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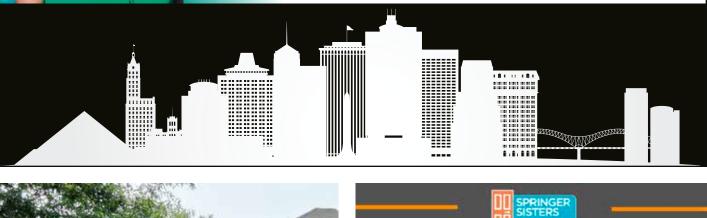
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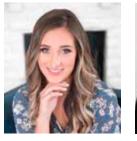
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*SHARPEN *> publisher's note **YOUR AXE**

I want to encourage you to make plans to attend our next Real Producers ROUNDTABLE, where we will hear from several titans in the industry about what it means to "Sharpen your Axe." This will be an amazing event like none other with plenty of time for Q&A and networking following.

"Sharpen your axe" serves as a powerful metaphorical reminder for us to continually invest in self-improvement and preparation throughout our careers. Just as a woodcutter meticulously maintains their axe to optimize performance, real estate agents must consistently refine their skills, knowledge, and tools to excel in their dynamic field.

1. **SKILL ENHANCEMENT**: Like sharpening the blade of an axe for efficiency, real estate agents should focus on honing their core skills. This includes improving negotiation tactics, refining communication abilities, and mastering the art of closing deals. Continual training, workshops, and staying updated on industry best practices are essential for staying competitive.

2. **MARKET KNOWLEDGE**: Just as a sharp axe cuts through wood effortlessly, staying informed about local real estate market trends, regulations, and emerging technologies allows agents to navigate their industry with ease. This knowledge empowers them to provide valuable insights to clients, helping them make informed decisions.

3. **NETWORKING AND RELATIONSHIPS**:

Building and maintaining relationships with clients, colleagues, and industry professionals is akin to sharpening the handle of the axe. These connections can provide referrals, access to resources, and opportunities for collaboration. Cultivating a strong network is crucial for long-term success.

4. **CONTINUOUS LEARNING**: Sharpening the axe represents a commitment to lifelong learning. Real estate professionals should seek out opportunities for growth, whether through certifications,

seminars, or mentorship programs. Staying curious and adaptable is vital in an ever-evolving industry.

5. **TIME MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY**: Just as a well-balanced axe is easier to wield, effective time management and organizational skills are essential. Agents should streamline their tasks, appointments, and administrative work to focus on their core responsibilities, such as client service and deal negotiation.

6. **ETHICAL CONDUCT**: The final polish on the axe is ethical conduct and professionalism. Just as a well-maintained tool showcases the woodcutter's dedication, ethical behavior builds trust and credibility in the real estate industry. Upholding honesty, integrity, and transparency is fundamental to long-term success.

"Sharpening your axe" is a reminder to all of us that success in our careers is not a one-time achievement but an ongoing journey. By consistently improving our skills, staying informed, nurturing relationships, embracing lifelong learning, manag-

ing time efficiently, and upholding ethical standards, we can ensure our "axe" remains sharp and effective in a competitive and ever-changing market.

Jeff White, Owner/Publisher







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Photos by Elizabeth Looney Photography

A Tale of Resilience, Friendship, & Excellence in the Mortgage Industry

In the bustling world of real estate, where competition can be fierce and challenges numerous, the story of Ashley Koon and Allison Brigman, also known as "The A-Team," is nothing short of inspiring. These two remarkable Loan Originators with Cardinal Financial Mortgage share more than just a profession; they share a bond of friendship that's as unbreakable as it is exceptional. Born in Memphis, Tennessee, and raised in Bartlett, their journey together has been one of unwavering support, unyielding determination, and a commitment to turning dreams into reality.

A UNIQUE CONNECTION: FRIENDSHIP

Ashley and Allison's connection goes beyond the workplace. They live merely 1.5 miles apart in Arlington, Tennessee, and are together almost 99% of the time. If you are looking for one, odds are they are probably always together.

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND A SHARED PATH

Their journey began with educational aspirations. Ashley graduated from the University of Memphis, while Allison received her degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Both earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 2004, setting the stage for their eventual career in the mortgage industry.

