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FEBRUARY 2023



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# So, You're Losing Your Job. What Now?

Losing a job can be devastating, but you can make decisions now to help you prepare for your future.

By Shauna Osborne



The American Psychological Association deems losing your job — whether that means being laid off, downsized or forced into early retirement — one of life’s “most stressful events,” up there with divorce and the death of a loved one in terms of anguish. Given that the average American changes employers about 12 times throughout their career trajectory, unfortunately, most of us will experience this ordeal at least once in our professional lives. The subsequent shock and confusion make it challenging to know which steps to take next.

According to mental health professionals, the first, most important act of grace we should allow ourselves after a job loss is time to grieve. You may experience a range of emotions in the immediate aftermath — panic, rage, even elation — and all are acceptable. The key is to keep moving forward through these stages of grief to process (and learn

from) the loss. Remind yourself that you have unique and valuable skills and knowledge to offer your next employer.

Next, move on to the practicalities of your employment change. Address any necessary, time-sensitive paperwork for unemployment; health, vision and dental; life insurance; retirement; stock options and other non-salary benefits. Take a careful look at spending, evaluating expenditures in terms of essentials and nonessentials to help you set a realistic budget moving forward.

Finally, human resources experts advise letting everyone in your life know you’re newly on the job market. Friends and family can’t support you if they don’t know your situation; the outpouring of advice and encouragement will be a balm for your bruised self-esteem and a catalyst for your budding job search. Happy hunting!



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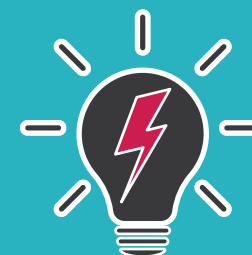
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## ▶▶ partner spotlight

By Megan Taylor-DiCenzo

Photos by Michael Gallitelli, Metroland Photo



# Erin DeLancey & Brian Rohan, ROHAN & DELANCEY PC

## KINDNESS AND RESPECT, ALL DAY, EVERY DAY

**Brian Rohan and Erin DeLancey share an exceptional law firm that focuses on transactional work: residential and commercial real estate and titles, as well as business and corporate work, estate planning and administration.**

They often have hundreds of files open simultaneously, but they pride themselves on the feeling they give every client — that they are the most important one. Truly, Brian and Erin couldn't provide such exceptional service without an equally outstanding team — one they are proud to call family.

"Our team is critical to the success of the firm," Brian said, "and I believe it's critical that the team be recognized and that they be treated with kindness, professionalism and respect. Our receptionist is as integral a part of the firm as our attorneys are."

The closing coordinator, Virginia "Ginny" Lamb, has been a part of the firm for over 11 years. She technically retired in the spring of 2022, but she still works full time three days a week.

"Even on the days she's not working, she's checking emails at 6 a.m.," Brian shared. "Her work ethic is unmatched. Everybody loves her. Her personality and demeanor combined with her efficiency are irreplaceable."

When Erin became a partner several years ago, she was also thankful for Ginny.

"While I learned from Brian, I also learned invaluable information from my paralegals," Erin remarked. "I have learned so much from Ginny. She

taught me how to work a file from beginning to end and how to confidently explain figures to anyone; this knowledge gave me a new understanding of everything."

Claudia Bertasso is the title administrator for the firm's associated title company, Elite Title and Abstract LLC, and has been with the firm for 19 and a half years.

"She's incredible at what she does," Brian noted. "There's nobody better in the industry than Claudia."

Known for crossing the t's and dotting the i's, Claudia can spot issues quickly and work diligently to clean up any issues or concerns.

"Her knowledge base, problem-solving skills and focus are exceptional, and she is irreplaceable," Brian shared.

"Everybody picks up the slack for each other here," Erin added. "For a while, our receptionist was out, and we all jumped in. Whenever we are short-staffed, Claudia will jump in with zero hesitation to ensure that our clients close."

Christine Galuski is the firm's second closing coordinator. Although she has only been with

the firm for a little over a year, she has proven to be an exceptional addition to the team.

"Like Ginny, Christine works very hard in a trying and stressful role, and always with a smile on her face, handling every client file with professionalism and kindness," Brian remarked.

