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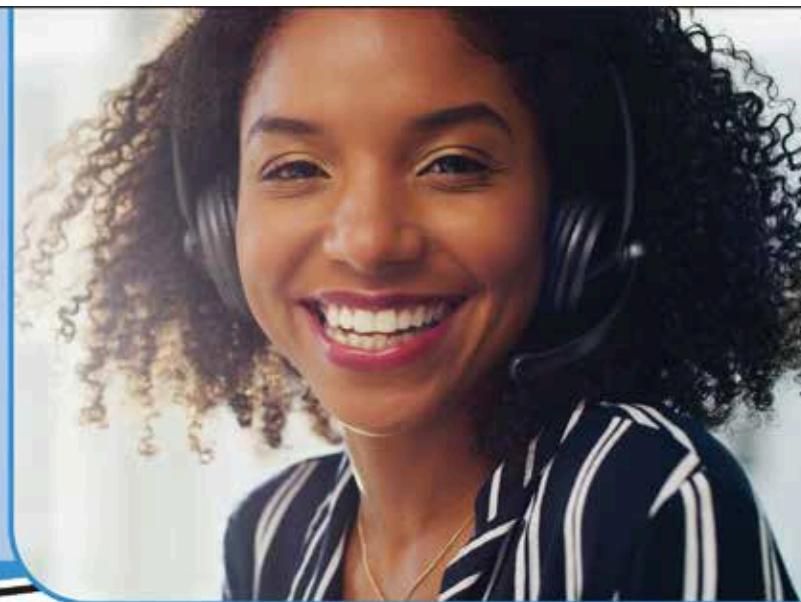
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» publisher's note

# Nurturing Your SPHERE



Dear NOVA Real Producers,

A happy May to you, especially to all the hard-working moms out there! With Mother's Day just around the corner, take a moment to reflect on those relationships in your life you cherish the most, and which ones could be worth the time and effort to nurture a bit more.

Nurturing a sphere of influence, or SOI, is crucial for REALTORS® as it can often lead to increased referrals and repeat business. Here are some timely tips for our Top 500 community to nurture their SOI for years to come.

**Personalize your communication!**

Don't underestimate the importance of personalized communication with past clients, friends, and family members — it's essential. Send them personalized messages, pick up the phone, and schedule in-person meetings to keep in touch.

**Give regular updates!** Keep your SOI updated about your professional and personal life. Share your real estate business achievements, new listings, or market updates with them on a regular basis.

**Get comfortable with social media!**

Stay connected with your SOI by engaging with them on social media.

Commenting on their posts, sharing interesting content, and promoting your own real estate business are great ways to stay top of mind.

**Organize an event!** Organizing events is an excellent way to stay connected with your sphere. Consider hosting client appreciation parties, annual holiday gatherings, or community programs to build stronger, lasting relationships.

**Send a newsletter!** A monthly or quarterly newsletter can keep your SOI informed about the ever-changing real estate market, new listings, and help them stay informed. A newsletter also shows your circle that you're paying attention to market trends.

**Start a referral program!** Offer referral incentives to your SOI. This encourages them to refer you to their friends and family members who are looking to buy or sell a property if there's something in it for them too.

Using one or more of these tips with your SOI is a great long-term investment that can really pay off BIG down the road in the form of referrals and repeat business!!

Thank you to all who came out in late March and joined us at our first-ever

Masquerade Sneaker Ball! We had an amazing time! Check out the photos on page 26 and on our social media and be sure to tag yourself and your friends! We're looking forward to seeing you all soon at our next event. Keep an eye on your inbox for your exclusive invitation, coming soon!

This month, we're pleased that preferred partners **Primary Residential Mortgage** and **Curds & Cuts** have joined our NOVA Real Producers family. Welcome!

Happy Mother's Day,  
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# What is your funniest high school memory?



**DONNY SAMSON**  
Samson Properties

My funniest high school memory is probably when we were playing our rival in varsity baseball. I was so fired up in the dugout and cheering that I got light-headed and passed out in the on-deck net. I think my friends have exaggerated it a little over time... But that's the story, as they tell it.



**MARY BETH EISENHARD**  
Long & Foster Real Estate

I graduated from high school in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1974. So you must consider that "time in our lives." We had multiple wings in our high school - classrooms with windows. And one day, a "streaker" started at one end of the campus and ran all the way (naked!) to the other end of the campus. You could hear the roar as he ran by the classrooms. It was a total disruption, but so funny!



**KENNY HOWARD**  
DryHome Roofing & Siding

When I was in high school, back in the day, this was the time frame of when the show "Jackass" had just came out, so I took a girl's project, which was a beta fish, and I swallowed it, attempting to throw it back up like they did on the show with a goldfish. Well, I wasn't able to throw it back up because the teacher came back in the room. When it was time for the girl to show her project, everyone burst out laughing and looked at me. It was pretty embarrassing, but also amazing at the same time.