Right out of college in 2004, Ashley and Allison both landed jobs at Wells Fargo Financial, primarily focusing on refinancing. At Wells Fargo, they competed against each other, just as they did years earlier in gymnastics. However, it was in 2011 that they transitioned to the purchase side of the mortgage industry, marking a significant turning point in their careers.

THE A-TEAM: A STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM

Today, Ashley and Allison operate as a dynamic team of four, with Maria Morgan as their Senior Processor and Stacy Wright as their Loan Officer Assistant. With a combined experience of over 18 years in the industry, they've earned their place among the best.

Their dedication and hard work have not gone unnoticed, as evidenced by their impressive list of accolades. From







being recognized in the Scotsman Guide's Top 1% Mortgage Originators in America to winning the Memphis Most award for Best Mortgage Company in 2020 and securing President Club honors for the last 10 years, their achievements speak volumes about their unwavering commitment to excellence.

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY WITH GRACE

Life, however, had its curveballs to throw at Ashley. In 2014, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. What could have been a devastating blow turned into a story of resilience and unbreakable friendship. Ashley faced eight rounds of chemotherapy, 32 rounds of radiation, and several surgeries, all while keeping her career on track.

Throughout this challenging period, friends and family rallied around her, but none more than Allison. She stood by Ashley's side every step of the way, ensuring that the business continued to flourish, and their clients received the same dedicated service they were accustomed to.

During Ashley's chemotherapy sessions, the two of them would sit side by side, laptops open, working on loans and pre-approvals. The message was clear: no matter the adversity, they were there for their clients, unwavering in their commitment to delivering results.

Ashley's resilience shone brightly as she continued to work out six days a week during her treatment, a testament to her indomitable spirit and her steadfast dedication to both her physical and mental well-being.

PASSION AND REWARDS: MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE

Today, what fuels Ashley and Allison's passion in their business is helping clients achieve homeownership. For many, owning a home is a lifelong dream, and the satisfaction of being able to make that dream a reality for their clients is what drives them forward.

The most rewarding part of their business, they say, is taking the time to understand their clients' stories, goals, needs, and dreams. By seeing their clients as real people with genuine aspirations, Ashley and Allison can match them with the best loan products and create a seamless lending experience.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

In addition to their dedication to their clients, Ashley and Allison are actively involved in supporting their community. They lend their support to the West Cancer Clinic and St. Jude, organizations that make a significant impact on the lives of those facing critical health challenges.

FAMILY, FRIENDSHIP, AND SHARED INTERESTS

Beyond their professional life, Ashley and Allison are deeply committed to their families. Ashley is the proud mother of two daughters, Harper and Brinley, both of whom are following in their mother's footsteps as cheerleaders. Allison is married to Troy, her husband since 2006, and has two boys, Cole and Carver, who excel in competitive baseball and soccer, respectively.

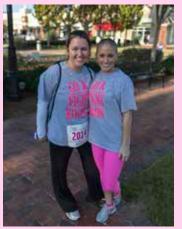
Their bond extends to their leisure time, where they often find themselves traveling, going to the lake, and spending quality time with each other's families. Though not related by blood, their connection is as close as that of sisters.

HIDDEN GEMS: PERSONAL TOUCHES

As individuals, they possess hidden gems that aren't easily found in their online bios. For example, Ashley's remarkable feat of never missing a day of school from Kindergarten through 12th grade speaks volumes about her dedication and commitment to her goals.







WORDS OF WISDOM

When asked what advice they would give others, Ashley and Allison are quick to share their wisdom. They emphasize the importance of setting goals and not being discouraged by rejection. Every closed door, they believe, leads to another opportunity. Experience, they say, comes from making mistakes and learning from them, much like the loans they close—they are like intricate puzzles that they piece together in order to get the loan CTC (Clear to Close).

FAMILY FIRST, ALWAYS

But if there's one thing they want you to remember, it's their unbreakable bond of friendship and the commitment they share as a family, both personally and professionally. They exemplify the notion that doing what you love and calling it work is the secret to success and happiness.