Even before Ginny was semi-retired, they knew they needed a second closing coordinator, and Christine stepped into the role easily.

"She's a quick study," Brian shared. "We're fortunate to have her. She pitches in. I see her come in earlier and stay later, especially on the days Ginny has off. It's not required; it's just who she is."

Michelle Stevens is the firm's "jack-of-all-trades." For more than 10 years, Michelle has helped wherever she was needed.

"She started as the receptionist," Brian remembered, "and Michelle quickly proved herself. She was opening and closing files, doing title searches and even helping with bookkeeping. She was juggling 150 tasks."

About two years ago, Michelle moved into the title paralegal role to assist Claudia, and she has been fantastic.

"Michelle is the consummate team player and will roll up her sleeves and dive in where needed," Brian shared. "She's such an awesome piece of the puzzle."

Sylvia Hahn Berman has been the firm's real estate paralegal for the past three years. She provides critical support to Ginny and

...

“  
EVERYBODY  
PICKS UP THE  
SLACK FOR  
EACH OTHER  
HERE.”







“She is loyal as the day is long,” Brian added. “We never had to worry if the monies were being properly handled. Gloria was so good at managing the firm. We all miss her daily presence and continue to include her in parties and events.”

Luckily, they don’t have to miss Gloria for long because she’s offered to train Ashley whenever needed. Ashley already has an excellent working knowledge of QuickBooks and has tackled problems without hesitation as they came along.

“She’s all over it,” Brian said. “She’s got a great personality, and who knows where she’ll go with the firm.”

“We have the best staff,” Brian added. “They are exceptional. We trust each other implicitly. Everybody works hard and wants to do a good job. I’m blessed to have the firm I do.”

“We genuinely care for one another,” Erin added. “I would love to see where we go in the future. I think we have such a good group of people that this could be something amazing. We

all have our roles, but we are also so versatile. There may be firms where REALTORS® and clients have to wait for the attorney to get back to them, but with us, you have everyone willing to help. Of course, you will always have Brian and me to assist, but you also have the rest of our exceptional team. That’s why I never dread coming to work. I know when I get here, my friends will be working with me.”



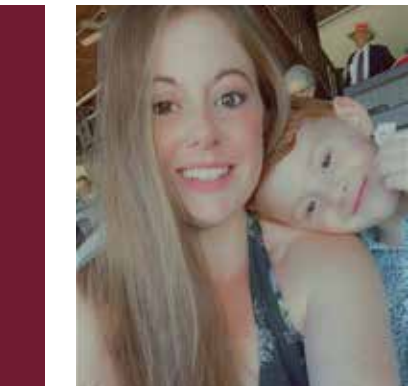
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Christine as they work to close transactions in short order.

“As Sylvia’s confidence has grown, it’s been a great pleasure watching her blossom in this role,” Brian commented.

The most recent addition to this outstanding team is Ashley Murdza, who stepped into the role of bookkeeper and office manager after a fantastic interview. Gloria Allegretta worked as the firm’s bookkeeper for about 20 years and retired in 2022.

“Gloria retired about a year ago now; we threw her a party, she received gifts and we said our goodbyes, and then she came in the next day to work,” Erin said with a laugh.







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# Too Busy to Succeed

Transformational Conversations with Lisa Giruzzi

A familiar refrain throughout the world, especially in businesses, is "I'm so busy" or "I have too much to do." It's become so commonplace that we take it as a given, a fact of life. We have accepted that being busy is just how it is — a requirement for a successful life.

For many, having a never-ending to-do list is a status symbol. Because we associate success with being busy, it can become a badge of honor to be in demand, running from one thing to another. However, there is a cost to the hamster wheel of busy.

The constant stimulation of busyness leaves people feeling exhausted and wanting to escape. This decreases performance and can even lead to overindulging in various things to alleviate the suffering or perhaps engaging in coping strategies such as meditation, positive thinking or other "self-care" techniques. Either way, it's only temporary relief at best.

Since we don't question the assumption that being busy is required, we are focused on reducing the stress related to being busy. That's focusing on the wrong thing. What if, instead, we stopped believing the thought that being busy is necessary?

