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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	06 Index of Preferred Partners		10 Publisher's Note: Wishing You a Happy New Year!		12 The RP Experience Podcast Recap: Episodes 48-51
	18 Leader of the Month: Marcus Larrea		24 Partner Spotlight: Sheryl Moreno, LaCasaTour		30 Cover Story: Denny Grimes & Team

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►► publisher's note

2023

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Dear Fort Myers Real Producers and valued partners,

Happy New Year! I hope your holidays have been happy and healthy, full of family, friends, laughter and good times.

2023 is a new year, with new ideas, new goals and a fresh slate of opportunities... As we launch into the new year, many of us are busy making resolutions and setting goals, both personally and professionally. As business owners and REALTORS®, we are accustomed to setting short-term, quarterly, and yearly goals for ourselves, our teams, and our businesses. What I have personally found so vital is having good habits and routines in order to successfully hit my goals. With the market showing signs of significant changes yet again ... a positive mindset, along with maintaining good health and establishing good habits that stick, will set us up for success in navigating whatever 2023 may throw at us.

In our November issue, our health and wellness expert Carlene Murray, with Board30 Naples, shared the concept of “habit stacking” — essentially, adding a new habit onto your existing habits to boost the chances you’ll successfully adopt it into your regular routine. An example might be adding listening to a podcast, like *The RP Experience*, that you’ve been meaning to get to, to your existing drive to work or daily walk. Professionally, new habits might

include incorporating weekly, quarterly or annual goal reviews into existing planning time or team meetings.

Here at Real Producers, some of our plans for 2023 are to continue to connect this amazing community so that we can draw strength and inspiration from each other, continue to share solid information and best practices, and get together to blow off steam with some of the most inspiring people we know! As always, we welcome your feedback as we look to improve our platform, offer fresh and valuable content in our monthly publication, and find ways to make our quarterly events even more enjoyable and impactful for you.



Wishing you all a very happy New Year and continued success in 2023. We look forward to seeing you at our big **Fort Myers Real Producers launch party on January 19th** or at one of our other events in the new year!

Very respectfully yours,

Andrew Regenhart

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To learn more or to inquire about being a guest on *The RP Experience*, email andrew.regenhard@n2co.com.

RECAP OF EPISODES 48-51

EPISODE 48 JESS MORRIS

Top producer Jess Morris, with Marzucco Real Estate, grew up in Florida and has a wealth of knowledge about real estate. Jess shares that when she was growing up, her dad owned a mining company and would buy large, 500-plus acre properties and how she became interested in real estate in the process. At age 10, she had her mind set on purchasing her first property. Her dad told her however much money she raised, he would match it, and she eventually found and purchased her first property at 12 years old.

In this episode, Jess explains that she predominantly sells real estate

in Golden Gate Estates, a spacious and private area. Land goes from 1.4 acres to some as big as 50 acres. She says many people prefer to live in this area so they don't have to deal with an HOA. People build whatever they prefer here and can own livestock. Jess gives the listeners the perspective of the price range in Golden Gate Estates and points out what people should be cautious of when deciding to buy. In her free time, Jess loves the outdoors and enjoys spending time with her husband and two children.



Andrew Regenhard (left) and Jess Morris.

EPISODE 49 TAYLOR CANADA

Born and raised in Naples, top producer Taylor Canada's real estate journey began when he was just a child. Taylor has been involved in his family's home building and real estate companies since the 1970s, with his family highly involved in the area's development. Taylor explains he didn't enjoy the 9-5 office job, had started a wood staining business, and found himself getting more interested in the idea of entering real estate. He obtained his license in 2013 and started putting it to use in late 2014/early 2015, with a first sale in 2015.

Taylor describes how anyone can farm a certain area and grow their business.

He explains how important it is to be an expert on a given area by asking questions, studying the comps, and getting open houses in the area, as well as being honest and truthful when people ask questions. Taylor says he wakes up every day with the mindset of thinking he is unemployed, explaining that this business mindset helps him to not become complacent and stay motivated to continue working his hardest to generate business. Taylor is married with two children (and had one on the way as of this writing, in late November 2022), and enjoys golfing, boating, and dining out.



Taylor Canada (left) and Andrew Regenhard



EPISODE 50

MARK RILEY

Top producer Mark Riley, CEO of Lux International Properties, received his Ohio broker's license in 1979 and moved to Naples in 2013, opening his own firm in 2014. He is currently focused on luxury properties in Naples and Sarasota, and also runs Lux Home Design International, an interior design business.