LEGACY OF GREAT MOMS

When it comes to what they want to be remembered for, Ashley and Allison have their priorities straight. They aspire to be remembered as "Great Moms" who've raised four wonderful children between them, leaving an indelible mark on the lives they've touched.

In the words of Floyd Mayweather, they live every day as if it were their last, striving to be the best versions of themselves. And as realtors, friends, and mentors, they inspire us all to reach for the stars, chase our dreams, and, above all, cherish the bonds of friendship that make every journey worthwhile.

In the realm of real estate, Ashley Koon and Allison Brigman are not just "The A-Team"; they are a testament to the power of resilience, friendship, and unwavering commitment. They remind us that the most extraordinary achievements often begin with extraordinary friendships.

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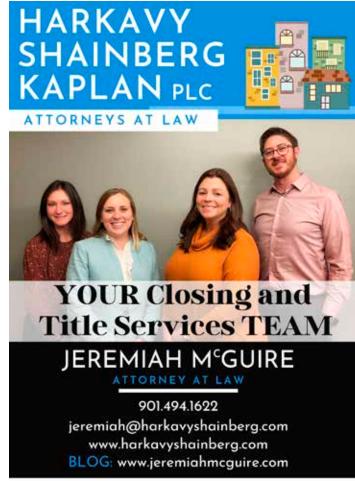
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How Does Memphis Real Producers Work?

CONNECTING. ELEVATING. INSPIRING.

FOR THOSE WHO MAY BE NEW TO REAL PRODUCERS. OR IF YOU ARE JUST **CURIOUS. HERE ARE SOME QUICK FACTS ABOUT REAL PRODUCERS:**

The Heartbeat: We seek to elevate the culture of our local real estate community by **INSPIRING** us to KNOW ONE ANOTHER BETTER, creating stronger CONNECTIONS, more trusted relationships, and more repeat business for everyone involved.

Distribution: This magazine is sent free of charge to the top 500 agents in the greater Memphis area based on MLS productivity. Within this area, there are over 5,000 active agents, but everyone who receives this publication is part of an elite group. You and BUSINESSES in a variety of creative ways. If are remarkable. Just to be in this group is truly a badge of honor!

Content: This is all about you, the Memphis real estate community. We do personal and unique stories host various social networking events where top on members of this community, giving you a platform to inspire others. Our goal is to go beyond the numbers and take a deep dive into the personal side of the industry, to inspire us to know one another better. It costs absolutely nothing for a real estate agent to be featured in the publication.

But to be featured, an agent must be nominated by a peer or leader in the Memphis real estate community. We are always taking nominations and encourage you to nominate individuals who are making a huge impact on our local real estate market.

Our Partners: Anyone listed as a "preferred partner" in the front of the publication is a part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue, attend our events and be a part of our online community. We don't just find these

businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have recommended every single preferred partner you see in this publication. We do not meet with businesses until they are vetted by one of the agents in our community and receive a "stamp of approval." If you are looking to add to your arsenal of incredible vendors, look no further.

Connections: We love connecting REALTORS® you ever would like a personal introduction, we would love to arrange it.

Events: Along with the monthly publication, we agents, along with our top preferred partners, get together at reputable local venues to rub elbows, mastermind, have a good time and strengthen our greater Memphis community. We communicate information about the events through the publication, emails and social media.

Contribution: If you are interested in contributing, nominating REALTORS® for certain features, know of top-notch affiliate partners who should be a part of our community or would simply like to network, please email me at any time. I look forward to hearing from all of you!

> Jeff White Owner/Publisher Memphis Real Producers Jeff.White@RealProducersMag.com

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By Christina See | Photos by Tracey Simpson

A DREAM FULFILLED

"I wanted to become a REALTOR® in high school. I can remember my mentor coming to me in the fall of 2005 asking what I wanted to do when I graduated high school. I was 17 and I bluntly stated I wanted to be a real estate agent. My mentor looked at me and said real estate is a trade, you need to go to college, get a degree and make real estate your Plan B."

