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► publisher's note By Kelly Kilmer

NATIONAL INFLUENCE.

Happy summer, fellow Real Producers! I trust you are enjoying some summer activities as the weather is heating up. I also trust that your business is heating up as we soar through 2023.

At the time of this writing, I am in Dallas, TX, where I had an awesome opportunity to visit the print facility where the publication you are holding as well as hundreds of others are printed. At the facility, publications from all over the country are quickly printed and assembled, ready for mailing. It's a marvel to see how our designs go from digital to print to homes and offices so quickly. We use state-of-the-art technology to make sure every copy comes out high quality and looks fantastic.

As I'm visiting with the other area directors from around the country, I realize what a powerful network we have within Real Producers. You probably know agents that have been featured or receive publications in other parts of the country. I've run into people at airports that recognized our logo and said, "Hey, I was a cover!" We celebrate the best of the best in over 100 markets nationwide and are growing quickly. I think it's important that you don't forget you are part of a huge network of Real Producers across the country, and I hope that in the next few years, you have more and more opportunities to network with this group on the national level.

In an effort to begin the cooperation of Real Producers across the country, we have launched the Real Producers Podcast nationwide. This is an amazing channel for you to hear stories from agents in all areas and niches. We were excited to learn that Oklahoma's own Brett Boone has been featured and his podcast released in June. We would love it if you could give it a listen, as well as the many other wonderful stories.



So back here in Oklahoma, keep up the amazing work. We cannot wait to see you at our upcoming events and continue to support you and your businesses.

Kelly



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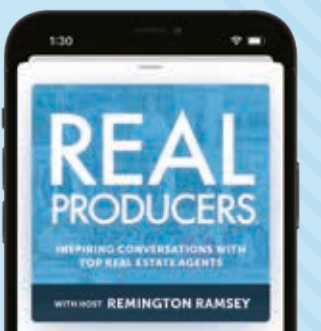
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Kalyn

Family First

STROPES

“I even tell my clients, my family is first... I’m a mama before I’m a REALTOR®, but I have a really strong business.”

Many REALTORS® begin their careers seeking the flexibility a career in real estate promises, only to later discover they have less time on their hands than ever before. Clients can be demanding, and they’ll reach out for help at any time of day if agents let them. Losing business can be excruciating, especially in such a competitive industry, and the fear of missing an opportunity often drives agents to adjust their schedules to meet their clients’ demands for 24/7 availability.

This approach often produces impressive sales results, but other parts of life may suffer. Family members often become the second priority, and self-care can go out the window. But not for Kalyn Stropes. She has achieved something that few REALTORS® can claim — true work/life balance. Now, four years into her real estate career, Kalyn has achieved business success while homeschooling her four children and prioritizing her family.

So, how does she do it? She says the magic word is *boundaries*.

“I love boundaries,” she says with a smile. “Boundaries are my favorite. It’s the way I keep everything moving and my momentum going... I time block. My team knows when I’m

“I’m very upfront that my family comes first, and I have never had someone tell me that’s wrong. I have been confident in that.”



homeschooling my kids, and my clients know that, too. I'm very upfront that my family comes first, and I have never had someone tell me that's wrong. I have been confident in that. And here's the thing, if someone doesn't respect that, I don't need to work with them anyway because we won't work well together. Sure, I want as many clients as I can get, but I also want people that respect me. If that timeframe doesn't work for someone, then it's not a good working relationship. Do I break that every once in a while? Sure, but I work hard to stick to it."

The result of Kalyn's commitment to boundaries is a thriving business *and* a rich family life. She and her husband, Benjamin, have four kids, Brandt (10), Asher (6), Noah (4), and Kylie (2). Each day starts with stretching,

breakfast, prayer, then school from roughly 7:30 until 10:00 am. From there, Kalyn heads off to work the business while her husband, an Oklahoma City law enforcement officer, takes over with the kids.

"I love my schedule. It's what makes everything possible for me, and ultimately, what allows me to have such a good life with my kids," Kalyn says.

Growing The Sparrow Group
After nearly a year on a team, Kalyn started a real estate team, The Sparrow Group, in the fall of 2022. It's now a team of four agents and growing.