**JENNIFER MCCARTHY**  
Kensington Vanguard National Land Services

I was sneaking out of school in my friend's car when the security guard approached the car. I got in the trunk and my friend drove off campus with me closed in the trunk. I exited a few miles down the road.



**JESSICA WELLAR**  
Kristin Brindley Team

Not funny at the time, but in retrospect, my funniest memory was getting canned from McDonald's in 11th grade with a 'McPink slip' after 30 days for not being perky enough about my fry girl duties... My fledgling career (and self-esteem) could only go uphill after that! LOL



**RICK PERRY**  
eXp Realty

I always hung out with my BFF's sister and her friends in high school. We would joyride in my car and just had a great time! Keep in mind these girls were "fine" and beautiful, but as far as dating or anything else, they were like, "Rick, you're like a brother to us." So they baited me during class break to come into the girls' bathroom... Somehow, the teacher found out and I was suspended for one day. It was funny!



**ELLEN BUCHANAN**  
NOVA Real Producers

I've worn glasses since the third grade. In high school, when we were all horribly self-conscious, I wanted to look cuter, so I took them off and approached a group of boys who were friends with the boy I had a crush on. I asked, "Have you seen (him)?" And to my horror, he was standing right there with them. (Face palm!)



**JULIAN VARO**  
Real Broker LLC

My friend, because of his hyena-like laugh, is super infectious. They bet him he couldn't make a jump shot from the top of the bleachers, and right before the ball went in, he hit a girl in the head and he was laughing so hard as we were hiding.

Said friend was very entrepreneurial in high school, and he would sell BBQ sauce and hot sauce, so he had six lockers filled with BBQ sauce. He was so good at it that each table had his BBQ sauce at it. He should be an entertainer, but instead, he's a flight attendant! His dad's homemade BBQ sauce... His dad said share it with your friends, not sell it!



**WENDY ROSS**  
Kristin Brindley Team

I had a clothing class right before the school day-care would open each day (young kids would be dropped off so students could practice for early childhood education). I didn't like kids back then... There was a large sandbox in the room and I used to bury and hide all the sand toys so they couldn't find them.



**GRANT BRONSON**  
Real Broker LLC

Our high school prom was shut down. We were on a party bus and there was alleged drinking on the bus. They breathalyzed all of us, and my friend saw people getting taken by cops, not in handcuffs, but taken by them ... and booked it! At the end of the parking lot, he smashed his face on the ground, got up, and ran into the woods. On top of that, our bus driver drove away so the cops had no evidence of this alleged drinking. The boy who ran showed up at the after-party in an all-ripped suit and one shoe, and he lived to see another day. On Monday, we got called to the principal's office over the loudspeaker for questioning by an actual cop and the school resource officer. It was kind of like good cop/bad cop. They threatened to pull tapes, but we knew they wouldn't, and shockingly no one got in trouble!

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# MY WORST DAY

## in the Title Sales Business

If you have been following along on my blog and video journey since 2012 on DCTiteGuy.com or read my articles in *NOVA/DC Metro Real Producers* magazines, you may look at me in a certain way. Maybe you see me as an expert in the title business or someone who has always been successful. Well, that has not always been the case. For every REALTOR®, lender, and title person who you see as successful, there were many times when they had to crawl through mud and endure some difficult times. This story is one of them for me.

### Big Kahuna

In 2006, I was just one year into the business. No training, so trying to figure it out along the way. Our office in Phoenix had a big Realtor client who sold real estate to many of the players on the Phoenix professional sports teams. He was a high roller and had an ego to match. He was not my client, but a client of my branch manager. My interactions with him were not frequent, but when they did happen, I was on pins and needles because what came out of his mouth was very unpredictable.

One day, he closed three transactions with us, all into the millions of dollars. Back in 2006, we didn't have social media to easily see other agents and interact with them, so my branch manager gave me the closing packages with the commission checks and asked me to drop them off at his office. This was advantageous because I could then wander the real estate office and talk to the other agents.

### The Ask

As I was driving to his office I got a call from my branch manager, "Wade, are you to the office yet?" Me: "No." Her: "Ok, um... (Name) wants you to stop by McDonald's and pick him up a number 2 with a Diet Coke." There was silence because I couldn't believe I was hearing this. "WHAT!?" I had over \$150,000 in commission checks with me, and this guy wants me to do what? Imagine how I felt at that moment. My place in the chain of hierarchy was realized. After going back and forth, pleading to not go forward with this humiliation, I relented as it was in the best interest of our title branch.

### Raise the Bar

When I arrived with the client's food, he quickly took it from me and began eating, and carelessly tossed his closing packages and the \$150,000 of

checks into a drawer as if I gave him a promo flyer about an upcoming event. I just shook my head.

