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If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at dees.hinton@realproducersmag.com.

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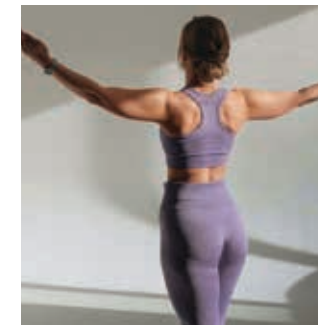
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▶ publisher's note: dees hinton

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

From the entire staff of *Central Mississippi Real Producers* — HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Some of my staff and I recently had a 2023 planning meeting and reflected on 2022! 2022 was a good year for *Central Mississippi Real Producers*!

As we continue to grow, our mission is the same: to identify, promote and enhance the relationships of top REALTORS® in Central Mississippi and connect these REALTORS® with the top industry partners that help them sell more real estate.

We have some great ideas to implement in 2023 to reach more REALTORS® and industry partners to help them connect and grow their businesses.

Here is a sneak peek into some of our plans!

We will continue to have our large social night events and are planning the next one for March 2023! We are going to do *themed* social nights just for fun and have some creative ideas to help our ad partners meet our REALTORS® at these events! It's going to be fun!

We will also continue our monthly smaller events — the magazine reveals. These were a great success in bringing together that month's features along with a few of our preferred partners. If you are a partner and have not been to a magazine reveal yet, don't worry — we will make sure each partner is invited to these a couple of times this year.

If you have not noticed, the last couple of months, we have included an article from Central Mississippi

REALTORS®. This is a great partnership we have developed and have enjoyed getting to know their amazing staff. We will continue to provide space in our publication for them each month for articles, flyers for upcoming events, etc., to help keep everyone informed!

We are also going to begin some additional feature articles in each issue.

Some months we will have two preferred partner feature articles.

Some months we will have an icon feature article. Some months we will have an article on charitable organizations in our area.

And we have a new feature article — *Partner Recommended Agent Spotlight*!

As always, we accept recommendations of any top producer, rising star, icon in the industry or just a unique, interesting REALTOR® that you would like to see featured in the publication! We want to know who you want to know more about. Just email us!

We are always open to new ideas, and we always want to hear from you!

YOU CAN CONTACT US AT:

Dees Hinton
dees.hinton@n2co.com | 601-331-3659

Cindy Raborn
cindy.raborn@n2co.com | 601-613-3474

Wishing you a happy, healthy and successful 2023!
Dees

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

Jan. 1 — Shane Saxton	Jan. 23 — Greg Shows
Jan. 2 — Rick Henson	Jan. 26 — Wanda Leiczak
Jan. 20 — Ginger Randall	Jan. 26 — Katie Warren
Jan. 21 — Laci Pittman	Jan. 29 — Brooke Witcher



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SACIA FINDLAY

▶▶ top producer

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

**SACIA FINDLAY SELLS
HOMES AND MANAGES
PROPERTIES FROM
AROUND THE WORLD**

Real estate came naturally to Sacia Findlay. She was born into it and grew up in the business. “My mother actually showed houses while she was pregnant with me.” Sacia was born in Jackson and then spent time in Arizona before returning to Mississippi. She grew up watching both parents work hard and take care of their clients, her mother in real estate and her father in financial planning and insurance sales. Sacia was the oldest child and always mature for her age. She had already been working various jobs for five years before getting her real estate license at only 19 years old. She started under her mother with DELL Properties and soon after became part of the international franchise Realty Executives, The Dell Group.

