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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	08 Index of Preferred Partners		14 Publisher's Note: Embracing Resilience		18 Words by Wade: 3 Ways for Realtors to Grow Their Instagram Following
	22 Legal Hotline: Bright MLS Compensation		26 Partner Spotlight: Interstate Moving & Storage		32 Agent Spotlight: Kelly Stock Bacon
	38 Rising Star: Adam Belasco		44 Cover Story: Laura Schwartz		50 Top 250 Standings

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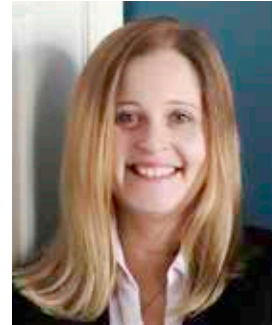
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►► publisher's note

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Dear Real Producers of Northern Virginia,

As the vibrant colors of autumn paint the world around us, I am reminded of the beauty that comes with change. We all face seasons of transition and growth in our professional and personal lives. This October, let us recognize the power of resilience while embracing change — a quality that defines our top agents and preferred partners.

Resilience is not just a trait; it's a mindset that propels us forward, no matter the challenges we encounter. In real estate, where every day presents new opportunities and hurdles, resilience is our compass. Just as the leaves fall, creating space for renewal, resilience allows us to shed what no longer serves us and embrace new possibilities! With the changing real estate landscape, we rely on our collective resilience to navigate uncertainty and chart new paths to success.

October is also Breast Cancer Awareness Month — a time to honor the resilience of survivors and raise awareness about early detection and prevention. Please join me in supporting this vital cause, fostering unity among those who have battled breast cancer and those who stand by their side.

Speaking of unity, our recent NFL Game Day 2023 event at FedEx Field was a testament to the strength of our Real Producers community. The photos capturing those unforgettable moments are now live on our social media accounts! Tag yourself and your friends, and be sure to look forward to their appearance in our upcoming November issue.

Lastly, a warm welcome goes out to our newest NOVA Real Producers preferred partners, **Embrace Home Loans, Final Offer, and First Heritage Mortgage.** Your expertise enhances our Real Producers community, and we're excited to collaborate with you!

As October unfolds, let's channel the spirit of resilience in every endeavor as we continue to adapt, grow, and inspire each other!

Best regards,



Kristin Brindley
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3 Ways REALTORS® CAN GROW THEIR INSTAGRAM FOLLOWING

Instagram is a great platform for Realtors because Instagram is completely visual-based, and so is real estate! The platform also has the ability for Realtors to create a brand while exposing their business to thousands of people.

Every Realtor I know would *love* to grow their Instagram following, but many of them find stagnation. After the initial follows of their friends, family, and past clients, how do you organically grow your following outside of those people?

1. You Need to Be In Your Content

Pictures of motivational posters and other mundane items are not going to move the needle. As a Realtor, YOU are the product and the brand. People ultimately buy from you. If you know this to be true, why would you not want to feature yourself in your content? This can be pictures, but more importantly, it should be video content where you are letting people know how you solved a problem, answered a question, or just did something fun with friends or family. The end goal is for people to get to know and like you, perhaps before ever meeting you. Creating that upfront trust and likeability will move the needle. If you have thought that you don't want to be on camera, or that using a free medium to promote your brand isn't important, I would talk to other agents you know who have created success on Instagram to get their opinions.

2. Reels and Stories

To go along with the theme of being in your content, shooting Instagram Reels and Story videos will also increase the likelihood of your Instagram account being discovered by people outside of your followers. Instagram rewards video content over anything else, so this should be your top priority when using the platform: videos first and using still photos as secondary content. Creating video content on a regular to semi-regular basis also helps keep your brand and messages in front of your growing audience. If you post very infrequently or mostly post still photos, that is hurting the potential growth of your Instagram account.