From that moment on, I pledged to myself to raise the bar and always be a valuable resource to clients. I wanted the value to be seen so clearly that this would never happen again. That day helped me realize the future of what I wanted to be and how I wanted to be seen by my peers and clients. Being humiliated to that degree, and having someone not care because they feel that is the role you play to them, is a hard pill to swallow.

Everyone's journey is different. Never underestimate what is underneath someone else's successful appearance today. Lastly, be humble, treat others with respect, and reward people for the value they bring to you.



Wade Vander Molen is the senior vice president of business development for Pruitt

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

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▶ marketing matters

By Todd Lebowitz

# What Does Your ONLINE AGENT PRESENCE Say About You?

If you're a real estate agent, you should be googling yourself routinely to monitor your online presence. When you do, are the results making you say, "This is an agent I need to work with!" If not, there are plenty of steps you can take to improve your online presence. Below is a quick checklist to give you a guide to all of the opportunities for greater exposure.

## Who Do You Want to Be?

Before taking action, take a moment to self-reflect on your brand and what it stands for. Since your career evolves, it's helpful to do this on a yearly basis. What are the three things you want to be known for when someone finds you online?

What impression do you want to create? Don't try to be someone you're not. That's exhausting and won't bring out your best. The online world allows you to amplify what you most want to get attention. Combine your unique personality with your target market, location, and niche areas of expertise for a solid brand.

## Recycle, Reuse, Repurpose Content

The key is in repurposing content for a variety of platforms. This not only exponentially saves time, but it also gives you a consistent agent brand. That photo you took for Instagram? Make a LinkedIn post with it and a Tweet.

## LinkedIn

Easily position yourself as an expert in your area, thanks to their article-writing platform, tags, and networking capabilities.

## Instagram

Show off photos of your homes and post graphics with testimonials. Keep it simple. Use a grid designer app to create a consistent rather than jumbled look.

## Facebook

Cultivate connections using Facebook's extensive local groups. Set your Instagram account to automatically push content to your Facebook page.

## Personal Website

Stand out from other agents with a website tied to your brokerage and one you create yourself. This personal one can be simple to make using WordPress and a real estate agent theme.

## Google My Business

Double, no, triple-check that all of your contact information is right. Use review tools and incentives to encourage former satisfied clients to write reviews.

## Listing Websites

Zillow, Trulia, Realtor.com. Make sure you have consistent messaging on all of these listing sites. They have the power of pulling in lots of traffic and you want to make sure your branding is spot on.

## Review Websites

Don't overlook the continuous carousel of real estate rating sites. Although you don't want to break your budget by subscribing to their bells and whistles, it's worth taking advantage of free listings.



With more than 25 years of experience, Todd Lebowitz is CEO and owner of My Marketing Matters, which he runs with his business partner Ram Devaguptapu. Together, they have grown the company to be a recognized leader in real estate marketing with more than 20,000 clients locally, regionally, and nationwide.

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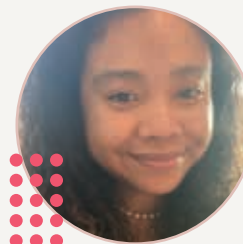
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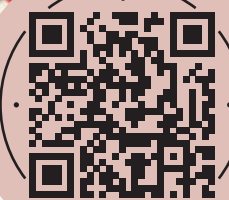


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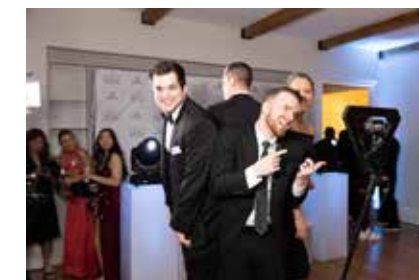
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was made possible because of you! Thank you to Yelina of **Curds & Cuts**, who provided the delicious food for the evening. Another big thank-you to the amazing DJ team from **Gold Event Group** and beautiful decorations from **Popped by Dominique**. It takes a village to strengthen our community. To everyone involved, we adore you!

A special thank-you to our valued sponsors: **Vellum Mortgage, Pruitt Title, and Scalable RES LLC**. Thank you to our partners **Ryan Corvello Photography** and **HD Bros** for capturing the night — this event's success

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"For moms in this industry: First, don't get down on yourself for feeling like you aren't giving enough time to your family. As a career military mom, I missed a lot of special moments in our kids' lives, and now

that they're adults, they don't remember those at all. More importantly, they saw me as a great role model with strong convictions and work ethic and a willingness to make a better life for others and, in turn, for our family. Second, life and real estate are team sports. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Whether you need help with business tasks or just with more mundane tasks at home so you can preserve your quality time, it's a worthy investment that will pay dividends for you and your family."