"I have a deep faith in the Lord. The song *His Eye Is on the Sparrow* gave me a lot of confidence to see that even if I don't feel like I can fly, the Lord has his hands on me, and he's holding me," Kalyn explains.

I love my schedule. It's what makes everything possible for me, and ultimately, what allows me to have such a good life with my kids.



The Sparrow Group Real Estate Team



As a REALTOR® and team leader, Kalyn prides herself on her honesty, clarity, and communication. She doesn't push clients, instead preferring to work on their timeline to find the home that best fits their needs. She is intensely client-focused.

Kalyn is also the exclusive buyer's agent for Selah, a New Urbanism community in Norman. Her goal is to one day work exclusively for buyers in Selah while allowing her team to handle the remainder of their business.

Family First

Kalyn is proud of what she's accomplished as a REALTOR®, but her family is undoubtedly her greater source of pride. She particularly enjoys spending time with her kids outdoors and movie nights.

"One of the kids gets to pick the movie and be the movie instructor. They make tickets, make a theme, and help with dinner and dessert. It's a big orchestra of things," Kalyn beams.

As Kalyn has shown, running a real estate business can be a tremendously rewarding and balanced experience. With the proper boundaries in place, it's possible to have the best of both worlds. Now, with her family life and her real estate business both thriving, Kalyn is looking forward to what will unfold in the years to come.

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Informing the Decision with Teamwork

Through time, the company has grown with its success. Today, Jan is joined by two other full-time inspectors, including her son, Will Banks, and Caleb Dickinson. Jan takes pride in the way her clients appreciate the consistent, high-quality inspection work, day in and day out.

“

No matter who shows up to inspect the house, if they have an Inside Out Home Inspections shirt on, you know you're going to get the same level of work.



“We do what we've always done. I think people like to know what to expect. We always inspect houses exactly the same way. Consistency is very important to me. No matter who shows up to inspect the house, if they have an Inside Out Home Inspections shirt on, you know you're going to get the same level of work,” Jan explains.

“When it comes to what we deliver to our partners and clients, I want the consistency of Chick-fil-A and the ease of Amazon.com. I want it to be easy to do business with us and for people to rely on what we do.”

Standing Out

Jan started the company by bringing a wealth of experience with her from her prior work, including working in construction, as well as serving as national sales manager for a public company for 10 years. Along the way, she has always enjoyed having the chance to build long-term bonds with her partners.

“I get the best of both worlds. I get to maintain all the relationships that have grown during my time in the business,” she says.

Ever since starting the company, Jan has appreciated having the chance to run her business in a way that delivers a distinctive brand of service. In addition, she has felt that being a woman-owned company in an industry typically dominated by men has been helpful at times.

partner spotlight

Written by **Dave Danielson**
Photos by **Shawna McDuffie**, Peak RES

“Some women decision-makers feel very comfortable when a woman is standing in front of them. Only about 1.8 percent of all the home inspectors in the nation are women,” Jan says.

“I brought a very relational approach to what I do ... it’s not as transactional. We’re proud of the product that we have. Our inspections are the only product we have besides our relationships, and we take it seriously. As part of that, we don’t have to be right. We want to do the best job. If something happens, whether it was our fault or not, we want to fix it. We don’t have to always be right. We always want what is best for our buyers. We make it right for them, even if it wasn’t a miss on our part. The customer experience is our primary concern.”

“

Each time we work with someone, we want to provide them with the best experience they have had. We want them to feel good about the house when they leave.



Jan smiles as she talks about the other members of her team. Her son, Will, served for six years in the U.S. Navy as an avionics technician. He specializes in septic system inspections, in addition to full home inspections. The other member of Jan’s inspection team, Caleb Dickinson, makes a big impact each day with his thorough and caring approach.

“People always think that Caleb is my son,” she smiles.”While he’s technically not family, he’s our family now. He is married and has two little boys.”

Free-Time Fulfillment

Away from work, Jan treasures time with her husband, Phillip, and the rest of her family, including six children aged 14 to 30 and one 10-year-old grandchild.

In her free time, Jan continues her active pace through life. In fact, as an avid runner, she has taken part in numerous high-endurance events, including ultra-marathons.

She also enjoys reading, skiing, kayaking, paddle boarding, and pretty much anything outdoors.

