners, they have come highly recommended by one of their peers.

If your business works in the real estate industry and you would like to be one of our Preferred Partners, contact us! We would love to talk with you!

If you know of a business that works in the real estate industry and you think they would be a good fit as one of our Preferred Partners, contact us!

 I want to thank our Preferred Partners for being a part of *Central Mississippi Real Producers*. You help make us a success!

Dees

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| Sept. 6 Brian Lott | Sept. 17 Victoria Prowant |
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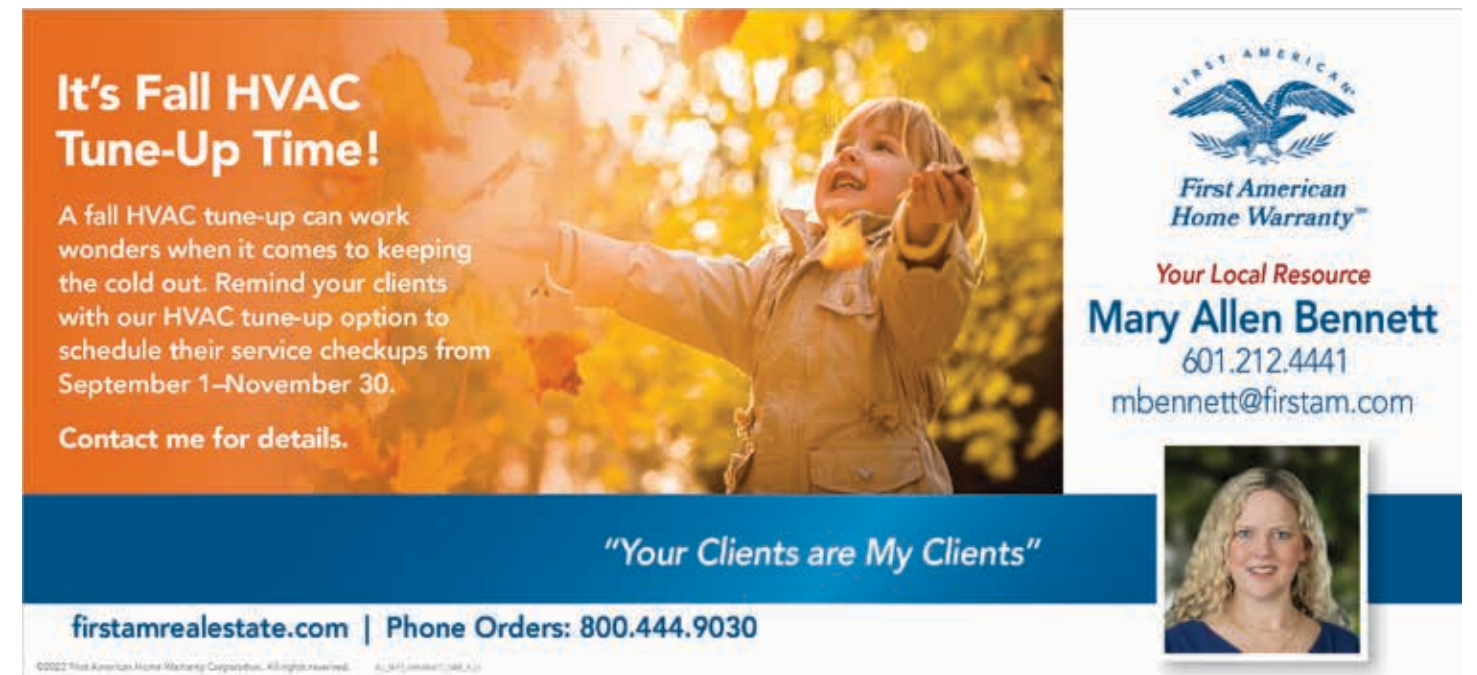
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Debbie Carter



▶ top producer
Written by Susan Marquez.
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Debbie Carter is All About Family

No matter what aspect of her life is involved, Debbie Carter will tell you that family is the most important. From her own large family to her “work family,” Debbie is always looking out for what is in their best interests. “I often tell new agents that the secret to success is to never worry about the money you will make, but to always worry if you are doing the right thing for your client. Treat each transaction as if you are buying or selling that home for yourself.”

The daughter of an entrepreneur who understood the value of real estate, Debbie comes by her passion for the industry honestly. Some may remember her father, Bobby Miles, from his commercials on television. “My parents owned Miles Furniture and Appliances in Jackson for over 30 years, so sales has been in my blood since birth.”

