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Are You Ready to Spring into the SPRING MARKET?

▶▶ publisher's note

Dear Real Producers of Richmond,

As we emerge from another winter, it's time to start thinking about the spring real estate market. Despite the uncertainty and volatility of the past few years, there are many reasons to be positive and hopeful about what lies ahead.

Interest rates remain historically low, making it an ideal time for buyers to enter the market. Low rates can help spur demand and lead to increased competition for properties, which is great news for sellers. And even though interest rates are on the rise and can impact the real estate market, it's important to remember that they are just one factor among many. The economy, supply and demand dynamics, buyer motivation, investor demand, and local market conditions can all contribute to a robust real estate market, even in the face of rising interest rates.

The overall economy is still showing signs of strength and stability, which bodes well for the real estate market. With more people returning to work and consumer confidence on the

rise, we can expect to see increased demand for homes in the coming months. Overall, while a low-inventory market can create challenges for REALTORS®, it can also create opportunities for those who are able to adapt to the market conditions and leverage their skills and expertise to serve their clients effectively.

Moreover, there are a number of demographic trends that are driving demand for housing. As millennials continue to enter their prime homebuying years, they are driving demand for starter homes and entry-level properties. At the same time, baby boomers are looking to downsize and simplify their lives, leading to increased demand for smaller, more manageable homes.

In short, the spring 2023 selling market is shaping up to be a positive and hopeful one for real estate. With low interest rates, a strong economy, and demographic trends driving demand, there are many reasons to feel optimistic about what lies ahead. So get ready to spring into action and make the most of this exciting market!

Thank you to all of you who attended our Masquerade Sneaker Ball on March 24th! We will have photos from the event in next month's issue. In the meantime, please check them out on our social media pages and be sure to tag yourself and your friends! Next, we're excited to gather with everyone again on **May 4th for our Lawnpalooza event**, which is going to be another great time together as a community. Keep an eye on your inbox for details and your exclusive invitation!

With gratitude,



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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What strategies are you implementing to help your clients navigate the competitive spring market?



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Who's been the most influential person in your life?



BROOKE BARNARD
River City Elite Properties
My husband.



ALBERT MORGAN
Long & Foster Realtors
I have had several people in my life that have influenced my life but none more important than my step-father. He took us in at a low point in my childhood and made me who I am today. He always stressed working hard and looking out for others. Making sure I had a good work ethic but still taking the time to take care of others was his principle. He has since passed, but I still think of him every day and the impact he has had on my life.



DAN TULLI
Joyner Fine Properties
The most influential person in my life was my father, George Tulli. In his short life, he modeled the importance of family, character, and investing in your education. He embedded in me the belief that, in life, it is okay to get knocked down, but to never stay down.



ADILA MCGHEE
Dila Design LLC
Forrest McGhee (my husband). I became who I am now because of his support, and he taught me the ways of American life.



CHRISTOPHER HASKINS
eXp Realty
My father.



SHERRY KLETZLY
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices
Towne Realty
My parents, especially my mother.



DANIELLE BOWERS
Virginia Capital Realty
Dr. Baxter Perkinson influenced me at a young age. I enjoyed sleepovers with my old classmate Elizabeth, his youngest daughter, and was intrigued by his work ethic, stunning home on the river, and his ability to practice self-care through his painting. Watching him over the years from afar inspired me to grow a family, build a legacy, and find ways to express my inner self through activities that make me happy.



MEGAN NAPIER
Napier Realtors ERA
My father; not only am I fortunate that he is my mentor and broker, but he also is the kindest and most thoughtful person. I am very lucky!



TAMMY WILKERSON
Designed 2 Sell
My father was the most influential person in my life. I've pushed myself to create more opportunities my entire life because of his example... I view our staging company as a direct extension of the furniture business he led for over 40 years and his father before him.



KATIE WILLIAMS
Cinch Home Services
My husband has been the most influential person in my life. As a business owner and firefighter, he is the busiest person I know. He strives to be the best at all that he does and sets the bar high for our household.



AEKTA CHAWLA
Zriliant
My mother.



TINA MCCABE
eXp Realty
My parents!



DREW DEMAREE
The Freedom Companies
Hands down, the most influential person in my life is my late wife Kimberley! She inspired me daily how to work hard and be kind to others at the same time. She was a top-producing real estate agent in Richmond, Virginia, and an amazingly active mom and wife. So when she got diagnosed with Stage 4 breast cancer, I honestly was shocked at how she kept going every day even during her surgeries and treatments! Even though she passed away in April 2022, she is still my BIGGEST INFLUENCE of how I live each day! We called her a unicorn for a reason!



CALEB BOYER
Providence Hill Real Estate
Jesus Christ. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.



MARY ANN WHITE
Napier Realtors ERA
My most influential person is actually two people: my parents. They always encouraged my brother and me to be involved in anything we were involved in and to treat all people with respect. One thing that has always stuck in my mind was a saying that they told me, "Everyone puts their pants on the same way, one leg at a time, so treat everyone the same."