In this episode, Mark shares that his mother was a real estate icon in Ohio and he would go to listing appointments with her when he

was young. He learned a lot about the business by attending meetings, and at the age of 14, his mother helped him buy his first property. Mark explains that he originally wanted to be a pediatrician and that he "fell in love" with the pediatric ward, volunteering at a children's hospital throughout high school. Mark talks about always having had an entrepreneurial spirit and how he started and sold a landscaping business at a young age.



Mark Riley (left) and Andrew Regenhard



EPISODE 51

DONNA RAYNOR

Originally from Greenwich, Connecticut, Naples preferred partner Donna Raynor is Home-Tech's service warranty specialist and home warranty representative for all of Collier and Lee County. She works with new clients and helps REALTORS® from Fort Myers to Marco Island. Donna had been visiting Naples since the 1980s, when her in-laws moved down from Long Island, New York. She made the move to Estero in 2003 with her husband and two sons and worked as a school teacher in Lee County.

In this episode, Donna talks about her experience in sales and the pride she feels working for a company like Home-Tech.

She explains how she works with Realtors and customers and describes the service agreements she sells, which include all major appliances. Donna discusses the major issues with certain appliances here in Florida, including ice machines and air conditioners. She says she thoroughly enjoys educating her customers about HVACs and their maintenance. Donna shares what makes Home-Tech so special and why she ended up purchasing their services when she initially interviewed for her position.



Donna Raynor (left) and Andrew Regenhard

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MARCUS

The Second Act

By Zachary Cohen

LARREA

Growing up in Fort Myers, Marcus Larrea was surrounded by the family business. Both his parents were pharmacists; his father owned a community pharmacy, and his mom was the pharmacy manager at a local hospital.

“I grew up in the pharmacy, working with my dad in the summer-time. I would always try to find things to help out with,” Marcus recalls. “I didn’t know at the time, but I was learning a lot from my dad about how to run a business, how to treat employees,



Photo by LaCasaTour

...



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members.”

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and how to develop culture. I learned more from my dad than anyone. He's my mentor and my best friend.”

Marcus always had an entrepreneurial spirit, just like his dad. He started his first business — an eBay store-front selling toys — in eighth grade. While studying business management at Florida Gulf Coast University, Marcus completed a business plan for an idea that would eventually become a thriving company.

“While I was at Florida Gulf Coast, my dad had just sold a division of his pharmacy to a national company. They were making this product called gold fiducial markers — little gold markers that are implanted into patients with cancer that undergo radiation. They were selling it as a prescription, which made it a hold-up,” Marcus explains. “We took that product, wrote a business plan, and turned it into reality by getting FDA approval to turn this product into a medical device that we started selling to hospitals and surgery centers.”

In 2009, Marcus founded Stellar Medical, a company he still owns today.

For the Love of People

By 2016, Stellar Medical was still successful, and Marcus was dating his now fiancée, Sarah. Sarah began studying to become a REALTOR®, and Marcus decided to follow suit.

“I thought I'd dabble in it,” Marcus reflects, “but what I thought would be a hobby right off the bat turned into much more.”

Marcus found that not only was he successful at real estate, but he loved it. Real estate provided him with the connection he lacked while working full-time at Stellar Medical.

“At Stellar Medical, we do a lot of good for people, but I didn't get to see the customer satisfaction or the patients getting better. We are in a lab and an office. I'm a super social person and always have been, so real estate fills a big need for me. I love to be around people,” Marcus reflects.

Marcus capitalized on his entrepreneurial background, drive, and love for connection. His real estate business took off from the get-go.

“Being around people did it for me. It was fun for me then, and it's fun for me today. It lit a fire in me that was missing at Stellar Medical.”

“
**BEING AROUND PEOPLE
DID IT FOR ME.**
It was fun for me then, and it's
fun for me today.”



...

...

Palm Paradise Real Estate

Just two years after launching his real estate career, Marcus took his team independent, founding Palm Paradise Real Estate along with business partner Aaron Parvey. His fiancée, Sarah, joined him, and is now the brokerage’s top-producing agent.

Palm Paradise is a team-based brokerage with three offices and 56 agents. Marcus has largely stepped back from production, focusing instead on business operations, expanding the team, coaching, and education.

The brokerage’s early results are impressive. They closed \$68 million in 2020, \$164 million in 2021, and, at the time of this writing in late summer 2022, were tracking to close well over \$200 million by year end. In 2021, Real Trends recognized Palm Paradise as the number one megateam in Fort Myers for both volume and transactions, the number 11 team in Florida for transactions, and the number 18 team in Florida for volume. Zillow recognized the team as the first in the country to reach a 100 percent customer satisfaction score.

