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Riptide Ridez

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

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Cal Harrelson

► feature agent

Written By **Dave Danielson**
Photography By **Donald Hovis - Tides Eye Photography**

DEEP ROOTS - REACHING SKYWARD

CALMETTOS

Cal Harrelson is well-known in a wide range of ways that represent his many gifts. One of those is creating Calmettos ... the name he uses to describe his paintings of the Palmetto tree, the South Carolina State Tree.

Through time those paintings, which have become collectible and cherished keepsakes for people, are unique and special gifts Cal presents to his clients. They also adorn the walls of special properties, including the South Carolina Governor's Mansion, the home of golfing icon, Jack Nicklaus, Ambassador Nikki Haley, and others

LOVING HIS COMMUNITY

His roots also run exceptionally deep in this land, with his coastal family roots dating back over one hundred years. He has had lifelong love with the region — one that he continues to build upon with his storied real estate career that has stretched over 32 years. He joined the Coldwell Banker Sea Coast organization in August 2022.

"I began my career with Prudential. Through time, I have had the chance to work with several great companies. I have loved everywhere that I have had the opportunity to be," Cal says.

"I truly feel very fortunate. Joining Coldwell Banker has been a new ballgame that is very enjoyable, as well. It is fun being with a national and an international firm, where everyone gets along so well."

COASTAL FOCUS

Through time, Cal's work has naturally brought his focus around the water. In fact, most properties that he lists are located on the saltwater or close enough to "smell the pluff mud at low tide," as he says with a smile.

Cal specializes in the evaluation, acquisition, and sale of coastal properties. He also enjoys working with clients with investments, second-home and primary properties in Georgetown and Horry counties. Cal is known for putting "GONE" signs on his sold properties. Sellers even reach out to him saying, "I want to list my property with you because I want a "GONE" sign in my yard."

"One of the most gratifying parts of the work I have been able to do, is receiving referrals from friends and the repeat business," Cal explains. "One of the parts I appreciate is the fact that there are many cases when I've been able to be involved in selling the same properties two or three times."

TREASURED MOMENTS

One of the most rewarding and pivotal moments of Cal's life happened after college where he was a student at the University of South Carolina. That is when he met Julie, a Clemson graduate, who would become his wife of 37 years.

Cal majored in Political Science and went on to become the Director of Fundraising for the Republican Party in South Carolina and was the South Carolina Director for "Reagan-Bush Campaign '84", the fundraising arm of the Campaign in SC. In the late 1980s, he moved to the coast and started his own PR firm on Pawleys Island. Around 1990, he began his real estate career that has been truly stellar.

SIGNS OF SUCCESS

Through time, Cal has received numerous accolades and honors that reflect his tireless work with those he serves. He has been a perennial Top Producer and Listing Agent of the Year. He also received the REALTOR® Image Award that "reflects the highest integrity in real estate, as voted by his peers," according to *The Sun News*."

...

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Cal presenting Former SC Governor, Nikki Haley, with his Calmetto

Cal with Wife Julie in SC Governors Mansion

Cal and Wife Julie love the Outdoors

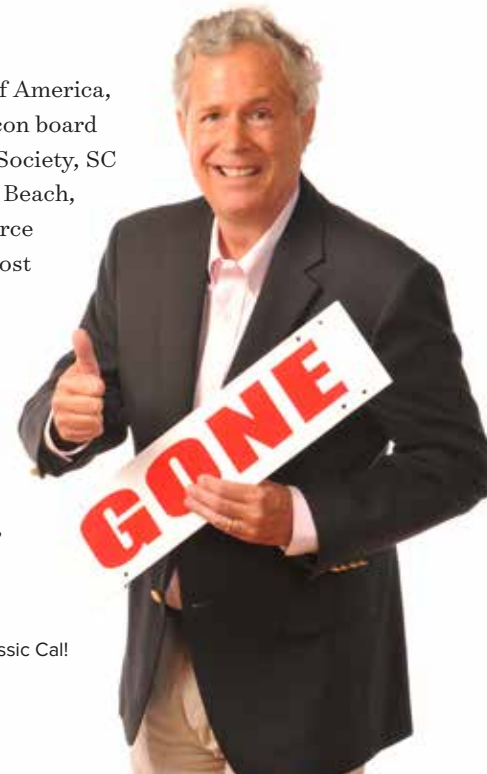
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Family makes Cal's life extremely rewarding. In addition to treasuring time with his wife, Julie, and their 22-year-old son, he loves his two South Carolina State Dog Boykin Spaniels. Away from work, Cal looks forward to time spent outdoors, with favorite pursuits including fishing and hunting for turkey and deer.