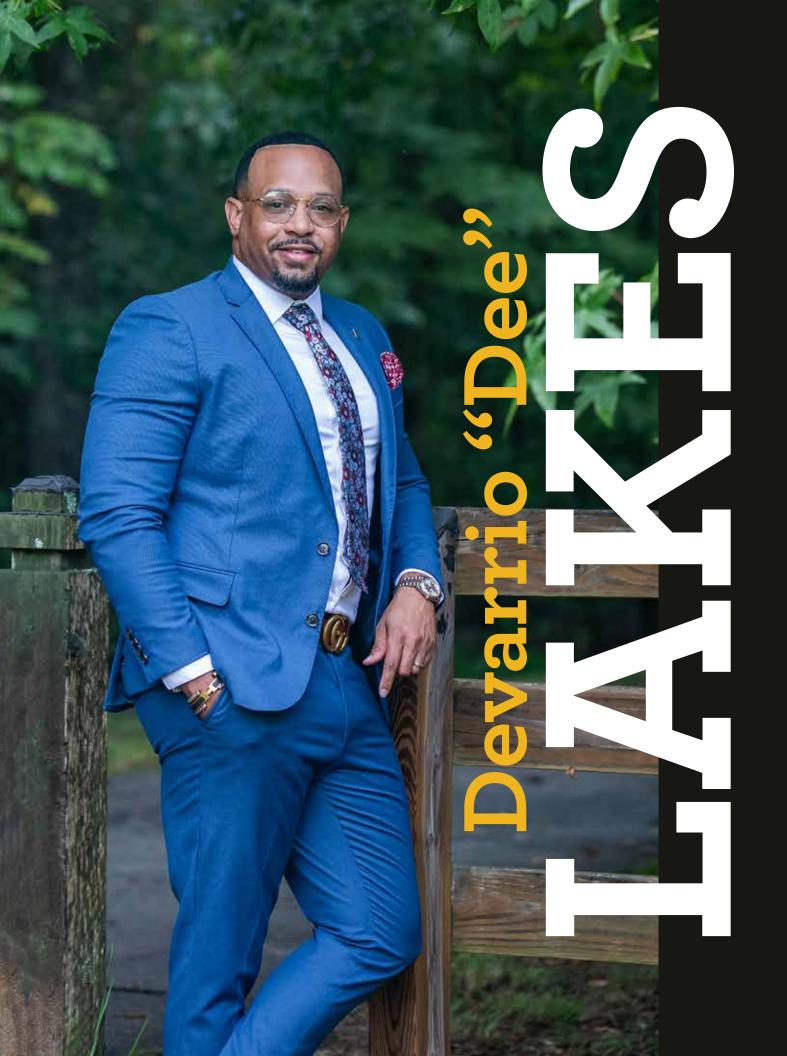
Dee Lakes was born in Cleveland, MS, and grew up in Drew, MS. He attended Northwest Community College, where he received his Associate of Business Administration Degree in 2009, and Columbia Southern University, where he earned his Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership Degree in 2023. After college, Dee worked in Banking and Insurance, but he was still just as passionate about becoming a REALTOR® as he was in high school. He received his real estate license in 2020.

Dee has been a REALTOR® now for three years and two months. He has been with Patterson Homes Real Estate Agency ever since he earned his license. As of January 2022, Dee is the MS Managing Broker of

Patteson Homes Real Estate Co. He achieved MMDC in 2021 & 2022, he was Rookie of the Year in 2022 for Patterson Homes, and he was the highest-grossing commissioned agent at Patterson Homes for 2022 out of over 80 agents. Dee is also a graduate of Leadership MAAR Class of 2023 and is a current student in Leadership MS. He is set to graduate in December 2023. His volume last year was around \$7 million and his career volume as a REALTOR® is around \$20 million.

"My focus right now is informing, guiding, and educating my clients,





especially first-time homebuyers, as well as my agents. Being able to be a part of and share an integral moment in a new homebuyer's life, all while educating them on the process, is what I am passionate

about right now.
Real estate is what
I eat, sleep, and
breathe! This has
always been something I've wanted to
do, even as an adolescent, and now
I am fulfilling that
dream and doing
what I love!"

In defining success, Dee says,
"Success to me is something that varies from person to person; it's an achievement of a particular goal

that one has set out to conquer. The one thing I want to capitalize on is my willingness and determination to push through any obstacle. I'm a businessman at heart and know what it takes to succeed in the business world and run a successful business."

