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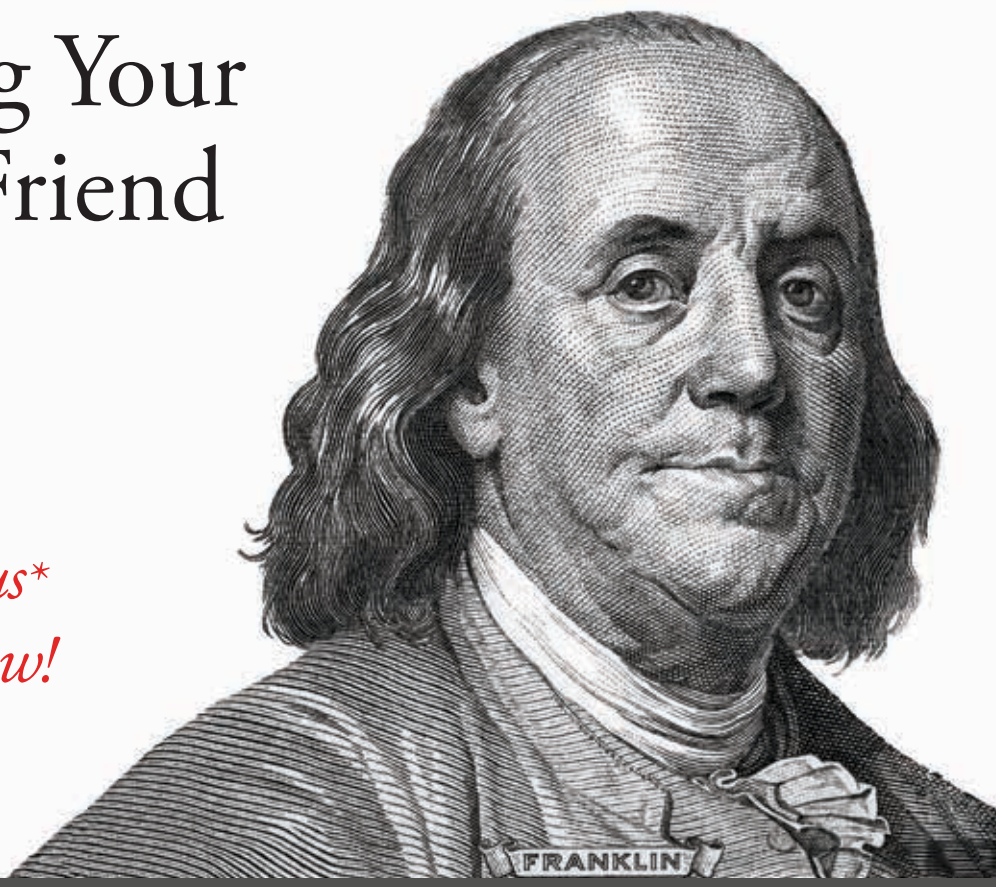


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welcome publisher's note NEW PARTNERS

Welcome to our February 2023 edition of *Colorado Springs Real Producers*. This edition marks my third anniversary of owning the platform!

A lot is changing in the real estate market. This month, we are welcoming back one of our pre-pandemic advertisers, Classic Homes! While several builders were cutting ties with their REALTOR® partners in 2021 and 2022, I constantly heard positive things about Classic Homes from the real estate community. I'm so thrilled to have them back aboard. www.classichomes.com

I would also like to welcome our renewing partner: Brick and Mortar Home Inspections. Back when I purchased my home in 2018, Mark Baxley was the inspector I used, and he did a phenomenal job of pointing out everything I needed to know about my 60-year-old home while not scaring me away from the closing table. www.bandmhomeinspections.com

We're also excited to welcome Cyberbacker, a virtual assistant platform designed specifically for real estate agents. The Colorado Cyberbacker franchise is owned by Jacob Clendenning, who used to be a real estate broker in Fort Collins; he understands real estate and what REALTORS® need.