PAGE YONCE
C&F Mortgage Corporation
My father, Ivan Yonce, was the most influential person in my life. My dad was the first to teach me that we are all equal, treat everyone with respect, and always do what is right. The character of a person is earned by their actions. I miss the man that gave me my foundation.



WILL GUZA
Joyner Fine Properties
From a personal standpoint, my wife Libba and my parents are undoubtedly at the top and continue to be to this day. From a professional standpoint, it would be Bill White of Joyner Fine Properties and Mark Powell of Homes 'N Land. Their guidance and importance to my development in this industry will continue to have a daily impact for the rest of my life. I am so fortunate to have them in my corner.



CHRISTY BACON
Keller Williams Realty
My mom and dad because they both have amazing qualities that complement each other. My dad has a super outgoing personality and doesn't know a stranger, and my mom is caring and compassionate.



WES ATIYEH
Joyner Fine Properties
My father.



ANN MITCHELL
The Kerzanet Group
My mother was the most influential person in my life. She was the hardest-working person I have known. She juggled putting her family first, along with her work, with such class and grace. Everything she touched was a home run!



AMANDA HARDESTY

Hardesty Homes

Brian Liggan, my former broker and mentor. Most Richmond agents know/remember him. He taught me so much: how to put out fires, run a real estate brokerage ... the list goes on and on. I was his admin to operations manager until he passed away from cancer.



ANNE LANG

ARW Home

This one is easy! My father is, by far, the most influential person in my life. He was a great teacher of all things. I recall him teaching me about tools; I would assist him in his workshop as a child. He taught me about cars and how to change a tire and check the oil, as well as how to drive. He showed me the world as we traveled and moved in the Air Force. In his later years, he was finally able to share many of his adventures as a fighter pilot in Vietnam, and also some of his misadventures as his plane went down a few times. He taught me how to fly and build an airplane. He built his own, which is now in a museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He taught me how to farm during his retirement years when he bought my grandparent's farm and retired in Iowa. Most of all, he taught me about unconditional love, true respect, being responsible and self-sufficient, and how to live a Christian life. We lost him last year, just after his 90th birthday, but what a great birthday it was. Love you, Dad!



JULIE CRABTREE

eXp Realty

My grandmother was the most influential person in my life. She taught me to never rely on others for your success. Hard work is the only way to get anywhere in life.



RICK COX

The Rick Cox Realty Group

Certainly, I would have to say that the most influential person in my life was my grandmother who passed away a couple of years ago at the age of 103. She always saw the positive things in everything and everyone. She always had an unconditional love for all of her family and friends. I always felt good after being around her. She gave me a true appreciation for the belief that people and the relationships you make with them are truly what life is all about. The real estate industry

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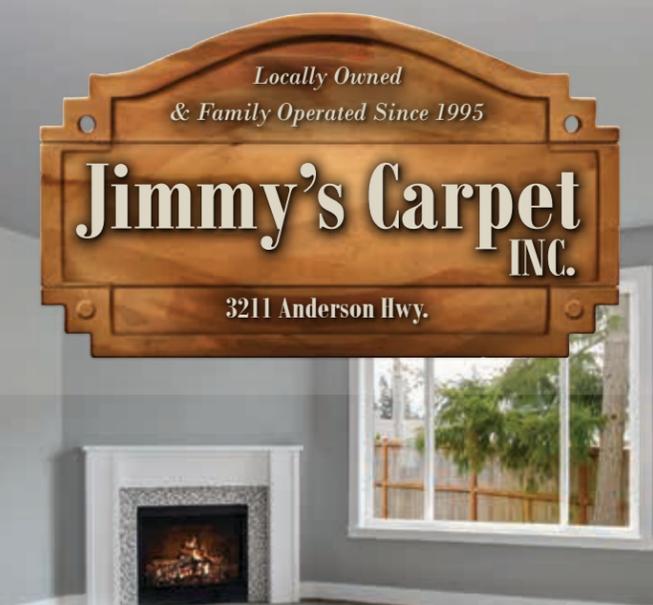
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By Mary Garner DeVoe

CONSISTENCY

A sign in the conference room of a friend's new office says: "Everything You Want Is on the Other Side of Consistency."

Sure, I know about consistency — don't we all? Who among us has not been taught about, or at least read about, the importance of good habits? I have taught the importance of repeating actions and the practice of "habit stacking." But the naked truth of that sign got me rethinking the meaning, application, and results of consistency. The sign changed my perspective, so I started doing a little research.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary refers to consistency as "harmony of conduct or practice with profession." Do my actions match my profession? Are my actions lining up with the reputation, results, and expertise I intend?

I googled consistency and quite a bit came up about Patrick Mahomes, the quarterback for the Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs (and game MVP). He talks about consistency. Mahomes talks about what happens outside of and in preparation for the 60 minutes of actual

game time. He says, "No one really sees pro athletes behind the scenes. They don't know how hard they work. They don't see how you work on the basics. They couldn't possibly know. You wouldn't think that someone who hits like Alex Rodriguez needs to use a tee every day, but that's how he stayed on top of it."

