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Olympia Pistalu

Approachable, Honest,
Knowledgeable

“I’m not a salesperson. I’m a guide.”

Olympia Pistalu’s first passion was sociology and education. She grew up in Fresno, excelled at sports and academics, and stayed local, earning her undergraduate degree from Cal State Fresno before heading to the Bay Area to get her master’s at Cal State East Bay.

“I loved my sociology studies and wanted to share what I was learning with as many people as possible, so the natural progression was to go into teaching,” Olympia reflects. While Olympia was excited about the possibilities of a career in education, she soon discovered it wasn’t a perfect fit.

“I aspired to really enlighten the students to the nuances of human social society and structures, to give them tools and data that demystify how social structures impact all aspects of our lives. But I soon found myself grading papers at all hours of the night and years away from earning a living wage,” Olympia continues.

As a first generation American, Olympia wanted to build generational wealth, and she believed buying and holding real estate was the best way to do it. So, in 2016, she pivoted, getting her real estate license and beginning her sales career.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

Olympia’s initial goal was to sell real estate part time, perhaps buy a duplex or two for herself, and carry on in academics. But shortly after getting licensed, she landed her first listing, a \$2.5 million home that another agent failed to sell. Olympia got the house under contract in a few weeks.

“The process of getting this house prepped, marketing it, and getting it sold for this client, who really needed this sale so they could move onto a new phase of life, was intensely rewarding. I knew then that this was how I was going to make a positive impact in people’s lives.”

Olympia went on to win the 2016 Rookie of the Year for her brokerage. Since then, she has continued to grow her business. In an effort to bring her clients a higher level of service, she joined forces with Real Estate Experts in 2019. Since then, she’s averaged \$20 million in sales per year, capped by an \$18.6 million year in 2022.

KEEPING IT REAL

Olympia has found success by leaning into authenticity and transparency. She keeps it real with her clients by preparing them well and managing issues proactively. Her background in sociology means that interpreting stats, market data, and human trends are second nature.



“I’m approachable, honest, and knowledgeable. My ability to analyze macro and hyper-local data and explain it in a way that everyone can wrap their arms around sets the clients up for smooth and happy transactions. I think a lot of agents know how the market works, but engaging the client with the market in real time is a special skill set. I think that’s why people like me. I’m personable, realistic, driven by the data,” Olympia says.

Although she started her career in luxury sales, Olympia has developed a particular love for helping first and second time homebuyers.

“Helping people get on the escalator of building wealth and advising them wisely is one of the most impactful things I can do with a real estate license,” she says.

Regardless of the scenario, Olympia remains devoted to seeing her clients achieve their goals smoothly.

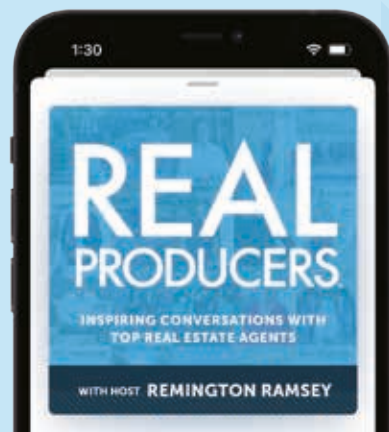
“I know everyone wants to go do luxury, but I love my first-time buyers and sellers. My clients are normal people and I want to protect them, inform them, and be a lifelong resource to them.”

SHAPED BY HER PAST

Outside work, Olympia enjoys fitness, travel, and dining. While she has the gift of enjoying a healthy life today, she went through a life-changing cancer battle as a nine-year-old. That journey has shaped her perspective on the world, allowing her to step in each day with authenticity and gratitude.