Personable, Professional, and Positive

As you see firsthand, the process of buying or selling a home can be one of the most stressful times in the lives of your clients. Jan and her team keep that top of mind and receive rave reviews when it comes to supporting the deal with open dialogue that is personable, professional, and positive.

“Even if someone has bought 15 houses in their life, they are still stressed. Each time we work with someone, we want to provide them with the best experience they have had. We want them to feel good about the house when they leave,” Jan points out.

“We want buyers to be excited about their new home. Even if we find unfavorable items, they can still leave the inspection with a clear understanding of the repairs and the next steps. They can still feel good about their purchase or decision not to purchase a particular property.”

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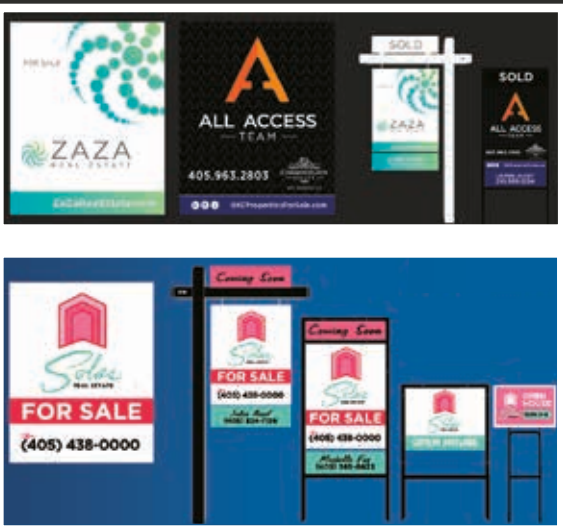
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Written by **Dave Danielson**
Photos by **Shawna McDuffie**, Peak RES

LAUREN SARGEANT

ACTIVE ADVOCATE

One of the many attributes you put to work for your clients each day is your willingness to go above and beyond for them ... to not just go through the motions, but truly fulfill their needs.

That's a role that Lauren Sargeant enjoys fulfilling for her clients, as well.

As a REALTOR® with Keller Williams Central Oklahoma, Lauren is an active advocate for those around her, including when it comes to giving back.

Making a Dedicated Difference

One of Lauren's true passions is making a difference in her community ... especially supporting HALO Project International.

"We got involved with the organization because our oldest child is adopted," Lauren explains. "We felt like we were failing as parents. We could see her need for us to grow our parenting skills."

In time, Lauren and her husband, Clayton, heard about HALO Project International—an organization that was amazing and helping foster and adoptive parents.

"We got into their 10-week intensive counseling program. We got our hope back, and they taught us how to better connect with our daughter and son. It was transformational for our family," Lauren says. "That was eight years ago. I knew talking with other families that all our kids from hard places had some similarities."

When the first board of directors was established for the organization, Lauren was there — eager to volunteer and help. She has been on the board of directors ever since then. In fact, she currently serves as president of the board.

"I remember talking with our executive director, Cindy Lee, and telling her how much I wanted to be involved," Lauren says. "I didn't want others to have to walk this difficult road without the skills required. I want all families and children who have experienced trauma to find hope, healing, and better connections. We have a fantastic group of 17 licensed therapists who are doing amazing work in our community." (<https://haloprojectokc.com>)

Some things seem to happen as if they were meant to be. And that's the way Lauren feels about the partnership she and her family have with the organization.

"You walk through hard things, and if you let God use it, He turns it into a beautiful thing, and that's what HALO is for us. Our daughter is so much better about communicating her needs. She has turned into a firecracker of an advocate for kids. It has been her mission for three years to get the counselors, teachers and administrators at her school into more trainings with HALO," Lauren smiles. "They are starting that because of her persistence and information that she has provided. I'm very proud of her. She is a big mental health advocate for kids."

Helping In Many Important Ways

The way that Lauren has been involved with the organization is a natural extension of her desire to help people around her.

"I love building relationships with people. I believe there's a house out there for everyone. I like being part of the process while we discover where that is," Lauren says. "Your home is more than just a house. It's also about the neighborhood you choose, where you will stop for coffee, enjoy a date night, and weekend lunches with your family and friends."



In addition to her committed work on behalf of her clients as they reach their real estate goals, Lauren is also an advocate at large for the community she loves. In fact, she has a passion for sharing local restaurants and boutiques with the world ... so much so that she has her own blog with videos on YouTube sharing her favorite local businesses. See www.BestLifeOKC.com.