He purchased ads in Colorado Springs, Denver, North Colorado and Alaska Real Producers for 36 months. To put it simply, Cyberbacker is "all in!" www.cyberbackercowyo.com

Next we are welcoming aboard David Copeland with FlyHi Photography. I met David when he first opened his business, and they've been a blast to watch grow. One thing I admire about David is how laid back he is. He is never pushy. He never demands anyone's business, but he is always there when you need him. www.flyhiphotography.com

Last I'm overjoyed to welcome Jen Weis and her brand new business specializing in feng shui: Leading With Shui! Many of you know Jen as the Marketing Manager for Benton Capital — she is bringing that same level of passion and devotion to Leading With Shui, which has been one of her life's dreams to open! Please check out her website and send her some support as she gets her business off the ground! www.leadingwithshui.com

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Bryce & JOHN O'BRIEN

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Bryce

Growing up in an entrepreneurial family in Clearwater, FL taught Bryce many priceless lessons. She was an eyewitness to three small business start-ups and learned first-hand about business structure. Learning how to successfully run three distinctive businesses *simultaneously* would prove priceless in her future. She also gained marketable, real-world experience in several industries.

She was proud of her parents for co-owning two businesses together, and her mother for running a chain of spas. There was great family unity among Bryce, her siblings, and their parents as they were all working toward the same goals, together.

However, the best and most powerful things that Bryce took to heart were the importance of treating clients like beloved family, the power of establishing relationships (especially in competitive industries), and the benefits of maintaining a stellar reputation. *These became the foundation upon which she built her life.*

Bryce continued working for her parents before going off to College to Florida State University. There she was involved in a co-ed fraternity that focused on doing service projects within the community. She graduated and became a special needs teacher and behavioral specialist, but her heart still was searching for more.

A Serendipitous Meeting

In June 2004 Bryce met John at her friend's wedding. He was in the Army 10th Special Forces Group, and would soon be stationed in Stuttgart, Germany for two years. Meeting the handsome young man who was so intentional about living a meaningful life made an impression on Bryce. She decided to actively pursue a non-profit opportunity serving the elderly and disabled.

In December, Bryce moved to Dallas, TX as the new Executive Director of the north Texas region for Rebuilding Together. She started mobilizing volunteers and her heart finally felt full in her passion for helping others. (rtntx.org).

John

John grew up on a farm in Michigan. He loved their small town where everyone knew each other, and he also enjoyed their occasional trips to visit his grandmother in Florida.

His father, a military veteran who had served in the Army 5th Special Forces Group, was a Master Plumber running his own business. His mother served as an Administrative Assistant in the public school for 48 years. John developed a strong work ethic and learned from his parents' example that reputation is everything, hard work is a blessing, taking shortcuts is cheating, serving others and giving back is an honor, and faithfulness in the small things is

...

▶▶ power couple

Written by Ruth Gnirk
Photography by Heidi Mossman
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essential. *These became the foundation upon which he built his life.*

John had served as an Army Infantryman for almost seven years before he became a Special Forces Weapons Sergeant in 2004. While stationed in Stuttgart, Germany, John could not stop thinking about the beautiful and charming woman he met at his cousin's wedding that spring.

He reached out to Bryce in 2005 and after Skype-dating for six months, he invited her to fly out to Germany so they could get to know each other better. In 2006 John was given the option of extending his tour in Stuttgart or PCS-ing to Fort Carson. Before the year was up, Bryce made one more trip to Germany, and John came to the US to visit her.

Meaningful Compromise

"He was serving the country, and I was fulfilling a mission dear to my heart in Dallas," Bryce explained. "We both made changes so that we could

grow together. We each gave a little so we could make something great."

John chose Colorado and Bryce did, too. The couple had a two-week window to get married between six months of stateside training and before John left for a six month deployment to Iraq. For the next two years Bryce continued fulfilling her duties for Rebuilding Together. She flew back and forth from Colorado Springs to Dallas every two weeks, not knowing that she was destined to work successfully "in two places at once" in her future career as well.

Bryce had dreamed of homeownership in Florida, but never thought she could afford it on a teacher's salary. She was delighted to be John's wife, and honored to have been given the task of selling a home that he owned in Fort Campbell, Kentucky while he was deployed, serving our country. She felt a little overwhelmed at the task until she met Lisa Boyd, a wonderful Kentucky REALTOR® who

kindly and patiently walked Bryce through the entire process.

