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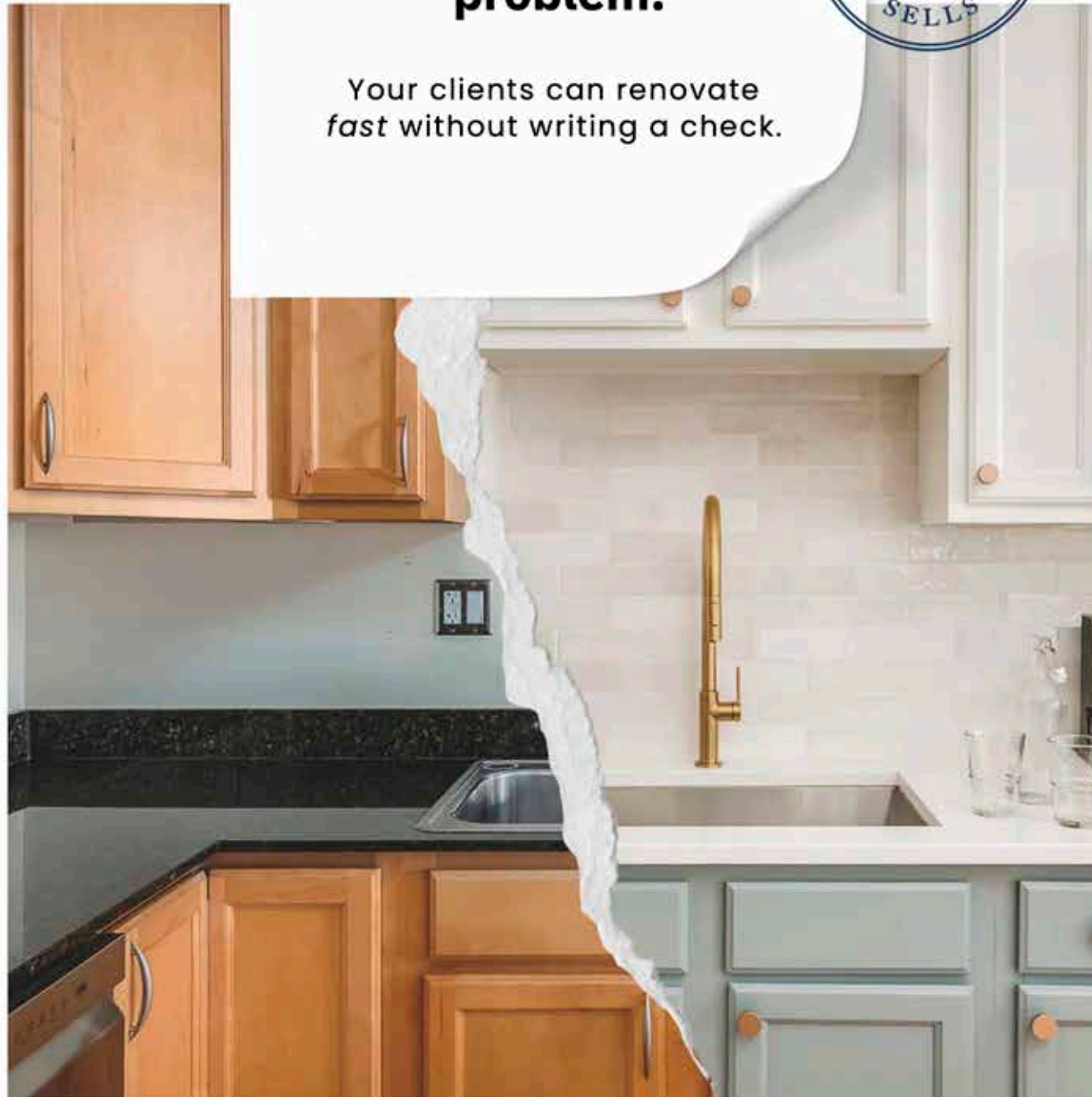
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OUR RISING STARS

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# Wishing You an INTENTIONAL NEW YEAR!

Dear DC Metro Real Producers,

Happy New Year! I hope your holidays have been happy and healthy, full of family, friends, laughter and love. As we launch into 2023, I wanted to share some thoughts on how to create the year that you want by optimizing intentionality.

Putting pen to paper and writing out your goals is impactful because the act of writing something cements it in your brain. And since our brains accept what we tell them without question ... written or verbalized goals and affirmations are empowered to manifest in our lives. I encourage you to find a quiet moment to sit with yourself and write out your hopes and dreams for this year and into the future.

A boss of mine, years ago, had a pretty cool, personal New Year's tradition. Each New Year's Eve, instead of partying, she would have a 'Me' night, where she would get out the goals she'd written a year ago, on the last New Year's Eve, and check off how many things on the list she'd accomplished in the past year. She would cross off what no longer seemed important, keep the things she'd still like to achieve, and add new goals for the coming year. (A boat, she said, had been on her list a dozen years; she just kept moving it forward.)

Another intentioning activity is creating a vision board. Same concept. Taking the time to think about and then physically put together a board with powerful images, messages, dream locations, and bucket-list stuff cements your intentions, percolates them in your consciousness, and helps bring them to life.



@realproducers

Whether you write them out, make a vision board, or choose some other tangible way to clarify and reinforce your goals, taking the time to do this is a very worthwhile effort for those who want to be in the driver's seat of their lives.

With the market poised to have significant changes yet again, self-awareness and intention will play a big role in helping navigate whatever the new year may throw at us. Here, at Real Producers, we plan to continue to connect this community so that we can draw strength and inspiration from each other, continue to learn tips and tricks and share best practices, and get together to blow off some steam with some of the nicest, most inspiring people we know! We're excited about the **Masters Masquerade Ball coming up on March 22nd** and can't wait to see everyone decked out for an evening of serious fun! Your exclusive invitation will be coming soon!

This month, we're pleased that preferred partners **Renovation Sells, Shore United Bank, and Truist** have joined the DC Metro Real Producers family. Welcome!