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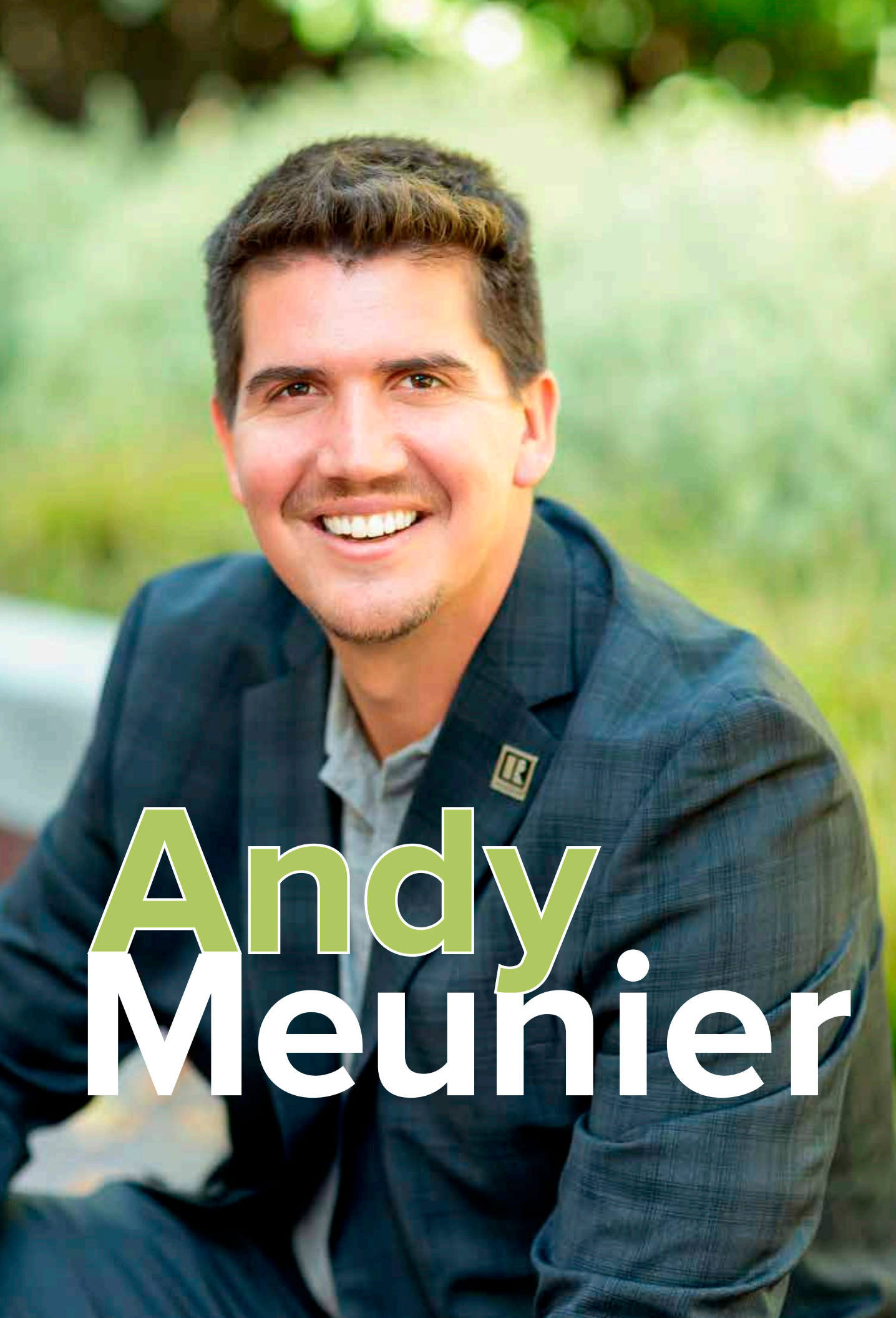
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Andy Meunier

►► silicon valley real producers agent feature

By Zachary Cohen

LEARNING FROM THE BEST

Real estate has been a central part of Andy Meunier’s life for as long as he can remember. His father, Dave, as well as his uncle and grandfather, have had long and successful real estate careers. Andy’s father, in particular, made a significant impact on him; Andy attributes much of his success to his dad, who taught him about putting himself in his clients’ shoes and managing expectations.