You can be productive without being busy. In fact, over-active busy minds are ineffective and more likely to make errors. The ability to be present leads to higher levels of productivity and performance. Think about it: If you need brain surgery, do you want a surgeon who's busy-minded or one who is present?

It is possible to live a different way. It is possible to be very successful and feel accomplished without the frenetic, busy schedule. It takes courage to try something new. Recognizing that you don't have to believe everything you think is the first step.

Slowing down and choosing to have space in your mind to do nothing is an act of self-love. Experiment with the idea that *busy* is optional. Test it for yourself. You'll be so glad you did.



**Lisa Giruzzi** is a peak performance coach, best-selling author and accomplished speaker with over 25 years of experience helping people to discover their true nature and live life powerfully — free from stress, regrets, judgments and fear.

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By Haley Van Bellingham  
Photos by Martyn Gallina-Jones, Gallina-Jones Photography

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**THE GRASSHOPPER INSECT IS A SYMBOLIC BRAND DECISION FOR GRASSHOPPER HEATING & COOLING. GRASSHOPPERS ARE THE ONLY ANIMAL THAT CAN MOVE IN JUST ONE DIRECTION — FORWARD. IT REPRESENTS WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED BY NEVER DWELLING ON PAST MISTAKES, INSTEAD GROWING FROM WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED.**



“We believe in celebrating people: their wins, successes and sometimes even failures,” Amanda said. “Often, you learn an invaluable lesson through failure so that you won’t make the same mistake again.”

Clearly, Grasshopper’s innovative approach is working; they’ve experienced 10-fold growth since last speaking to *Real Producers*.

“Our culture is ‘fun. We’re a modern, outside-the-box, forward-thinking company,’” explained Amanda Triolo, owner and operator of Grasshopper. “For us, it’s all about listening to our people. We aim to have a culture where people feel valued, appreciated and loved coming to work every day.”

Grasshopper delivers unparalleled resources and treats the team with integrity. With values that start from within, their business has a solid people-focused core.

“We have a very employee-centric culture,” explained Kelly Osterlitz, the company’s chief growth officer. “Our management approaches working with our team as ‘working for them’ rather than ‘our employees working for us.’ Our employees feel that.”

Every Tuesday morning, the team comes together for breakfast and a team meeting, or *Tuesdays with Grasshopper*. Sometimes they play games, and one day a month, they set the phones to answering services so they can spend the afternoon doing team activities.

“Sometimes people take things too seriously,” Amanda explained. “There’s no reason why companies cannot incorporate fun into their day-to-day operations.”

Along with incorporating fun, Grasshopper treats each employee like an important person to invest in. They spend the time discovering what their employees need to be successful and providing the resources to make it happen.

“We help them discover where they want to be in life,” Kelly explained. “We’re very goal-focused and supportive of their hopes and dreams. If they want to buy a house, we’ll put together a first-time homebuyer seminar.”

With a younger employee base, there are many life milestones Grasshopper strives to be a part of. Their approach is holistic. Within the first 90 days of employment,

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“OUR CULTURE IS ‘FUN. WE’RE A MODERN, **OUTSIDE-THE-BOX,** FORWARD-THINKING COMPANY.”





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each team member has created a vision board, which they will check in on throughout their career at the company with their employee advocate. This supports the company's mission of "creating opportunities that change lives and lead people to make great decisions."

Work-life balance isn't typically the norm in a hands-on, round-the-clock industry like heating and cooling. However, Grasshopper strives to change that. Recently, an employee was brought on who initially worked for another HVAC company. As Amanda tells it, his life was changed for the better by switching to Grasshopper.

"Now that he works with us, his wife is one of our most prominent advocates. The family's mental state is the healthiest it's ever been because they're financially stable, and he has the time to spend with his family. In this industry, it's very hard to find a stable, supportive work environment — you're starting in



the day and ending late at night. For him and his family, they've found that balance."

What's more, when employees feel supported, the results trickle into the community.

"We slow it down and take the time with our employees, so they take their time with the customer. Nobody's ever feeling rushed," Amanda explained. "It creates a full circle experience. We hope we give our people such a great experience working at this company that they give our clients an even better one."