An informal poll of top-producing agents confirms that the listing appointment itself takes about 45 to 60 minutes. But the preparation and practice that precedes an appointment is about eight hours. Top agents schedule role play and practice, market study and analysis, training, and coaching. They also review their performance to analyze what is working, what is not, what can be improved, and what needs adjustment.

An agent's role play, practice, and preparation are the football player's drills to improve speed, footwork, getting hit, weight lifting, and studying game film. Practice and preparation time *increases* for athletes as they increase their skill level. Drill sessions for peewee football (ages 5 to 9) run about 45 to 60 minutes; and for middle and high school (ages 10 to 17), the time runs about 75 to 90 minutes; while at the college and professional level, sessions can be two-plus hours.

The idea of increased practice and preparation time may seem peculiar to some REALTORS®; but the best business people and agents with whom I have worked schedule and dedicate time for this. They purposefully engage with other colleagues, both local and across the country (and the globe), to share best practices, challenges, strategies, and tools. They work with coaches and attend training to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. They practice dialogues and objection handling.

Agents who grow and maintain strong businesses understand that their daily activities must be purposeful, scheduled, and consistent. The results don't happen by themselves — the results are driven by the consistent, habitual activities.

If a garden or farm is not consistently fertilized, weeded, watered, nothing but weeds will grow. Physical fitness is not achieved by an annual workout. The best litigators spend more time litigating, honing their practice. The best surgeons spend more time doing surgery, perfecting their skill. This plays out in everything... Basketball players can dribble and shoot. Consistency is what made Michael Jordan special!

It is now April. It is time to assess where you stand in the game and determine your strategy for the next 12 weeks. Did you achieve your 12-week goal? What worked really well? What didn't work at all? And what needs adjustment? How much time did you spend practicing, taking a training or workshop, or working with a coach? What did you do *consistently* to drive results?

Please be clear: if you aren't *consistently* closing on transactions and meeting your goals, your schedule and your "routine" needs an overhaul. John Maxwell describes The Law of Consistency as "Motivation gets you going, but discipline keeps you growing."

So are you going, or are you growing? How will you bring into your life the consistency required to have what you desire?

To continue the conversation, join me on Facebook: Mary Garner DeVoe – Business Coach & Trainer or The Freedom Companies.



Mary Garner ("MG") DeVoe is the director of training for The Freedom Companies and has been in real estate leadership for over 30 years. She is passionate about adding value to her clients and helping them grow personally and professionally. When she is not training, MG enjoys her family here in Virginia and in Louisiana.

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UTILIZING A POWER OF ATTORNEY *in a Real Estate Transaction*

IF YOU ARE A REALTOR® ASSISTING A CLIENT WITH THE SALE OR PURCHASE OF PROPERTY BUT THEY CANNOT SIGN DOCUMENTS DURING THE TRANSACTION DUE TO INACCESSIBILITY OR INCAPACITATION, A POWER OF ATTORNEY CAN BE A HELPFUL LEGAL TOOL FOR CLOSING THE DEAL.

A Power of Attorney is a document that allows a person (the “principal”) to grant one (or more) persons the authority to act on their behalf (the “agent”). A POA can be limited to a specific action, such as the purchase or sale of real estate, or contain a broad range of general powers.

If a POA is going to be used on a real estate transaction, be sure to send a copy of the document to the closing attorney to review early on so they can ensure all requirements are met — that the document has been properly executed and notarized, and that it has the requisite language included that will permit the agent to sign the deed and other documents on behalf of the principal. If the owner of real estate is a Company or Trust, a POA may not be the appropriate document to utilize if a member or trustee is unavailable. If the principal is a corporation or LLC, a resolution or special consent is usually the appropriate document to appoint an authorized signor. When the principal is a Trust, the Trust agreement usually appoints a successor Trustee to execute documents.

If your client needs to obtain financing to purchase property and intends to use a POA at closing, be sure their lender also sees a copy of the document prior to settlement and authorizes its use. Do not wait until the last minute to do so, as the file may have to go back to underwriting pending approval of the document, which may result in a delay.

It is important to note that a POA terminates upon the death of the principal. If a property owner died intestate (without a Will), their heirs will need to sign the contract and convey the property. If the owner died testate (with a Will), the beneficiaries or qualified Executor (if granted the power of sale) will need to sign documents.

In Virginia, if an agent signs a Deed or Deed of Trust utilizing a Power of Attorney, the original (or a certified copy) will have to be recorded in the jurisdiction where the property is located. In addition, most title companies will require an affidavit to be signed by the agent stating that the principal is “alive and well” and that their authority has not been revoked. It is a good idea to ask your client for the location of the original at the very beginning of the process to avoid any last-minute surprises or issues at recordation.



Katie Redwood is a partner at Tluchak, Redwood & Culbertson, PLLC. She has been a licensed attorney practicing real estate law in Virginia for over seven years. Outside of the office, Katie enjoys golfing and eating at local restaurants in Richmond, and is an avid Hokie fan.