“Our approach is simple,” Marcus says, “We provide full support to all team members — transaction coordinators, an in-house marketing team, a director of operations, and a sales manager. We provide tons of coaching with some of the nation’s best, and we have a strong spirit of volunteerism and culture.”

Growth on All Fronts

Alongside his thriving real estate business, Marcus continues to run Stellar Medical. His life beyond work is full too; he and Sarah have a 1-year-old daughter, Sophie.

“Every night, I make sure I have two to three hours with them. When I get home, it’s family time. We enjoy our evenings together and get back at it



Marcus Larrea and his fiancée, Sarah, with their daughter, Sophie.

work-wise after Sophie goes down,” Marcus smiles.

Marcus is thriving, both personally and professionally. Yet, if there’s anything his entrepreneurial background has taught him, it’s to not let off the gas. As he looks ahead, he’s keenly focused on taking an already successful Palm Paradise Real Estate team to the next level.

FUN FACT

Marcus graduated from the University of Florida with an MBA in 2018. At one point, he was running Stellar Medical, studying for his MBA, and launching Palm Paradise Real Estate at the same time.



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By Zachary Cohen
Photos by LaCasaTour

Climbing the Mountain

SHERYL

Moreno

LaCasaTour

“There is always a bright reason to smile, to work, to laugh — even in the hardest times.”

Sheryl Moreno’s life began in Nicaragua, where she was born and raised. At 10 years old, she took an arduous journey to the U.S., crossing the border illegally with her mother. It was a dangerous trip many attempt; Sheryl was lucky enough to make it.

“My brother, Derick, and my dad got visas to enter the country, but they denied it to my mom and me,” Sheryl explains. “I went through crossing the river, hiding from the helicopter. I still remember the sound, running from tree to tree in the desert. I remember that moment very vividly.”

Sheryl eventually landed in Miami, where her family regrouped and began to rebuild their lives. In the years since, Sheryl has used her personal journey to fuel the fire of gratitude and success. She’s found the motivation to be a better person every single day.

“I love this country because it has given me the opportunity to work. I never wanted anything for



I love what I do — the art, the design, and architecture of a home — the décor that brings individuality to each home that my team and I have the privilege to photograph.





The LaCasaTour team

free. I come from a third-world country where people want to work and be somebody, but we can't do that," Sheryl reflects. "The fact that I came from nothing, I have used that fuel as motivation to be better. The opportunities here are limitless."

A New Lifestyle

Sheryl spent the rest of her childhood in Miami before moving to Orlando as an adult. At 18, she opened her first business, a flooring company. Still a teenager, she employed 35 contractors, learning how to install flooring and how to be a business owner. It was a time of tremendous growth in her life.

Then, the recession of 2008 hit. Sheryl, like many others, was humbled. Her company folded, and she had to go back to the drawing board.

In the following years, Sheryl began exploring her artistic side through makeup artistry and photography. She met her husband, Edward, and the couple moved to Houston, where she built a thriving photography business.

And then, tragedy struck. On the plane back from their wedding, Sheryl's husband had a stroke. The airplane turned around and landed at the nearest airport, hoping to save him. Unfortunately, he passed away, leaving Sheryl as a single mom to their young son, Jadoni.

Sheryl was once again forced to pick up the pieces of her life. She had been through challenges before, but this one, in particular, shook her. She moved back to Florida to be closer to her family.

“Where I stand today, I'm extremely grateful for what God has allowed me. I'm so appreciative and humbled that I'm able to be here. I'm just grateful for life.”



The Moreno family

"I came to Cape Coral and started again. I'm so used to climbing the mountain," she says.

LaCasaTour is Born

In Florida, Sheryl's brother, Derick, built a website and laid the groundwork for a new photography business. Sheryl's likeability, photography skills, and perseverance helped the business gain further traction.

"I did not ask him. He did it out of the kindness of his heart, and I joined almost nine months later. It was his idea," Sheryl reflects.

Today, LaCasaTour is one of Southwest Florida's most reputable real estate photography brands. Sheryl now has a team of 10, allowing the company to shoot 15 to 25 homes daily.

"I love what I do — the art, the design, and architecture of a home — the décor that brings individuality to each home that my team and I have the privilege to photograph. Art is a talent we are born with, and it continues growing daily with hands-on experiences. We could not be where we are today without the help of my amazing team," Sheryl says.