“In 2010, when my mother retired, I got my brother’s license and started my own franchise of Realty



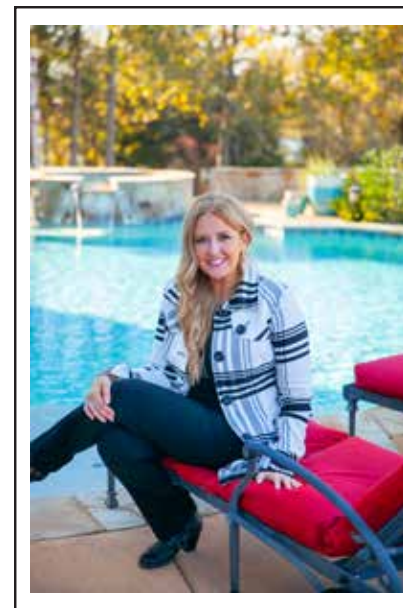
Executives and changed the name to Realty Executives, Central MS,” Sacia says. She was one of the youngest franchise owners the company ever had, which is saying a lot, as the company had over 600 offices in 20 different countries, and over 10,000 agents at the time. Sacia has continued to be a high-ranking agent among the company, and her accomplishments within the franchise have been impressive. She has received the Diamond Award, as well as the Executive Award, 100% Club Award and the Chairman’s Award several times. “It was never about winning awards; it has always been about taking care of the client and trying to help anyone I could.”

With over 20 years in the business, Sacia has helped everyone from first-time homebuyers to seasoned investors with rentals and commercial properties.

She has repeat clients that bought and sold multiple properties over the years. She often has people call her to sell their homes off market, and she is normally able to do so. “I love bringing buyers and sellers together, making new relationships, and refer-

ring clients to other top agents nationwide.” Sacia says the business has its good and bad attributes though, like all jobs. “I have been in scary and dangerous situations, like having a gun pulled on me for money and snakes sneaking up on me.” Just last year, she got stuck in a large vacant medical building

for hours during a tornado. “There was no power, cobwebs and bugs everywhere, and the weather turned so bad we couldn’t even stand by the windows or get a phone signal. Being in the dark with bugs was not in my job description, but luckily, I did end



up selling the building to a long-time, repeat client. It’s best to focus on the positive, right?”

One of the areas of real estate that Sacia has excelled in is investment properties and upscale residential rentals. She began investing in real estate for herself at an early age. “I bought my first home when I was 20 years old, built my first home at 26, and then purchased my first rental when I was 27 years old. It started as a way to get tax write offs, then transitioned into retirement planning. I try to buy a new property almost every year and have the renters paying them off for me.” Sacia says it is easy to sell a product you believe in. “It was working so well for me that some of my clients wanted to start doing the same, but only if I would manage the properties. That is how the

“
IT WAS NEVER ABOUT
WINNING AWARDS; IT HAS
ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT
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CLIENT AND TRYING TO
HELP ANYONE I COULD.
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Connecting with Nissan and their supplier companies became a huge source of business for Sacia. “These companies are bringing in skilled workers from other countries who are only here a few years. Many of them bring their families to experience the American way of life. There has been a challenge to find the kind of rental homes they desire. Having an inventory of nice rental homes in the Madison County area is a struggle, but we have been helping.” One of the challenges Sacia has had is that many subdivisions don’t allow, or don’t want, rentals in their neighborhood. “We carefully vet our renters and look after our properties. We even manage the lawn care on most of them. I personally have rentals in almost every neighborhood I sell houses in, so it is just as important

property management part of my business started.” Sacia says it is a strong investment with a great return and her clients know that they are in it together. One of her favorite testimonials is, “Sacia makes me money in my sleep!”

and assisting her in real estate, they frequently travel back together.

Sacia’s husband, Garren, played football for Georgia Tech, where he graduated with a chemical engineering degree. In 2013, after the birth

of their son, he joined Sacia in real estate and her father in insurance at Financial Works USA in Ridgeland. “We wanted more time together, to be flexible for the kids, and it just made sense to be able to help our clients diversify their investments and retirement planning.” Sacia manages properties in Mississippi

Sacia has built a successful business over the years that continues to thrive with the business partner, Mindy Dotson. Mindy has known and worked with Sacia almost 20 years and was instrumental in Sacia’s ability to relocate her family to Utah. “We moved due to medical reasons for one of my children and also to be near my husband’s family,” she says. “It has worked out to be an ideal situation for us, and I am so blessed to have clients that understand.” Sacia has a broker’s license in both Utah and Mississippi, and with her husband doing insurance in both states



for clients and investors nationwide and credits her strong team and reliable subcontractors, who have been with her for years, for making sure the business runs smoothly.





to me to maintain the values as it is for the homeowners there. I have realized the need of having a nice rental home for other professionals as well, and I want everyone I work with to feel the hospitality Mississippi is known for.”