Andy is one of four boys in his family and the only one who decided to pursue a career in real estate. After attending the University of Minnesota, where he earned a degree in marketing, he returned to the Bay Area to begin his real estate career under the tutelage of his dad.

“I was lucky enough to have him as a mentor in the early days of my career,” Andy reflects. “I learned the intricacies of a real estate transaction, including the difficult conversations and negotiations that take place. These are the most critical components of any successful deal.”

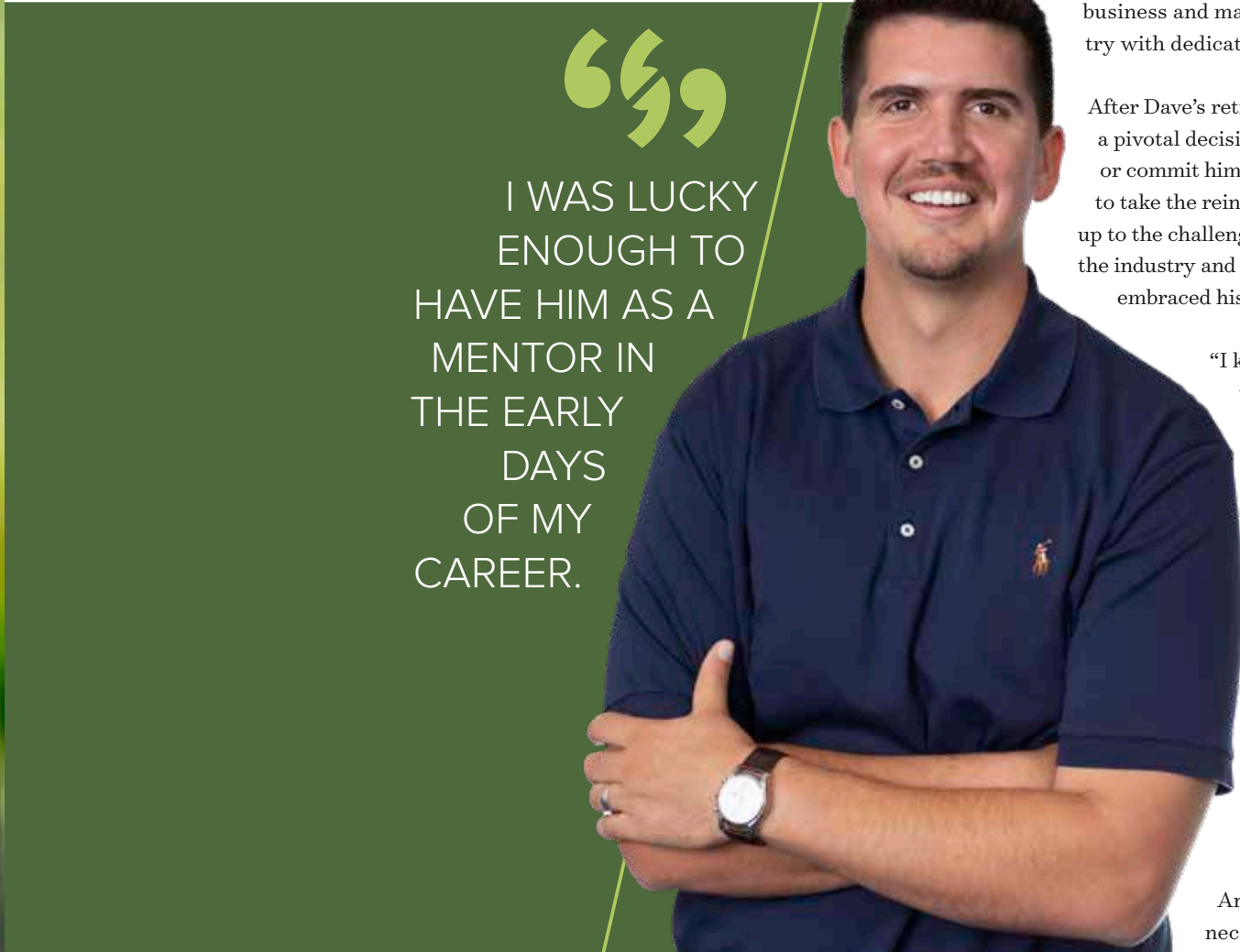
Andy has always been highly motivated to make his mark in the world of real estate. His father was the driving force behind the business for many years, allowing Andy to learn and grow, gaining the knowledge and experience he needed to succeed. Andy knew that he could build his own book of business and make a name for himself in the industry with dedication and hard work.