When it comes to the community, Grasshopper's employees are ready to go above and beyond.

"One of our guys responded to a no-heat call last month. The client was also struggling because the windshield wipers on their car weren't working — our guy went out and grabbed a new pair," Amanda shared. "Another time, a customer was recovering from surgery and our guy brought out her garbage. Later, she called and asked to speak to the owner. When she got me on the phone, she was crying. The details matter to people. The same way that we help our team is the same way they serve our community."

In a beautiful cyclical approach, Grasshopper is also ready to serve its employees.

"If somebody's going through a hard time, we have a therapist as a resource who can be accessed at any time. In this way, 'forward is a way of life,' even on a bad day. Our goal is

to support their mental, emotional and physical well-being — even down to providing healthy-option breakfast and lunch. There is no avenue that we have not yet explored, or that we're not willing to explore, to support our employees," Kelly said.

So what inspired Amanda and the management team to go above and beyond for their people? The key is retention. To maintain a solid team, Grasshopper's management delivers.

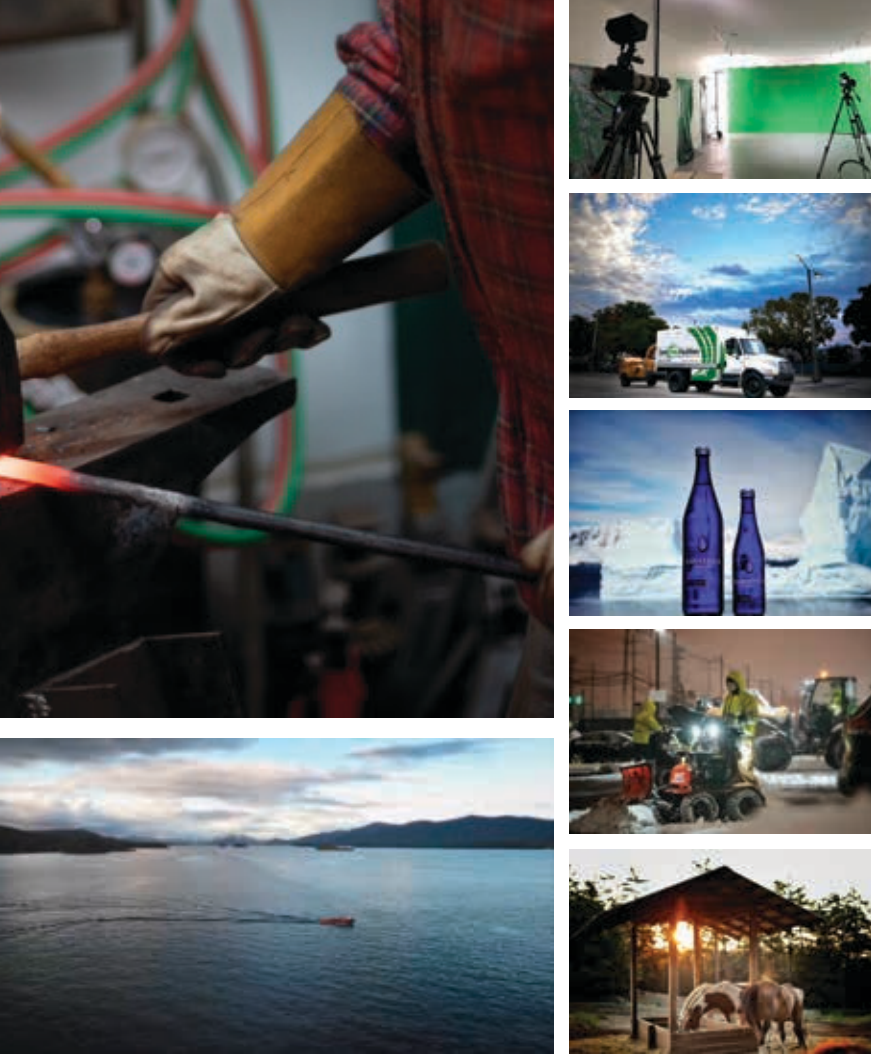
"As the world has evolved, you see this shift, where it's no longer about how much money somebody can make. Instead, it's about where somebody's mental health is good, where they leave work in good spirits, where they are valued and feel appreciated, and where they know they're taken care of."