REAL Adventure

The whole experience inspired Bryce to pursue a new career. The newly-married 37-year-old former teacher had a life-long love of learning. She signed up for expedited, in-person real estate classes, which she completed in November 2007. She continued working remotely and traveling to Dallas for Rebuilding Together even after her license arrived January 2008.

"My first year as a REALTOR® was challenging and humbling," Bryce recalled. "I didn't have a 'sphere' or a mentor. I had a heart for people and the example of my entrepreneurial parents. I knew what a difference Lisa had made for my family, so I learned what I needed to as I was helping my clients."

Bryce met Julie Watson with Springs Preferred Realty in her second year, and joined the team. Julie took Bryce under her wing and taught her to be a successful REALTOR® in Colorado Springs. Bryce learned to work with high-level, short sales

clients and investors. She stayed with Julie's team for about five years, then worked for an independent brokerage for five years.

"In 2017 I found a home at Keller Williams," Bryce smiled, "and I've been there ever since. At KW I was reinvigorated to go into a whole new level of education, coaching, and leadership. After three months, I asked John to join me. And he did, in 2017."

John hung up his uniform after 14 years of service, seven in the Infantry, and seven in Special Forces. After separating, he accepted a position in government services. He began serving as a security and law enforcement instructor at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, then transferred to Fort Carson to become the Troop Schools' Manager. John still holds this position today and is honored to teach and mentor soldiers. He earned his Associate Broker license in 2018, joining Bryce in real estate.

Cultivating Relationships

The O'Briens love to experience life, and Bryce loves events and entertaining. They had moved to the close-knit community of Fountain years ago without knowing anyone. John returned home from training shortly before Thanksgiving, and the couple enjoyed their first Thanksgiving with their neighbors. Bryce discovered that the whole *community* is very supportive of military families. They became family.

This motivated Bryce to start annual "neighborhood" events including an Easter egg hunt, Fourth of July picnic, and a fall festival complete with a pumpkin patch. She invites her lending partners to co-sponsor the event each year, and extends an open invitation (via social media) for the *entire community* to join them.

This past fall they had their sixth annual fall festival and chili cook-off. The pumpkin patch had 400 pumpkins, and photographers were on hand to capture treasured family memories. The event was enjoyed by *600 people!*

Bryce and John are honored to work with diverse clients (civilians and military



families) and *returning* clients. Bryce recently helped her *very first client*, who was ready to move to Florida after living in the house Bryce helped her client find *fifteen years ago*.

YOLO

The O'Briens had been on the hunt for a home in FL. They planned to hold dual licensure in CO and FL and split their time between their two homes. Covid taught them not to wait to live out their dreams. They earned their Florida real estate licenses in 2020, and started an *expansion team* there who serve clients with the same compassionate, ethical, knowledgeable care.

In November 2021 Bryce fulfilled her lifelong goal of buying her own dream home in Florida. It meant so much because she had been helping others fulfill *their* dreams for 15 years before purchasing her very own home. They love having a home close to Bryce's parents, siblings, and a lifetime of her friends

Making A Difference In Two Places At Once

The O'Brien family includes fur-babies Lily (a yellow lab) and Maddie (a golden retriever). They enjoy dog parks and camping in the mountains (in their camper, which doubles as their mobile office). John enjoys the

local golf courses and loves that he can golf *and* ski on the same day.

The couple spends a lot of time in Fountain, and their favorite sushi spot is Arashi Sushi. Bryce enjoys cooking and baking, and hosting friends. Giving back in this way also helps her feel the warmth of family since her family lives out of state.

"We got into real estate so we could help others," John reflected. "We each have the heart of a servant *and* a teacher. We have the best of both worlds because we are helping clients, impacting communities, building teams, and *living* in Colorado *and* in Florida 'simultaneously.' We are here to help *generations* and build relationships that last a lifetime."