Sheryl takes a friendly but professional approach to the business. While on-site, she'll often create a few TikToks of the home to help her agent partners with marketing.

Living in Gratitude

Sheryl is in a more positive place in her personal life, too. Her two sons, Jadoni and Jace, are now 12 and 6, and she's

remarried to her husband, Rey. Most of her family is still in Nicaragua, so she's often sending financial assistance back home. Her family is her primary driver; they are the reason she does everything she does.

"I'm so grateful my brother Derick and I get to share the fruits of our labor with our loved ones, the reason we do everything for," Sheryl says. "Where I stand today, I'm extremely grateful for what God has allowed me. I'm so appreciative and humbled that I'm able to be here. I'm just grateful for life. I think we take life for granted. The majority of us forget how blessed we are, especially here in the United States. There is always a bright reason to smile, to work, to laugh — even in the hardest times. I'm happy that I'm alive each day, as simple as that sounds."



LaCasaTour is one of Southwest Florida's leading real estate photography companies. For more information, visit www.LaCasaTour.com.



Sheryl Moreno

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Team leader Denny Grimes (left) with his daughter, Morgan Grimes (center) and Tony Erpenbeck (right)



» cover story

By Zachary Cohen | Photos by Michelle Reed Photography

DENNY GRIMES & TEAM

40 YEARS OF SUCCESS

DENNY GRIMES & TEAM HAS BEEN ONE OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S MOST PRODUCTIVE AND REPUTABLE REAL ESTATE BRANDS FOR DECADES. DENNY BEGAN HIS REAL ESTATE CAREER IN 1983 AND STARTED HIS REAL ESTATE TEAM IN THE EARLY '90S, WELL BEFORE A TEAM MODEL WAS THE INDUSTRY NORM.

“
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...

In recent years, Denny has stepped back from production, assuming more of a leadership role while a new generation of agents take control of production. Two of those agents are his daughter, Morgan Grimes, and second-generation REALTOR® Tony Erpenbeck, who have become the team's listing specialists.

We sat down with Denny, Morgan, and Tony to hear more about what makes Denny Grimes & Team's success so enduring.

Beginnings: Denny Grimes

“Back when I started, there were no teams, and I was one of the first to start with that model here in Southwest

Florida,” Denny reflects. “At that time, Southwest Florida was smaller than small. We never got the bleeding edge of ideas. They were happening in bigger markets, and I'd go to conferences where people were talking about growing a team. People were even talking about getting a buyer's agent. That was cutting edge, and I was excited about the idea.”

Denny built his real estate business on follow-up, customer service, and high integrity. When he started his team in the early '90s, he stressed the same values.

“Words like integrity get thrown around, but I'm always asking the

question, ‘What can we add to our systems to provide a higher level of service?’ For example, we bought a moving truck, offer a free black car service, and we have a series of events to give back to clients and families, among other things.”

Denny has always valued production and growth. As a leader, his primary goal is to help his agents achieve their potential. He's a passionate trainer and educator.

“Our secret sauce is our system for everyone to reach their highest potential,” Tony explains. “Whether that's to sell 10 or 300 homes a year, the team will show you how to do it and hold you accountable.”



Meet Tony Erpenbeck

Tony began his real estate career in 2011, following in the footsteps of his mother, one of Stock Development's top agents.

“She's a rock star,” Tony beams. “I always knew I'd go into real estate.”

Tony graduated from the University of Florida in 2009, at the bottom of the real estate market crash. Two years later, his mom began encouraging him to join her in real estate, as she saw the market turning. That's when she introduced him to Denny.

Tony began as a buyer's agent and became a listing partner a few years later. He closed 75 transactions for \$33 million in 2021.

Over the years, Tony's passion for the business has remained strong. His purpose has become more defined, as he and his wife, Paige, now have two young daughters, Lorelai (6) and Charlotte (3).

“When I got into the business, it started out about making money... That drove me in the beginning. But for me now, it's all about my family and my kids and providing for them,” Tony says.



Meet Morgan Grimes

Morgan was raised around the real estate business, watching her father, Denny, thrive in real estate. For most of her upbringing, she had no intention of getting into real estate, but that changed when she reached adulthood.

Morgan began her real estate career in 2012. After struggling to build her business in a down market, she turned toward the restaurant business to find her footing financially. In 2015, she returned to real estate full-time.

Over the past eight years, Morgan has solidified her role as one of the area's top agents.

“Things have been amazing since,” she smiles. “After finding some success, it was a relief to know I made the right decision. I'm glad I joined my dad in the business.”