With a strong foundation, growth opportunities are boundless.

"We have some lofty goals, and I have no doubt that we will meet them. We're already growing out of the space we're in now. When you think of heating, cooling and indoor air quality in the Capital District, our goal is to be a household name. I think you'll see much more of Grasshopper in the future."







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» on the rise

By **Emily Williams**  
Photos by **Martyn Gallina-Jones**,  
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# Meghan DICKSON,

## CORE REAL ESTATE TEAM

### EMBRACING THE UNEXPECTED

“When the universe gives you a new beginning, it starts with an ending. Be thankful for closed doors — they often guide us to the right one.”

This philosophy is something that Meghan Dickson, a REALTOR® at Core Real Estate Group, embraces after encountering her own unforeseen ending: an ending that, in hindsight, turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

When the pandemic hit, Meghan was laid off from her job in recruiting and found herself looking for new employment. It was during her job search that she met Tori Romeo, broker and owner of Romeo Team Realty.

She applied for an assistant role with Tori’s office, and while the role ended up being filled by someone else, the two kept in touch after Meghan expressed interest in getting her real estate license.

“I was always interested in real estate,” Meghan explained. “I have a legal studies degree, and real property always intrigued me — as well as contracts and everything like that, too. I’m a total nerd when it comes to that.”

She also has an extensive background in customer service, having spent numerous years in the restaurant industry.

With her combination of legal knowledge and service experience, a career as a REALTOR® seemed like a perfect choice. In August 2021, Meghan took the exam and got her real estate license. Within her first month, she had her first home under contract, and her career has been on the rise ever since.

Meghan’s desire to help others is what drives her to succeed, and she loves that real estate gives her that opportunity.

“With law and the service industry, my main intention was just to help people,” Meghan remarked. “I wanted to provide the service. I wanted to make sure that I was doing my job just as well as I possibly could.

“In real estate, when we get to closing day and we go to the final walkthrough, I see the happiness in my client’s eyes; it makes me want to cry that I’m able to provide such a huge milestone for people.”

As a self-described “introverted extrovert” who loves people, the connections Meghan has made with clients and colleagues alike have been one of the most satisfying parts of her career.

“You get the same experience in serving, but the thing with serving is they eat, they leave,” Meghan noted. With real estate, “it’s just so much deeper of a connection than I could ever begin to explain.”

A lifelong learner, Meghan believes that knowledge is power, and she encourages other REALTORS® to soak up as much as possible.

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“Be a sponge,” she implored. “Be comfortable with the uncomfortable, and most importantly, don’t be afraid to fail because you learn so much more from that than success.”

By continuing to educate herself, Meghan can better educate her clients so that they feel empowered to make informed decisions for themselves.

“A good agent is supposed to explain it enough so that they feel comfortable, but also not push them to do

something that financially is not in their books,” Meghan explained. “I’m not here to sell you something. I’m here to help you buy something.”

Finding the right mentor has also had a huge impact on Meghan’s trajectory. She choked up when talking about Tori and how imperative her support and guidance have been throughout her journey.

“She always answered my phone calls if I had questions,” Meghan said. “I owe Tori everything. She saw

something in me that I didn’t see in myself, and I’m so grateful.”

Meghan is also extremely grateful for Danny Starks. He has been — and continues to be — a fantastic mentor to Meghan throughout her transition and growth.

Outside of work, one of Meghan’s biggest passions is watching live music, especially Phish, whom she’s seen perform more than 20 times.

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”

“Music is my outlet,” Meghan remarked. “I always say, ‘Give me a banjo or harmonica and I’ll be fine.’ I’ve met so many great people in the music communities.”

Meghan is also an avid sports fan, having played sports herself growing up.