Wishing all of you a happy, healthy, prosperous New Year, and one in which the clarity of your intentions – and the actions you take to further them – help you have one heck of an awesome 2023!

Sincerely,



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DC Metro Real Producers PRESENTS



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▶▶ we ask...you tell!

# What was your proudest moment in 2022?



**BRETT RUBIN**  
Compass

Personal — getting engaged in St. Lucia right when my now fiancée finished school! Professionally — continuing to hit the goals that the team sets, especially in a market showing signs of weakening.



**MARIA KOLICK**  
RE/MAX Realty Centre

This is a 2021 moment that rolled into 2022 ... but my daughter joined me in real estate, and being able to mentor her and see her succeed has been so fun. I also had my biggest sale ever in 2022!



**KYLE STERLING NICHOLS**  
Keller Williams Capital Properties

At the height of COVID, one of my close friends was a flight attendant and got fired. She joined me as a personal assistant and had never done real estate in her life. She is now a licensed REALTOR® and doing really well. It's been so fun to watch!



**JENNIFER VO**  
Keller Williams Realty

My kids go to a small, private school, and when the pandemic hit in 2020, the school announced a complete shutdown. This place is a second home for my kids, and they do such a great job, so we were, of course, devastated. A group of five parents did a “save the school” campaign and actually raised money through the community to save the school. Since then, they have had the highest number of students in 20 years!



**ADAM BELASCO**  
Keller Williams Capital Properties

I got into flipping houses this year, and my proudest moment was probably finishing my first flip. It started out as a very rough, beat-up, house built in the early 1900s, and had not been updated since the '80s. It turned into a very unique and modern townhouse after all the hard work, and nearly doubled in value.



**ELLEN COLEMAN**  
RE/MAX Realty Centre

Being able to adapt to the changing market, bringing people together again and meeting them where they are!



**SASSY JACOBS**  
Washington Fine Properties

I sell a lot of market properties and I just sold my biggest off-market one for \$7.5 million.



**CASEY ABOULAFIA**  
Compass

Getting two middle school-aged kids into brand new sports. I didn't realize how hard that could be!



**RYAN MCKEVITT**  
Long & Foster Real Estate

Getting my broker's license. 135 hours of class-work and passing on the first attempt!



**LEISEL L. TAYLOR**  
Village Premier Collection Maryland

Being able to grow my brokerage to 50 agents in eight months.



**ALAN CHARGIN**  
Keller Williams Capital Properties

Our fifth wedding anniversary (jam packed — two kids, three houses, career changes).



**MICHAEL ALLWEIN**  
Century 21 Redwood Realty

Having a baby (December 2022). Professionally, being able to navigate through this weird market and stay focused and adapt and change.



**SHARI GRONVALL**  
Compass

Personally, I have one high school, one middle school and one elementary school kid. Seeing them all on the other side of the pandemic, living through school shutdowns and all of that, and they are all happy, doing well, and back to having a normal childhood!



**DAN SCHULER**  
Compass

My wife and I brought our third kiddo, our daughter Lydia Monroe Schuler, into this world on June 24, 2022.



**SCOTT SACHS**  
Compass

Second year as a team with a new company, and just seeing the way that we've been able to grow and network amongst our peers this past year. The volume that we've done with just two people and our admin — with wives, kids, our property management group, etc., has been awesome to see!



**MOLLY BRANSON**  
RLAH Real Estate

Flipping my first house.



**LAWRENCE LESSIN**  
Homes By Owner, Inc.

I had a lot of friends and family get into hard times over the years, and I was there to help them. It is great that they know I'm there for them.



**CRAIG SWORD**  
Compass

Helping my sister and brother-in-law purchase a home in Mount Airy during a competitive time, and sell the home they were in for \$100,000 over asking price.



**COREY BURR**  
TTR Sotheby's International Realty

Becoming a grandfather, and being a father of the bride to my only daughter!



**ELIZABETH ANN HO**  
RLAH Real Estate

I had a goal when I first started in real estate to save up enough money to take my husband on an all-expenses-paid vacation, and this year, we went on a very romantic vacation to St. Lucia that I paid for!

...



**TOHMAI SMITH**  
Compass

I had some clients that bought a house who, prior to that, lived in southeast D.C., in a high crime area. They surprised their kids with the house, and I have a video of their reaction, the daughter crying happy tears. Following up a few months after they moved in, the father told me his daughter had said how happy she was not to hear gunshots anymore.



**HARRISON BEACHER**  
Keller Williams Capital Properties

In 2022, we pulled off an ownership conference. It was a special day of inspiration and collaboration, and something no local real estate team had ever done before.



**SUSAN LEAVITT**  
Compass

The proudest moment was July 10, 2022, in Spain. I crossed the finish line of the IRONMAN Vitoria-Gasteiz after several years of pandemic postponements. 140.6 miles of swim/bike/run at the hottest time of the summer in Spain!



**JENNIFER LONG**  
Cinch

My proudest moment of the year was celebrating my birthday in Paris this past May, after my first international trip was rescheduled five times over a span of two years due to the pandemic. My lifelong dream to watch the sunset from the top of the Eiffel Tower and see the Mona Lisa in person required immense patience and flexibility after hopes were shattered multiple times due to COVID-19 restrictions, closures, and rescheduling. A perspective I carry, after completing this much-anticipated trip, is to let all things unfold as they should. Had I traveled in 2020 as initially planned, I would not have been in Paris on my actual birthday, which was the icing on the cake for a trip I will forever remember.



**J.P. MONTALVAN**  
Compass

My proudest moment in 2022 was taking on my first clients as a leadership coach, helping entrepreneurs — including agents — grow the leader within themselves and with their teams.



**RICHARD PRIGAL**  
Compass

The proudest moment, not just of 2022, but of my entire 25 years in real estate, was when I helped a dear friend of mine, who is a wheelchair user, purchase a home. I never realized the obstacles that someone in a wheelchair faces when trying to purchase a home. Not only did we need a home that was wheelchair accessible, but one with an elevation that was flat and on the same level as the road. In addition, we had to find a home that was accessible to public transportation. Many of the homes were on busy streets without crosswalks or neighborhoods that didn't have public transportation.