When it comes to giving back, Cal has been engaged in many ways to make his community better and richer for the people who live in it. He has been involved with several organizations,

including Rotary International, Boy Scouts of America, March of Dimes' Walk America, Church deacon board as chairman, United Way, American Cancer Society, SC Crawfish Festival, Palmettos for Garden City Beach, and Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce as President, where he established today's most popular "Leadership Georgetown" program.

Congratulations to Cal Harrelson for the timeless and tireless impact he makes on those around him. In the process, he helps those he serves reach skyward ... toward a brighter future. One of Cal's favorite quotes is, "Life is a special occasion. Do not miss it."



Classic Cal!



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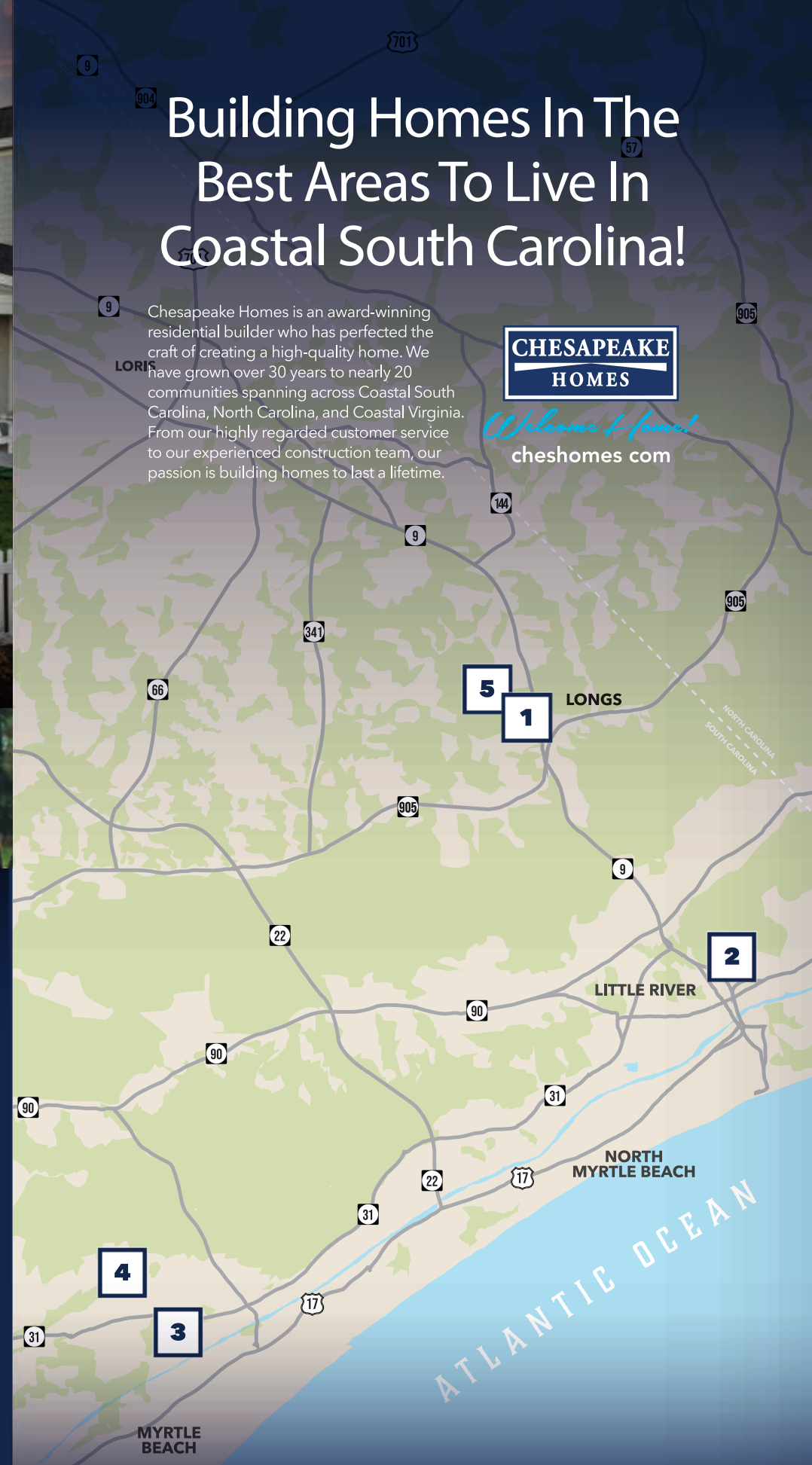