After Dave’s retirement in 2019, Andy was left with a pivotal decision: either pursue another career or commit himself fully to real estate. He decided to take the reins of the family business and step up to the challenge. Motivated by his passion for the industry and his desire to make a difference, he embraced his new role.

“I knew I had big shoes to fill, but I was determined to carve out my own path and continue the legacy of success that my father and grandfather had established,” Andy offers.

Andy closed 13 deals in 2020, his first year on his own, giving him the confidence to succeed on his own. He followed up with 37 transactions and over \$40 million in sales in 2021 and another \$35 million closed in 2022, placing himself in the top 1% of Coldwell Banker agents.

Andy continues to implement the necessary skills to create success.



“”

I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE HIM AS A MENTOR IN THE EARLY DAYS OF MY CAREER.



He works diligently at his craft. He is a calming force during otherwise stressful times. He utilizes his knowledge of technology and the fast-moving world of real estate to provide his clients with the best possible representation.

“Real estate transactions can be stressful and difficult, but I learned from my dad how to be a calming force for my clients during these times. He was really good at making people feel relaxed and putting them at ease, and I’ve adopted that ability to have tough conversations while also offering direction and reassurance. It’s an invaluable asset in this industry, and I’m so grateful to have learned it from him.”

After the passing of his father in 2021, Andy has become even more appreciative of his family. He remains incredibly close to his brothers, mother, and grandmother, who live within a block of his house. Family has always been a top priority for Andy, and he cherishes the time spent with them.

“My family... stands at the very top of my list,” Andy says. “When my dad passed in ‘21, it was a big shock, but it brought my family that much closer together. The support system I have is irreplaceable. It’s the reason I can do what I do so well.”

Andy and his wife, Marina, welcomed their first son, Noah, to the world in December 2022. Having a newborn has been trying but beautiful (as any parent knows). Now, Andy has a new motivation for the long-term success of his business.

“I’m just getting started. I’m extremely early in my career. I see myself with a lot more bandwidth to handle more volume, but right now, I am happy. It’s such a fun business, and there’s a lot of room to grow. My biggest goal is to provide exceptional service to my clients day in and day out and show them who you work with matters.”

“”
 THE SUPPORT SYSTEM I HAVE IS IRREPLACEABLE. IT’S THE REASON I CAN DO WHAT I DO SO WELL.

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▶▶ cover story

By Zachary Cohen

Manu Changotra

FINDING HOME IN THE BAY AREA

Born in Amritsar, India and raised in Bangalore, Manu Changotra went on to earn an MBA in advertising and build a successful marketing career in her home country. She worked with multinational brands, such as Coca-Cola and Gillette, alongside a host of top Indian brands, but when Manu's husband got a job opportunity to work for Apple in the Bay Area, the couple jumped at the chance to experience life in America.

Manu and her husband intended to stay in the US for one year, but they fell in love with the area.

One year became two, then three. Now more than twenty years later, they still call the Silicon Valley home.

"We started loving this place," Manu reflects with a smile. "I felt the Bay Area and the people were amazing. I felt at home with a good mix of all kinds of people from all



over the world. People are easygoing, not rushed. There is diversity. I could try every cuisine in the world. I could meet different people from different backgrounds. And that's what it was about for me — the people, the connections.”

While her husband had a clear career path with Apple, Manu's professional path in the US was less clear. She stayed at home with her two children for many years. Meanwhile, she worked in sales at Godiva Chocolate and later started a cake-making business.