**JORDAN DOBBS**  
Intercoastal Mortgage, LLC

Closing loans for multiple clients that were denied by multiple lenders! We helped the clients buy their dream houses! Also, we closed a loan for one of our agent's clients that she brought to us... The client was about to walk out from the transaction due to high interest rates. We were able to give the client a much lower rate on a different product and get the deal closed for our agent!



**MONIQUE MALABET**  
Keller Williams Capital Properties

Took the broker's class!



**EVA DAVIS**  
Compass

I helped a client buy a house, and she is the first person in her family to ever be a homeowner.

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# 4 Must-Dos

## TO GROW YOUR DATABASE IN 2023!

Having a strong database has always been important, but maybe not as important as it is right now. With the real estate market essentially doing a 180 over the course of seven months, shoring up those strong relationships is a must, but so is adding new people to your database all the time. There are several ways to expand your database right now and, over the course of the next few months, to really hit the spring market running. Hopefully, you find these strategies valuable to your business.

### 1. Adding the Other Side of the Transaction

Look at your real estate business since 2020. How many homes have you sold from either the buyer side or seller side? Once the transaction closed, did you think to put the people on the other side of the transaction into your database? According to NAR, roughly only 16 percent of people use the same REALTOR® twice. If you know that 84 percent of homeowners are going to use a different Realtor the next time they buy or sell, it makes sense to send them home-sale anniversary cards and invite them to all

your client appreciation events. By adding in these additional people, your database could go up by over 100 people overnight.

### 2. Client Appreciation Events — Bring a Friend!

When I speak to my Realtor clients, I always ask them when their next client appreciation events will be. These are very important in order to get back in front of your sphere of influence and top prospects. Go to your top ten 'A' clients and have them personally invite either a co-worker, friend, or neighbor to your client appreciation events. This is a great way to have someone from your sphere who thinks of you as a rock star "sell" you to potential clients to add to your database. If you are doing two to three client events a year and get 10 to 15 extra people to attend every single time, your database will really grow.

### 3. Download LinkedIn Contacts

As a busy working professional, you more than likely have a LinkedIn account. Did you know you can download your LinkedIn contacts into an Excel spreadsheet? I realize many of these people may not be direct relationships, but we do know these people are choosing to be connected to you professionally and they have jobs — and in many cases, good ones. Take these downloaded contacts and put them into your real estate CRM. Add these people to your drip campaigns and, of course, invite them strategically to your in-person client appreciation events.

### 4. Mayor Campaign

If you are in the Brian Buffini program, you may already know about the "Mayor Campaign," but it can be very effective. How many people do

you interact with in a given week who are outside of real estate? Set a goal of adding five people a week to your database. Here it goes:

"If you were buying or selling a home or had a friend or family member who was, do you have an agent you would refer them to?"

[No]: "Well, I'd like to be that person, and from time to time, I come across valuable real estate information that everyone finds helpful. Would you like to receive that? [Sure]"OK, great. Where's the best place to send it?" [Probably my home address] [123 Main Street]

Using these four ways to strategically grow your database in 2023. Good luck!



Wade Vander Molen is the director of sales/marketing for Stewart Title in the Northern Virginia/Washington, D.C., area and has been in the title industry since 2005. Wade helps real estate professionals with all facets of their marketing and teaches a new, sustainable business model to help them grow their businesses. You can visit Wade at [www.DCTitleGuy.com](http://www.DCTitleGuy.com).

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► legal hotline By Kim Stepanuk, Esq.

# ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

**M**ost agents are familiar with the litigation side of contract disputes. An aggrieved party (“Plaintiff”) files a lawsuit against the party from whom he/she is seeking relief (“Defendant”). In Maryland, these actions are initiated in a local district court if the amount in dispute is less than \$15,000 or in a circuit court if the amount is greater than \$30,000. If between \$15,000 and \$30,000, the matter can be filed in either the district court or circuit court — this is called “concurrent jurisdiction.” In Washington, D.C., these actions are filed with the Superior Court. The Superior Court has a small claims division which handles matters where a Plaintiff seeks \$10,000 or less. Aside from litigation, there are other options available to parties in dispute to include mediation and arbitration.

## MEDIATION

Black’s Law Dictionary defines mediation as “a method of nonbinding dispute resolution involving a neutral third party

who tries to help the disputing parties reach a mutually agreeable solution.” More simply put, mediation is akin to a roundtable discussion where a trained mediator will attempt to assist the parties in reaching a discussion. The mediator will help to guide the discussion, ask for each side’s position, and often ask the parties questions which would be asked of them by a judge in court. The mediator will not make a determination as to who is right in the matter and, accordingly, anything stated or shared by the neutral mediator is not binding on the parties.

## ARBITRATION

Black’s Law Dictionary defines arbitration as “a method of dispute resolution involving one or more neutral third parties who are usually agreed to by the disputing parties and whose decision is binding.” Similar to mediation, the parties agree to involve a neutral third party named an arbiter

or arbitrator. Unlike mediation, the arbiter or arbitrator will hear testimony and evidence and make a final determination based on what he/she hears. The parties typically agree, through contract or before engaging in the arbitration process, to be bound by the arbiter or arbitrator’s decision with limited and sometimes non-existent rights to appeal. Arbitration, compared to the court process, has more relaxed rules of evidence so the arbiter or arbitrator can consider information that may not be admissible in a court of law (e.g., hearsay), is often faster and usually less expensive, and records of the proceeds are not available to the public.