Dee has been married to his beautiful wife, Tamera Lakes, for 11 years. Tamera is an Interior Designer and owns a Luxury Pillow line. They have two children: Carsyn (11) and Skylar (5). The family loves to travel and spend time just loving on each other. "My wife loves to read her Bible, design, and just make things pretty! My son is a gamer and loves to play sports. My daughter is a Princess of all Princesses! She loves to play dress-up as she has all the characters. She loves to put on kiddie makeup and absolutely loves to play Roblox with her great friend who is just three days older than her."



In addition to traveling with his family and friends, Dee likes to mentor others and is a devoted lover of Christ. Dee also supports St. Jude, RPAC, a host of sports teams and little leaguers and soon, the LeBonheur, MS/TN Realtor Benevolent Fund.

Dee would like to be remembered as a God-fearing, free spirit, philanthropist, and all-around knowledgeable person who is passionate about his craft. He wants to be remembered as a family man who loved his wife, kids, parents, relatives, and everyone he met. He would love for everyone to know the heart and work that is put into building a legacy for his family.

Advice to the up-and-coming top producers: "Stay the course, seek help when necessary, and don't apologize for blazing a path that God has called you to do!"

Dee's favorite quotes include: "The true test of a man's character is what he does when no one is looking." - John Wooden

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your path." - Proverbs 3: 5-6

"When you do more than you're paid for, eventually you'll be paid for more than you do."
- Zig Ziglar

Big League Movers would like to congratulate **Devarrio** "**Dee**" **Lakes** on their Rising Star feature this month!

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NOMINATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS!

NOMINATE YOUR **FAVORITE AGENT:**

We are always accepting nominations for feature stories! If you know a colleague who is absolutely ON FIRE and deserving of celebration, we would love to feature them in an upcoming edition of Memphis Real Producers magazine! Categories may include Top Producer, Rising Star, Team Leader, Broker, Giving Back to the Community, etc. To nominate a fellow REALTOR®, simply scan this QR code and follow the prompts. We look forward to receiving your nominations!



RECOMMEND YOUR FAVORITE VENDOR:

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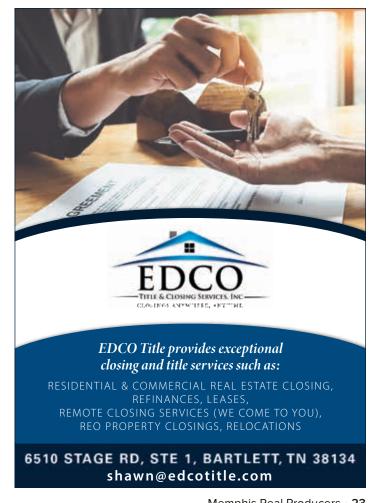
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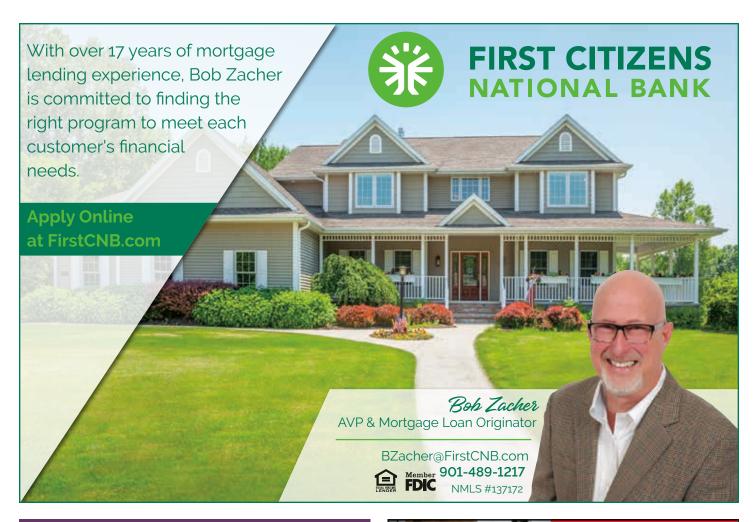