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RIP TIDE RIDEZ



- JON FINEZ

Written By Anita Jones • Photography By Jeremy Kierez - High Tide Content

The Myrtle Beach Grand Strand area is a mecca for Golf Carts! One can find them at every beach, in neighborhoods and shopping centers from Little River to Georgetown. One of the first questions excited home buyers ask their realtor is where can I buy a Golf Cart? "Now that I live at the beach, I must have one!"

Jon Finez, serial entrepreneur, and owner of Riptide Ridez was well aware of this phenomenon and opened two stores in the Grand Strand. He opened the first one in the Gator Hole shopping center in North Myrtle Beach in October 2021 and the second one in Pawleys Island in May 2022. He had the foresight to see that the new

trend in the golf cart world would be the Low-Speed Vehicle (LSV). He is planning on opening two more stores this year.

WHAT IS A LOW-SPEED VEHICLE?

An LSV and golf cart are two distinct and different classifications, so while an LSV can be used as a golf cart, it is not technically a golf cart. An LSV is described as an electric vehicle that has a top speed of greater than 20 MPH but less than 25 MPH varying state by state. A golf cart, by contrast, can only have a top speed of under 20 MPH. The public road maximum speed limit also varies by locale, so drivers need to check for their own state traffic laws.



“Our love for the beach is what brought us here.”

A street legal golf cart is known as an LSV or low-speed vehicle. State and federal safety standards laws dictate what requirements need to be met in order to be allowed to drive on roads.

Jon reports, “Every vehicle in our stores is a Low-Speed Vehicle. I can sell a low-speed vehicle as a golf cart if that is what the customer wants. It has all of the capabilities of an LSV but can only be used as a golf cart. This means they purchase it and pay the 8% sales tax. But once they choose golf cart, it is always a golf cart. This way they do not have to register it with the DMV or pay property taxes on it. About 20% of our customers only want a golf cart.”

Jon continues, “In South Carolina, to be Street Legal, the vehicle must have the following:

- Brake lights
- Windshield
- Horn (in some municipalities)
- Seat belts (including the passenger side) for each seat
- Exterior mirrors
- Valid Driver license
- License plate
- Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)
- Vehicle registration
- Insurance

Just like with a car, the new owner must register with the DMV at time of purchase. If someone wants to upgrade their golf cart to be a street legal vehicle, they must ensure all the above items are included. The most difficult part of the upgrade is to increase the speed to be the minimum required by law. And only an electric golf cart can be upgraded as gas models are not allowed.” LSV’s cannot be driven on the freeway. According to federal law, your vehicle has to not only be able to do a minimum speed but also is restricted to roads with

a speed limit of 35 miles per hour or less. **Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards also dictate that all low-speed vehicles must be electric...no gas-powered vehicles allowed!**

Jon seems to have been born an entrepreneur and was always a hard worker. He knew as a teen, that if he wanted to buy something he would have to work to earn the money. He started mowing lawns in his neighborhood as a young boy. He then expanded to a landscaping business with a couple of his buddies. It became clear early on, that he had a head for business.