## NAR’S PREFERRED DISPUTE RESOLUTION METHOD

The preferred dispute resolution method of the National Association of Realtors® is mediation. More information about their policies can be found at [www.nar.realtor/about-nar/policies/mediation](http://www.nar.realtor/about-nar/policies/mediation). Nothing in the GCAAR or NVAR contracts require the parties to attend mediation, however, in the Maryland REALTORS® contract, Paragraph 60 states as follows: “Buyer and Seller agree that any dispute or claim arising out of or from this Contract or the transaction which is the subject of this Contract shall be mediated through Maryland REALTORS® or its member local boards/associations ... [and] that the obligation of Buyer and Seller to mediate as herein provided shall apply to all disputes or claims arising whether prior to, during, or within one (1) year following the actual contract settlement date or when

settlement should have occurred.” The parties usually must participate in mediation prior to initiating any court action unless the delay in a party would be prejudiced in his or her delay in filing.

If you find yourself in a scenario where the buyer and seller cannot agree on a resolution, always consult with a real estate attorney in your jurisdiction as soon as possible. Each action has a “statute of limitations” or a limited period in which an aggrieved party has the right to initiate a claim, so prompt consultation about the unique facts and circumstances of your situation will be important.



Kim Stepanuk is a licensed real estate attorney with MBH Settlement Group Bethesda. Prior to joining MBH, she worked as a litigator at law firms in Montgomery County and Howard County, MD. If she is not at the closing table, you will likely find her hiking, baking or chasing her 2-year-old daughter around, picking up the toys and socks left in her wake.



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## ALEXA GOULDING

Long & Foster Real Estate

"Real estate here is so different from the Hungarian system, and I was fascinated with that. I noticed open houses, for example. I used to go to all the open houses. I couldn't believe people opened their houses for strangers to walk in and take a look. I was fascinated by that. It's so different from Europe."

Favorite Quote: "Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it."

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## BOBBY MORRELL

Prime Title Group

"I have worked on maybe 15,000 cases, Lawrence maybe 9,000. We have a full-service team that aims to provide quality service at a fair price, and we've been delivering that for a combined total of 46 years. We have a track record of closing our cases on time with few issues, and we aim to

deliver a problem-free closing experience. That's what is important for buyers, sellers, and agents."



## KYLE STERLING NICHOLS

Keller Williams Capital Properties

"I knew that my purpose for being a REALTOR® was far greater than just serving myself; it's also about serving the individuals around me. In D.C.'s competitive housing market, I must develop creative strategies to ensure my clients achieve their goal

of homeownership, even when they feel like the gap is too large for them."





Lawrence Elliott Jr.

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# PRIME TITLE GROUP

## EXPERIENCE MATTERS



Closing on a home is often one of the most significant financial decisions a family or individual will make. There is so much at stake, from personal contentment to financial well-being, and so much can go wrong along the way. Inspections, appraisals, and negotiations all have the potential to derail a transaction.

When a deal gets to the closing table, the final i's are dotted and t's crossed, and some of those very last hurdles involve title work. That's why it's imperative to have an experienced title company on board.

Bobby Morrell and Lawrence Elliott Jr., of Prime Title Group, know that experience matters. Their combined 46 years in the title business inform their movements and their ability to problem solve for their clients. Their number one goal is always a seamless closing.

### The Road to Prime Title

In 1985, Bobby Morrell moved to the United States from Jamaica to work on a master's degree in electrical engineering; he graduated from Howard University and stayed to build a career.

In the '90s, Bobby was doing software programming and network management, and many of his clients were in the title business. Then, in 1997, he decided to leave his engineering career behind for an opportunity in title; he partnered with a high school classmate-turned-client on hard REO contracting (i.e., real property owned by a bank and offered for sale).

"We worked on perhaps 10,000 cases together, closing cases across

Maryland, D.C., Virginia, and West Virginia," Bobby reflects.

Lawrence, a former real estate agent and licensed attorney, got into the title business two years after Bobby, in 1999. The pair were introduced by a mutual acquaintance in the early 2000s, as Bobby notes he was looking for a new partner for REO contracting at the time.

**The Birth of Prime Title Group**  
The synergy between Bobby and Lawrence was evident. Where one man struggled, the other was an expert.

"We soon began working together," Bobby recalls. "And it was perfect; Lawrence was the front-end of the house, and I was happy to handle the back-end. We got together and felt



Bobby Morrell





From left to right: Prime Title Group Co-Founder Lawrence Elliott Jr.; Stacia D. Wright (buyer) with her daughter, Ginneh; and Long & Foster agent Ashley Brooks.

...

like we were a good match in terms of our different skills.”

After over a decade of partnership, Bobby and Lawrence founded Prime Title Group, LLC, in 2017. Today, Bobby still handles most of the back-end work, including management and processes, while Lawrence, an attorney, does the front-end work, meeting clients and completing closings.

Prime Title currently has 20 employees, including Bobby and Lawrence. Their business model is centered around exceeding clients’ expectations, and the experience Bobby and Lawrence possess allows them to deliver on that front.

“I have worked on maybe 15,000 cases, Lawrence maybe 9,000,” Bobby says. “We have a full-service team that aims to provide quality service at a fair price, and we’ve been delivering that for a combined total of 46 years. We have a track record of closing our



#### HIDDEN GEMS

Born in Jamaica, Bobby Morrell loves returning to the Caribbean to visit with his daughter, Elizabeth. One hidden gem he would recommend is Negril, Jamaica.

“Jamaica is the top English-speaking destination in the Caribbean. The reason I like Negril is it offers a less touristy experience. There are seven miles of white sand beach, and from there, you can take tours into the interior. It’s a more relaxed atmosphere. It’s a place where you can hang out and meet the locals.”

cases on time with few issues, and we aim to deliver a problem-free closing experience. That’s what is important for buyers, sellers, and agents.”

**Prime Title Group, LLC, is committed to providing unparalleled real estate closing services to every client and partner. For more information, please visit [primetitlellc.com](http://primetitlellc.com).**



# PRIME TITLE GROUP



“

We have a track record of closing our cases on time with few issues, and we aim to deliver a problem-free closing experience. That’s what is important for buyers, sellers, and agents.