"We really hand-hold our families through the process. We teach all our clients about financial planning so they can be *successful* homeowners who are building a strong financial future through real estate," Bryce shared. "We also teach all our agents that client care is *number one*. We are not selling a product, we are building relationships. We offer a superior experience, and are a guide on each client's journey. Clients have always been, and will always be, at the heart of what we do."



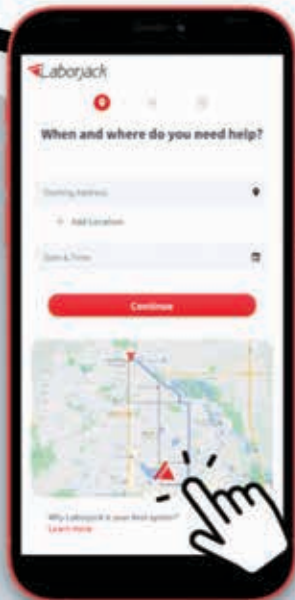
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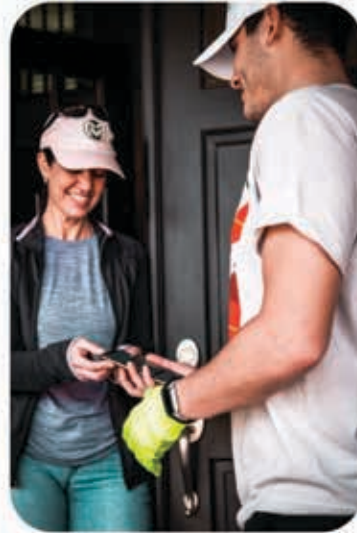
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LIZ & JERRY Cobb



EXPERIENCED, LOCAL
AND PEOPLE-CENTRIC

▶ power couple

Written by Ruth Gnirk • Casa Bay Photography

Liz and Jerry Cobb shared a love of journalism, and community. Now they share a love of real estate. The Cobb Team are experienced in life, in marketing, and in making a difference in their community. They have the advantage of living locally for decades, and the Cobbs are people-centric whether it is a client, an agent, a business partner, or a community member. They are here to serve!

Good News

Liz is a proud fourth-generation native of Colorado Springs. She has always loved hearing and telling stories, and she knew from an early age that she wanted to be a journalist. After earning a degree in Mass Communications and Journalism from the University of Denver, Liz became a reporter for *The Colorado Springs Sun* (which was later bought out by *The Gazette*).

That was where she met Jerry Cobb, a fun and outgoing co-worker. Liz learned that he had been passionate about journalism even before he turned 15 years old. He had moved to the Springs to work for the *Sun* in 1983 after graduating from the University of Missouri with a degree in Journalism. However, after experiencing his outgoing personality and his skill for sales, an advisor encouraged Jerry to pursue the advertising side of the newspaper “business,” and he did.

Jerry worked in Sales and management for various newspapers, radio stations, and even a billboard company over the next two decades.

A Different Kind of Sales

In 2004 Jerry was growing tired of the long-distance commuting required for his job as advertising sales manager. He wanted to connect

with people and control his own destiny, and he knew just how to do that.

Jerry became a real estate Broker Associate and was mentored by Joe Clement. Some extended family members were surprised at the change of vocation, but Liz’s dad was very supportive and could tell that Jerry was going to do well. Jerry was awarded Rookie of the Year after his first full year, and was recognized as a top producer and Hall of Fame recipient. More importantly, Jerry served the community faithfully, even through the Recession.

In 2011, Jerry was given the opportunity to pair his love of journalism, advertising, and real estate. He became the sales manager for the real estate (and automotive) portion of *The Gazette*. As he built relationships with people in the community, he was invited to start working in radio advertisement sales in 2012.

Inspired by Jerry, Liz left her job at *The Gazette* after a 26-year career. She had served as the Vice President of Marketing for her last five years and she was ready for a change. She started working for herself in 2012 and was awarded Rookie of the Year by her brokerage, ERA Shields.

By 2015, Jerry left his media job and joined Liz in creating the Cobb Team. The pair have been focusing on real estate full time.

The Cobb Team

Jerry explained, “We treat each client like they are a business partners *and* friend. We enjoy working one-on-one with clients to tailor the process for them.”

...