He tried college for a while and quickly discovered that school was not for him. He realized that he wanted to start earning money now! In addition to his landscape business, he loved to fix up cars. His grandfather was a car dealer and mechanic and Jon loved following him around and tried to

...

learn everything he could. He took the money from his landscaping business and would find old cars, fix them up and sell them for a tidy profit.

Jon's first job with a salary was selling cellular phones. After learning the business, he started his own cell phone company in Raleigh. Shortly after, he opened one in Wilmington. He sold that business out in 2002. In 2003 a friend recruited him to become the GM of his boat dealership. Jon did this for years managing the existing dealership and also helping with adding an additional location in Wilmington NC. When Jon's first daughter was born in 2006, he decided to hang up all the driving and long days to be closer to home and enjoy being a father. Jon went back to his roots and started Triangle Motorsports in Raleigh NC, where he has been ever since. Triangle Motorsports has sold thousands of cars over the years and transitioned over to boats and low speed vehicles in 2022. This is the best of both worlds for him.

Jon is always looking at business trends in the vehicle industry in everything from boats to golf cars. He researched the megastores in Texas and Florida. He saw that most of the mom-and-pop golf cart stores were barebones. John relays, "My vision was different. I wanted my stores to have cool beach vibe and décor. I want customers to feel like they are at the beach when they enter my stores. There are surfboards, palm trees, brilliant colors, and lots of gorgeous Low Speed Vehicles! I located my stores in high traffic area where I get a lot of curious walk-in traffic who are immediately wowed by what they see."

Jon says, "I grew up loving all kinds of vehicles. I love having my own business. I love being around people and making them happy with what



they are able to buy from me. I believe in the Golden Rule and treat my employees like family. "

"My wife and I have been married for 19 Years and we have two beautiful daughters, 13 and 16. They are my reason for being. My parents were not able to give me a lot when I was growing up, so I really enjoy spoiling them. They are great kids, and I am also trying to teach them all the facets of running a business. I love sharing my successes with them. They are already selling items online with the help of their mother and understand what the profit margins are on their assorted items. My wife and I believe there is no better way, than to learn by doing!"

Jon continues with a smile, "Our family loves everything Disney and we have been to Disney World over 20

times. It is truly the happiest place for us. When I do have spare time its all about family. I am a true family man that cherishes every moment that I get to spend with them. When I get all the future locations open, I hope to get back to my favorite thing to do, Saltwater fishing. Our love for the beach is what brought us here. We first had a beach house at Carolina Beach, NC, but as the kids got older, they preferred the excitement of the Grand Strand. We love it here!"

Learn more about Riptide Ridez and LSVs by checking out their website at riptideridez.com or giving them a call at 843-663-0710 for the N Myrtle Beach Store, or 843-314-9060 for Pawleys Island. Or you can drop by either store to see for yourself. They would love to see you. Tell them Real Producers sent you!

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Joellen PLYLER

CAROLINA SKY REAL ESTATE

Joellen Plyler initially started her real estate career to help her husband with his home inspection business, but with the explosion of the market, Joellen's husband Mitchell ended up getting his real estate license to help her grow her business! Mitchell encouraged her to get her license so they could better understand the realtor's perspective when booking and referring home inspections. After passing her real estate exam in October 2018, she was at a trade show with Mitchell where she met two people from a local small real estate office. "I decided I liked them so much, I wanted to hang out and work with them. So that is how my career started."