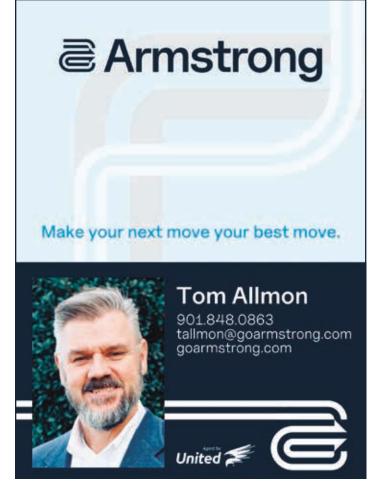


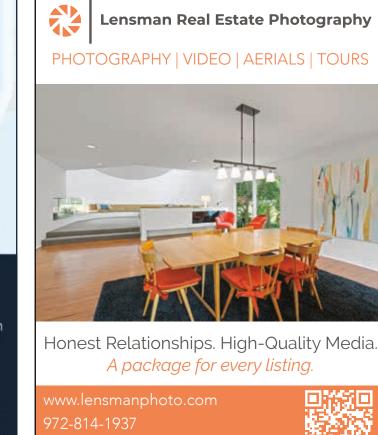




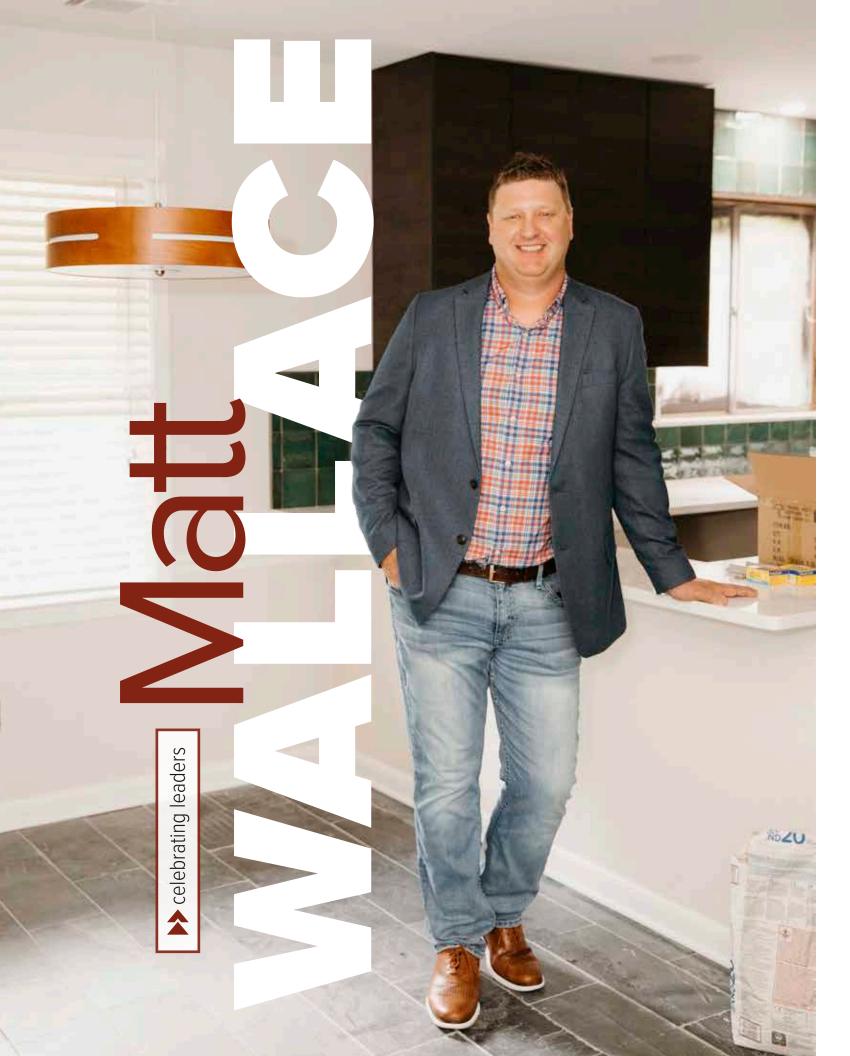








michael.berry@lensmanphoto.com



By Cassie Teeter
Photos by Elizabeth Looney Photography

Family. Ambition. Integrity. Resilience.

atthew V Columbia and grev Arkansas

atthew Wallace was born in Columbia, South Carolina and grew up in Fordyce, Arkansas. After graduating

high school, he attended Ouachita
Baptist University in Arkansas. In 1999,
he graduated with a degree in education.
He became a high school football coach
while also teaching Physical Education
at several schools in both Arkansas and
Desoto County.