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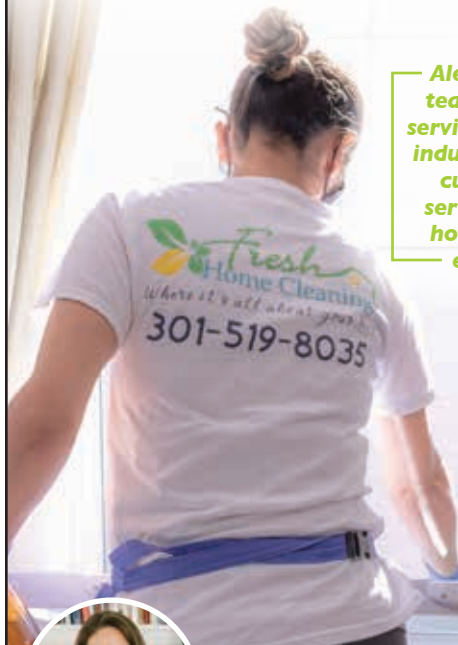


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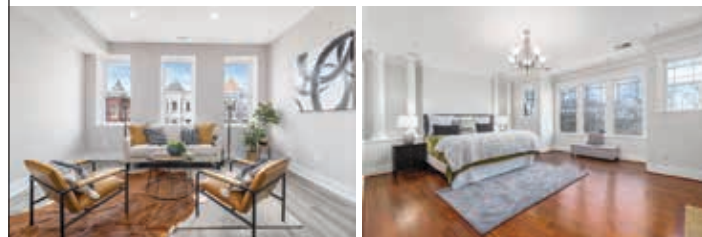


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GOULDING  
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ACROSS AN OCEAN



**I**n 1991, the last Soviet soldiers made their way out of Hungary, which had been occupied by the Soviet Union for the previous 45 years. Journalists from all over the world came to the country to report on this monumental transition. Born and raised in Budapest, Alexa Goulding was finishing her master's degree in English and American studies at the time, while also doing work translating for those journalists.

"One of these film crews came from a local Washington, D.C., station," Alexa recalls. "And the most important person I met is Dave, my husband now, who is a cinematographer."

The ensuing love affair would upend Alexa's life, bringing her across the ocean to begin life anew.

**New Beginnings**

Alexa had been curious about life in the

U.S. before meeting Dave. She attended a year of college in Texas and studied the English language and American culture in school. But moving to the U.S. full-time was never on her radar.

"But we fell in love," Alexa smiles. "We went back and forth for two years, and then one of us had to move. It was easier for me to move, so we made a deal — if everything works out, we'll spend a good chunk of the year in Hungary, where my family is."

When Alexa arrived in D.C., Dave was the only person she knew. It wasn't easy to build a social life. In 1995 and 1997, she gave birth to her children, Gregory and Grace. The next few years were devoted to their care and education.

"My whole goal with the kids was to make extra sure they speak Hungarian, which is a very difficult language. I wanted to make sure they

learned from me, so I stayed home with them."

**A Professional Calling**

By the time Grace enrolled in kindergarten, Alexa was ready to find her place professionally. That's when she turned toward real estate.

"Real estate here is so different from the Hungarian system, and I was fascinated with that," she reflects. "I noticed open houses, for example. I used to go to all the open houses. I couldn't believe people opened their houses for strangers to walk in and take a look. I was fascinated by that. It's so different from Europe."

"I had been doing various jobs — translating documentaries for National Geographic channel in Hungary, teaching English to diplomats — all kinds of things. But I decided I wanted to try real estate because it seemed so fascinating and different."



### The Next Chapter

Alexa's real estate business is churning along at a steady rate of about \$15 million in sales per year and, at the time of this writing in late November 2022, she was tracking to close \$20 million by year end. She doesn't intend to significantly grow her business, instead preferring to enjoy the balance she has worked so hard to achieve.

"Now that the kids are out of college and launched in their lives, it's a whole different chapter for us. I can really focus on doing more business and spending more quality time with friends, family, and my husband. Professionally, people always talk about taking it to the next level. I am very happy where I am. I love the balance of life and work. That's important to me. My agent friends laugh that I just work to travel, and to an extent, that's true.

"As crazy as real estate is, it's also perfect. I've made it work for my life, and I love it."



I'm trustworthy. I'm friendly. I'm a good problem solver. I'm there for my clients.

Alexa Goulding was born in Hungary and immigrated to the U.S. in the 1990s.

Alexa began her career in 2002. Over 20 years later, she's thriving. She works in the same office she started with, Long & Foster Bethesda Gateway.

### Building a Reputation

Alexa is sociable, friendly, and outgoing. She's built her business off relationships and referrals.

"I'm a solo agent, but it's like family here. My office is like family to me," she says. "It's an interesting business I have. It fits me. I'm in this for the long term. My goal is that if you ask anyone if they've worked with Alexa, that they have a smile on their face and say they had a great

transaction. I'm trustworthy. I'm friendly. I'm a good problem solver. I'm there for my clients."

Alexa's business model is unique because she travels to Hungary for nearly two months every summer. When her kids were younger, she'd enroll them in summer camp there. Today, she continues to travel to her home country to spend quality time with her family.



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*"The only thing worse than not getting what you want is someone else getting it."*  
Roger Sterling (Mad Men)

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# KYLE STERLING NICHOLS

## Bridging the Wealth Gap and Transforming Lives

### ▶▶ rising star

By **Cory Templeman**  
Photos by **Ryan Corvello**

As a young boy, Kyle Sterling, an up-and-coming REALTOR® with Keller Williams Capital Properties, developed a close bond with his grandfather. But this wasn't your typical grandfather-grandson bond. Instead of fishing or going to ball games, Kyle Sterling and his grandfather connected by talking about real estate.

Kyle Sterling's grandfather earned his chops as a successful real estate investor on the south side of Chicago (at a time where redlining was at its peak) and taught Kyle Sterling at a very early age the correlation between owning real estate and achieving long-term financial freedom.