While Joellen was working at that small office, she enjoyed the camaraderie and learning about the real estate industry, but she was not making much traction with her business. It was at this time that she ran into an old friend who was working in Waxhaw, North Carolina selling real estate in Myrtle Beach for clients wanting homes and investment properties on the Grand Strand. "I started working with her as local agent here to help her clients. We worked on every deal together and she taught me more in the first two years with



her than I ever imagined I could learn. Thanks to that friend, Sheila Fleming, I have a lifelong mentor and someone I will continue to work with. I made the decision to work with Carolina Sky Real Estate, which is a new company this year, and I have never been happier to be part of a family that believes in the power of God in our lives."

Prior to real estate, Joellen was a High School Marketing Teacher and shares, "If I made it through that, I can make it through anything!" Joellen moved to North Carolina from Michigan 21 years ago and worked in retail, honing those important customer service skills. She graduated from UNC Charlotte with a Degree in Marketing and never really knew what she wanted to do with my

WRITTEN BY BARBARA GART • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DONALD HOVIS • TIDES EYE PHOTOGRAPHY



life. She is thrilled that "In my late 40s I finally found a career that I thoroughly enjoy!"

It is a career that paid off. Joellen's career volume is \$21 million, with \$15 million this year alone. In her five years in real estate, she has learned a lot, and shares, "The main thing I had to overcome to do well in my business is getting to a point of really loving myself. Giving myself grace for who I am and what gifts God has given me. I try not to be too hard on myself for not being perfect." She loves that the real estate lifestyle is a perfect fit for her and allows her to work full-time while still being able to focus on her family and visit her grandchildren.

Joellen has found that real estate can be a lonely business, even when many people surround you. "You need to be disciplined and self-motivating to be successful. I plan my days by the hour but give myself a break if things change." She also always puts her clients first, and developing those long-term relationships with her clients is what she finds most fulfilling. "I want my clients to feel good about referring me to their friends and family. Someone in the industry once told me 'Make sure you do right by your clients because you never know if you'll see them in the grocery store aisle and you want to make sure they are happy to see you!'"

“

When I moved here, I immediately wanted to get involved in some kind of charity for children.

”



...

Joellen and her husband Mitchell have three children, Christian, Drake and Miyah, and four grandchildren, with a fifth grandchild born at the end of 2022. "We enjoy when our children visit us at the beach because for them it's a vacation but for us it's a break to relax." Giving back and working with children was extremely important to Joellen when she moved to Myrtle Beach. "When I moved here, I immediately wanted to get involved in some kind of charity for children. My love for teaching children was something that I missed. I started to volunteer at The Children's Recovery Center and have not stopped. This facility and the employees are the most selfless, amazing woman that I have ever met. I am an advocate for children and would love to financially help every child I come across in my life. One day I want to own a home where I can house a mother and her children that are in need until they get on their feet."

Although she is always learning, Joellen has great advice to share with new agents. "Try to remember that most clients have not purchased a home in some time or even ever, so remember to walk them through every step and always answer your phone. You never know what agent you will work with again in the future so do not burn bridges." Her key to success is putting the clients FIRST and the money SECOND. This key value is embodied in one of Joellen's favorite quotes. "From start to finish, it's about relationships, and each relationship should never end!"



From start to finish, it's about relationships, and each relationship should never end!



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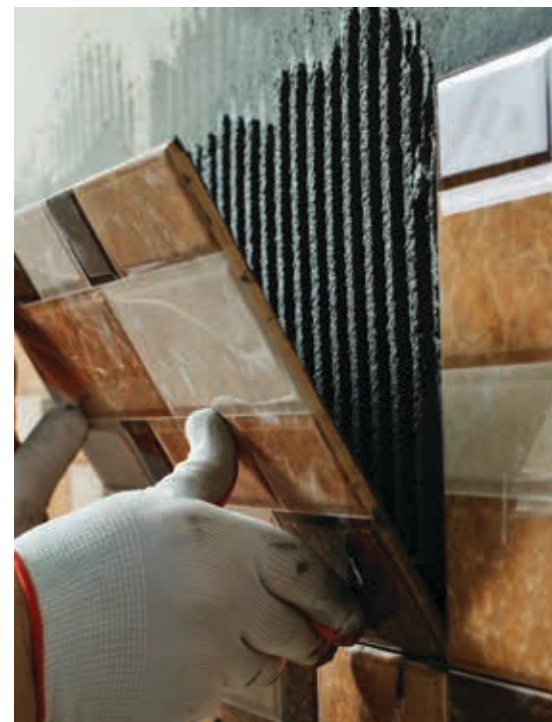
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Hank Thomas, owner and broker-in-charge of Century 21 Thomas, was born into the real estate business and has seen it all. He brings many years of real estate experience and local knowledge to his company. Having lived in North Myrtle Beach since 1956, Hank could be considered a native.