Getting Her Start

Before real estate, Lauren was a teacher in Yuma, Arizona, when her husband, Clayton, was stationed there with the U.S. Marines. While there, Lauren attended graduate school and got her master's degree in special education.

In time, Lauren and Clayton moved back to Oklahoma City. As Clayton was deployed to Iraq, Lauren thought about other paths she could take professionally. Real estate came to mind.

“My father-in-law, Rowell, had been in the business for years and was the regional director for Keller Williams, and he suggested that I get my license. In 2003, my husband had gone to Iraq; when he left, I was a school teacher, and when he came back, I was a REALTOR®,” Lauren says with a smile.

Initially, when she got into the business, Lauren, Clayton, Rowell, and Corrie formed the Sargeant Home Team.

Today, the team includes just Lauren and Clayton.

“My husband helps me on the side. He is an Oklahoma City police officer, and we love helping other first responder and military families find their forever homes.” They are also joined by Shari, her transaction coordinator, and Lauren’s sister, Karlee, who serves as her marketing coordinator.



I listen, and I genuinely care about my clients and their families. For me, it’s not just about a transaction. I’m in it for the long haul. I like to stay in contact, and we often become close.



Wonderful Life

Family is at the heart of life for Lauren. She treasures time with Clayton and their children—15-year-old Sophie, and 14-year-old Sam.

In their free time, Lauren and her family enjoy attending Life Church. They also love to host friends and family, travel and explore local restaurants and businesses.

Day by day, Lauren Sargeant is an active advocate for the needs of those around her.

“I listen, and I genuinely care about my clients and their families. For me, it’s not just about a transaction. I’m in it for the long haul. I like to stay in contact, and we often become close. I love it when I get to work with all the generations of a family, the kids, parents, and grandparents, and repeat the process when they are ready to upsize or right-size their homes. In fact, I sometimes pray with my clients, when I feel led and they feel comfortable. God knows when we are supposed to close on a home. His timing is better than mine,” she says with a warm smile.





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cover story

Written by **Zachary Cohen** • Photos by **Nested Tours**

Natalie *Simon*

COMING HOME

Over the past century, Nichols Hills has become one of the most desirable places to live in all of Oklahoma. Founded in the early 1900s, Nichols Hills boasts impressive homes on expansive acreage, a bustling restaurant scene, beautiful green spaces, and a vibrant community. This suburb of Oklahoma City has managed to maintain its rural feel even as more upscale businesses move into the area. Nearly 100 years after its inception, it remains one of the most attractive places to live in the area.

Natalie Simon has called Nichols Hills home for the past eight years, the last seven of which she's spent as one of the area's top real estate agents.

"Nichols Hills is where I'm raising my family. I love the area and community. It's a warm, loving place where residents care about the neighborhood and want to see it develop into something special," Natalie offers. "It's home, and I enjoy contributing to making it a better place to live. We recently finished remodeling our current home in the area and wouldn't be surprised if we got the itch to do it again in a few years."

“Nichols Hills is where I'm raising my family.

I love the area and community. It's a warm, loving place where residents care about the neighborhood and want to see it develop into something special.

”

Coming Home

Natalie's first career was as a project manager for IBM. All told, she spent ten years working for the company, first in Michigan and later in Oklahoma. She moved to Oklahoma after meeting her husband, Simon, and she eventually joined him in real estate.

"My husband opened a brokerage 13 years ago. He started in 2008 by buying rental properties and building a portfolio, got his license, and started a brokerage. He didn't expect to sell real estate, but clients started to call, and it turned into much more," Natalie explains.

As Simon became engrossed in real estate investing and other entrepreneurial endeavors, he asked Natalie to take over the residential division of his company.

Natalie's interest in real estate was sparked when she and Simon began remodeling homes. Exploring and developing architecture, layouts, and design gave her a fundamental understanding of structures, materials, and construction procedures and inspired her to launch her own real estate career. In 2016, Natalie was licensed. The transition into real estate coincided with the birth of her oldest daughter, allowing her the flexibility to be a present mom and hold a career.

"It was an easy transition. My husband is my mentor, and it is fun to work with each other. It has its challenges, but overall we are a strong team who push each other to succeed," Natalie shares.