•••

Although the Cobbs occasionally complete deals together, they try to care for their own clients personally to deepen the trust. They cover more of the Front Range by each focusing on different counties. Both of them are extremely service-oriented with their clients, peers, and colleagues. They always maintain a level of professionalism, regardless of the circumstances.

Jerry has earned several designations including Quality Service Certified, and has been awarded through RE/MAX and ERA. Liz has also earned designations, including Certified Negotiation Expert, and has been awarded for multiple levels of success and leadership.

The Cobb Team has received numerous awards including the ERA Shield's Top Producing Team, locally and in the State, as well as the Circle of Achievement. The team has also been the recipient of the Leader's Circle on multiple occasions.

However, what matters the most to them is that their clients are pleased, feel confident, and can tell that Liz and Jerry care about them personally.

Giving Back

The Cobbs are very involved in their community, in business *and* in life. Their current focus is The Old Mutt Hut. This local resource means a lot to them because of their love for their purebred

“
WE BELIEVE
IN THE
POWER OF
COMMUNITY
AND HOW IT
CAN PROPEL
A CITY.
”

Bernese mountain dogs, Harper (3 years old) and Hemingway (6 months).

“We believe in the power of community and how it can propel a city,” Liz shared. “We avidly volunteer for many local organizations and boards, and have years of volunteer experience in supporting community efforts including fundraising.”

They are also staunch supporters of Air Force Falcon Football. Jerry shared that he feels the Air Force Academy is the gem of the community. The Cobbs love to host clients at Air Force games and says they always love the jet flyovers and the cadet March On.

•••



Harper



Hemingway

...

The Cobbs enjoy spending time with their sons. Stuart is an attorney in Houston, TX and has a one-year-old daughter named Elliot. Their son Kelly lives in Des Moines, IA and works in the medical software industry. Liz and Jerry look forward to making memories with their granddaughter at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo and The North Pole.

“We treat clients, and those on the other side of the transaction, with courtesy and kindness,” Jerry explained. “It’s not win-lose; this is a win-win business! Liz and I both subscribe to the same tried and true formula. By providing superior service to each and every client, and operating with the utmost integrity, *everyone* wins. Our clients get the results they expect, our peers and colleagues experience a fair and honest transaction, and we enjoy a life of balance and success.”

“
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	Down Payment	Seller Concessions*
Conventional (Primary And Second Home) Down payment and closing costs can be 100% gift funds, grants, or loan	3% up to 10%	Up to 3% (Primary Residence)
	10-25%	Up to 6%
	More than 25%	Up to 9%
Conventional (Investment Properties)	Up to 15%	Up to 2%
USDA Down payment and closing costs can be 100% gift funds, grants, or loan	0%	Up to 6%
FHA Down payment and closing costs can be 100% gift funds, grants, or loan	3.5%	Up to 6%
VA Down payment and closing costs can be 100% gift funds, grants, or loan	0%	Up to 4% towards closing costs, + 4% towards debt payoff

NOTE: Down payment assistance can be added to Conventional, VA, and FHA loans.

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ARROW

MOVING AND STORAGE

▶▶ partner spotlight

Written by **Brian Gowdy**
Casa Bay Photography

Arrow Moving and Storage, an agent for Mayflower, has been family-owned in Colorado Springs for over 27 years. David Ottoes, President of Arrow, opened the company in 1995. Today, Arrow employs 165 people, fifty in Colorado, and has locations in Cheyenne, WY; Salt Lake City, UT; San Antonio, TX; and of course, their location in Colorado Springs, CO.

Arrow moves customers and businesses locally, nationally, and internationally. They also work with the military, moving our soldiers to different bases around the world. Whether a client needs an entire household moved or a few pieces of furniture, they can accommodate any sort of move. They are the preferred mover for

many local and family-owned businesses, as well as many real estate agents they work closely with.

“Moving can be stressful. But with the right plan and the right team, it doesn’t have to be,” David Ottoes says. Many of Arrow’s employees have been in the business for over twenty years. They know the best way to handle every piece of furniture so that nothing gets damaged. Further, they know how much each piece will cost to move which means their price quotes are accurate.