Unfortunately, few are endowed with the same homebuying acumen that Kyle Sterling possessed from an early age. Thanks to factors like pricing, income, and knowledge, many homebuyers feel that creating wealth through homeownership is a distant

dream. There are millions of buyers out there that get shut out of the market completely, never getting a fair shake to build generational wealth through owning a home. But Kyle Sterling is living proof that the dream of using real estate to achieve long-term financial freedom is alive, well, and 100-percent attainable. And he's helping folks break down the barriers once and for all.

### **Bridging the Wealth Gap and Transforming Lives**

Originally from Chicago's South Side, Kyle Sterling purchased his first investment property and decided to pursue a career as a Realtor at the age of 24 — a move many of his closest peers couldn't fathom. According to Kyle Sterling, many couldn't grasp the fact that he was able to purchase property with limited income in one of the country's most expensive real estate markets. And it wasn't about envy or jealousy ... it was because they didn't have the knowledge or the access to make it happen themselves.

Unfortunately, this is a problem that continues to rear its ugly head today. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau and studies led by the



Urban Institute, the homeownership gap between whites and minorities is larger today than it was over 50 years ago[1]. Even in cities with larger minority populations and more economic opportunity — including Washington, D.C. — a large homeownership gap of nearly 25 percent still remains[2]. Working to close this gap is exactly why Kyle Sterling says he became a Realtor at an early age.

"I knew that my purpose for being a REALTOR® was far greater than just serving myself; it's also about serving the individuals around me," he says.

...





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# CATCHING UP WITH OUR RISING STARS

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

DC Metro Real Producers caught up with a few of our past Rising Stars to see how they are doing and what's new in their personal and professional lives since we first featured them in the magazine.

We are pleased to reintroduce you to **Eric Steinhoff**, with eXp Realty; **David Shotwell**, **Lauren Donnelly**, and **Luke Rozansky**, with Compass; **Samantha Damato** and **Caroline Aslan**, with Long & Foster Real Estate; and **Russell Brazil**, with RLAH Real Estate.

Like everyone else, these rock stars have been navigating the tumultuous

changes in the past few years — at first, dealing with no open houses, juggling work from home, some managing work with children homeschooling, and still tackling a very busy market, which only got busier as home sales skyrocketed in 2021 and 2022. We had a feeling our Rising Stars rose to the challenges and continued to thrive ... and we were not disappointed!

On the following pages, check out what these Rising Stars have been up to since they were first featured and where they're careers are headed. We can hardly wait to see what they'll do in 2023!



▶▶ special feature

## ERIC STEINHOFF

EXP REALTY  
APRIL 2017 RISING STAR

### What are you doing differently in your business today than when you were featured in the magazine?

We now do both staging and magazine-quality photography in-house, and have a moving truck for our clients to use for free. Our business has doubled since we were named Rising Stars. In 2019, we received the Chairman's Award from eXp for being a Top Domestic Team among all domestic teams in the company. We have now expanded to sell real estate in both Pennsylvania and at the Delaware beaches. Also, our referral business has really expanded as eXp Realty has grown to 90,000 agents worldwide. Additionally, we coach, mentor, and train new agents in Maryland.

### What is happening now in your personal/family life?

Our oldest daughter, Kayla, is now married, and we have a 16-month-old granddaughter and another grandchild on the way! We helped our middle daughter, Erica, find a home conveniently located to the hospital where she works. After college graduation, our youngest daughter, Brooke, joined our team and is helping us as a buyer's agent, admin, and all-around rock star!

Earlier this year, we moved to a new home in the Woodlands of Urbana, and have become active in the neighborhood. Amy started a Woodlands' coffee group and movie club, and "Spike" (that's me) is ready to perfect his pickleball game.

### What are your personal and professional goals for 2023?

Our goals are to continue to help other agents grow their businesses through coaching and mentoring. We plan to continue client contact through events like our Annual Thanksgiving Pie Giveaway and floral-arrangement craft nights.

This year, we were happy to purchase a new home for a family in need of housing in Mexico through the New Story program, and plan to do that again. Community service is a priority for us, and we will continue to be involved with Frederick Health Hospital Good Samaritans, the Community Foundation, and Soles of Love (shoes and boot collection for needy local children).

### With your experience, what is the best advice you have for other up-and-coming top producers?

My best advice for other up-and-coming top producers is to be great on at least one form of social media. Be very active with your clients and your sphere of influence on that social media platform. You will build a better relationship with your clients by interacting with them on social media rather than by sending them a canned email. Also, be perfect with your CRM from day one. It will really pay off as you grow your business if you stay on top of putting all your clients and friends into your CRM.





▶ special feature

# DAVID SHOTWELL

COMPASS  
JULY 2017 RISING STAR

### What are you doing differently in your business today than when you were featured in the magazine?

By and large, I'm doing things the same way. I'm still a solo agent and love it. My volume has definitely increased, but I still provide one-on-one support and solutions to all of my clients. I'm also still with Compass, who provides me with great technology and services that enable me to manage and run my business very efficiently and effectively.

### What is happening now in your personal/family life?

Like many of our friends/family/clients during the pandemic, we looked at our house (in our



case, our house in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware) and decided it didn't work for us anymore. So we did a massive

renovation/rebuild over the off-season in late 2021 to early 2022. We completed the work in late April 2022, just in time to enjoy it before renting it out for the prime summer weeks. Also, like many others, we got a dog during the pandemic! Oh, and still happily married.

### What are your personal and professional goals for 2023?

For 2023, personally, I want to continue to travel as much as I can. I've already scheduled trips to Puerto Vallarta, Germany, Scandinavia, and Provincetown, and hope to squeeze in one or two more. Professionally, I plan to continue to focus on doing what's best for my clients — coaching them on the best ways to position their homes to sell in this market (if they should sell at all) and helping my buyer clients find the best home for their unique needs and circumstances.

### With your experience, what is the best advice you have for other up-and-coming top producers?

Be your authentic self. Nothing will resonate better with people (clients, customers, other agents, sales managers, brokers, etc.) than being true to yourself and others in all your interactions.