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Wes Fertig
Joyner Fine Properties
“Calling people back, communicating effectively, doing what you say you’re going to do, and then going above and beyond what’s standard. Offering true service and showing the client you actually care about them as people and whether they are happy. It’s basic stuff. I’ve learned that if you can do the basics really well, you’ll excel.”

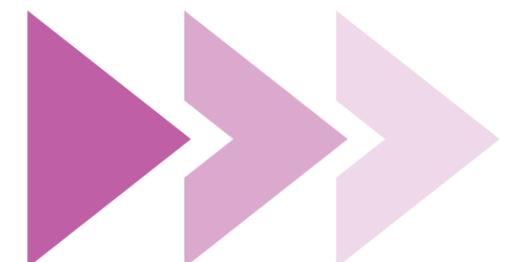


Casey Smith
Valentine Properties
“You have to operate as a business owner first or you won’t last.”
“I love when I’m standing in front of a client and I can explain the process and what I think our plans should be ... the point when I can feel that they trust me and that they understand what’s to come. It’s very gratifying to be doing what I love and to make a difference to help people through the biggest transactions they are going to make and bring them from confusion to confidence.”



JoanElaine Justice
Keller Williams Realty Richmond West
“I learned that self-care is a way for me to care for the people I love and serve through my work. I aim to have a significant positive impact on the people in my world.”