Outside of real estate, Sacia and her husband enjoy seeing new places and having fun adventures with their five children, ages 1 to 23. “We still have three younger children at home that keep us busy, but I truly think children and family are the purpose and happiness of life.” Sacia says they love cruises, visiting other countries and taking the family on vacations.

“Trying to maintain a good balance between work, family and travel has made working in two states manageable and enjoyable. I feel I have developed a well-oiled machine now and that I can run

it from anywhere,” says Sacia. “I sold a home from a cruise ship last October, and two from Branson, MO, over Thanksgiving. Jennifer, my licensed assistant, jokes with me about how I can sell a house from anywhere in the world and do so on almost every vacation thanks to her and DocuSign®.”



best we can today to work hard and enjoy life now with our loved ones. I

am so grateful for the relationships I have made over the years with fellow REALTORS®, business affiliates and clients and that my husband and I ended up following in my parent’s footsteps. What a blessing it has been.”



Sacia’s favorite place to be is on “some beach, somewhere.” She has had clients tell her that they love that she “lives life,” and she will tell you that is exactly what she is trying to do. Sacia lost an uncle in his 30s and a sister to cancer at only 37 years old, and friends who have died too young. “None of us are promised a tomorrow, so we just do the

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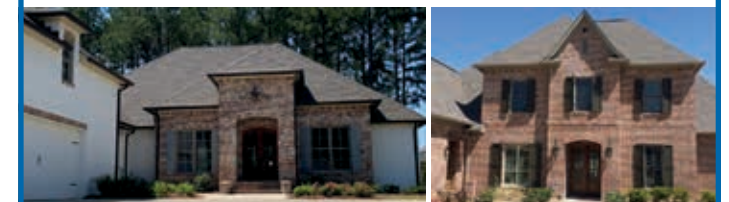
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Emily Phillips

FROM REAL ESTATE HOBBYIST TO ONE
OF CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI'S RISING STARS



Emily Phillips is a “Pearl Girl” through and through. She was raised in Pearl and graduated from Pearl High School. Her husband, Jeremy, is also a Pearl graduate, and their oldest children, Alexis and Ethan (now 21), graduated from Pearl. Their son Jacob currently attends school in Pearl. “I can’t imagine living anywhere else,” she says.

When she was just 16 years old, Emily began working in a law firm. She continued working in the field while attending Hinds Community College and worked as a paralegal until 2017. “I was ready to be a stay-at-home mom with my kids for a while,” she says. During that time, Emily did some contract work on the side. When her youngest child went to kindergarten, she felt the pull to work again. “I wanted to do something that provided a second income, but I also wanted something that was flexible, so I could spend time with my children and be present for their activities.”

Emily had always been a “real estate hobbyist,” checking out different real estate markets when on vacation and looking at houses. “I have always loved houses, and I love the stories behind the houses and the stories of the people who live in them.” Jeremy encouraged Emily to look into real estate. “He said I had always had a reason I couldn’t do it, but now I had no reason not to do it. He even paid for my classes randomly one day and told me to get started when I was ready.”

After taking online classes and passing the exam, Emily got her license in 2019. “I talked to several brokerages in town, but in the end, I was most impressed with Derrick Havard. I am so thankful he took me in and allowed me the opportunity to be mentored by him and the other amazing veteran agents at Havard. Each one is a big part of my success story.”

Thinking she’d do real estate part time, Emily did well from the beginning. “I got my license the end of April and closed on my first house in June. I ended up closing on nine houses that year.” Emily was named Rookie of the Year by Havard Real Estate Group LLC for 2019. “I did even better my second year, so I knew that this was the right career for me.”