3. Not Promoting Your Instagram Account

As a Realtor who wants people to follow them on Instagram, you have to promote and market that you have an Instagram account that has valuable

and fun content. You should be promoting your account on all of your marketing, as calls to action on any videos you shoot, signage, and more. Your Instagram account shouldn't be a secret. Let as many people as possible know that they should be following you so they can be informed and somewhat entertained. Failure to promote your account will continue to hinder your progress and maintain the current stagnation in your follower count.

Instagram is a valuable tool for any Realtor to create a following and get eyes on them, their brand, and their business 24/7. The more quality followers you have, the greater the likelihood of generating more relationships and potential business. Consider these three suggestions that plague many Realtors, then make a plan to start creating educational and informative content to make the watcher smarter and you more valuable. Good luck!



Wade Vander Molen is senior vice president of business development at Pruitt Title LLC 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.DCTitleGuy.com.



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COMPENSATION

Bright MLS announced that starting on August 9, 2023, a user may enter any amount in the listing's cooperative compensation field. Previously, Bright MLS allowed compensation as low as one cent. On their website, Bright MLS noted that their goal was to provide Bright subscribers flexibility for transparent negotiations by allowing users to enter any amount in the field. (See www.brightmls.com/article/update-to-listing-entry-cooperative-compensation-fields). While the modification of one cent may seem minor, the update is focused on reinforcing the concept that all offers of compensation can be negotiated.

Currently, there are at least three class action lawsuits progressing through the courts, which directly challenge the way buyer broker compensation is paid. In a nutshell, the Plaintiffs (Sellers) in the lawsuits allege that 1) they were unfairly required to pay the Buyer's Broker commission and 2) they had no ability to negotiate these payments. Ultimately, the courts will be tasked with determining the merits of the argument. In the meantime, it is important for agents to be cognizant of these trends in the market. An important nuance that has arisen is a change to the NAR Code of Ethics Standard of Practice 12-1. This amendment was made in January 2022 and states: "REALTORS® must not represent that their brokerage services to a client or customer are free or available at no cost to their clients unless the REALTOR®

will receive no financial compensation from any source for those services." (See www.nar.realtor/about-nar/governing-documents/code-of-ethics/2023-code-of-ethics-standards-of-practice).

How can agents protect themselves in an ever-changing market? Continue to educate yourself and adjust your sales presentations to reflect best practices. During an initial buyer consultation, the agent should establish compensation expectations. Words matter, and choosing them carefully is a vital consideration. Utilize a written buyer representation agreement that sets forth the circumstances in which the agent is paid, the amount, and by whom. Further, be attentive to the fact that compensation might exceed what is set forth in the buyer representation agreement and how this would be handled should be memorialized.

The change to this field in Bright MLS does not necessitate any changes to the NVAR standard forms. Specifically, the following wording is contained in the NVAR Standard Form Exclusive Right to Represent Buyer Agreement (K1338), paragraph 8: "In the event seller does not pay any or all of the amount due, Buyer hereby agrees to pay any and all remaining Broker's fees due to the Buyer's Broker." Therefore, the Buyer's Broker can be compensated by their client if the Listing Broker does not offer cooperative compensation. In the same paragraph, the form addresses what should occur if excess compensation is offered. ("Broker may retain any additional compensation offered by the seller or seller's representative, even if this causes the compensation paid to Broker to exceed the fees

specified above.") An additional factor to consider is that Buyers and Sellers can negotiate commissions directly; however, the parties must proceed with caution and only after a thorough review of the ethical, legal, and contractual requirements.

The Buyer Broker Compensation has become a hot topic and being attentive to the changes in the real estate landscape is an important consideration when dialoguing with a prospective client. Agents must have open, honest, and transparent conversations with their client that establish clear expectations related to compensation. A critical part of this process is to include the concept that commissions are always negotiable, and all aspects of the payment structure must be memorialized in writing.