KELLY ETTRICH  
Century 21 Redwood Realty

"I always focus on the relationships, not the transaction... I want to understand where people are on their path in life. Understanding where they are in their journey helps me to find space that will fit their needs. In addition, I work hard to develop solid relationships with other agents by supporting their efforts and getting to know them on a professional and personal level."



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A Word from Our Preferred Partner:



KELLY KATALINAS  
Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation

"I try to be a true partner in the real estate transaction. Working together, we need to provide an excellent experience for all parties involved in the transaction. I take responsibility for my actions, and the actions of

all members of my team, from loan application to loan closing. We can make a difference in someone's life, with every client we serve, and we need to serve them well."







▶ partner spotlight

By Holly Morgan  
Photos by Ryan Corvello

# KELLY KATALINAS

Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation



*A True  
Partner in the  
Real Estate  
Transaction*

Kelly Katalinas can sum up her rewarding mortgage career in three words: “It’s about gratitude.”

“Remembering to be thankful, growing with and adapting to change, and being a resource for the community are all important on the road to success,” she notes.

Kelly is the branch manager and a certified military mortgage specialist at Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation. She credits her

blue-collar beginnings and her large Italian family for instilling a strong work ethic and a drive to be the best at what she does: educating homebuyers and treating them with integrity, respect, and honesty.

After graduating from James Madison University with a degree in business management and a minor in economics, Kelly spent nine months in human resources but came to realize she was meant to change careers and help people in the housing market. “I met a

woman in the mortgage industry who assisted a friend with a home purchase,” she says. “She and I talked for some time about her profession as a loan officer, and the next thing I knew, I was meeting with her manager.”

Over the past 37 years, Kelly has built her reputation as a straight shooter. She aims for truthfulness, but always listens with patience and works diligently to find the best solutions for homebuyers.





Kelly Katalinas is a branch manager with Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation.

“I try to be a true partner in the real estate transaction. Working together, we need to provide an excellent experience for all parties involved in the transaction. I take responsibility for my actions, and the actions of all members of my team, from loan application to loan closing. We can make a difference in someone’s life, with every client we serve, and we need to serve them well.”

Kelly also realizes the real estate and mortgage industry is constantly evolving.



“The housing market has seen a lot of change since 2020 when the pandemic began,” she reflects. “Looking ahead to the rest of 2023 and beyond, new approaches and strategies to purchasing a home will occur when interest rates continue to increase. There is still an overall shortage of homes on the market to meet demand, regardless of the recent increases in mortgage interest rates.”

“We have to continually change and adapt to industry trends and challenge ourselves daily, especially with circumstances that are beyond our control,” she adds. “There is always room for growth, and always an opportunity to learn from others and improve.”

Kelly’s meaning of success has also changed since starting her mortgage career. In 1986, the housing industry was male dominated, very competitive, and all about hitting your numbers. The focus now is on building and maintaining relationships, coaching people to be successful, and bringing others forward.

According to Kelly, one of her biggest strengths is her ability to understand the importance of a seamless real estate transaction.



#### FAMILY FOCUS

Kelly Katalinas lives with her husband, Michael, in Springfield. They have been married for 32 years and have two adult children, Christopher and Jaclyn. The family enjoys traveling and spending time at their vacation home in Topsail Island, North Carolina.

“I love to spend time with my family,” Kelly says. “As my children have gotten older, I see them less frequently, so when I can spend time with them, those moments are most special to me. As my husband and I are both in mortgage lending, our work hours are often hectic, so when we are together, it’s just nice to take a breath and relax. Michael continues to make me smile daily, so those moments are very special.”

“My team and I go to great lengths to effectively communicate often with all parties throughout the process,” she says. “We want to be sure our clients are comfortable with their financing choices as we understand they might only go through the home-buying process a few times in their lives. Buying a home is a special time, and we will never forget that.”

Kelly plans to continue starting each day with gratitude. After three decades of originating home loans and managing teams of loan originators, she is thankful for her life and the work she has accomplished.

Working at Fairway is perfect for her in many ways, she concludes. “I love the name of my company because individually and as a team, we embrace a culture of treating our valued customers and clients, as well as teammates, with fairness.”

Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation is a full-service mortgage-lending company. Their experienced staff offers expertise in all areas of mortgage lending, including purchases, refinances, renovation, and reverse mortgages. They are licensed in all 50 states. For more information visit [www.kellykatalinas.com](http://www.kellykatalinas.com).