Hank will tell you, ‘My love for this area runs deep. My family came to the beach when just a few beach homes dotted the oceanfront and long before anyone had conceived of the idea of a condominium. It’s difficult to imagine today, that after Labor Day the beach looked like a ghost town. Everyone disappeared except a handful of locals.’

He is an active real estate developer and has served as the President of the Grand Strand Board of Realtors. He served as Regional Vice President for the SC Association of Realtors. Hank is well known for giving back. He is a past President of N Myrtle Beach Rotary Club and served on the North Myrtle Beach City Planning Commission.

Mr. Thomas deflects a lot of credit to others and was reticent to be featured in our magazine. He was the first broker interviewed when *Carolina Coast Real Producers* started. It has taken this long for him to agree to be featured!

Hank’s parents, Albert and Mildred, and his 6 siblings, moved to the beach in March of 1956 from Chadbourne. His mom’s cousin married Elbert Jordan who was in real estate in Crescent Beach. Hank says, “My parents were struggling, and Elbert told them that the beach was the land of opportunity, so mother moved the family. After a short while at the beach, mother went to work for Elbert. She worked with Mr. Jordan over year and got a taste of the real estate world. However, needing to help feed a household of 9 she took a job as executive secretary at Aerovox where she worked for 3 years. She felt the real estate bug in 1961. She

quit her job, got her license, and opened Thomas Realty in Crescent Beach in the spring of 1962.

Hank continues, “At that time the beach was made up of Cherry Grove, Ocean Drive, Crescent Beach, and Windy Hill. Each town had its own paved Main Street. Ocean Drive was the biggest and most developed. Highway 17 was a two-lane road. The buildup of the beach was very slow with just a few houses being built each year. In 1960-62 Highway 17 was widened to four-lanes.”

Hank relays, “My experience with real estate began in 1962 when my mother opened an office in Crescent Beach. I would help people rent a house and could overhear my mother talking with her clients. She took to the business world very quickly and in 1963 she opened a second office in Cherry Grove and by spring of ‘64 moved the family here. At this time, Phil Permenter, was actively involved in digging the Cherry Grove channels. Cherry Grove was the new beach and had a lot of buzz. Phil worked with Carl Meares Sr. of Fair bluff and EC Sanders of Tabor City. These were the two money-men behind the construction of the Cherry Grove Channels. The first channels were dug by Mr. Charlie Nixon whose family owned all of Cherry Grove plus lands in the Little River Neck area.”

“Mr. Charlie started the expansion of Cherry Grove in the early 50’s when he closed the inlet at Cherry Grove at the location around the Cherry Grove pier and tied it to a spit of land east of the inlet Mr. Charlie created a master

plan for Cherry Grove planning the channel fingers with channels coming all the way to Sea Mountain Highway. He dug the first channels at what is now 60-62nd avenues. In 1963 Mr. Charlie decided to sell tracts and let someone else dig the channels.”

Hank continues the NMB history, “Premium Investments, the Meares and Sanders team, purchased the tracts. Phil Permenter orchestrated the digging of the Channels and my mother teamed up with them in 1963 to handle all the sales. She closed the Crescent Beach office and moved the family to Cherry Grove where she and my father bought a house on 46th avenue for \$17,000! Cherry Grove was a boom town from the mid 60’s thru the mid 70’s as the channels were dug.”