Debbie is the youngest of six children. “My mother has always been my role

model. She was the glue that always kept everything together. She juggled six children and owned a business, while trying to reel my dad in from the new adventures he was always getting into.” Bobby Miles loved buying land and coming up with ideas on how to make it work for him. “At the same time, my mother was working to figure out how they were going to pay for the land.” Debbie says her





... father knew what he was doing, as much of the land he purchased many years ago has now been developed. On the business side of things, Debbie's mom was bothered at how hard it was for women to get a loan, and she took pride in helping women build their own credit.

When she purchased her first home in her early 20s, Debbie connected with Debbie Shows with Magnolia Properties. "She quickly became my friend, and eventually my mentor, as she helped to further my interest in real estate that had begun with my father's buying ventures." One of those ventures was Mallard Lakes, a subdivision her father developed in Raymond in the early 1990s. "He partnered with Bill Hetrick, who also became a mentor for me. Bill helped to spur on my thoughts of working in real estate." But Debbie was content for the time being, working in the medical field, mostly at Mississippi

Sports Medicine. "Being able to deal with the public, often during stressful times, along with understanding the importance of meticulous record keeping were two valuable skills that have served me well down the road."

Sometimes in life a single event can cause a person to change direction. For Debbie, it was a problematic home purchase in 2002 that gave her the push she needed to pursue her dreams of becoming a Realtor®. She just knew there had to be a better way. She took the real estate course, but let two years pass without doing anything. Debbie was a single mom, and she feared putting her family in a situation where her income would not be guaranteed. While she had the support of people around her, she wasn't ready.

In the meantime, she met her husband, Mark. "He encouraged me to follow my passion, and he assured me that he would take care of me and my daughter, Brittney. I borrowed a couple of floppy disks from Bill Hetrick and studied for a couple of weeks, and I passed the real estate test the first time I took it!"

That was 19 years ago, and Debbie is still going strong. "One of my first sales was listed with Carl Merck of Merck Team Realty. He was such a joy to work with. He contacted me several times over the years for different business dealings, and every time he would say, 'Hello, Mrs. Carter, this is Carl Merck, your future broker.' It was always a running joke with us, but in 2011, I made the decision to turn that joke into a reality, and I have been here ever since."



Life is not about being rich, being popular, being educated, or being perfect. It's about being real, humble and kind.





“
He encouraged me
to follow my passion,
and he assured me
that he would take
care of me and my
daughter, Brittney.”



Debbie says that she has sold some of her clients multiple homes. “Some are on their fifth home! I sold a home to a young lady through a referral, and I ended up selling a home to her sister, and to her brother. Then her parents sold and bought a home with me, as did her grandparents on both sides. I feel like I’m one of the family – they invite me to all the weddings!” Debbie says her real joy is selling to first time home buyers and helping to guide them through the buying process. “They are always so excited.”

While she sells properties all over the tri-county area, she tends to gravitate

toward Rankin County. “I live near downtown Brandon, and this is the area I know the best.” She is thrilled to have her daughter, Brittney, join her at Merck. After graduating from Mississippi State and working as a paralegal with Elliott Law Firm for two years, Brittney made the decision to join the family business. “In less than a year, she has already proven to be a rockstar REALTOR®! Being able to work with her every day has given me the greatest joy. Real estate is all about family to me. It may not always be blood, but it is always family.”

A post she saw recently on Facebook sums up Debbie’s thoughts: “Life is not about being rich, being popular, being educated, or being perfect. It’s about being real, humble and kind.”

Note: *As she was preparing for this interview, Debbie received the heart-breaking news that her beloved broker and friend, Carl Merck, had unexpectedly passed away. “I loved Carl like a father, and he will be terribly missed. The only joy I find in his passing is that he is now with his lovely bride, Mary, who passed away in 2020.”*

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JP CLARK

JP CLARK'S PASSION IS TIED TO LAND



▶ rising star

Written by Susan Marquez. Photography by Abe Draper Photography.

If you want to find JP Clark in his happy place, try looking outdoors. Land, and all it provides, has been a major part of his life. Now it is his career. "I have been enthralled by land for as long as I can remember."

Born and raised in Jackson, JP says his first introduction to the great outdoors occurred during holidays spent at his family's land in Waynesboro, MS. "My dad was never a hunter, but my uncles and cousins were, so I always tagged along. I was with them when I harvested my first deer and turkey." When he was 10 years old, JP met Eddie Briggs, owner and principal broker at Briggs Properties. While Eddie was well-known for his time as Lieutenant Governor, he is also an attorney, entrepreneur and avid outdoorsman. "One day Eddie invited me hunting. That began a relationship centered around our appreciation for land and the great outdoors." JP learned many lessons through these times. "Through my experiences with Eddie, I learned a lot about land and wildlife management. By the time I was in high school, I knew I wanted to have a career working in the land business."