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JoanElaine Justice

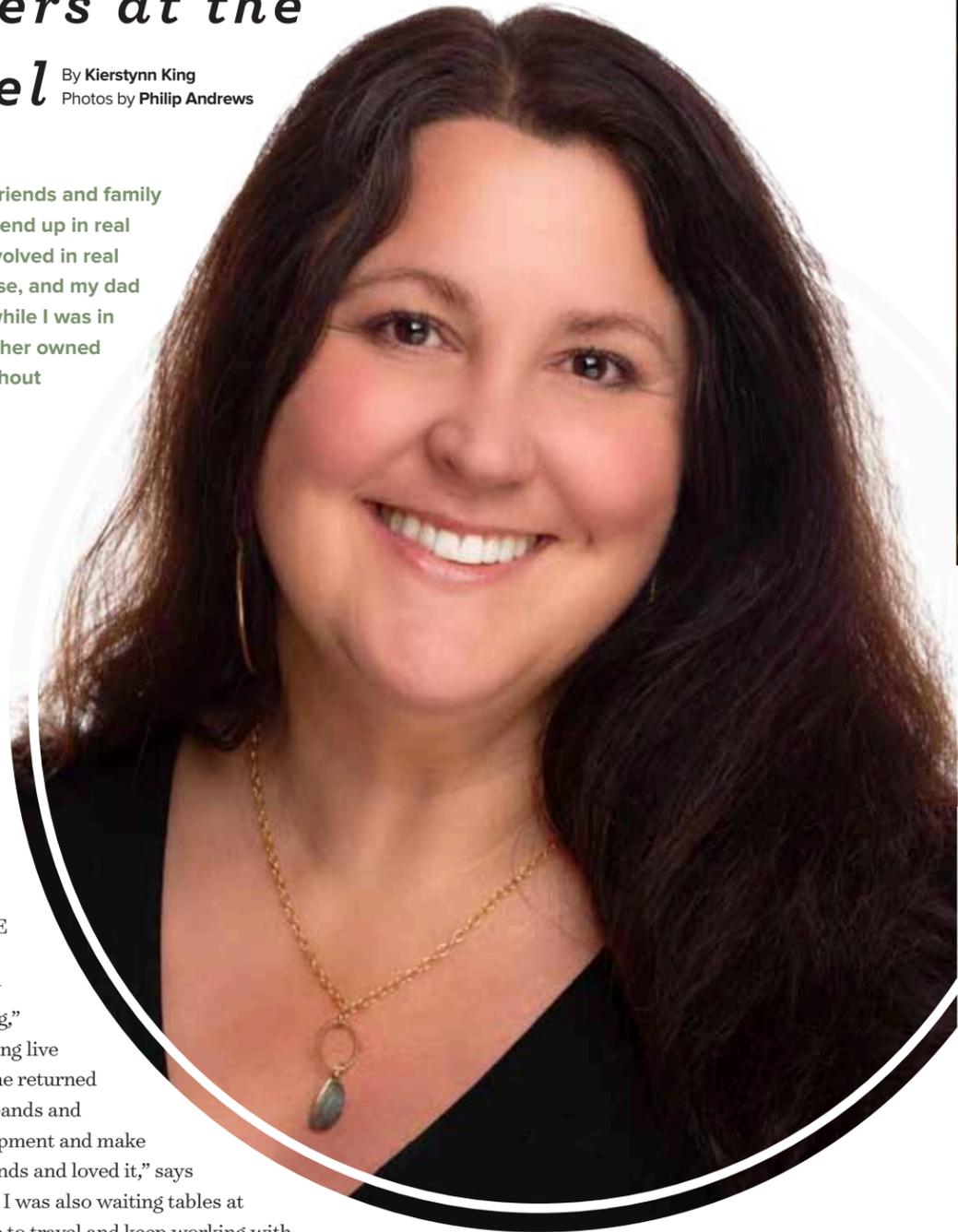
Serving Others at the Highest Level

By Kierstynn King
Photos by Philip Andrews

JoanElaine Justice, better known to her friends and family as JoanE, always knew she was going to end up in real estate. “I come from a family that was involved in real estate; my mom had her real estate license, and my dad did commercial development and sales while I was in high school,” JoanE recalls. “My grandfather owned multiple multifamily properties all throughout D.C. and Maryland.”

JoanE grew up in Alexandria, Virginia, where she lived with her grandmother during high school until she attended college. She attended Radford University for a semester, then transferred to Virginia Commonwealth University, where she majored in marketing, with a minor in women’s studies and journalism. “While I was at Radford, my grandmother passed away,” says JoanE. “I wound up transferring, but during that time, even though I liked college, I felt kind of lost.”

Conflicted, and not knowing what she wanted to do with her life at the time, JoanE decided to drop out of college. “I decided to travel throughout Europe for a while. My first loves in life are music, art, and traveling,” she says. While traveling, she began attending live shows and connecting with bands. When she returned to the States, she had friends who were in bands and needed someone who could help carry equipment and make flyers. “Before I knew it, I was managing bands and loved it,” says JoanE. “I was living a really interesting life. I was also waiting tables at Stella’s, which paid the bills and allowed me to travel and keep working with bands. However, if you don’t make it at a national or international level, life on the road wears you down a bit, and it becomes challenging.”



JoanE then decided to make the transition to a more stable career in real estate. She joined and became a founding member of Keller Williams Realty Richmond West, which, at the time, was new to the area. “Originally, I was just going to be working with investors because of my family’s involvement with investment and development,” she says. “But because of the times, everybody was able to get a mortgage and buy a house. I got my license in January of 2005. That opened up more opportunities and I started selling homes to friends and acquaintances and building a more traditional real estate career path.”

During her time in real estate, JoanE has worked in just about every position as an agent. She worked as a buyers agent in the beginning of her career, then worked on her own, had her own team with a partner, and wound up launching the Expansion Team, as the expansion partner for the Reynolds Team, which is now known as EmpowerHome.

JoanE has won RAR outstanding production awards and several Keller Williams awards.

“I’ve done a little bit of everything in my career, I’ve done investment work, foreclosure and short sale, commercial work, straight residential work, and I’ve done that consistently throughout my career,” JoanE says. “I haven’t necessarily picked a lane to be in, the way that many agents have. I think that’s one thing that sets me apart.”

Although she doesn’t travel as much as she used to, JoanE credits what she learned while traveling as something else that sets her apart. “I’ve been very fortunate to travel to different places like Bali, the Sacred Valley in Peru, Central America, and all over Eastern and Western Europe. In these other countries, I’ve been able to see how their real estate works and how other cultures handle that,” she explains. “It’s allowed me to see Richmond, and the Central Virginia market, with a different set of eyes.”

When it comes to managing her work–life balance,

JoanE admits that it's been a key area that she has had a challenging time with. "As I was launching the Expansion Team in Central Virginia, I was initially the only agent, and because there was such rapid growth, I ran myself into the ground and burnt out," she says. "With burning myself out, I had a lot of health issues arise because of it. I had to learn how to modulate my activity in business and be able to get back to my center doing the things I love." JoanE took major time off last year to regroup and take care of herself physically. When she returned this year, she made sure she focused on not working seven days a week or working late at night. "I always want to make sure I'm bringing my best self to the table," she says. "When I wasn't taking care of myself, I wasn't bringing my best self to the table."

These days, on her days off, JoanE can be found relaxing by the James River, reading a good book, hiking alongside the river with her mom, going for walks, and being out in the sunshine. "I don't

take my health for granted anymore," she says. "I learned that self-care is a way for me to care for the people I love and serve through my work. I aim to have a significant, positive impact on the people in my world."

As for what's next, JoanE, along with Deborah Reynolds and Sarah Reynolds, just bought The Highpoint Building at 3300 West Broad Street. "We are so excited to headquarter our team there this year as we grow!" JoanE enthuses. She hopes that she'll be able to continue to sell, as well as coach and mentor the team to the next level.

"I've been very blessed to be in business with people that I admire, and they've set up amazing opportunities for me and others to take things to the next level," she says. "I want to make sure to honor that opportunity and continue to serve people at my highest level."



“

I'VE BEEN VERY BLESSED TO BE IN BUSINESS WITH PEOPLE THAT I ADMIRE, AND THEY'VE SET UP AMAZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ME AND OTHERS TO TAKE THINGS TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

—Joan Elaine Justice

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CASEY SMITH

▶▶ rising star



Photo by Jennifer Gavin

INSTILLING CONFIDENCE

By Dave Danielson

One of the absolute best gifts you can give your clients through your work is helping them move forward through the process with an underlying sense of certainty. That's an area where Casey Smith excels through her work.