Emily says her favorite part of the business is getting to know her clients. “I love to learn their stories and help them reach their goals. I also stay in touch with my clients. So many are first-time homebuyers, and already I’ve seen people go through major life events like finishing graduate school and having children. I’ve even had three first-time homebuyers come back to me to find their second home. That’s such a satisfying feeling.”





Admitting working with clients can be an emotional journey, Emily says she doesn't mind. "The relationship between an agent and a client can be quite intimate. I learn about their families, and I experience their whole range of emotions with them. Sometimes there is disappointment and other times celebrations. I have laughed and cried with many of my clients."

Emily and Jeremy have three children. "We are a 'yours, mine and ours' family. Jeremy and I each have a 21-year-old, and together we have our 9-year-old." Jeremy is in commercial and health care facility property management. "He has a broker's license, but he uses his license differently from me," explains Emily.

Outside of work, Emily enjoys decorating homes. "I love decorating our home, and I have helped others over the years." That has come in handy in real estate. "I have some furniture I can use to stage an empty home, and I also help clients prepare their home for showing. It helps relieve them of the pressure that sometimes goes with that." Christmas decorating is also something Emily enjoys. "I have decorated for a few people for several years."



Sports is also an important aspect of the Phillips' lives. "The two older ones were always involved in sports and activities, and now Jacob plays baseball and basketball, so that keeps us busy." When they do have free time, Emily says they enjoy entertaining friends and family at their home. "We have a large family, so it's not uncommon for us to have 30 people in our home!"

On Sundays, Emily sings in the choir at Crossgates Baptist Church, and on Wednesdays, she works with the 3-year-olds. She is also involved in her community and serves as an ambassador for the Pearl Chamber of Commerce.



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**From Education to Home Inspections,
Dave Riegel is Always a Teacher**



Dave Riegel has spent his career as a teacher. The Ohio State graduate taught high school, coached the school's cross-country team, served as a high school principal for a decade and even worked at the Ohio State Department of Education for a couple of years. But when he met Natalie Hortman four years ago, Dave fell helplessly in love, and he moved to Mississippi.

"Natalie is from Laurel, and she lived in Jackson, so I moved to Jackson." The couple got married, and between them, they have four children. "My kids, Nathan and Corrine, are grown. Natalie's, Elizabeth and McLure, are still in school."

Dave learned after he moved to Mississippi that the state wouldn't reciprocate his administrative license. "I couldn't go to work right away, so I decided to start my own business." Dave had been looking into the home inspection business for a while. "When I was a high school principal in South Carolina, the school was undergoing a construction project and, while it wasn't in my job description, I became a de facto construction manager. It required a lot of hands-on work on my part. It was a big project, and I got interested in construction. I learned about fire codes and building codes."

When looking for a way to transition to a new career, Dave drew on that interest in construction and his experience in teaching, and he started a home inspection company from scratch. "I now educate people on the importance of a good home inspection. I feel that I do a good job explaining things about a home to my clients. I take time with them, explaining how a house operates as a system. A home is the largest investment most people will make in their lifetime. But a buyer doesn't always see what I see. They

...



aren't looking at the roof or the electrical panel. I am in a teaching role in that respect, and that feels natural to me."

Dave started his business, Mississippi's Best Home Inspections LLC, in May 2020 — the same month he married Natalie, the same time a worldwide pandemic was in full swing and the housing market began an unprecedented surge. Having a strong Google presence was a good means for Dave to get clients. He got off to a strong start, especially after real estate agents got to know him. "I went to different agencies and introduced myself. I have been

fortunate to have a lot of agents who have helped me get established."

For a fee of \$300, Dave says he has saved some homeowners anywhere from \$8,000 to \$10,000. He stresses that not all inspections are perfect. "As an industry, we do a pretty good job most of the time, and it is almost always a cost saver for the client. My company actually offers a pay-at-close option so the cost of the inspection can be wrapped into the closing costs, which makes it affordable for most people."

While Dave's business is based in Jackson, he says he'll go anywhere in the state if he can work it out with his schedule. "I have been to Oxford, Greenville, Greenwood and other places around the state. It's something I don't mind doing." As a matter of fact, Dave says he enjoys seeing different parts of his new home state. "I have been very happy living in Mississippi."

