

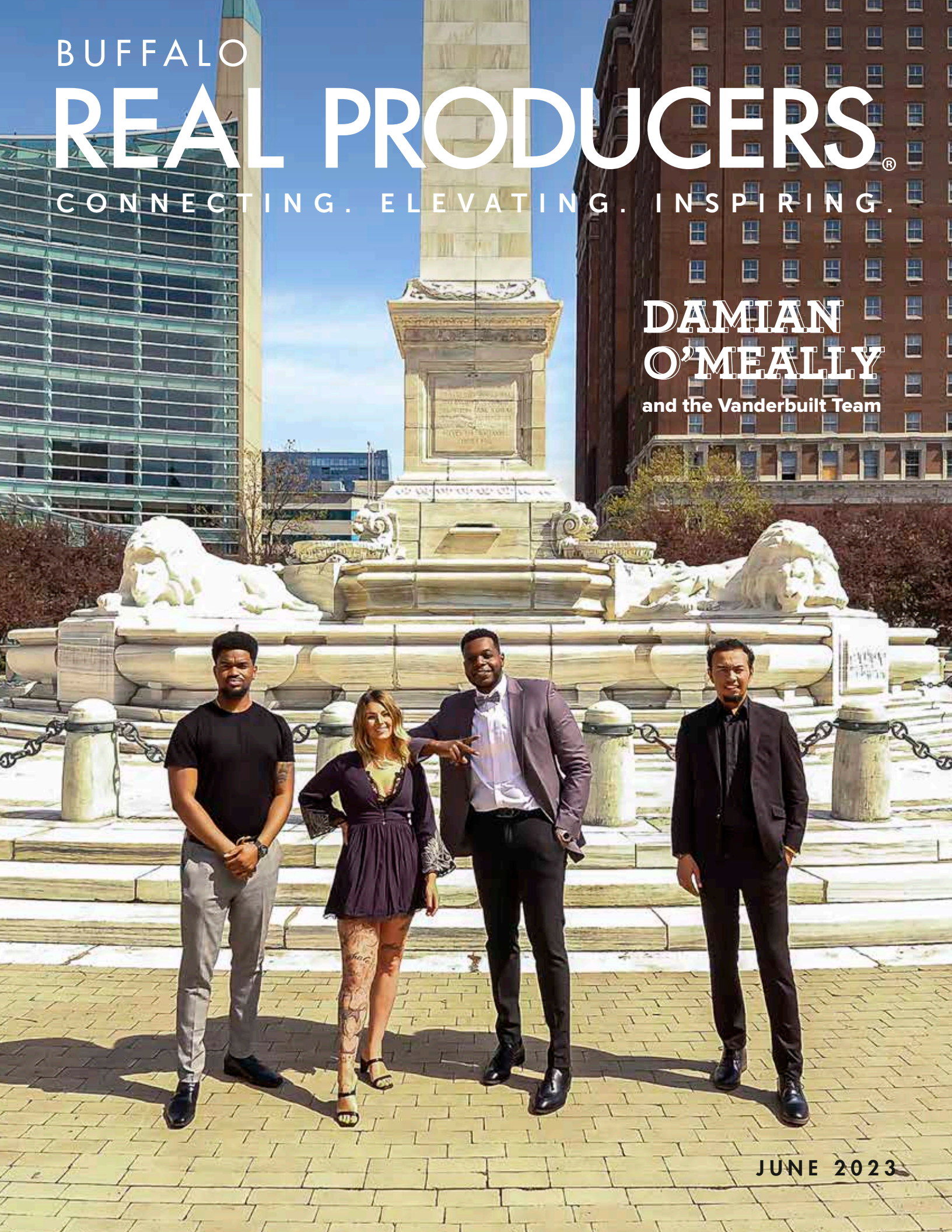
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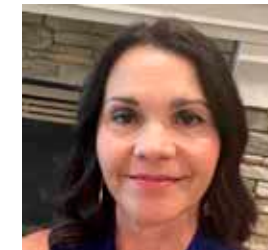
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# MEET THE BUFFALO

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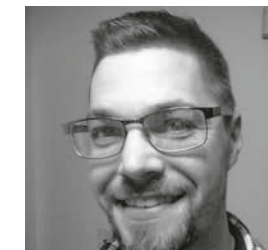
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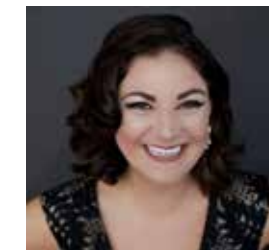
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## BUFFALO REAL PRODUCERS BACKYARD COCKTAIL HOUR

July 18th (Tuesday) at 5pm

Working hard this summer already? *Buffalo Real Producers* is throwing a chill cocktail party so you can relax and share some of your favorite real estate stories of the year so far.