As a REALTOR® with Valentine Properties, Casey instills confidence in her clients as they move closer to the real estate goals they have long held in their hearts.

"I love when I'm standing in front of a client and I can explain the process and what I think our plans should be, the point when I can feel that they trust me and that they understand

what's to come," Casey says. "It's very gratifying to be doing what I love and to make a difference to help people through the biggest transactions they are going to make ... and bring them from confusion to confidence."

GAINING MOMENTUM

Even before getting her start in the business, Casey built a long tradition of helping others. When she was 23 years old, she managed a local hair salon. That's when she received an opportunity to become a transaction coordinator and licensed Realtor at Valentine Properties. She recalls what went through her mind when she was presented with the opportunity.

"I knew I was meant for a challenging, fast-paced career. The opportunity to work in real estate was a no-brainer," she recalls with a smile. "I applied right away and got the job."

MOVING FORWARD

In time, Casey pursued a transaction coordinator role with another firm. After a year and a half, COVID-19 swept the nation and her job was eliminated. Since 2017, Casey has had her real estate license. She considered her next steps.

"During COVID, I thought no one would be hiring a transaction coordinator. At that point, I had been in real estate for

years," Casey remembers. "I had done and learned everything behind the scenes in my administrative roles. Sales was the only thing I didn't feel like an expert in yet. So I decided, in the midst of the COVID chaos, to dive headfirst into sales and took a leap of faith."

FULL-CIRCLE SUCCESS

Casey went back to her original broker at Valentine Properties with the idea of rejoining her original brokerage — this time as a Realtor in a sales role. After being advised by her original broker to interview around and find the right fit, Casey interviewed with a few other firms and then came right back.

"I knew this was the right fit for me," Casey smiles. "It was a little intimidating at first since I would be starting my career as an independent agent there versus being on a team somewhere else, but I decided to take the leap of faith."

Her faith and belief were rewarded. In fact, during her first full year as a Realtor, Casey recorded an impressive total of over \$10 million in sales volume, working exclusively by relationship and referral.



Photo by Jennifer Gavin

GENUINE GRATITUDE

Casey is deeply thankful for the vital level of support she has received from those around her, including her broker, Heather. "Heather is responsible for so much of the knowledge I have about the process and how to structure having my own real estate business. She helped me realize that you have to operate as a business owner first or you won't last," Casey explains. "She also taught me a lot about implementing different systems."

"I also have a real fighting spirit. Without that part of me, I would never have pushed through to where I am and where I'm headed."



Rising Star Casey Smith (right) and her fiancé, Brylee Despinis, will be married on October 1, 2023.

Photo by Philip Andrews

Photo by Jennifer Gavin



WONDERFUL LIFE

Away from work, Casey looks forward to time spent with her fiancé, Brylee, and their dog. Together, they love hiking, as well as exploring local breweries and enjoying live music.

When it comes to giving back, Casey has enjoyed sponsoring Stonewall Sports over the past two years. "It is a great sports league. I met Brylee there, along with many of my clients and dear friends," she says. "It is near and dear to my heart and business."

As Casey instills an important level of confidence and certainty in her clients as they pursue their dreams, she also moves forward on her own path with purpose.

"I know this is my calling in life. This is my passion. I feel blessed for the level of success that I've achieved. I don't take it for granted," Casey says. "I'm here as a Realtor to truly help people invest in themselves."

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▶ cover story

By Zachary Cohen
Photos by Philip Andrews



WES
FERTIG

SERVICE OVER SELF

After 20 years with the Chesterfield County Police Department, Wes Fertig was ready for a change. He'd been promoted several times throughout his career, rising from a special victims detective to captain. He found great fulfillment in his work, but as his 20th anniversary neared, he took a hard look at what he wanted going forward.

"The advantage of starting in public service so early in my life was that I accumulated 20 years of service time by the age of 40," Wes reflects. "So I started to think, did I want to look at my next career, or did I want to be a lifer?"

After careful consideration — and due in no small part to a small seed planted years prior by friend and broker Wayne Gauthier — Wes decided that a new career was on the horizon, and in 2019, he turned his attention toward real estate.

BECOMING NUMBER ONE

Wes was excited about the opportunity to have a fresh start and was drawn to entrepreneurial ventures that would allow him more control over his daily schedule.

"Real estate offered me an opportunity to still remain someone who can provide value. It was another career where I could still be of service, to make a positive impact. That was important too," Wes explains.

In the past four years, Wes's real estate career has taken flight. He closed 10 homes in his first year while working full-time as a police captain. In 2020, he went full-time in real estate and the choice paid big dividends — he closed 44 homes. Wes followed that with 55 homes closed in 2021. In 2022, he closed 57 homes for over \$22 million. He's been the top REALTOR® by number of closed transactions at Joyner Fine Properties for two years running, all as a solo agent.