Dave enjoys playing the guitar, something he'll have more time for now that he has finished his Doctorate of Education at the University of Southern

Mississippi. "Our family attends Chapel of the Cross, which we love."

Dave's career in education isn't over. He has received his administrative license in Mississippi and his newly earned doctorate in education. He will continue helping people understand more about the home they want to buy, which is satisfying for Dave, whose company is growing. "I have recently brought on an employee to help me in the business."



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A NOTE FROM Nita ...

Written by **Nita Martin**

As an association executive, I often have the privilege of meeting many high-performing leadership teams at national conventions and REALTOR® meetings across the country. Over the past two years, every association leadership team I've met has grappled with simultaneous overlapping changes — a global pandemic, inflation, low inventory, varying interest rates, political climates and the learning curves of adapting to new technologies. As we close the year, I'd like to express my gratitude to the governing boards of Central Mississippi REALTORS® and Central Mississippi Multiple Listing Service, who have also overcome every obstacle imaginable. These determined volunteers serving at the highest capacity of association leadership have presided over an era of uncertainty with persistence and dexterity.

Reflecting on the vast accomplishments of both boards, I am encouraged by their ability to focus on broader business plans driving transformation. Whether launching a regional MLS partnership, erecting a new facility, onboarding a new administration and staff, adopting more efficient operations, promoting responsible fiscal oversight, resetting policies or equipping CMR with the technologies needed to thrive for years to come, the focus on membership was laser sharp.

The complexities and pace of change have yet to wane! At the helm of these immense efforts were our skilled and dedicated leaders, CMR President Schneika Stokes and CMMLS President Vicki Weaver. Stokes and Weaver have demonstrated exceptional agility through constant change. I appreciate their stewardship of the association's



Nita Martin, CEO

most precious resources, which is the time sacrificed by the volunteer board members.

Thank you to each member who served earnestly, upholding the loyalty and duty of care for the greater good of real estate in Central Mississippi. This year is arguably one of the most challenging on record, but it has been equally rewarding to witness the evolution of the future CMR. Many thanks to our leadership this year!

Sincerely,
Your Chief Change Officer



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NEW YEAR,

Why not to start that diet in January.

NEW YOU?



Happy New Year! As the notes of “Auld Lang Syne” fade into the background, visions of the person we hope to be in 2023 begin dancing through our heads. Will she make more time for self-care this year? Will he spend more time with the kids? Whatever our hopes and dreams for a “new you,” we often choose the new year as a time to kick-start that transformation. However, research shows that the year’s beginning is often *not* the best time to take on diet-related or weight-loss resolutions.

Here’s why. At their core, our wintertime eating habits have to do with biology. Long ago, humans ate as much as possible when food was available during the winter, as resources were harder to come by; essentially, we are still programmed to “store up” food in insulating fat layers until warm weather arrives.

In addition, weather can have a significant impact on mood. In many areas of our country, winter means ice and snow, freezing temps and early darkness ... not necessarily the most cheerful atmosphere. Add to that the idea of limiting food consumption (usually, the foods that make us happiest) and braving the elements outdoors — not a recipe for success.

Also related to weather is cost. Let’s face it: It costs more, especially during colder months, to eat healthily. Fresh produce is harder to come by, and it’s not as tasty or nutritious, frequently sitting on a truck for days, imported from whatever warm-climate area in which it was grown. Doesn’t sound quite as appealing as tomato or zucchini picked from your neighbor’s garden, huh?

Yes, all those holiday goodies may have wreaked havoc on your eating habits, but now that the celebrations are over, allow your eating and workout habits to settle and stabilize. Save strict resolutions for spring-time, when the sun is shining, the days are longer, and fresh, healthy foods are right outside your door!

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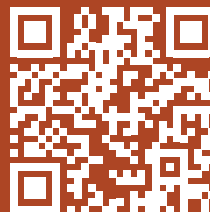
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