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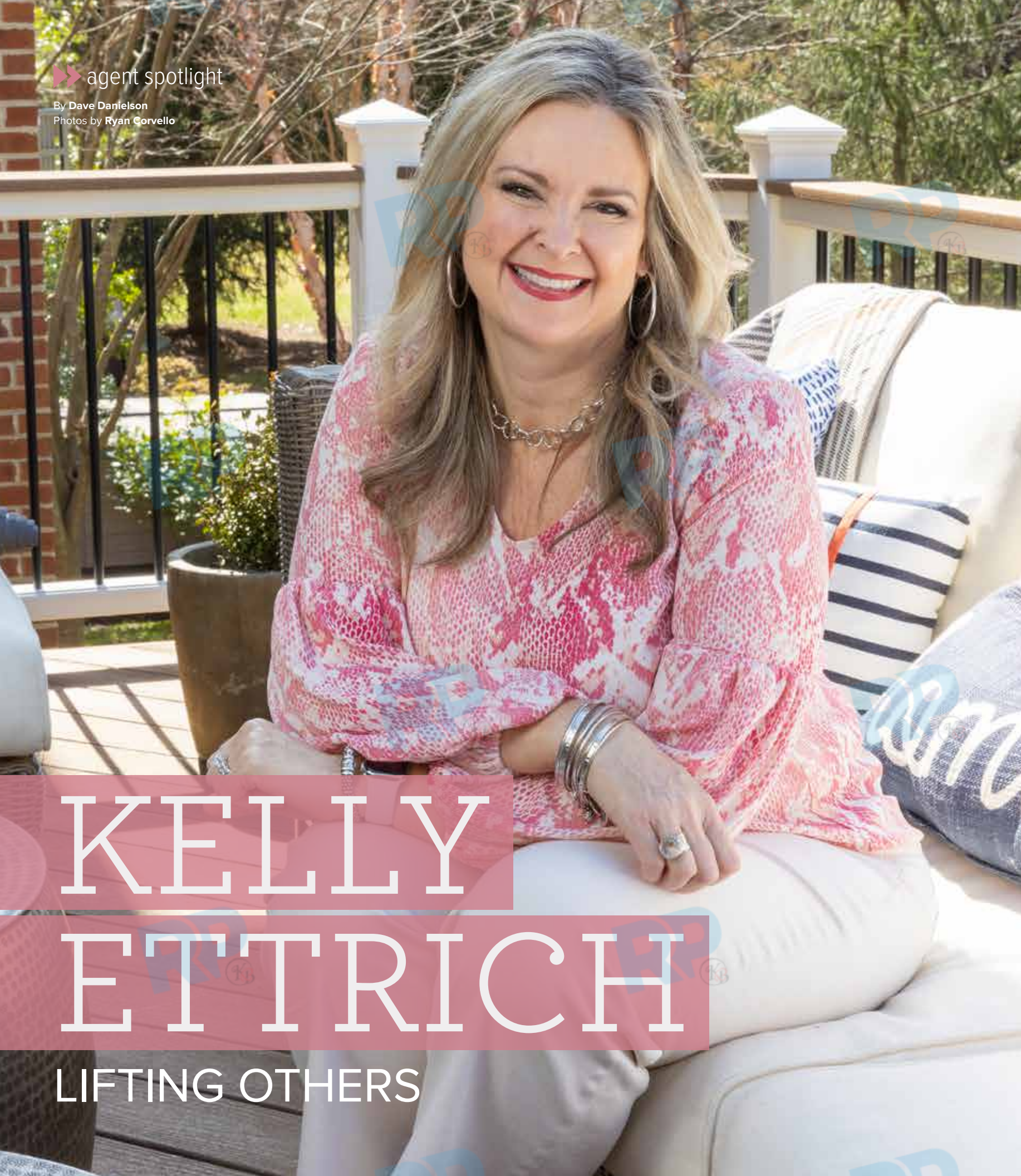
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▶ agent spotlight

By Dave Danielson  
Photos by Ryan Corvello



# KELLY ETTRICH

LIFTING OTHERS

Setting your sights on the goals you have in mind and then reaching them is no small accomplishment. What's even more remarkable is being able to lift others with you. That's an area where Kelly Ettrich excels.

As a REALTOR® with Century 21 Redwood Realty, Kelly has a passion for opening doors for others around her. "I love getting to know my clients as people and become friends with them. Maintaining a relationship with them is very important to me. Each year, I host a huge holiday party in my home to show them my appreciation," Kelly says.

"My clients have nicknamed me the 'real estate sherpa' because I try to do the heavy lifting to make buying or selling a house easy and stress free."

### Coming of Age

Kelly earned her real estate license in 2015, but her story began well before that, growing up in McKeesport, Pennsylvania — a suburb of Pittsburgh.

"Southwestern Pennsylvania was a very blue-collar, hardworking part of the U.S. Most of my friends' parents worked in the steel mills. We moved there when I was in third grade. Coming from a hardworking family, it was no surprise that my parents opened a family business when I was 10. It was a mini golf course — K&K Miniature Golf, named after me and my little sister, Karrie."