While in college at Ole Miss, JP had the opportunity to work on land-owners' properties around the state. "I enjoyed helping people make the most of their property through wildlife and habitat management. I didn't go to many ball games; I always came home to work on land." JP graduated from Ole Miss in 2019 and immediately took the real estate class. "The day I finished class was March 17, 2020, the day the state shutdown due to COVID-19." He was unable to take the test and receive his license until June. JP said it was an easy decision to hang his license with Briggs Properties. "Eddie taught me the majority of what I know about land and business. Deciding to sell real estate under his supervision was a no-brainer."

JP went on to receive his broker's license and remains at Briggs Properties as an Associate Broker. While land is his passion, JP has also stepped into other areas of real





“THROUGH MY EXPERIENCES WITH EDDIE, I LEARNED A LOT ABOUT LAND AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT. BY THE TIME I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, I KNEW I WANTED TO HAVE A CAREER WORKING IN THE LAND BUSINESS.”

estate. “I am also selling homes and commercial properties. To my surprise, I’d say that roughly 40 percent of the deals I’ve done in the past two years have been residential properties. In doing so, I’ve learned that I enjoy all aspects of the real estate business.” Land and home sales are very different, yet very much alike. “It ends up being a similar process. Regardless of the property type, I just want to help buyers and sellers reach an agreement and get to the closing table.”

Beginning his career in a hot market, JP says it is hard to gauge what the market is going to do. “Lately, I have been very busy with land. Recreational and timber tracts are still moving well. Properly purchased and well maintained, land is arguably one of the best investments. Throughout history, people and countries have literally fought to obtain more land. Ownership of land is very important.”

When he’s not working, JP enjoys spending time with his parents and siblings in Canton. “I have two

nephews and a niece, ages 8, 5 and 2.” But JP admits that for him, work is never over. “All of my hobbies are tied to land. If I am hunting or fishing, I am still learning more about what properties have to offer. There is always something to learn when looking at land. Every place is different.”

One of the things JP likes most about his career is all of the people he has met in the last two years. “I have met so many brokers and agents that have been very kind and helpful to me. I think this business shows one of the healthiest forms of competition,





as we all need each other's buyers and sellers. It is important for us to get along and have a relationship." JP says he enjoys keeping up with his clients, as well. "It is fun going through the process with them when they are buying something they love. I like seeing what they do with it." The secret to JP's success could be that he always makes a genuine effort to be above board in all he does. "That's important to me, and I think it makes a huge difference in my work."

“ I HAVE MET SO MANY BROKERS AND AGENTS THAT HAVE BEEN VERY KIND AND HELPFUL TO ME. I THINK THIS BUSINESS SHOWS ONE THE HEALTHIEST FORMS OF COMPETITION, AS WE ALL NEED EACH OTHER'S BUYERS AND SELLERS. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO GET ALONG AND HAVE A RELATIONSHIP. **”**



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RENFROW Decorative Center

Ross Renfrow is the Third Generation in Family Business

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



Ross Renfrow is continuing his family's legacy of excellence through the Renfrow Decorative Center in Gluckstadt. "We moved to this location from Byram four years ago," he says. Now operating out of a beautiful showroom with two large warehouses, Ross says the company serves as a one-stop shop. "We are a start-to-finish operation. We provide the labor for installation, often with 10 to 15 crews working on installations in the area."

Renfrow Decorative Center was started in 1998 as an offshoot of Renfrow Insulation, a company Ross's grandfather, Charles, established. "He opened the Decorative Center in Byram with my dad, Hubie Renfrow, and a business partner, Larry Collette. Larry ran the day-to-day business." Ross grew up around the business. His family lived in Byram until he was in the sixth grade. "We moved to Flowood and I went to school at First Presbyterian Day School, then on to Jackson Prep." Ross went to college at Mississippi State where he studied business management.

"In my junior year, Larry announced that he was retiring, and I had an option of finishing school or working under Larry for a year. He had over 40 years of experience working in the flooring industry and I knew I could learn so much from him, so that's what I chose to do." Ross not only learned about flooring, but he learned that he really liked the industry. Ross bought out his grandfather and Larry, and now he owns the business with his father. "I run the day-to-day side of the business," he says. "Every day is different. I'm kind of a high-energy personality, so I like that I am not stuck in a cubicle. I like forming relationships with people, and in my job, I talk with different people every day. I also enjoy going out and checking on jobs. That is really satisfying."