A major component that separates Arrow from other moving companies are their Personal Move



•••

Coordinators. They are the single point of contact once the move is booked and ensure things go as planned. Mat LaFleur, one of Arrow's Relocation Consultants, is the face of the business to real estate agents and their clients. "When a realtor refers one of their clients to us, it's our job to take the best possible care of them because our performance is a reflection of their own business." Mat's job is to meet with customers, schedule every component of their move, and set real expectations so that the process goes smoothly, and everyone is satisfied in the end. Mat is also a member of multiple local networking groups to stay connected with Colorado Springs's business community.

Arrow Moving and Storage has been built on the foundation of quality service and repeat business from past customers and real estate agents. Over their fifty years in business, they have perfected the formula for making moves outstanding. They take care of their customers like family.



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FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

Siobhan Celusta grew up in the Springs and was accepted to the US Air Force Academy (USAFA) at age 17. She served as a skilled pilot and flight commander for almost six years, traveling to many countries and being stationed for a time in Germany. She loved connecting with people from different cultures and seeing the world.

For the next three years Siobhan advanced in leadership positions as a pilot in the Air Force Combat Search and Rescue career field, then returned to

her hometown in 2013 to train cadets to fly. In 2014 she took the opportunity to invest in a commercial business and real estate venture, becoming co-owner of a local brewery.

In the four and a half years that she served as an instructor in the USAFA Powered Flight Program, Siobhan taught 2,500 cadets to fly the T-53 (also known as the Cirrus SR-20). *Three* different classes recognized her as a Superior Instructor. She knew her role as an instructor was impacting lives, but she decided she wanted to serve both her local community *and* her country in the Colorado Air National Guard.

Then one day her world came to a screeching halt. An auto accident nearly took her life. During the long healing process, she tried to focus on her recovery. Unfortunately, due to the severity of her injuries, the Air Force asked Siobhan to medically retire.

A WHOLE NEW WORLD

“Retiring from the military felt like losing my identity,” Siobhan reflected. “I served for almost 17 years as a pilot and a flight instructor, and I didn’t think I



...

had *any* skills that would transfer to the civilian world. During a routine visit, I shared my frustration with my doctor. He said that as a Colorado Springs native who was good with people and knew how to stay calm in a crisis, I should consider a career in real estate.”

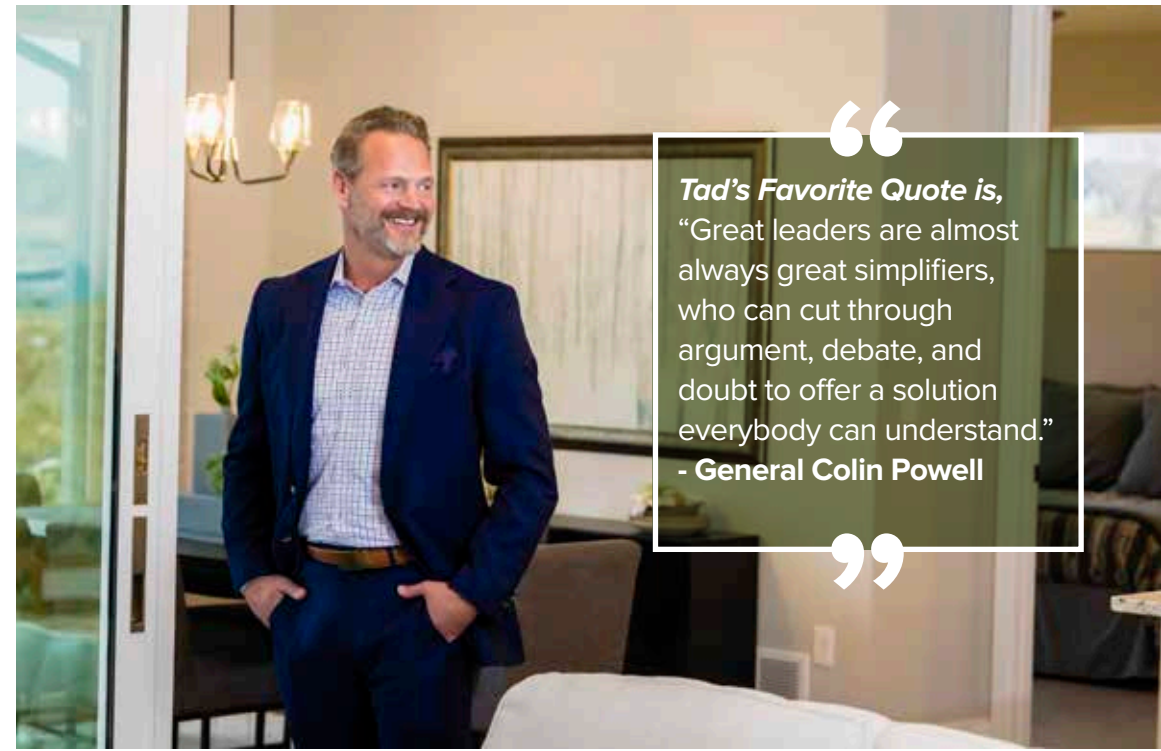
She called her REALTOR®, Caryn Becker, to help her research the opportunity, and Siobhan became a licensed Associate Broker in 2017. Although it was difficult for her to walk because she was still healing from the accident, Siobhan started as a solo agent for a legacy brokerage.