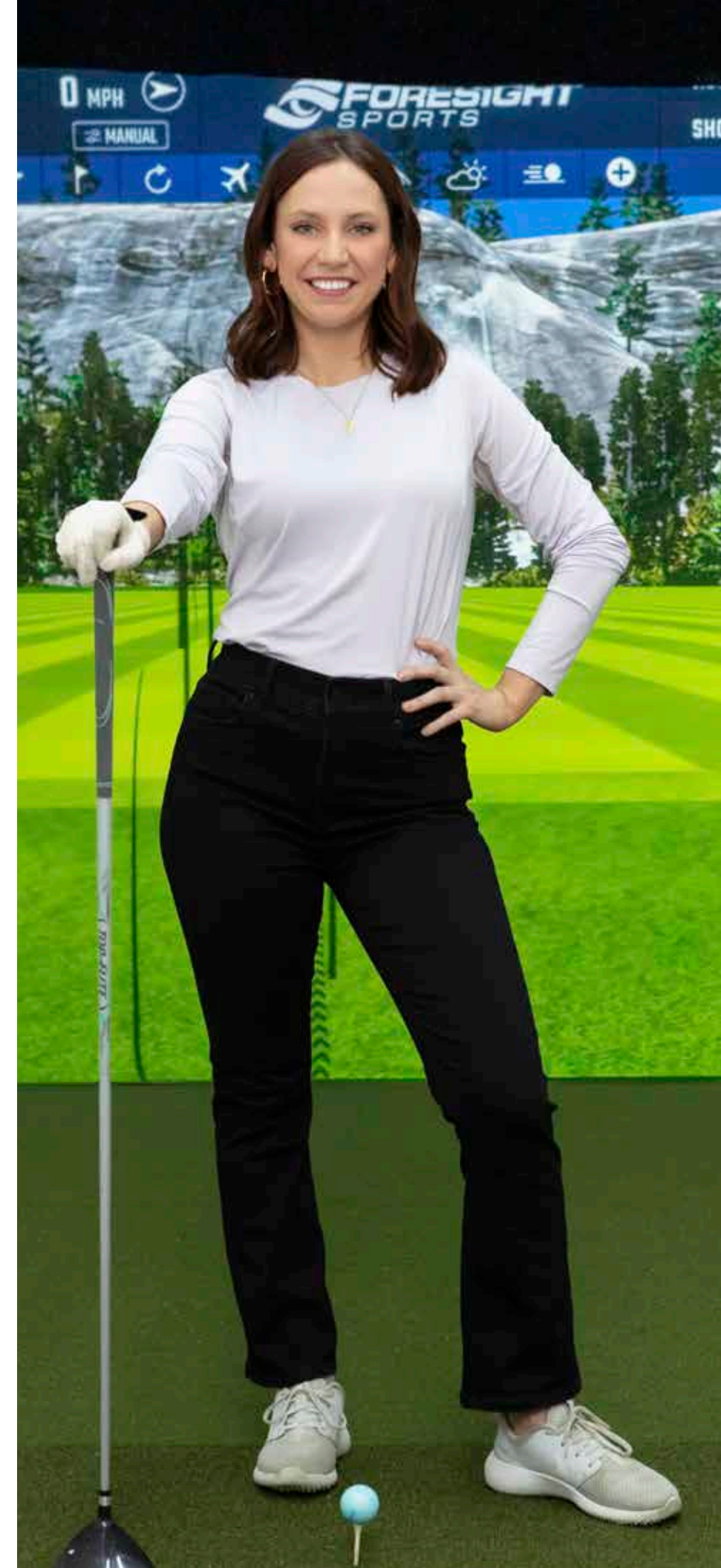
“I love watching or going to any kind of sporting event, whether it be the Boston Bruins, the Mets, or rocking the Carolina Blue with my mama during college basketball season,” she commented.

Family is extremely important to her as well.

“I idolize my family because they’ve always believed in me,” Meghan shared. “I just want to make them proud, and I think I have. It’s crazy to think that I’m about a year in, and I have the opportunity to build something from the ground up,” Meghan said.

“We want to create something that we can be proud of ourselves.” Never one to shy away from a challenge, Meghan is willing to put in the effort because she knows that good things come when you’re willing to step outside your comfort zone.

While she has no idea what the future holds for her, she had this to say about the next chapter: “I can’t wait to see what happens.”