Today, Morgan is one of Denny Grimes & Team's listing specialists. In 2021, she closed an impressive 109 homes for \$36 million.

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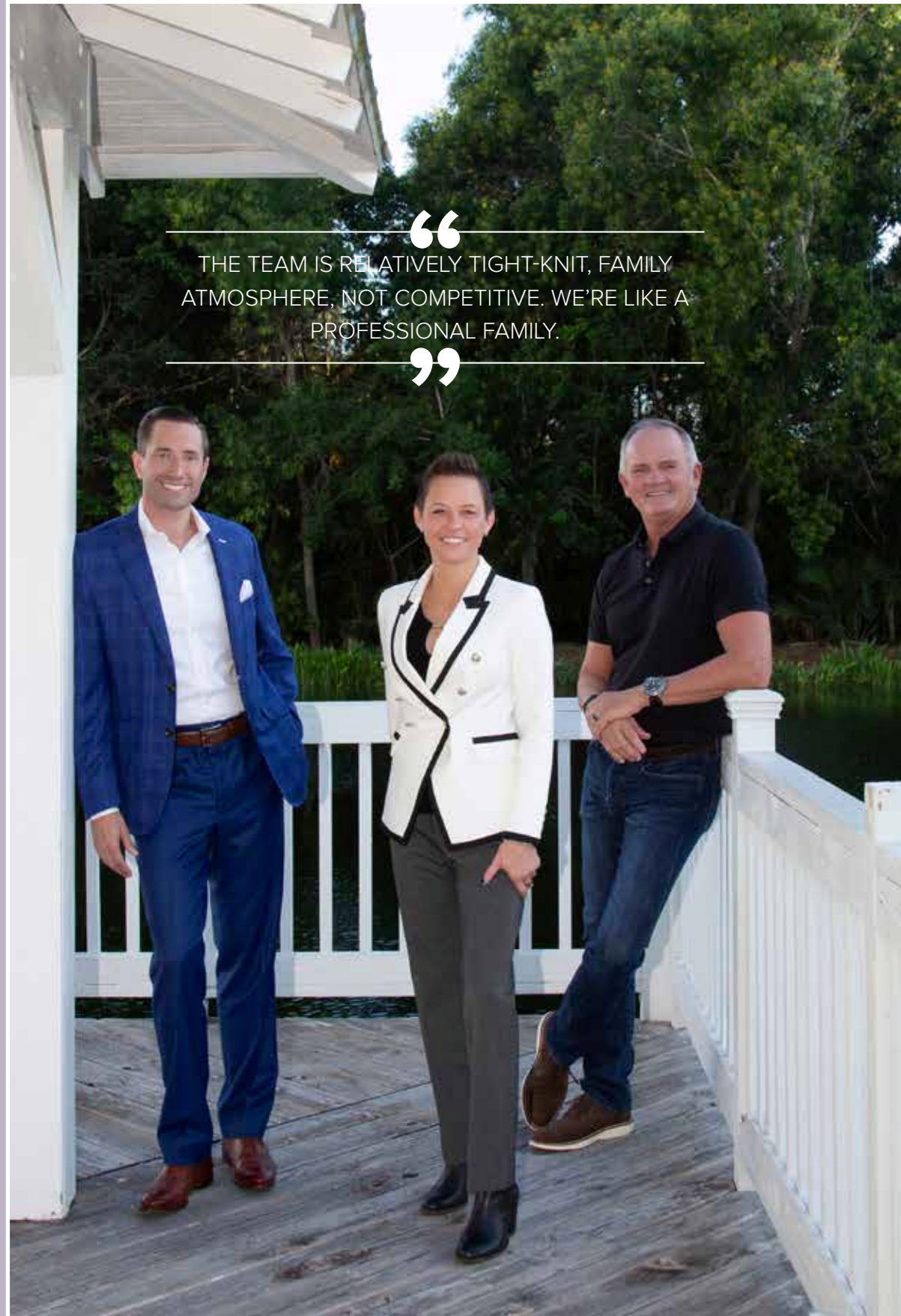
40 Years and Counting

Denny Grimes & Team have been leading the way for Southwest Florida real estate teams since the early 1990s, and they don't intend to slow down. In 2021, the group of 11 agents closed just shy of 400 homes for \$130 million.

"The team is relatively tight-knit, family atmosphere, not competitive. We're like a professional family," Denny says. "And now, a new generation of leaders are here with Morgan and Tony."