“There I was at Godiva with an MBA selling chocolates,” Manu laughs. “But it was an exciting time, too. In India, I couldn't dream of starting my own business. I started baking, and from there, started making designer cakes.”

By 2012, Manu was ready to return to the workforce full-time. That's when she turned to real estate.

“I was excited to work with people and be able to help them achieve something. I connect with people well, and I wanted to take that journey with people,” Manu offers. “I realized I could have my own business, have flexibility, and be at home when my kids needed me. There weren't too many full-time South Asian agents at that time, and there was a huge demographic of the South Asian population looking to have that connection with their agent – to be culturally understood, to talk in their language. So I got my license, and before I knew it, I was off.”

“
I take the journey with
my clients and guide
them along every step
to make sure they make
the right decision.
”

Manu has now been thriving in real estate for over a decade. She closed \$142 million as a solo agent in 2022, making her the #215 individual agent in the nation and #37 agent in the Bay Area by volume (as ranked by RealTrends and The Leading 100).

Although Manu serves people from all cultural backgrounds, most of her clients are South Asian; the cultural similarities offer a pathway to instant connection.

“In real estate, it's not always straightforward. We dig in deep, and I can give clients perspective on choices. I take the journey with my clients and guide them along every step to make sure they make the right decision. I add value from a real estate perspective but also from the emotional connection I offer. It's all about relationships in life,” Manu explains.



Manu's journey from a marketing career in India to becoming a REALTOR® in the US has been a path with tremendous rewards. She now has a business and a life she is immensely proud of.

"I came to the US, and I wasn't scared, but I had to start all over. I wasn't in tech, and being in the Bay Area, I had to discover what I could do here. I'm constantly out to reinvent myself, reenergize my business, and revamp my business because I enjoy my work. This comes naturally to me."

BEYOND REAL ESTATE

Manu and her husband, Manish, have two children, Salinka (19) and Shivank (16). Her daughter, Salinka, recently got her real estate license and works part-time around her schoolwork at San Jose State. Outside real estate, family is Manu's priority. She enjoys traveling, exploring new restaurants, and volunteering.



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By Zach Cohen
Originally printed in
July 2020 (San Mateo County
Real Producers)



““

They say you need six to twelve months of reserves. I didn't have any of that stuff. But I had the hustle and I had the drive.

Marquise Murphy knows humility. He knows challenge. And he knows what it takes to overcome.

Born in Newark, New Jersey, and raised in North Carolina, Marquise made his way to the Bay Area in 2006.

“I was playing college football for NC Wesleyan College on a partial scholarship with dreams of going to the next level (NFL) prior to my move to California,” Marquise reflects. Unfortunately, an injury prompted Marquise to shift directions.

Upon arriving in the Bay Area, Marquise devoted himself to creating success. “I wanted to prove any societal stereotypes wrong for myself and my family,” he explains.

When Marquise landed in California, he secured his first sales job, where he solicited businesses door to door to sell sports tickets. “I did that for a year and a half,” he reflects. “I met a guy through doing that owned a semiconductor company. He was looking for a young guy to train and liked my approach when I was selling the tickets. He invited me back for an interview to sell semiconductors.”

Marquise accepted the interview and was hired on the spot. It was a good experience, and he got exposure to another business and another side of sales. But unfortunately, the semiconductor company went under in 2008, leaving Marquise to find another job.

“I had to find my next move. It was all about people, being able to present something tangible, and helping people with that,” Marquise explains. “From there, I got into cell phones. I moved up to manage two stores. But I wanted to do something different.”

That's when Marquise made his first move into real estate. A former customer was a loan officer, and Marquise decided to join the team.

“I liked that I was able to help people buy a house...I wanted to give it a go. That was my first taste of real estate,” he recalls.

Marquise enjoyed his work there, but after only eight months, the recession hit. Marquise, along with the majority of his peers, was laid off. “I knew I wanted to stay in real estate. But wanted a stable salary,” Marquise explains. While he had gotten a taste of real estate, it would be a long, challenging road, and another five years before Marquise found his rightful place in the industry.