▶ special feature



### What are your personal and professional goals for 2023?

Given our most recent addition, I'd like to spend a lot of time with the baby and use my limited work time to generate business and referrals, which my work partner will handle. It is a new business model for me, and one which I'm not sure many agents have followed, so I'm very curious to see how it goes!

### With your experience, what is the best advice you have for other up-and-coming top producers?

My suggestion would be to enjoy yourself and remember to set aside a substantial percent of your earnings for taxes and a rainy day. You never know what could happen, and when it does, being stressed about paying bills is not good. This business can be cyclical, so give yourself the ability to ride the waves.

# LAUREN DONNELLY

COMPASS  
MAY 2018 RISING STAR

### What are you doing differently in your business today than when you were featured in the magazine?

I continue to operate in much the same way as when I started, operating as a solo agent and focusing on creating high-quality experiences for my clients. I am now nearly 100-percent sphere and referral based, which makes working with every single client a pure joy. I moved my business to Compass, and since I was a Rising Star, I have spent enormous amounts of time on my database making sure it's accurate.

### What is happening now in your personal/family life?

I have four children, including our newest addition, who was born in August 2022.





**With your experience, what is the best advice you have for other up-and-coming top producers?**

Especially in this changing market, be willing to do any deal that comes your way, because you never know where it could lead. A small rental transaction may turn into a buyer in a year or two. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there and let your friends know you are in the business. Even something as simple as a few Instagram stories promoting your sales/open houses lets your network know you're busy and doing well!

# LUKE ROZANSKY

COMPASS  
MAY 2017 RISING STAR

**What are you doing differently in your business today than when you were featured in the magazine?**

I am fortunate that every additional year I am in the business, my client referral network grows, so I am no longer reliant on paying for leads. I stay connected with my past clients, who then refer me to their friends and family, which is the greatest compliment.

**What is happening now in your personal/family life?**

I am getting ready to move to Kalorama, so I'm excited to do some light renovations and decorate my new condo.

**What are your personal and professional goals for 2023?**

I want to continue assisting more and more clients find their dream homes. Even though we are heading to a tougher market, I want to break my personal volume record. Personally, I look forward to hopefully taking a few fun trips with friends and family!



special feature

# SAMANTHA DAMATO

LONG & FOSTER REAL ESTATE  
NOVEMBER 2018 RISING STAR

**What are you doing differently in your business today than when you were featured in the magazine?**

Since being featured, I expanded and grew my business to be a top producer at Woodley Park and a mentor to multiple agents. In 2020, I became a director for GCAAR, and have been serving as treasurer for GCAAR from 2021 to 2022. Currently, I am up for election as secretary of GCAAR. In 2021, I began to scale back my real estate business and accepted a full-time position as a settlement attorney at RGS Title. Being associated with both RGS and Long & Foster has

been wonderful, and I truly enjoy the multiple layers of professional interaction with agents.

**What is happening now in your personal/family life?**

Our family relocated from D.C. to Montgomery County in the fall of 2020. Shortly after the move, we welcomed our second child, Matthew, to the family. [At the time of this

writing in late November 2022] we are currently expecting baby number 3 in the middle of December [2022]. Making the switch from full-time Realtor to full-time title attorney has been key for growing our family. I partner with other agents for my real estate business goals, and it's been a godsend. I now can plan weeknights and weekends with my family and am still fully immersed in the real estate industry. It's been the best of both worlds for me!

**What are your personal and professional goals for 2023?**

I want to keep building the amazing network I have amongst Realtors in the DMV. In addition, after coming back from maternity leave, I'd like to further develop the mentorship and educational programs I've been working on for agents. Education and the sharing of that knowledge is vital in this business — and I want to keep pursuing those goals. In addition, I'd like to continue to maintain a healthy work-life balance. I don't live to work, and I don't necessarily just work to live. It's a very happy medium. I find true joy in what I do.



**With your experience, what is the best advice you have for other up-and-coming top producers?**

Find your own path. Don't force yourself to follow someone else's footsteps. Another's approach may not be the right one for you. Listen and learn from those around you. Your best resource is your peer group and whatever team you end up building around you. Don't go it alone! Always be ready to learn. Always be ready to experience something that hasn't quite happened before. Stay humble. Identify and be ready to fix mistakes. Learn from them. This can be a crazy, unpredictable business ... your strongest assets are your integrity and resilience.



**What are you doing differently in your business today than when you were featured in the magazine?**

When I was featured in the magazine, I was a solo agent. Today, I am heading up a team. Additionally, today, I sit on the executive committee of GCAAR and on the NAR Board of Directors.

**What are your personal and professional goals for 2023?**

To keep growing my business and to keep bringing on team members who I can help grow their businesses alongside mine.

**With your experience, what is the best advice you have for other up-and-coming top producers?**

Create a consistent, replicable lead-generation model. As the market cools, agents who work their sphere primarily will see a dropoff in their business. Those who consistently generate new, high-quality leads are the ones who will see their businesses thrive.

# RUSSELL BRAZIL

RLAH REAL ESTATE  
APRIL 2020 RISING STAR



Estridge Group is very special. We all want our kids to be successful, and I now find myself in a position to directly help influence that!

**What are your personal and professional goals for 2023?**

I know 2023 will be extraordinary. I feel it's really going to sort out the Real Producers from those who don't have the need or the appetite to succeed. We ride the increasing interest rates, and more selective buyers, and the increasing shift from the seller's market. Negotiation skills, understanding differing strategies, and flexing relationships are going to be key to success. My intentions for 2023 are to be my best self, continue to strive for excellence within my personal and business relationships, and perform above and beyond expectation. I also intend to allocate more time for travel!

**With your experience, what is the best advice you have for other up-and-coming top producers?**

Be disciplined, be focused, trust the process, understand your industry, and respect your colleagues. This is a relationship industry!