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# Stephanie

## **MARTINO-KILMARTIN,**

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When clients first meet Stephanie Kilmartin, they're often surprised to find out how young she is. She got her start as a REALTOR® right out of college, but she demonstrates a level of professionalism and knowledge that belies her age.

Stephanie attended the University at Albany, earning a Bachelor of Science degree. She majored in human biology and minored in anthropology, psychology and sociology and was a member of the UAlbany cheerleading team.

Always having had a strong work ethic and the ambition to accomplish her goals, Stephanie initially learned how important

hard work and dedication are from watching her mom growing up.

"She was a successful businesswoman in the field of property management," Stephanie shared.

Stephanie knew she wanted a career that allowed her to have the ability to get out what she put into it. With her work ethic, determination and desire to make a difference, real estate was a perfect fit.

"I love real estate because the harder you work, the more rewarding it is," Stephanie remarked. "It is exceptionally gratifying to be the person your clients trust with one of the biggest investments they will ever make."

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▶▶ featured real producer

By **Emily Williams**  
Photos by **Michael Gallitelli**, Metroland Photo





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Now, three and a half years in, she's already earning accolades; her success comes from a combination of optimism, tenacity and a lot of hard work.

"I push myself and say yes to every opportunity I am presented with," Stephanie said. "I put in the long hours because I know the results will follow."

Although her career path doesn't directly relate to what she majored in, Stephanie doesn't regret her time in school. Her college courses taught her valuable problem-solving skills that have helped her become a more effective REALTOR®. When a problem arises in a transaction, she approaches it with a solution-based approach instead of getting wrapped up in the problem itself.

Goal setting and accomplishing goals are also extremely important to Stephanie. One thing that helps her stay motivated is having written goals.

"Having a written goal allows me to constantly be reminded of what I want to accomplish and gives me the motivation to push or exceed that goal," Stephanie shared.

She keeps what she calls a "closed transaction binder," where she documents her goals for the year on the first page. Whenever she closes a transaction, she puts it in the binder and is reminded of her goal.

"I see that every time I close a house; it's motivating for me," she noted.

Stephanie's desire to help her clients is at the heart of what she does, and she makes sure to put their needs front and center.

"I don't just want to meet somebody and get them under contract quickly with a house that I know they're

not going to be in love with," she explained. "I take the time and make sure I'm listening to their specific needs and desires."

Stephanie is well-versed in working with both buyers and sellers across a wide range of price points.

"I like working with both sellers and buyers," she remarked. "I like having a mix because every day is different. It's not just the same routine. I've sold houses that were \$100,000, and I've sold houses that were \$6.8 million."

Stephanie has also benefited from working with "some of the best in the business," and she credits other REALTORS® that she's worked alongside for helping to fuel her growth.

"My broker Kevin Clancy and office manager, Kristen, have been instrumental in my growth and success," Stephanie remarked.

A firm believer in building others up, Stephanie makes it her mission to treat everyone she encounters with courtesy and compassion.

"I think it just comes down to being kind and treating people the way you want to be treated," Stephanie shared. "As agents, we are all in this together."

Along with professional happiness, Stephanie found personal happiness as well. In June of last year, she married her high school sweetheart of almost 11 years. They bought their second home together in October and just completed a full renovation.

"I've had a very busy year, planning the wedding, buying and renovating my house, and selling a ton of homes," she said. "I love being busy. It keeps me motivated."

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When Stephanie and her husband can find the time, they enjoy skiing, golfing and traveling together. Stephanie also loves to use her creative side, especially when it comes to design. Along with renovating her home, she's assisted multiple clients with their design projects.

Her advice to other REALTORS® is to develop good habits. Come up with a daily routine and stick with it, stay organized, and stay focused on your goals. She encouraged others not to give up, even when the going gets tough.

"The industry can beat you down, and it will; you just have to keep getting back up," Stephanie commented.

Looking ahead, Stephanie is excited about what her future in real estate holds. She has found her true calling and is looking forward to growing personally and professionally, building her rental and investment portfolio, and continuing to help clients find their dream homes. With what she's already accomplished at such a young age, we can't wait to see what the future holds.







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