First, he became a banker with Chase. After a failed move to Florida, he returned to California with the hopes of landing another banking job. That's when Marquise was faced with his toughest challenges. “I set up an interview at a bank in San Carlos,” Marquise explains. “I was on my last bit of savings, and I was sleeping on my buddy's couch for the first few months before I could get enough money to get out on my own. The job didn't go through...basically, the person I was going to sleep on his couch, said ‘If you don't have any income coming in, how can you stay?’”

Marquise pondered his next move. He had just arrived back in California but had nowhere to go. Swallowing his pride, he jumped on the internet and started searching for shelters and programs that might help support him in his time of need.





“It was humbling,” Marquise explains. “I ended up in a shelter in Redwood City. I was there for three months. At that time, my license was still processing. It was tough. It was challenging.”

While Marquise was waiting for his real estate license to go through, he landed a job at a 24 Hour Fitness, and another doing outbound calls for a local mortgage company. He saved enough to leave the shelter and buy himself a car — a \$300 Saturn Ion.

“They say you need six to twelve months of reserves. I didn’t have any of that stuff. But I had the hustle and I had the drive.”

Marquise remembers arriving an hour early to every client showing. He would leave extra time in case his car didn’t make it, as well as time to park around the block so that his clients didn’t see his car. Parking around the block wasn’t about shame — instead, Marquise was confident that he could execute for his clients and didn’t want to be unfairly judged.

“My intention was to help people long-term. I really wanted to do something that would help people. My initial plan was to come in part-time, but I’ve learned that there is no such thing as part-time in this business,” Marquise laughs.

Step by step, Marquise began to build up his business, alongside his financial stability. Joining his local associations was a huge help early on. He served as the Chair President for the Young Professionals Network of San Mateo County and currently serves on the Board of Directors for LifeMoves, a non-profit organization that helps the homeless in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties.

“ I LEARNED IN MY OWN JOURNEY NOT TO GIVE UP AND GIVE IN... It all happened within six years. If anyone says it’s impossible, they got it wrong. It’s not impossible. **You can do it.**”

Less than six years later, Marquise’s business is thriving. Given his background in football, he’s focusing on helping professional athletes and entertainers as an addition to his baseline business.

“I learned in my own journey not to give up and give in,” Marquise explains. “It all happened within six years. If anyone says it’s impossible, they got it wrong. It’s not impossible. You can do it.”

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By F. Alcaraz Construction

Renovating your bathroom is an investment that requires careful planning and execution. Still, it's also an exciting opportunity to make your space more comfortable, functional, and aesthetically pleasing. If you're considering a bathroom remodel in sunny California, here are some personalized pointers to keep in mind:

ESTABLISH A BUDGET AND ADHERE TO IT

Bathroom remodels can be a significant financial undertaking. Set a clear budget at the outset, considering California's high costs due to the state's above-average labor rates and material prices. This financial plan will guide your project decisions and help keep your remodel within manageable limits.

ENGAGE A RELIABLE CONTRACTOR

A competent contractor can streamline your bathroom renovation and ensure the final result aligns with your vision. Get several estimates, verify their California licensing status, and review their past work. Remember, choosing the right contractor can be the deciding factor in your project's success.

OPT FOR THE APPROPRIATE MATERIALS

From flooring to fixtures, you'll have a plethora of material choices. Select materials that reflect the style of your home and are durable enough to withstand bathroom humidity, and fall within your budget. Remember California's propensity for earthquakes; opt for flexible and sturdy materials when possible.

THINK LONG-TERM

Make your bathroom future-ready. Whether you're planning to age in place, anticipating a family, or simply considering resale value, your bathroom should meet future needs. Look at installing non-slip tiles, easy-to-clean surfaces, and water-efficient fixtures that comply with California's water conservation regulations.

MIND THE DETAILS

As the saying goes, the devil's in the details. Small touches can make a massive difference to the overall look of your bathroom. These tiny details can significantly enhance your space, from the grout color to the finish of your fixtures.