His transition to a career in real estate was the result of his interest in home renovations. In 2016, he earned his license and became a REALTOR®. He started off as a solo agent at Keller Williams Realty. Then, in 2017, he started his own team. He now works with the Heart to Home Group of RE/MAX Experts.

The biggest obstacle Matt has faced during his career was completely starting over in a new city. Moving from Mississippi to his current office in Tennessee, he had no contacts or an existing sphere of influence, so he went out and made it happen. "I called everyone I could. Door knocked, cold called, and held open houses... If people would listen, I would talk."

After seven years in the business, Matt has earned an impressive career volume of \$61 million, not including off-market deals for renovations. Last year, his total volume was \$9.6 million. He has achieved Multi-Million Dollar Club status each year and has been awarded lifetime membership.

Matt's wife, Samantha, has been an important part of his success. The two work together at The Heart to Home Group of RE/MAX Experts, where Samantha is a broker. Matt looks up to Samantha because she makes him want to be a better person.



Matt has one daughter, Taylor. Matt and Samantha have two sons, Ollie and Andy. Taylor runs the children's program at Lifetime Fitness and the boys love to play sports and go swimming. The whole Wallace family is very active. They love to take vacations and visit family, especially in Colorado. Matt especially loves to go deep-sea fishing. He also has a passion for supporting Shelby County Schools English Language Learners.

"Being a husband and a father is number one. Success is being a good husband, father, and Christian. It's becoming a better version of myself each and every day."

His current career focus is on broadening his group's areas of expertise. For example, Matt got his contractor's license and is working to grow that and the renovation aspects of his business.

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The Heart to Home Group also prioritizes helping new agents learn the ropes. The team is like a family. They look out for one another and take pride in each other's successes.

"I am a licensed REALTOR® and General Contractor. I know what agents need for repairs to close a deal. I want to help as many of my agent friends as possible with construction."

"Real Estate will always be a tool to help people and build relationships. I'm excited to watch my wife, Samantha Wallace, grow our team!"

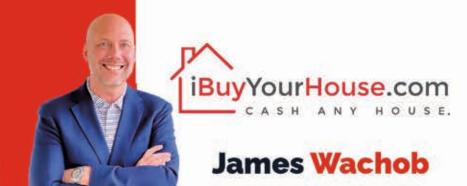
To up-and-coming producers, Matt says:
"That thing you don't want to do. Yes, that thing. That's what's holding you back in this moment. There are no shortcuts along the way. Do the work!"

Matt and his team aim to be remembered for four of their core values. The first is family. They care about the people that they work with and provide for. The second is ambition. They have big goals and are willing to make sacrifices to get there. The third is integrity. The group all go above and beyond to always do the right thing. The fourth is resilience. They stay strong and find solutions to adversity, just like Matt did when he first started out!

With these values driving the Heart to Home Group, it's no surprise that Matthew Wallace and his team are so successful. To stay updated, check out Matt's morning blog! It is called #mattsmorningminute and can be found on either Facebook or Instagram.



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JENJIER ARENDALE

HAPPY, HEALTHY & HELPFUL

By Christina See • Photos by Tracey Simpson

Jennifer was born in Memphis and grew up in Raleigh. After high school, she joined the Memphis Police Department as a PST (Police Service Technician). PSTs are the people in the white cars with the yellow lights that work in the traffic department. She would work traffic accidents of all kinds, direct traffic, work crossing lights, etc.

The police work helped her pay for her college degree. She attended Southwest Community College, where she studied Criminal Justice. After college, she knew she didn't want to be a police officer, but she wasn't sure where she was heading.