Kevin McMullen, (fellow top realtor) is nice enough let us use his pad to host this event. He has the perfect outdoor space to do so. Thanks ahead of time, Kevin!

Stop by to say hello or stay for the whole evening. There will be open bar and some food the whole evening. Realtors and preferred partners only please.

To RSVP please email David. Schaub@N2co.com to get the private link to rsvp.

## BUFFALO REAL PRODUCERS SUNSET CRUISE WITH OPEN BAR

September 12th (Tuesday) at 6pm SHARP. Ends at 8pm.

Who doesn't like a sunset cruise?

We're inviting only the top 300 realtors of Buffalo to join us for a sunset cruise like no other!

Set sail with us as we embark on an adventure to see the stunning colors of the sunset over Lake Erie.

While you're on the boat, enjoy a complimentary open bar that will be serving up a variety of delicious cocktails and drinks!

100% free for the Buffalo realtors. No presentations. All social, fun & a chance to celebrate our featured realtors in the past couple *Buffalo Real Producers* Issues!

This is an exclusive event, and spaces are

limited to 120 people. Once the spots are gone, that is it. So, don't wait, book your spot today and get ready to experience the adventure of a lifetime!

We normally don't mind if a top realtor brings some of their team with them but since this will be a very popular event we ask that only top 300 realtors rsvp themselves and do not bring a plus one with them.

As always, only realtors and preferred partners only of the magazine.

RSVPS will come out in late July but if you plan on grabbing a ticket we suggest you mark down the date. We are not allowing Pre-RSVPING until tickets go live on Eventbrite since we are so far away from the date itself.

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▶▶ REALTOR®  
team spotlight

# D O' A M M E I L A L N Y

## and the Vanderbilt Team

Article by: **David Cornwell**  
Photography by: **Glass Forest Media**

*Author Robert Kiyosaki changed Keller Williams agent Damian O'Meally's life for the better and now Damian is paying it forward and changing other lives for the better, too.*

It was reading Kiyosaki's popular book on real estate investing, Rich Dad, Poor Dad, that first opened Damian's eyes to real estate as a source of income and as a career. And then a chance encounter with an investor



buying 20 washers and dryers at the Best Buy where Damian worked more or less set his path to success.