Working with REALTORS® is something Ross enjoys as well. "When people want to buy a home, it's not unusual for them to want to update the home by changing the countertops, the backsplash, the flooring or something else. Or when a house goes on the market, something as simple as putting new carpet in the bedrooms

...



makes all the difference. I know REALTORS® are on the phone all day, every day, with all sorts of people. If they can make one less phone call, their day is a little easier. When they have a place they are confident with, it makes it easier for them. We want to be that place for them.”

To make things easier for the clients, Ross says the company does free estimates. “We take measurements, work up quotes, and we’ll schedule

the job if they are ready. Our prices are always competitive. We have a talented group of in-house decorators who help with everything, down to helping choose paint colors.”

Customers are always welcome to drop in at the design showroom any time. “No appointments are needed,” says Ross. The warehouses are also open to the public. “We have big slabs of granite, quartz and marble

so people can see the whole slab, not just a small sample.”

Ross and his wife, Miller, were married six years ago in February, and they are expecting their first child next February. “We are delighted,” he says. Miller is a registered nurse who works on the transport team for the NICU at UMC. “She flies in helicopters and ambulances, transporting sick babies.” The couple are members of Pinelake Baptist Church.



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meet NITA MARTIN

Central Mississippi REALTORS® NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER!

To meet and talk with Nita is to know that Central Mississippi REALTORS® are in the hands of an experienced, motivated leader.

Nita Martin is a licensed REALTOR®, NAR REALTOR® Association Certified Executive, and passionate advocate for homeownership. She has a combined 15 years of experience in administering nonprofit housing initiatives, leading REALTOR® Association programs and services, and facilitating residential real estate transactions.

She began her career in 2006, as a Homeownership Counselor certified by the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, NeighborWorks America, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. As a counselor, she aided neighborhood stabilization and revitalization efforts and served as a technical assistance specialist for down payment resources and other mortgage products for residential real estate sales.

In 2010, Nita was awarded the “Commitment to Excellence Award” by Suzanne Boas of Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Greater Atlanta for providing significant contributions towards foreclosure mitigation during the Great Recession.

From 2010 to 2012, her contributions to homebuyer education and counseling at the University of Southern

Mississippi’s Home of Your Own Program (HOYO) were instrumental in the program’s success in placing 500 families with disabilities into their first home marked by a milestone celebration in 2012 and its recognition as the “Best Homebuyer Program” for three consecutive years by Governor Haley Barbour.

Throughout her career, Nita has been an advocate for the real estate industry, affordable and workforce housing, fair housing, and civic engagement. In 2013, Nita was named a member of FDIC’s Delta Alliance for Economic Inclusion aimed to address the challenges and implement solutions to improve the economic well-being of the unbanked and underserved.

Hired by Central MS REALTORS® in 2014, she served as the Communications and Political Affairs Director responsible for developing the association’s public relations campaigns and promoting pro-REALTOR® legislative priorities. At CMR, Nita first developed RPAC fundraising experience and deepened her connection to the community through CMR’s Young Professionals Network outreach events.

In 2018, while hired as the Government Affairs Director of Advocacy for the San Antonio Board of REALTORS®, Nita was appointed to the Texas REALTORS® Political Involvement

Committee. Since 2019, Nita has led the political affairs and legislative advocacy efforts for the nation’s seventh-largest REALTOR® association in Orlando, FL, raising nearly \$1 million for RPAC and expending \$500,000 for REALTOR® Party campaign services. She has raised \$1.8 million+ for RPAC *year to date*.

Nita has extensive experience in managing multiple projects and staff, forging community partnerships, engaging governmental entities and private stakeholders, and maintaining compliance with federal regulations. She has expertise liaising association committees such as Governmental Affairs, Political Action, Home Builders, Military and Veterans, and Young Professionals. Nita’s footprints in housing, real estate, and politics have both effectively expanded pathways to homeownership and advanced public policies to protect a vibrant business climate in Mississippi, Texas, and Florida.

Nita has also just been appointed to serve as the 2023 Vice Chair to NAR’s Association Executive Young Professionals Network.

In her spare time, Nita enjoys spending time with her family, taking dance classes and gluten-free dining.

We are thankful that Nita is bringing all of her experience, training and passion to Central Mississippi!





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We held our *Summer Social Night and Three-Year Celebration* at Reunion Golf and Country Club on Tuesday, July 12, 2022. It was a great night of celebrating and networking! Everyone enjoyed the food, drinks, view, music and door prizes provided by our ad partners!

We are thankful that we have the opportunity to put these events together for everyone and appreciate our ad partners, sponsors and our REALTORS®'s support for the past three years! And cheers to many more!



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