2018 was a busy year. Her divorce was finalized, she moved out of the home in which she and her children (ages three and five) had made many happy memories, *and* she received her last Active Duty paycheck from the Air Force.

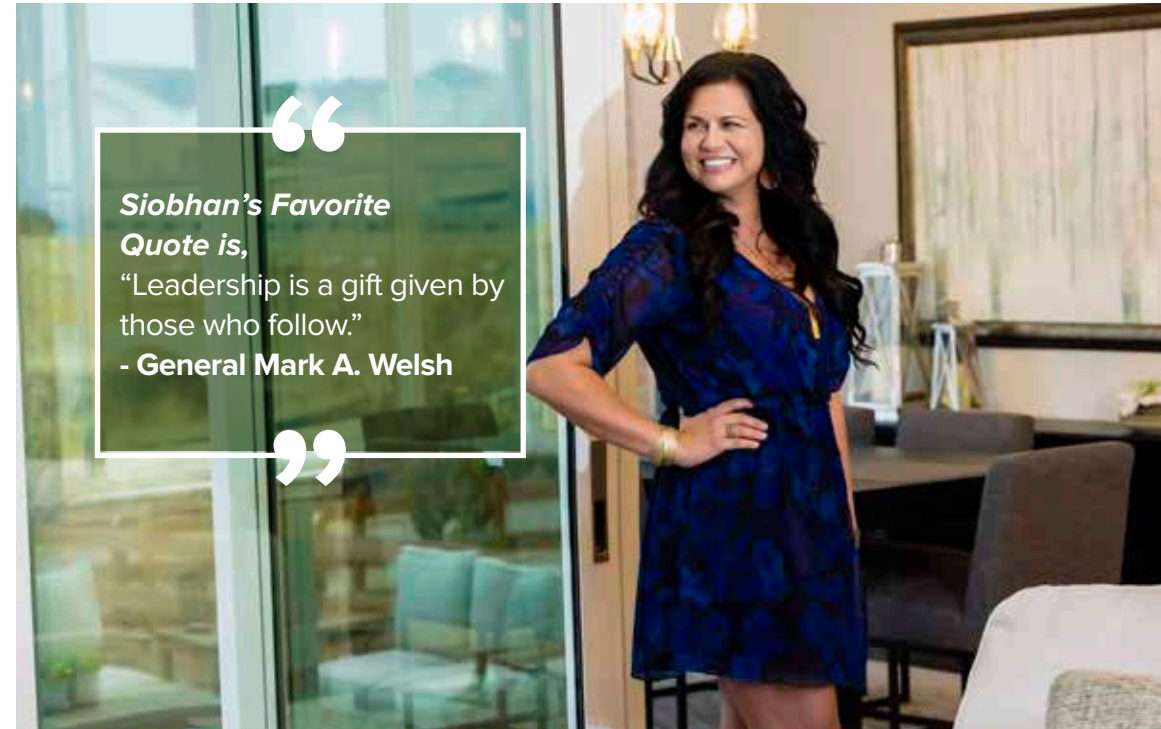
2018 was also a year of important connections. While she was dealing with the reality that she needed to become a successful agent *or* find a job with a steady paycheck, she was introduced to Chris Cowles at The Cutting Edge, REALTORS®. He saw her potential and invited her to be part of his team. While she explored other job opportunities, Siobhan was introduced to Retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, Tad Vannaman.