OPT FOR ECO-FRIENDLY MATERIALS

As California is at the forefront of environmental initiatives, consider using sustainable materials like cork flooring, recycled glass tiles, or countertops made from recycled materials. These choices help reduce your environmental footprint and often offer unique and beautiful aesthetics.



BATHROOM REMODELING TIPS FOR 2023

PRIORITIZE ACCESSIBILITY

If you or a family member has mobility issues or are planning for your golden years, make your bathroom more accessible; this could mean installing walk-in tubs, lower countertops, and ADA-compliant grab bars.

INCORPORATE TECHNOLOGY

With the rise of smart home features, there's no better time to make your

bathroom a technologically advanced oasis. Think about digital shower controls, automatic faucets, and smart mirrors that display your morning news or weather forecast.

KEEP THESE TIPS IN MIND

A bathroom remodel can be a significant undertaking. Still, with some planning, creativity, and California flair, you can design a bathroom that will be a personal retreat for years.





**PHI
CHIEN**

*phil***CHEN**
From the Street Skate to Real Estate Sales: Continuing to Take the Leap of Faith



print me more! <<

Were you, your broker or the team featured in an issue of Real Producers?

I eventually dropped off, while my friends became professionals. In their Thursday Magazine interviews they would say things like, "I need to skate with Phil Chen, but he says, 'I will never forget that.'"

"I remember I took a few years off and when I was in college, I registered and training gym." Phil chuckles. "I told my parents, 'I'm going to register this my whole life. I'm going to get schooled and go pro.' But I never did it. And I am going to regret it my whole life. I was too young to enjoy or see what the potential would be."

Despite the sense of loss from a skateboarding career that never was, Phil's path has led him to great things: first, a career in fitness, and now, a blossoming real estate business. He still takes lessons from his only years on a skateboard with him every day.

With the nature of a skateboarder, Phil remains willing to take chances when the time is ripe. "I'm constantly rolling the dice and taking risks and chances. That's my nature. I'm not conservative towards me. I'm always going to take the leap of faith," he explains.

"The business I learned from skateboarding is to be discriminative. Living, sleeping, breathing what you do, it becomes natural and instinctive. In a little way, it's a sense of when being an elite athlete was like, I could go to sleep, dream a trick, and do it the next day. I tell my kids now, try to be the best at whatever you do."

In college, Phil dove into another sport: snowboarding. "I was discriminating. Living, sleeping, breathing what you do, it becomes natural and instinctive. In a little way, it's a sense of when being an elite athlete was like, I could go to sleep, dream a trick, and do it the next day. I tell my kids now, try to be the best at whatever you do."

By 2006, Phil realized it was time to make a choice. With one foot in the fitness world and the other in the real estate world, his attention was divided. As he admits, "I was half-sitting [on a skateboard]."

"I had to choose. I took the leap of faith and got into real estate full time in '06."

In 2006, Phil experienced success, but the downturn of 2007 through 2009 would make him think twice about his decision to dive into real estate. "I had to choose. I took the leap of faith and got into real estate full time in '06."

Phil spread his own boutique brokerage, J/Edwards, without ever working for a larger brokerage, using the knowledge he accrued mainly on his own through his family's investments, observation, intuition, and experience. By 2010, he put himself on the map as a top real estate agent in the highly competitive area of Redwood City.

Coming to Compare from Spharion, which he operated and ran for the better part of a decade, has given Phil a unique perspective on the state of the local real estate market. "Compare is a unique spending freight train right now," Phil comments.

"It's fortunate to have had three careers that I've passionate about, but mostly great in and made the career."

Regardless of the brokerage where he hangs his license, Phil knows his reputation is what counts him to success. "People trust me. Reputation is an important cover any deal or commission. That's the reason an usually one of the first choices amongst an many talented agents in the Bay Area."

Phil stays motivated by staying humble and continuously striving to improve in all aspects of his work. "I'm still hungry, so watch out."

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