Natalie has now been selling real estate for seven years. Her commitment to building her business through word of mouth and referrals has allowed her to develop one of Nichols Hills’ strongest reputations. In 2022, she closed 23 transactions for \$19 million as an agent with Simon Simon Real Estate with eXp Realty.

“Clients like working with me because I pride myself on being professional, honest, efficient, and discreet, and I get the job done. I’m there for my clients and will go the extra mile to make sure my clients get what they want and the process is seamless. I try to think creatively and outside of the box to make things work for them. It’s never a simple transaction in the luxury market, so you have to be creative. Buying or selling a home is typically one of the biggest

financial decisions my clients will ever make, so it is my job to make sure it is a sound, stable investment for them and their future,” Natalie explains.

Living in Balance

Outside work, Natalie can be found playing tennis, volunteering, and hanging out with her family. She and Simon have two daughters, Sienna (7) and Sloane (2.5).

“They keep me busy. Between after-school activities, school, summer, and running a business at the same time — it’s a little chaotic but so much fun. I wouldn’t change a thing about it,” Natalie beams.

As she looks ahead, Natalie aspires to continue serving her clients, growing her business, and being there for her family. She admits that achieving work/life balance was more challenging in the early years of her career, but now she’s able to set better expectations with clients and, thus, create more time with her family.

“I know at times it can be challenging when things are urgent, but in my eyes, family always comes first,” she says. “Having two girls, I’d like to show them you can accomplish anything. You can pick up a new career, and if you put your mind to it, you can achieve endless goals. I didn’t know anything about real estate, picked it up seven years ago, and have accomplished so much. Whatever you want to achieve — as a woman, you can do it.”



FUN FACT

Natalie was born and raised in Michigan. She landed in Oklahoma after meeting her husband in a serendipitous fashion. “We met in Vegas,” Natalie laughs. “I was at a bachelorette party, and he was at a bachelor party. We had mutual connections from two of our parties who introduced us at the pool. We long-distance dated, and the rest is history.”



“**I try to think creatively and outside of the box to make things work for them.** It’s never a simple transaction in the luxury market, so you have to be creative.”



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We will be doing 2-3 POP-UP events around the city this year. Stay tuned for details!



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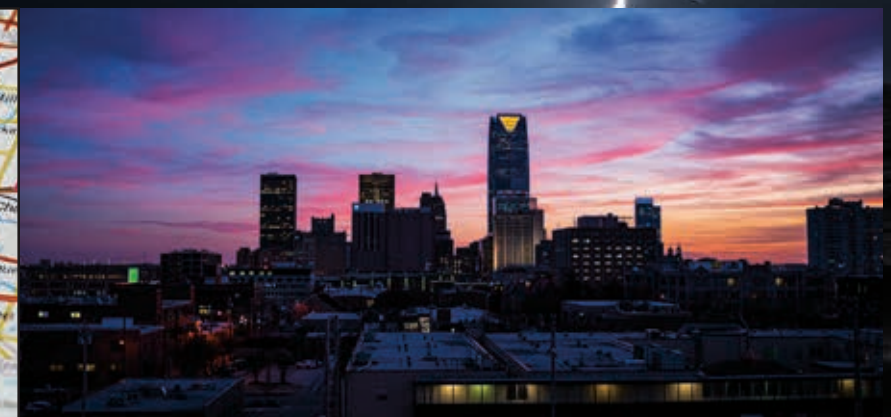
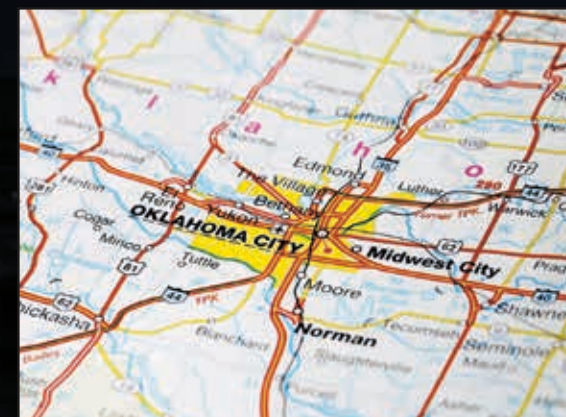
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