Jennifer left MPD and went to work in the copier industry doing administration and sales. From there, she met a friend who owned an estate sale business who asked her to come work for him. She said no at the time because she needed a steadier and more reliable income. In 2003, though, Jennifer decided to join her friend in his estate sale business. She stayed there a few years, but then she went looking for something more fulfilling. She still lends an occasional hand in the estate sale business.

Jennifer talked to her family one weekend about selling real estate, and she decided to take a real estate class that was starting on Monday. She received her license in December of 2006 and got busy selling in 2007. She interviewed with a few companies and found her real estate home with Prudential Collins-Maury. She loves them so much that she is still there, and they are now Coldwell Banker Collins-Maury, Realtors. Jennifer



is delighted to say, "17 years here with the same company and family!" She obtained her Brokers license in 2018.

Jennifer has won the Inner Circle Award, Presidential Award, Outstanding Service Award, and is in the Top 1% of Coldwell Banker agents in the State of Tennessee and North America. She has also facilitated over 500 transactions in her career and her total volume last year is over \$17 Million. Her average list-to-sales price ratio is 97%.

Jennifer's real estate business focuses on the service, not sales, as she keeps her client's best interests at





heart. Her strengths are networking, neighborhood knowledge, and personal service. "The most rewarding part of my business right now is working with all different types of personalities and seeing them happy at the end of the transaction. I am all about customer service and being a good agent. I want my clients/friends to have a great experience with me as their agent. I also look to learn something new from all the other agents that I encounter. One of my biggest hurdles was, and still is the work/life balance. I have a great support system of family, friends and other REALTORS® that help me stay balanced."

Jennifer has been married to her husband, Mark, for 27 years, and they have a son, Dylan, who is 25. Mark and Dylan are big golfers, so Jennifer spends most of her weekends hanging out with friends and with her dad on Sundays. When asked about any hobbies, Jennifer says her husband would say her hobby is shopping for clothes and jewelry! Something not many people know about Jennifer is that she had weight loss surgery in 2018, and she has lost over 150 pounds! She says it's the best decision she ever made regarding her health and well-being.

When asked to define success, Jennifer says, 'Success is about being happy. It's not a monetary amount or a sales volume amount, but truly being happy with yourself, your work life and home life."

Jennifer would like to be remembered as a great agent who worked hard for her clients and was good to other agents. "I am a helper," Jennifer says. "I will help any other agent to learn something new, share tips or info, show a house, fix your sign, or let you know something is wrong at a house. We all have to work together in this!"

"At the end of the day, my friends would say that I am always the one who is pulling everyone together. I absolutely love the circle of people I have in my life!" Real Producers is happy to have Jennifer in our life!

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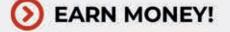
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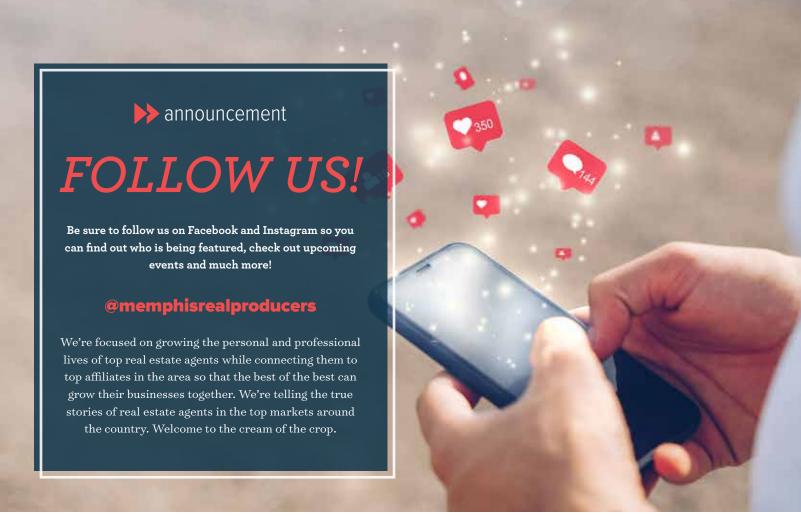














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