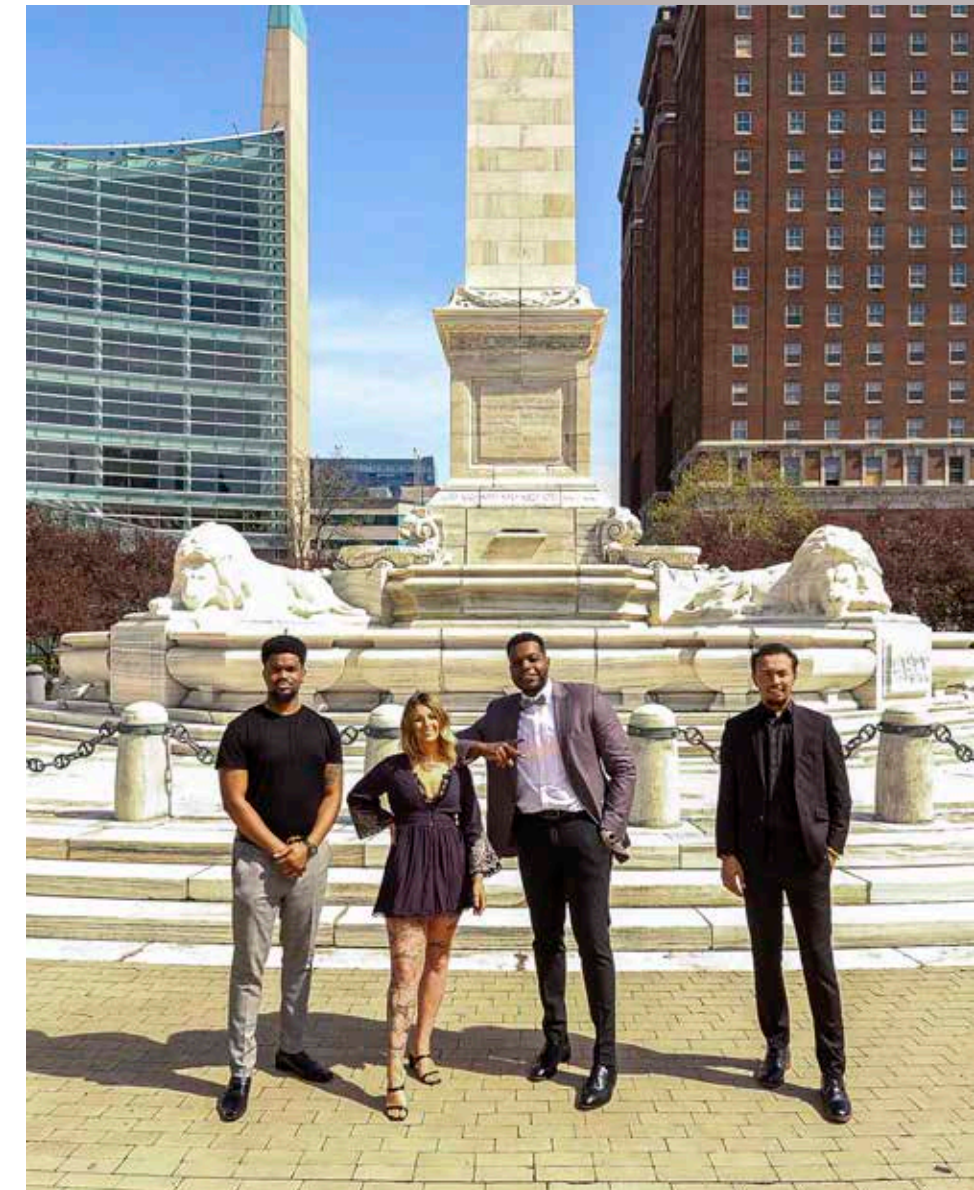
As owner and team leader of the Vanderbilt Team at Keller Williams in Williamsville, Damian is proud of his and his team's success. For five years running, it has won Keller Williams Platinum Performance Award, the platinum designation marking the sale of 50 properties or \$10 million in sales. The day he was interviewed for this article, Damian was also looking forward to attending that night's Premium Mortgage Top 100 event for the second year in a row.

Real estate has been very good to Damian and is a career that traces its roots back to his days working at Best Buy while earning an environmental design degree with a minor in architecture at the University of Buffalo. Starting as a seasonal employee, Damian moved on to sales and then worked at various stores and corporate headquarters in training and training development.

He was making decent money, he says, but after reading Rich Dad, Poor Dad, realized he was headed down the Poor Dad's path. It was about then that Keith Carlins walked into Damian's Best Buy and bought 20 washers and dryers for apartments he owned. A successful Western New York Realtor and investor, Keith was impressed with Damian's people skills and Damian knew Keith was the mentor he needed.

Since then, both Damian and Team Vanderbilt have enjoyed considerable success. Along with himself, members of the team are Octavio Smith, Rashon Hundley and Shannon Graham.

"What sets us apart is we're young," he says. "Within that youth are new ways to market, new energy. Being younger, we're savvy with technology, we're moving quicker. It's not wet



signatures and fax machines anymore but e-signatures and digital marketing and drones being flown over a seller's neighborhood and house. My clients love that stuff."

Another differentiator between his team and others is marketing. While some agents might do one, if any, open houses, "we do three in the first week," he says, noting the first 10-14 days of a listing are the most active.

"We hit hard with marketing from the moment we list you," he says, adding homes usually sell within six to seven days. Damian and his team work with investors and handle single-family, multifamily and commercial properties.

He says he gained much of his business acumen at Best Buy, learning how to provide the best customer service and communicate with folks from different walks of life. He credits Keith for much of his early real estate knowledge. But he also learned from his family, who despite their rudimentary education in Jamaica, immigrated to the U.S. and succeeded.