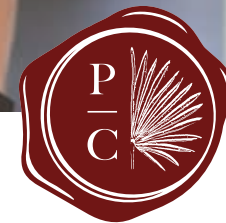
As Denny, Tony, and Morgan look ahead, they plan to continue to serve their clients and communities.

"I've seen real estate evolve from no assistants and no teams to a lot of teams in the marketplace. I've seen a lot in the last 40 years," Denny says. "And now, I get my satisfaction by watching other people — other agents on my team — win the awards and get the recognition."



Newer agents like Tony Erpenbeck (left) and Morgan Grimes (center) have begun to take over production, allowing Denny Grimes (right) to move more into a leadership role.

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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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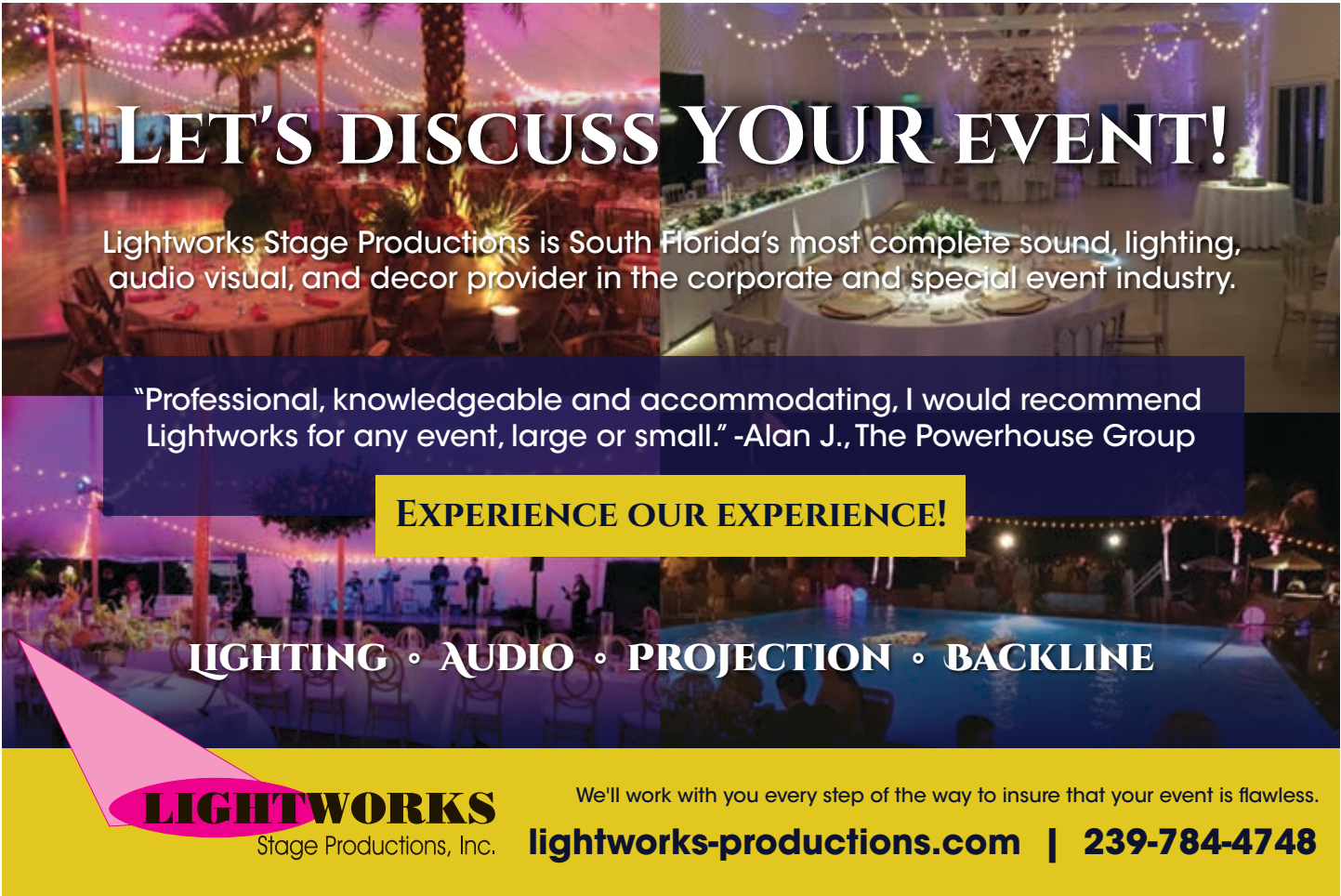
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