There were plenty of long days and hard-won lessons during those years working at the family business. "For example, we would

place coupons on hundreds of car windshields at every fair in the area. We opened up the golf course each spring after many long and cold weekends cleaning the grounds in preparation for the opening," Kelly says.

"My parents based the way they did business on the Disney model of customer service — providing a top level of experience for people. This hugely influenced me ... teaching me about how to interact with people and the value of hard work and customer service."

### Learning and Moving Forward

After high school, Kelly attended Northwestern University, where she studied economics.

From there, she worked for Accenture for 16 years. During that time, she gained valuable experience in business consulting and change management.

In time, Kelly transitioned from front-line consulting to director of facilities and services and eventually moved to Northern Virginia to become the East region lead.



“ “ ” ”

My clients have nicknamed me the 'real estate sherpa' because I try to do the heavy lifting to make buying or selling a house easy and stress free.



Kelly Ettrich and her husband, Mark; with three of their seven children, Keaton, Kendal, and Clay; and their two Cavalier King Charles spaniels, Savannah and Paisley.



Hershey Park ... and after 12, we would go on vacation,” Kelly says.

In her free time, Kelly and her family enjoy skiing together. Kelly also likes to host friends and soak up every moment she can enjoy with her family.

**Qualities of a Leader**

When you talk with Kelly, it’s easy to see the qualities that make her successful in life and business. “I always focus on the relationships, not the transaction,” she says.

“I want to understand where people are on their path in life. Understanding where they are in their journey helps me to find space that will fit their family’s needs. In addition, I work hard to develop solid relationships with other agents by supporting their efforts and getting to know them on a professional and personal level.”

As Kelly plans for her next steps in her business, she continues to work on behalf of those around her ... lifting them closer to their dreams and ambitions.



After many years of balancing a career and motherhood, she became a stay-at-home mom with her four children. However, nine years ago, she found herself in an “unexpected place” — divorced with no job and four children. “I took a year to focus on creating a warm, supportive, happy, and safe environment for my kids. I also did soul searching. I always loved real estate and thought it would be a good way for me to combine my skills.”

**Wonderful Life**

Family is at the heart of life for Kelly. She treasures time with her family,

including her husband of four years and their seven children: 26-year-old Maddie, 25-year-old Kenzie, 23-year-old Meredith, 22-year-old Clay, 22-year-old Malcolm, 14-year-old Kendal, and 13-year-old Keaton.

“I was a single mom for my first four years in real estate. I looked for ways to involve my children in the business. I got a chalkboard, and each time I sold a home, they drew a little house on it. As an incentive for the kids, with every four houses, we could go out to eat and celebrate. Then, after eight, we would go to



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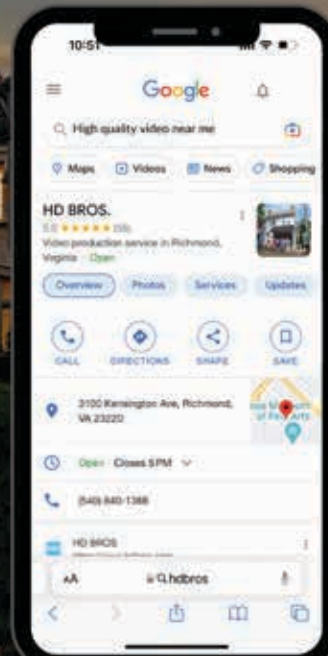



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# Faith Saunders

By Jason Collins  
Photos by Ryan Corvello

▶▶ rising star

Faith Saunders, has one constant in her life: her desire to help others.

A self-starter who doesn't need much push to get things done, Faith has got the numbers to prove it. Her first year as a REALTOR®, she was named a Top Producer by the Northern Virginia Association of REALTORS® (NVAR).

Faith's passion for real estate is founded on selling excellence. She has a deep understanding of the local real estate

market and is committed to helping as many people as she can to find the home of their dreams. Her achievements continued into 2023, and she regularly ranks among the top five on the Fox Homes Team of approximately 40 agents.

### Switching Careers

Faith joined the real estate industry in 2021, after spending six years as a physician assistant, a major transition between two very different worlds. But she is not one to shy away from a challenge.

Faith received her bachelor's degree in pre-med at Virginia Tech and her master's degree at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. After working in the emergency room and, later, in family medicine, Faith was looking to expand her horizons.

### In Search of a Limitless Career

Faith eventually began to feel stymied in her job as a PA. The opportunities for her advancement were limited and she was itching to try something new. She came across real estate while looking for a limitless career and, in her search, reached out to her former college roommate, who had gone on to become a successful Realtor in northern Virginia. Faith was curious to know if her friend believed she'd be a good fit for the industry, and her question was received with a lot of encouragement.