His dad found success as a plumber, Damian says, a job that paid his way through college. An extremely frugal man, his uncle came to New York without knowing how to read or write and over time bought 13 properties.





“ I KNOW IF I CAN WIN THE MORNING,  
I’M GOING TO WIN THE DAY. ”

“I realize now that he had an intellectual understanding of money and the fact that it’s a tool,” Damian says. “Once people realize money is a tool, it’s a whole different game; it’s a whole different mindset.”

Outside the office, you’ll usually find Damian at the gym early, a healthy habit he developed years back when he shed 100 pounds from his 6’4” frame. These days his daily routine is as much for his mental health as for his physical.

“Miracle Morning is another book that changed my world,” he notes. “I know if I can win the morning, I’m going to win the day.”

Growing up and attending public schools in Rochester, Damian says kids didn’t see real estate as a serious career path. To let a new generation

of students know that it is, he gives school presentations to help them know that millionaires aren’t just sports or entertainment stars. Becoming a millionaire can come from doing things to help folks, too, he says.

Travel is another passion and he tries to get away once a month for new experiences and to help keep burnout at bay. One travel spot that’s a favorite because of the greater appreciation of his own circumstances it gives, is visiting relatives in Jamaica.

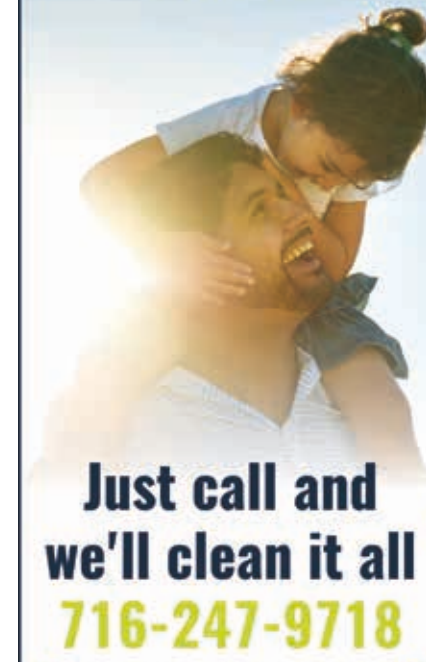
He tells of a recent visit when a nephew was riding a bike on rims for lack of tires while the family laughed and joked about the smallest things. “I feel humbled,” he says of such visits, saying everyone should learn to “be appreciative.”

Looking to the future, Damian would like one day to perhaps build a team doing business all along the East Coast. And he wants to leave some kind of legacy behind.

“If they could accomplish what they did without an education and without technology,” he says of his parents and uncle, “There’s no way I can fumble the ball.”

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# ALL PRO HOME INSPECTION

## JOHN VILLELLA

Article by: David Cornwell

John Villella has personally inspected more than 15,000 homes since launching All Pro Home Inspection 23 years ago. And that's not including inspections done by members of his team.

Those inspections have ranged from 600-square-foot lake cottages to 100,000-square-foot plus commercial properties and everything in between, including a recent inspection of a shipping container home.



While many things related to those inspections have changed over the years, he says from a seller's perspective one thing hasn't.

"Homes sell for more money in less time with inspections," John says. Seller inspections have a number of other advantages as well, including taking care of liability issues for agents and their brokerages.

"Put the information up front and make it available for a prospective buyer," John says. Along with visits to the property, a buyer will know whether to put in an offer or move on. Home inspections by sellers streamline the process, he says, and can significantly reduce negotiations because all disclosures have been taken care of.

As added peace of mind for sellers and buyers alike, All Pro has offered free warranties with its inspections for the past 15 years.

Since most of the problems buyers encounter when moving into a property happen in the first three weeks, they assume the inspector missed something, John says. But that's not usually the case.

Moving into a new home often means new demands on a house's systems. For instance, a family of four moving into a house previously occupied by a single person can put significantly more stress on those systems.

"You can't predict the future. Things fail, things break," he says. The new homeowners are disappointed and "then everybody starts dancing back and forth on the phone. So instead, we offer solutions, not excuses. I just think it's the right way of doing it—have a solution."

Free warranties that come with All Pro inspections include more than \$100,000 in warranty protection. There is a one-year \$100,000 structural warranty. There are also 125-day warranties



“YOU NEVER KNOW HOW

SOMEONE'S DAY IS GOING.