“
I’VE
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”

SEEKING BALANCE

The opportunity to determine his schedule was one reason Wes got into real estate. Yet, four years into his real estate journey, he’s still seeking the elusive work-life balance. As many Realtors know, having the chance to determine one’s schedule is very different from actualizing balance.

Wes has succeeded as a solo agent, but at the expense of long hours and little time off. So in 2023, he’s working on developing a strategy for better balance — which may very well include starting a real estate team of his own.

2019 was a busy year for Wes, marked by the start of his real estate career and tying the knot with his husband, Miguel Perez. Miguel, a former dance captain for Celine Dion, Shania Twain, and many others, is no stranger to a demanding schedule, having co-founded a new nonprofit dance company in Richmond, Conflux Dance Theater. In their free time, the couple enjoys taking their three Great Danes — Ares, Athena, and Boston — on day trips to hike trails around Charlottesville. On a grander scale, their passion for

international travel is strong; they’ve visited 10 countries in the last five years.

TRUST AND CHARACTER

Wes credits his success to his trustworthy nature and commitment to the basics.

“Calling people back, communicating effectively, doing what you say you’re going to do, and then going above and beyond what’s standard. Offering true service and showing the client you actually care about them as people and whether they are happy. It’s basic stuff. I’ve learned that if you can do the basics really well, you’ll excel,” Wes offers.

Wes also calls on the service-minded approach he honed during his time as a police officer. As an officer, Wes was often in a public-facing role. He learned to communicate flexibly and dynamically, adjusting his communication style to meet the needs of the civilian he was helping. As a real estate agent, he applies the same communication skills, giving him the ability to serve clients from all walks of life.



Wes Fertig and his husband, Miguel Perez, were married in 2019.

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“I communicate in a way that is straightforward and gets the job done, but also comes across as empathetic and shows the person you see them,” Wes says. “More than anything, I want people to know I’m an agent that’s trustworthy, someone that has character and you can do business with, and you don’t have to worry about my motivations or character. I have a service mentality. I use a motto from my law enforcement days: ‘Service Over Self.’ I practice that every day. When I’m dealing with people, I don’t sit there and think about how it’s going to impact me. I just make every decision with the idea of what’s in the best interest of the client ... and the chips fall where they fall.”



Wes Fertig (right) and Miguel enjoy taking their three Great Danes hiking around Charlottesville.



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GROUND YOURSELF in Nature This Spring

Bridge the gap between your body and the natural world through springtime mindfulness.

By Shauna Bryant, National Editor

As T.S. Eliot reminded readers in 1922, “April is the cruellest month.” Here, the famed modernist poet refers to, among other things, the liminal state between the cold and starkness of the landscape during winter and the promise of renewal and fruitfulness in spring, particularly for yesterday’s agrarian societies. However, the transitional nature of April remains difficult over a century later; the lingering pall of winter still chills our days, and serotonin and vitamin levels struggle, while the earth begins to warm and transform, impacting expectations and rhythms. How can we navigate the changing seasons in harmony with our bodies and minds? Try one of the following therapeutic techniques this month.

Forest bathing: Originating in Japan, forest bathing encourages connection to nature through our senses. Don’t worry, no actual bathing is involved — rath-

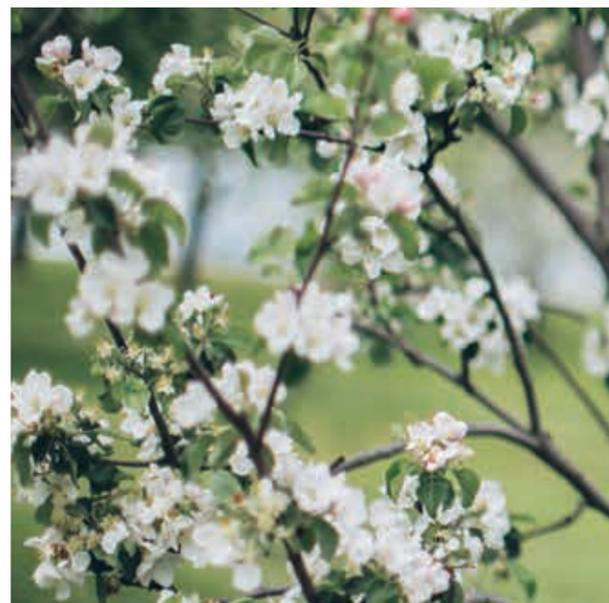
er, a slow, mindful walk in nature allows the bather to focus deliberately on their surroundings, tethered to the sights and sounds of the present moment. This practice has been linked to lower blood pressure, heart rate and levels of cortisol, depression, fatigue and anxiety.

Grounding: Also called “earthing,” grounding is the practice of realigning our energy with the earth’s natural electric charge, supporting the body’s ability to heal and regulate itself. This technique involves direct skin contact with the earth’s surface (e.g., walking barefoot, lying on the sand, swimming in natural bodies of water). Grounding has been shown to reduce inflammation and chronic pain and improve blood flow, energy levels, sleep and mood.