Faith firmly believed that a career in real estate would provide her with everything she wanted: infinite opportunities for progress, variation every day, and plenty of challenges to keep things fresh.

### The Journey Began with a Single Step

Faith didn't waste time making the change. Knowing that she had her work cut out for her, she decided to take the plunge headfirst and obtained her real estate license after just six weeks of intense studying on her lunch breaks and after work.

### Investing in Her Success

Faith credits her success to dedication and commitment to the profession. Knowing she was starting from scratch; she knew she had to put her entire focus into the job. In fact, this is one of Faith's favorite aspects of real estate: her level of success is directly influenced by her level of effort.

There were two major roadblocks looming for Faith at the start of her new career, the first being overcoming the stigma of leaving a full-time job in health care, which was not something she took lightly. The second was simply the concept of starting over. "When I meet a new client, they don't know that I was a PA with a long list of credentials. This is challenging when you're used to having a very different experience when you walk into a room," Faith explains.





Faith Saunders is a rising star on the Fox Homes Team at Pearson Smith Realty.



**“** *If you don't like something about the way your life is going, you must be the one to change it, and you must not be afraid to do so.*

and helped me develop my own vision for my real estate career.

“Casey Menish was another influential mentor in my life. Since college, she has been my best friend and confidante. She was the first person to encourage my inroad into the real estate industry, and she taught me that compassion, attention to detail, and professionalism must be the cornerstones of your business,” Faith says.

**Looking to the Future**

“If I could give my younger self some advice, it would be that it's okay to change your mind. If you don't like something about the way your life is going, you must be the one to change it, and you must not be afraid to do so. Never be satisfied with stagnancy; always reinvent yourself and grow as a person,” Faith advises.

The most appealing aspect of the real estate industry to Faith is that it is wide open with so many possibilities. As Faith points out, hard work never goes out of style, and she has worked hard to establish herself as a market expert. She is constantly learning about the local market. “If you want to be successful in the field, you need to have the data,” she notes. Her advice to rising Realtors is to be sponges, constantly soaking up knowledge through reading, listening to podcasts, attending webinars and conferences, and learning from colleagues.



Faith Saunders and her husband Robert welcomed baby Audrey Rose in January.

But Faith quickly realized that her compassionate nature and ability to connect with patients would be extremely beneficial to her career and to her clients. “In the emergency room, a healthcare provider only has about 30 seconds to build trust with the patient. This could be the patient's worst day — or one of their worst days — and you must convey confidence and competence for them to believe in your ability to help them,” Faith recounts. The same is true when meeting a new client, she says; it's critical to quickly establish your expertise.

**The Value of Mentorship**

Faith is also quick to give credit to the more seasoned agents that lent her a helping hand when she was first starting out. “Dustin Fox and his wife Devon were instrumental in my introduction to real estate. I was one of their first agents, and Dustin was a fantastic mentor who always made time for me, invested in me,

“Most importantly, never lose sight of gratitude,” she emphasizes. “This is your ‘why,’ your motivation for getting out of bed in the morning, and your driving force for success. Recognize what you have in front of you while striving to be more.”

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# MEG CZAPIEWSKI

— THE STRENGTH OF A MOTHER —

cover story

By Zachary Cohen



Photo by Ryan Corvello



Members of the Honorable Service Realty team at eXp Realty (from left to right: Esther Lerch, Meg Czapiewski, Adriana Griffin, Renee Conrad). (Photo by Ryan Corvello)

Before becoming a REALTOR®, Meg Czapiewski spent 29 years serving our nation in the Air Force. During this time, she got married, raised four children, and lived all over the world. If there's anyone that understands the challenges of moving and balancing family life, it's Meg.

When Meg was a Squadron Commander in England, she began a tradition of hosting a Mother's Day brunch for the families in her unit. "Two-thirds of our squadron was deployed, so we started hosting a brunch for moms whose spouses were deployed. We gave the kids the tickets so they could treat their moms. We had activities for kids and a nice brunch for moms. The idea was to allow them to relax from the ominous responsibility of being a single mom with a deployed husband," Meg explains.

Meg's Mother's Day brunch was a huge hit — so much so that decades later, she still receives feedback about

how special it was. So Meg decided to bring her Mother's Day brunch back to life, this time in service of the Northern Virginia community. Meg hosted her first annual event in 2022.

"I wanted to bring that here because we work in a very military-centric market area. I knew a lot of my community would not have someone celebrating them for Mother's Day, so we kicked this off last year, and this year it will be bigger and better," Meg explains. "It's a brunch for moms and kids that didn't have someone else to celebrate Mother's Day with them — a single mom, a deployed spouse, a first responder that had to work that day, for example. We're an all-female

team and most of us are moms, so this is near to all our hearts."