FROM THE MOMENT

THE PHONE RINGS,

YOU NEED TO MAKE THEIR

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covering sewer and mold, a limited home warranty and five-year roof protection against leaks. Upgrades to the free plan are also available.

"The warranty game has evolved over the years and there have been changes both good and bad," he says, adding All Pro will soon announce "an exciting change as to how we will offer protection with our inspection packages."

With both John and his father being veterans and his dad a retired firefighter, too, it's only natural All Pro also offers discounts to veterans and first responders.

Before starting All Pro Home Inspection, John was co-owner

and general contractor for Villella and Son, Inc., which specialized in concrete construction and custom home building. "But after 20 years of construction, my body said it was time to change," he says.

As to why someone should choose All Pro instead of its competitors, John says it's "first and foremost, experience." He also places a heavy emphasis on customer service and building relationships. "It's about communicating with people the right way. We do not sugarcoat what we find, but we will educate our clients," he says. "I've always said if we stay loyal to the property we are inspecting and communicate our findings the right way, we are

doing our job and serving all individuals fairly in the process."

While John and his inspectors must meet continuing education requirements and renew their license every two years, his staff also completes an in-house training curriculum. While a large part of that training is the nuts and bolts of conducting inspections, a significant portion centers on customer service.

"You never know how someone's day is going," he says. "From the moment the phone rings, you need to make their day a little better. It's just the way we work." His staff also makes sure referring clients





are appreciated. “The more success someone else is going to have, I believe the more success we are going to have,” he says.

One change John has seen in the industry over the years is the troubling trend for both buyers and sellers to forego home inspections, a trend the pandemic exacerbated. Some agents just give lip service to advising clients about home inspections, he says, but then tell those clients that doing so will significantly weaken their offer. “The idea of waiving the inspection is bad, for the buyer, the seller and agents and brokers involved,” he says, adding he expects

major lawsuits to eventually result from the practice.

When he’s not inspecting homes, you might find John and Lena, his wife of 33 years, on a bocce ball court. “I have a tremendous amount of fun playing it,” he says, adding he and his wife also play in tournaments around the state and in couples leagues a few times each week. “So that gives us date nights,” he says.

John also enjoys hunting, with both rifle and bow, not as much for sport as to simply get out in nature. And for the past four or five years, he’s gotten involved in dirt car racing,

including car sponsorship and working on the car. “It’s fun, he says of Friday evening races with his wife and daughter, Amber, 24. John reports her twin brother, Andrew, says he’s “not interested in watching cars go around in a circle.”

There’s obvious pride when he talks about the children. “Some of the things we instilled in them as far as beliefs and work ethics are really paying off for them,” John says. Andrew is the IT Director for Amherst school district and Amber is a Physician’s Assistant.

A former collegiate baseball player, John coached his kids and others in youth sports when they were of playing age and along with his wife traveled the Northeast while they played high-level soccer in a traveling league.

While he doesn’t necessarily know what lies ahead for the housing market and his industry, John knows it won’t affect one aspect of his business. “We like to help people succeed and I believe the more people we can help be more successful along the way, the better it is for our business.”





▶▶ buffalo real producers event

# LIMO BUS WINE TOUR

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Throughout this year and years to come we will be hosting realtor teams to brewery, wine and food tours throughout Buffalo. All paid for by our preferred partners of this magazine.

This month we took out the Enas Latiff Team & Vanderbilt Team! They chose the wine tour so we took a limo bus out to the Niagara Wine Trail for the day. It so happen to be one of the realtor's birthday so it made this limo extra special.

Each limo bus tour we bring on a few of our preferred partners limo to buy a round at each stop. This is a great way to meet some of our preferred partners in a social fun setting. This limo bus tour we had:

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- Clinton Hawkins from Pillar to Post
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# JAY HERLAN

**The Empire Team at  
716 Realty Group**

**For JAY HERLAN, Associate Broker and leader of The Empire Team at 716 Realty Group, there really is no place like home.**



“The best job I have is not being a real estate agent, it’s being a dad,” says the Director of 716’s Orchard Park office. “The best moments of my life have been with my wife and kids. Nothing else is even close.”