“Things began to change dramatically in the late 60’s when the four separate towns agreed to join forces by consolidating into one town, the City of North Myrtle Beach. This move set the path for major expansion...it afforded the ability to create a central water system and soon after the creation of a sewer system. By the mid 70’s, the boulevard areas of North Myrtle Beach had a central sewer system. In the spring of 1976, a major event occurred that has forever changed the character of North Myrtle Beach; the first condominium project was approved for construction.”

Hank continues, “My mother sold a lot and a half in Cherry Grove to Gail Jordan and Bob Hancock, and they build the first condominium in North Myrtle Beach. This changed the character of NMB from a cottage-type

•••

▶▶ cover story

HANK Thomas HAS SEEN IT ALL

The Boom & Bust History
of North Myrtle Beach

...
community to what we have today. Within twelve months Tom Baugh and Les Morris of Myrtle Beach came up with their prefabricated condominiums, A Place at the Beach. They built their first building at Crescent Beach on 21st avenue and the condominium boom was on. In 1981 another revolution took place in development when Bucky Drake built the Crescent Sand condominiums at 21st avenue S. This was the first high rise, an 8-story concrete and steel structure.”

This started a second condominium boom that lasted until the boom burst with the 1986 tax revision. In the early 80’s, the tax laws had been changed which created a tremendous incentive for people to invest in investment real estate because of the changes in the depreciation schedule. Investors could now write off a real estate investment in as little as 5 years. These tax law changes created a boom that pushed up real estate prices 200% in 4 years. The boom came to a bust in 1986 with the enactment of the 1986 tax reform. Overnight the depreciation tables were changed from accelerated depreciation to straight line and real estate sales slowed immediately. Then in 1989, we saw the Savings & Loan industry collapse. Property values declined 35-40% between 1986-92. The beach boom was over and would not rise again until 1996.

Hank says, “1986 set the stage for a massive slow down at the beaches... however during the early 80’s a sleeping giant in the county was beginning the move...Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority had been formed and Little River water and sewer had been created...unnoticed by most, adding sewer to the county was setting the stage for an unexpected growth. In 1986 Ernie Younts, Carol Rogers and I secured 400 acres in little river and developed River Hills



“ I AM PROUD OF OUR CENTURY 21 THOMAS SALES TEAM. I WORK WITH SOME OF THE BEST SALES ASSOCIATES ON THE BEACH. ”

subdivision. This was the first golf course community built west of the waterway on the north end. The subdivision and golf course were completed in the fall of 1988 and the first of 300 plus homes were begun. The sewer was to change the entire grand strand...it set the stage to change the beaches from a summer resort to a year-round community...the boom in residential development took a hit and was stagnated by the real estate recession that began in earnest in late 1989 with the collapse of many of the Savings & Loans.”

Hank continues, “The recovery in real estate began slowly in 1992 and by 1996 real estate was strong enough that Bucky stepped and built the first high rise since 1986. This project set in motion the 3rd and biggest real estate condominium boom that lasted until the bust of 2007. Property values during this 12-year period increased 400%.”

“The same boom that occurred to the condo world happened to residential development. From 1998 -2007 the number of residential lots and homes increased by 800-1000 percent. This

10 year growth period came to a crashing halt when the banking world collapsed in August 2007. Property values on single-family lots since 2007 declined 75% and condo values declined 55% by the end of 2008.”

Slowly life returned to the real estate industry after the ‘07 collapse and by 2018 property values were rising and the hot item was and is new home development for primarily retirees moving to the beach area. Then COVID-19 hit in 2020. After a short closure of short-term rentals , the boom was on again.

Hank’s life in real estate and NMB has made him a pillar of his community. He has continued his mom’s legacy in a beautiful way. Hank reports, “I am proud of our CENTURY 21 Thomas sales team. I work with some of the best sales associates on the beach. Every day they make coming to work a real joy.” One of his top realtors, Scott Matthews, says, “Hank is a great Broker-in-Charge. He always sets a great example as a businessman, community leader, and all-around good person.” Hank’s mother would be very proud.

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