#### BUILDING COMMUNITY

After 29 years in the Air Force, Meg retired as a colonel. Her final assignment was at the Pentagon, and by that time, her husband was working in government contracting, so they decided to make Virginia home.

As she transitioned to a more domestic lifestyle, Meg was unsure if she wanted to follow the traditional, post-military path into government contracting and service. So she got her real estate license to explore whether it would be a good fit — and the answer was a resounding yes.





"I really liked it. I felt this was something totally different, and I looked forward to that," Meg reflects. "I have spent many years moving around and have had many different experiences with Realtors, some good and some not good. That always sat in the back of my head. The good Realtors really made a difference."

Meg believed she could make a difference, too, and she was right. A decade later, she's thriving as the leader of Honorable Service Realty, a team with eXp Realty. She has two other agents in production on her team, Renee Conrad, who worked in hospitality and real estate before hiring Meg to help her buy her first home, and Adrianna Griffin, a former dentist and pastry chef from Colombia. Honorable Service Realty also has four rock-star administrative staff members. After a banner year in 2021, the team closed a still impressive 84 transactions for \$48 million in 2022.

"I chose the team name because I wanted my brand to signify the core values I learned and adopted from the Air Force: service before self, excellence in all we do, and integrity always. Everybody I hired into this team had to get that, had to understand it wasn't about the paychecks. It was about serving our clients. Without exception, the people on my team honor and embody those values. I'm so grateful for my team. I wouldn't be in the position I am without my fabulous team... We love each other."

**WORDS OF WISDOM**

Meg has been through countless moves, raising her children while she and her husband Mike were active-duty military members. While there were tough times, she's proud of how well her kids handled the continual transitioning. She believes that they've become stronger, more resilient, and more worldly adults as a result.

Alongside her commitment to her military and real estate careers, family has always been at the center of Meg's life. She lost her oldest son, Owen, in 2006 and has three adult children, Tierney, Tanner, and Savannah, who has blessed her with three grandchildren that live in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Meg also remains close with her mom, who often helps her out at open houses and events.

"You just do what you have to do," she says. "There were times that were tough, but my kids all flourished in the system and have very positive things to say about their experiences. We lived overseas four times — Panama, Japan, England, and Germany. In each of those places, we traveled as much as we could. That experience helped make them who they are today."

With so much experience under her belt, Meg has an unconventional take on work-life balance. She believes — and has proven — that it is possible to devote oneself fully to a career and still raise happy, healthy children.

"For moms in this industry: First, don't get down on yourself for feeling like you aren't giving enough time to your family. As a career military mom, I missed a lot of special moments in our kids' lives, and now that they're adults, they don't remember those at all. More importantly, they saw me as a great role model with strong convictions and work ethic and a willingness to make a better life for others and, in turn, for our family. Second, life (and real estate) is a team sport. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Whether you need help with business tasks or just with more mundane tasks at home so you can preserve your quality time, it's a worthy investment that will pay dividends for you and your family."

Life and real estate are team sports. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Whether you need help with business tasks or just with more mundane tasks at home ... it's a worthy investment that will pay dividends for you and your family.







## Comfort. Color. Style.

For 2023, the hottest interior design trends are all about comfort, color and style. Bold window treatments, lamps and rugs make a personality-packed statement, while earthy color palettes, vintage pieces, and warm woods cozy up the kitchen and other living areas. Options for sustainable and performance fabrics and furnishings are ever-growing, making your home a serene, timeless space that's kinder to the planet and your peace of mind.

By Shauna Bryant, National Editor



1. Dedicated dining rooms 2. Sustainability 3. Natural stone finishes 4. Vintage furniture 5. Statement lamps  
6. Maximalist rugs 7. Performance fabrics 8. Warm woods 9. Micro luxury 10. Jewel box laundry rooms



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|                  |         |     |             |   |             |     |             |
|------------------|---------|-----|-------------|---|-------------|-----|-------------|
| Katherine Hunter | Compass | 4.5 | \$3,105,000 | 5 | \$6,790,634 | 9.5 | \$9,895,634 |
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| RANK | NAME           | OFFICE                                      | SELLING # | SELLING \$  | BUYING # | BUYING \$   | SALES | TOTAL \$    |
|------|----------------|---|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------|-------------|
| 145  | Windy W Harris | Hunt Country Sotheby's International Realty | 5         | \$3,342,500 | 2        | \$1,930,000 | 7     | \$5,272,500 |

| RANK | NAME            | OFFICE                 | SELLING # | SELLING \$  | BUYING # | BUYING \$   | SALES | TOTAL \$    |
|------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------|-------------|
| 163  | Elliott R Oliva | Keller Williams Realty | 2         | \$1,954,000 | 4        | \$3,113,000 | 6     | \$5,067,000 |

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