SPECIAL DUTIES

Tad Vannaman was raised in the farming and ranching environment of Kansas, graduated from the USAFA in 1994, and served over two decades in the Air Force in various servant-leadership positions as an executive officer and involvement in political military affairs.



“
Tad’s Favorite Quote is,
“Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate, and doubt to offer a solution everybody can understand.”
- General Colin Powell
”



“
Siobhan’s Favorite Quote is,
“Leadership is a gift given by those who follow.”
- General Mark A. Welsh
”

team. He assisted people with investments, insurance, and tax mitigation for five years. And then he met Siobhan in 2018. He was captivated by her heart for her clients, and amazed by her passion for life.

FIGHTING FALCONS

Tad earned his Associate Brokers license in November 2019 (six months before the pandemic) and joined Siobhan. They are a perfect match and bring harmony to the team. As an extrovert, Tad likes the personal side of real estate and loves showings. Siobhan loves the clients, but she is great with the backend, detail-oriented aspects of real estate.

In 2020 the pair created the Fighting Falcon Home Team, adding buyer’s agents, a transaction coordinator, and an assistant. In 2022 they transferred to the virtual brokerage, eXp Realty. Now, they actively train and recruit agents to provide full-service care to their clients. At least half of the small businesses and resources they team up with are owned and operated by USAFA grads and veterans.

Tad said that partnering with USAFA grads and veterans assures them that everyone will be operating with the

...

...

highest level of integrity, and that there will be clear communication throughout the process. Siobhan and Tad have raised their children in this town, giving them a unique insight into youth programs and activities within the city.

GIVING BACK

Tad and Siobhan have been involved with Springs Rescue Mission, whose President and CEO, Jack Briggs, is also a pilot and USAFA grad. They are very supportive of other community resources for the vulnerable, as well.

The Fighting Falcon Home Team stays connected with clients through organic pop-bys, monthly magazines, and upcoming quarterly client events.

The couple is in the middle of their first house flip right now and have helped clients with pre-renovating their homes. They own and manage two short-term rental properties, and plan to have an informational event for their clients and the community regarding investment properties and short-term rentals.

Siobhan and Tad genuinely enjoy mentoring others and continuing to grow themselves. They have weekly mentoring sessions as well as team meetings. The pair is intentional about bringing in new agents willing to be trained and mentored. The end goal is teaching new team members to grow their *own* teams. They also have several independent agents in their organization whom they pour into regularly.

When the work is done and it is time for fun, you might find Tad and Siobhan camping in the pop-up camper they remodeled during COVID, going to music festivals, or planning an adventurous trip. Tad enjoys skiing and Siobhan likes to snowboard. Their biggest fan is their Pomeranian, Carl. You'll find him in the office with them every day, making people smile and enjoying belly rubs from anyone who comes in.



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LIZ COBB learned to ski when she was 3 years old at The Broadmoor Ski Area, where her mother was a ski instructor.



While she was in real estate school, **ALISON THORNE** underwent knee surgery and had to completely relearn how to walk!



TROY MACDONALD enlisted in the Marine Corps after high school and shipped off to boot camp the week of Sep. 11, 2001.



While stationed in Germany flying C-130s, **SIOBHAN CELUSTA** flew to Tanzania and climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro. She also ran with the bulls in Pamplona, Spain, and was the captain of the Air Force Women's Lacrosse Team.

TAD VANNAMAN has 5 younger sisters! He was also a Division 1 Wrestler at the United States Air Force Academy.



TULIO PEÑA nearly made a career riding his bicycle door-to-door, teaching swimming lessons!

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