# CAROLINE ASLAN

LONG & FOSTER REAL ESTATE  
SEPTEMBER 2020 RISING STAR

**What are you doing differently in your business today than when you were featured in the magazine?**

My strategy, from when I started out in year one to now, hasn't changed. Continued to focus on relationship building and driving for excellence in performance resulted in a stellar fifth year, in excess of \$22 million. I have every confidence that my sixth year will finish in a strong way and my pipeline, year seven, feels like it's off to a good start.

**What is happening now in your personal/family life?**

I became a grandmother this year! Everyone told me that it would be an amazing experience... They did not oversell it! Totally in love with my grandson. Also enjoying watching all of my kids establish themselves with their families. I was thrilled to welcome my youngest daughter into the industry. She is going to be extraordinary in the business, and having her join The



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Photos by Ryan Corvello

# DC METRO REAL PRODUCERS' NOVEMBER 2, 2022 NOVEMBER MAGAZINE PARTY

*Real Producers' Magazine Celebration Parties* never have a dull moment! It was an absolute honor to enjoy networking with our featured agents and top-notch partners. A very BIG thank-you to our wonderful sponsor, **Vellum Mortgage**, who hosted this gorgeous event. The luxury listing location was provided by **Jeff Wilson**, with Sotheby's International, at 5216 Abingdon Road in Bethesda, Maryland. We had a wonderful time connecting with the best-of-the-best over first-class cuisine and cheers!

We can never express enough gratitude for our preferred partners... We simply could not do what we do without your tremendous support. Thank you, again, for being part of our special *DC Metro Real Producers* community. We appreciate you all and can't wait to see everyone again at our next event!

For more information on all DC Metro Real Producers events, please email us at [info@dcmetrorealproducers.com](mailto:info@dcmetrorealproducers.com).

Thank you to **Ryan Corvello** and **HD Bros**, our event photography crew, who captured plenty of key moments on film and video, which you can also find on our Facebook group: NOVA Real Producers Top 500. If you were one of the lucky attendees and have not already done so, **be sure you join the private FB group and tag yourself and friends in the pictures!**





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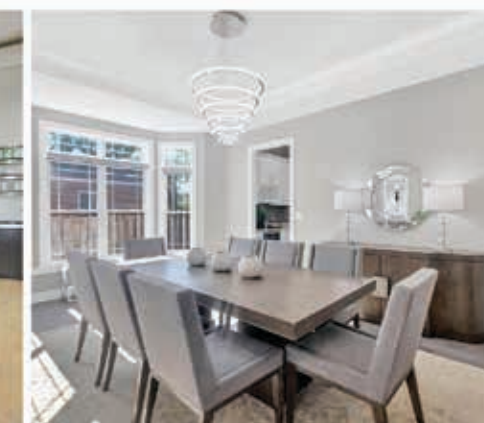
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# Observing Oosouji: Out with the Old

It's a new year, a transitional time to embrace the sentiment of "out with the old, in with the new." There's something about turning over the calendar page (hello, 2023!) that feels fresh and invigorating, like anything is possible.

In Japanese culture, the concept of *oosouji*, which literally translates as "ooo" (big) and "souji" (cleaning), presents a similar notion, with an emphasis on clearing out the old. In fact, it is considered inauspicious to welcome a new year with any "old business" (including dirt and clutter!) outstanding. How can we adopt this ritual of release as we march forward into a brand-new year?

Start with the right mindset. We often view cleaning as a dreaded task to be procrastinated as long as possible. Try to reframe this problematic mentality as one of forward-looking productivity. Much like a ritual, clearing out the physical dust of the old year means also clearing out the emotional and mental dust, wiping the slate clean for what is to come.

With that liberating viewpoint in mind, it's time to get your hands dirty:

- *Oosouji* is, traditionally, a top-to-bottom cleaning, so start at the top by dusting ceilings and fans, wiping down walls and dusting furniture and then vacuuming, sweeping or mopping floors.
- Designate several boxes in each room for items that are no longer meaningful, beautiful or loved, and when you've finished with your task, pass them along however is appropriate. Eliminating what you no longer use creates space for new ideas and frees you from unnecessary burdens. Also, include a bag or box for waste, removing it (symbolically taking out the mental "trash") from the house as soon as you finish that room. You will be surprised at how much lighter you feel!
- Last, remove stains from your home, whether on the furniture, carpet or grout. Old stains remind us of the past and have no place in a newly purged space.

If possible, every family member should be involved in your cleansing practice, making careful decisions about their individual possessions and benefitting from this fresh start. Happy New Year!



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Brandon graduated with a B.S. in Finance from Virginia Tech and strives to uphold his alma mater's motto "Ut Prosim" ("That I may Serve") by always being available for his clients to ensure they are comfortable and educated throughout the process. Brandon lives in Arlington, VA with his wife and three daughters.

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RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL
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# TOP 250 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Nov. 30, 2022

RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL
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RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL
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**Disclaimer:** Information based on MLS closed data as of December 5, 2022, for residential sales from January 1, 2022, to November 30, 2022, in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., by agents licensed in our D.C. metro service area of Washington, D.C., and Frederick, Montgomery and Prince Georges counties in Maryland. Numbers not reported to the MLS by the date the information is retrieved are not included. MLS is not responsible for submitting this data. Some teams may report each agent individually.

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RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL
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**Disclaimer:** Information based on MLS closed data as of December 5, 2022, for residential sales from January 1, 2022, to November 30, 2022, in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., by agents licensed in our D.C. metro service area of Washington, D.C., and Frederick, Montgomery and Prince Georges counties in Maryland. Numbers not reported to the MLS by the date the information is retrieved are not included. MLS is not responsible for submitting this data. Some teams may report each agent individually.

# TOP 250 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Nov. 30, 2022

RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL
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- 3.

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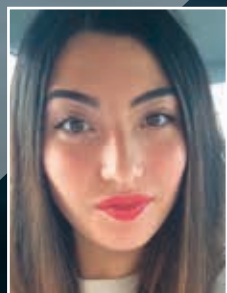
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- Current home must be listed for sale or under contract at the time of loan generation
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