This year, celebrate Earth Day — April 22 — by getting your feet on the earth and your head in the forest. Your health will thank you!



“April is the cruellest month.”
—T.S. ELIOT



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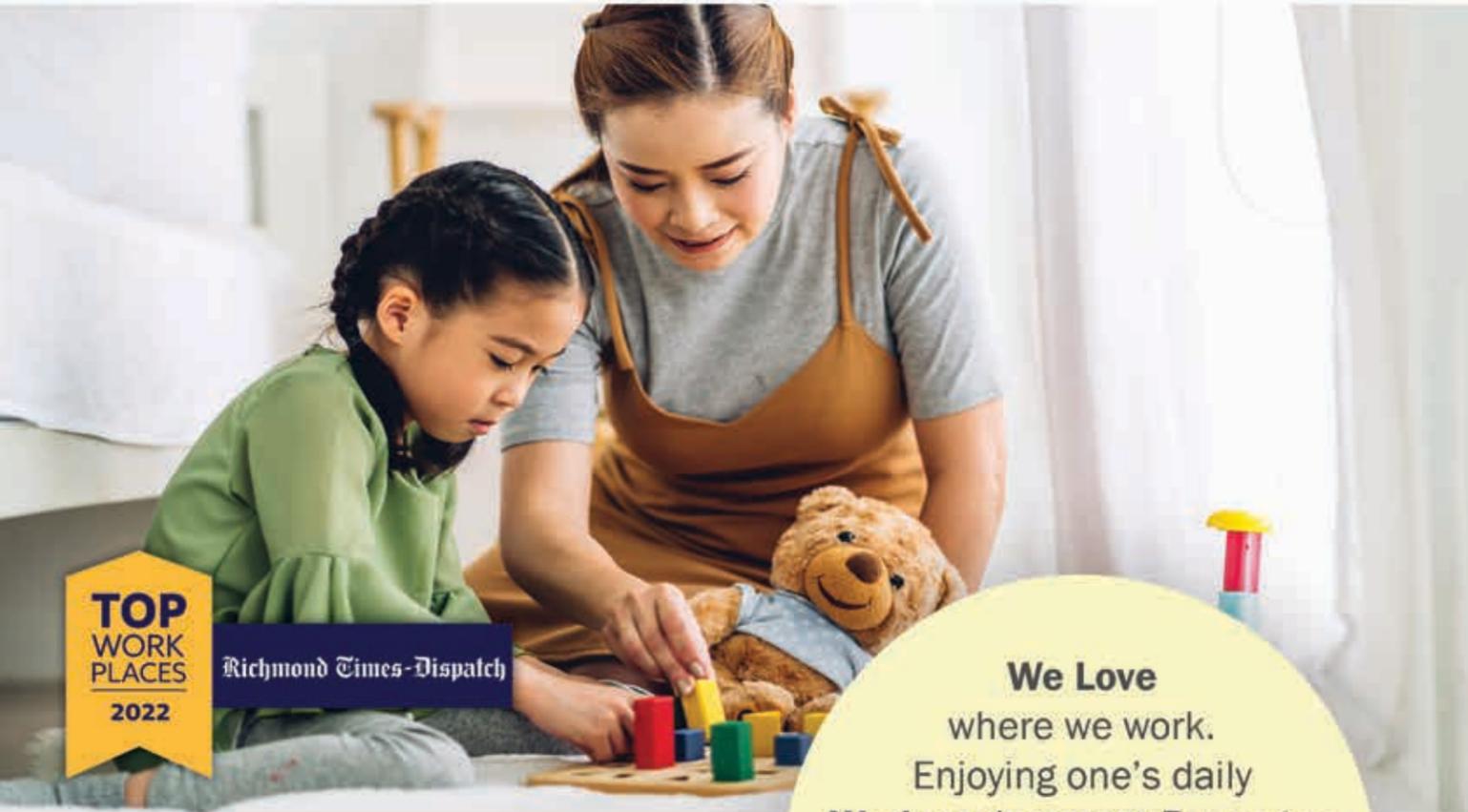
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TOP 100 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Feb. 28, 2023

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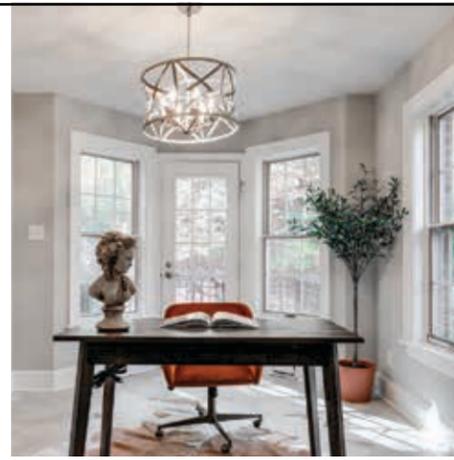
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