Jay and his wife, Jessica, are parents of Carson, age two, and Penelope, also age two—two months that is. And



despite briefly living “in a kind of zombie land” with morning clients bringing him coffee, Dad reports his youngest daughter’s sleep has gotten progressively better.

The leader of the top-producing Empire Team at 716 Realty Group, Jay was one of the original agents at the brokerage, which has shown strong and steady growth since its founding. A handful of agents then has grown to more than 70 now, with Jay as the brokerage’s sales leader for the past two years.

The seeds for his real estate career, he says, were planted at Canisius College where he was working on his degree in business management. As he studied, he found himself intrigued by the general principles of supply and demand.

“With real estate, it’s a finite commodity,” Jay says. “So there’s only so much of it in the world and when there’s only so much of it, it tends to hold its value more than other things.”

After graduation, he worked in management for several Buffalo area businesses, buying his first property in 2014, a duplex. “One side was paying for my mortgage while I lived in the other for free,” he says. In 2017 he joined 716 Realty Group and created The Empire Team a few years later.

“I started the team because there’s not a ceiling to growth in terms of knowledge or your business,” he says, adding that anything he does with his team or real estate in general “is done with a purpose; it’s calculated. I like to do things right the first time.”

His team, he says, is a good example of doing things right. “You collectively have more power with a team, you have better thinking collaboratively than you do as an individual.” Team members in addition to Jay are his brother, Jackson Herlan, Carissa Zamerski and Alyssa Peterson.

The doing-things-right mentality has paved the way for opportunities for his team and the brokerage, such as being the lead buyer specialist for the Bethune Lofts conversion, recently brought to market and headed by fellow 716 Realty Group agent Steve Persico.

“We collaborate on a daily basis on how to best serve our clients who are selling or



buying,” Jay says of the team. “We realize the responsibility we have as agents to help them facilitate the biggest transactions of their lives.”

The responsibility isn’t limited to the buying and selling process, he says but extends to owning and taking care of a home and how a house works “so that you can take care of it and generate equity and value in it as the years go by.”

In addition to single-family home sales, The Empire Team and 716 Realty Group, deal with an array of other real estate sales and service. “We wanted to make it a one-stop shop in terms of covering all areas of real estate—investments, building, single-family, multifamily, commercial, property management, and vacation rentals. It’s really all-encompassing and there’s been steady growth in all those different areas.”

As for his love of teaching and mentoring, some of it might be genetic. Both his parents were teachers and it’s likely he got a deal of leadership experience growing up as the oldest of four brothers and sisters.

He’s a team leader outside the office as well, coaching basketball for 19 years and currently serving as the head coach of the JV team at his alma mater, St. Joseph’s Collegiate Institute. “It’s a thankless job for my wife and I’m so grateful that she allows me to do it,” he says. “But I really get great joy out of it.” Fortunately, he adds, basketball season typically coincides with real estate’s slow season.

▶ REALTOR® on the rise

Article by: David Cornwell

Photography by: Eagle 1 Photography



While golf was once a frequent diversion, with kids Jay says “We’re really homebodies most of the time.” And he wouldn’t have it any other way, saying that walks around the village and playing with the kids at neighborhood playgrounds is about as exciting as it usually gets.

The family also vacations on Topsail Beach in North Carolina a couple of times a year, and Jay says that fully enjoying

those vacations is another advantage his team provides. “It lets me get away and put down the phone for a while, to actually disconnect from the real estate world for a short period and know the business is being handled the right way by my team.”

Whether coaching team members in the office or on the court, he says one of his central messages is “to never be above the work.”



**“IF YOU’RE ABOVE THE WORK, YOU’RE DOING SOMETHING WRONG. You have to be humbled to achieve the highest level of success.”**

“You’ve got to have the discipline to get up every day and do the work,” he says. “I don’t care how much money you make, or how much status you have, if you’re above the work, you’re doing something wrong. You have to be humbled to achieve the highest level of success.”

Jay says when he first got into the business he “never knew the potential and where it would take me and how it

would open doors I never thought were possible.” Now he’s at a point where his team’s success and accomplishments bring him more joy than his own.

“Being able to be that mentor and that team leader, that’s the fulfillment I’m after right now,” he says. His hope for his team is that one day they grow their own brand, form their own teams and “enjoy life and do things they never thought possible,” too.



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# BETH KLIPFEL

**I**t's almost as if Confucius had Beth Klipfel of Hunt Real Estate in mind when he advised contemporaries to "choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life." And while the laws of physics, time and space make that an impossibility, there's no denying her love of what she does and the professionalism with which she does it.

"I absolutely love what I do," she says. "I wake up every day excited for the next challenge."

Her professional designations include being an Associate Broker, a Certified Relocation Agent, Certified New Homes Specialist, Certified Investment Properties Specialist, Certified Real Estate Brokerage Manager and a Graduate of the Realtor Institute. She also has a Master's Degree in Real Estate Development from the University of Virginia.

With more than 10,000 homes sold, Beth can trace the roots of her successful career to a young ballerina seeking career guidance at a community college.

Working as a ballerina and attending UVA, she was taking summer break at her parent's home in Alexandria, VA, just outside Washington. A search for something to do during those summer

months led her to the career counseling office at the local community college, where testing indicated she'd be good in sales.

When she asked what kind of sales, real estate was one of the suggestions. She tried



▶ REALTOR®  
spotlight

Article by: David Cornwell  
Photography by:  
Adore Studio

it, loved it and got her license at age 20 and her broker's license two years later.

Joining Hunt in 2005, she's a consistent top producer with annual sales between \$10 and \$20 million and attributes much of her success to the diverse hands-on training she received early in her career in northern Virginia.

She worked with major developers planning projects, handled complicated land acquisitions and residential and commercial sales. "That was a huge learning experience for me," she says. "I formed my discipline as a professional early on for which I am very grateful."

These days her primary focus is on new and existing home sales and some land and smaller investment property transactions.

"The biggest advantage of working with me is that I'm really high energy. I'm available to my clients 24/7," she says. "And I take incredibly good care of my clients."

A big believer in continuing education, she says agents' experience and knowledge are critical to clients' satisfaction. "I know what to anticipate, I know how to get a deal through, I know how to stage and market," she says, adding she "throws a lot of money at my listings" to get her clients the highest return in the shortest amount of time.

Her affiliation with Hunt, she says, means she has "the highest quality of resources available." Among those is Hunt's "amazing relocation department," a resource that allows her to offer





clients moving to the Buffalo area exceptional “soup to nuts” service. That might include short-term housing, healthcare and “where to shop for everything.” Being a “relo” herself, she also has a more personal insight into such clients’ needs.

“I think that follow up with clients is really important and want to make sure that I am a constant source of good referrals for them and to answer any questions they might have. I always want to be a great source of resources for all of my clients before and after the transactions have closed.”

“Ours is a referral-based business,” she says. “Your best clients are referring their families to you and they’re trusting you with their largest investments,” adding that having clients like her and trust her so much that they refer friends and family is “awesome.”

Personal communication with those clients is essential, she says, and while she has a team of assistants to help her with an average of six closings a month, her clients talk to her and not her assistants.

Hunt Real Estate was founded as Hunt Business Agency by Charles Stanley Hunt in 1911. Originally based out of the Palace Arcade in downtown Buffalo, it specialized in commercial real estate – particularly the sale of movie theaters.



**“I think that follow up with clients is really important.”**

Since then the firm has grown into the pre-eminent agency for all types of real estate transactions in the Buffalo and Niagara areas with 16 branches and 657 agents. It also has offices in Boston and Phoenix.



With her background in dance, you might think that outside the office you’d find Beth and her husband on the dance floor. But while she’s a dancer, he’s not. Both are golfers, however, and try to play a round together at least once a week. In between, each plays in separate leagues. The couple is very athletic, she says, and supplements golf with bike riding and other activities.

They also enjoy a nice social life and love to travel, she says. They met at a party in D.C., where he was studying accounting at American University. “He was a Buffalo boy so that’s the way I ended up in Buffalo.”

And while her husband is her first love, real estate sales is a close second.

“I’m really good at what I do,” Beth says. “When you’re running a business well and you’re enjoying it, when you have a good reputation and you’re really able to help and serve your community well, there’s a lot of satisfaction.”



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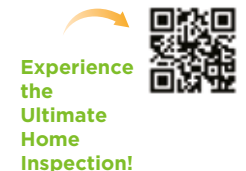
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