Colleen Sweeney is currently a managing attorney at MBH Settlement Group. Colleen has 20-plus years of legal experience ranging from drafting complex contracts, litigation, and conducting real estate closings. Colleen has represented clients in cases in the trial courts through litigation in both the Supreme Court of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia. She is an active member of the legal community and a lifelong resident of Northern Virginia.

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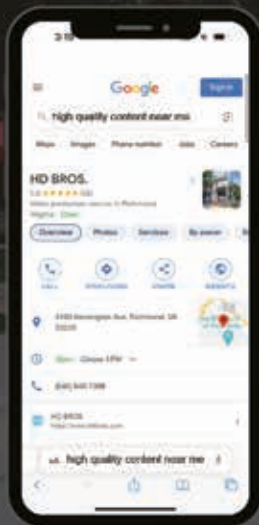


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▶ partner spotlight

By Dave Danielson



INTERSTATE MOVING & STORAGE

From left to right: Move Consultants Clinton Thompson and Kim Woods; Client Services Manager Sherry Skinner; Sales Director Erick Barr; Move Consultants Larry Miller, Mike Stine, and Tom Mulkerin; CEO & Group President Bud Morrisette. (Photo by Ryan Corvello)

DELIVERING MOVING SOLUTIONS WITH CARE

During the process of moving from one place to another, there's no shortage of surprises and hurdles that can pop up along the way. As your clients face that transition, it makes a huge difference to have someone on their side who can help them relocate with a minimum amount of stress and a maximum amount of care.

That's where Interstate Moving & Storage can help, offering solutions and peace of mind.

As CEO and Group President of the company, Bud Morrisette notes he and his team appreciate having the opportunity to make the moving experience as smooth as possible.

"What's very gratifying for us is that we deal with people during a stressful time and we bring solutions to them. We ease that stress and help them fulfill what their goals are," Bud emphasizes. "People move for all sorts

of reasons. Some are good and some aren't. Whether it's positive or negative, we help them see it through."

A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

Bud's grandfather, Arthur E. Morrisette, founded Interstate Moving & Storage in 1943 when he was just 27 years old.

"My grandfather was orphaned. He dropped out of school in ninth grade to care for his two younger sisters," Bud shares. "He did odd jobs to make it all work; eventually, he got a job as a stock clerk at a department store and met my grandmother.

"From there, my grandfather went into civil service with the Navy in the human resources department for six years," Bud continues. "He was elevated through the ranks but felt he could do more and wasn't comfortable with the bureaucracy. He finally quit the government job and put together \$450 with another gentleman to get a truck to be able to do odd jobs, including chopping firewood."

CEO & Group President
Bud Morrisette
(Photo by Ryan Corvello)



It wasn't long before Bud's grandfather was called upon to put his truck to work helping people move items.

"He was opportunistic," Bud smiles. "That experience of moving someone on that one occasion led to a career in founding a moving company. It's the American story: He didn't approach life with a sense of entitlement — just perseverance, discipline, desire and a dream."

SIGNS OF SUCCESS

Today, Interstate Moving & Storage is a \$135 million enterprise with more than 500 employees who work to carry out more than 20,000 moves globally each year. Of that number, about 20 percent of the company's moves are in the Mid-Atlantic region, 50 percent are across the rest of the nation, and 30 percent take place abroad.

"A significant portion of our customers are referred to us by their REALTOR® as trusted advisors to their clients. We realize that ensuring their clients are properly matched with a professional moving company from start to finish goes



a long way in reducing the stress of the relocation," Bud notes.

"We're the ones who are entrusted to move the lifelong possessions of a client and get them

settled into their new residence," he continues. "The mover is the person who has the final touch on the experience. It's important to have that partner that takes care of things to the point where clients rave about the experience because



Bud Morrissette is the grandson of Arthur E. Morrissette, who founded Interstate Moving & Storage in 1943. (Photo by Ryan Corvello)

we know that it reflects favorably on the real estate agent and, in turn, they receive referrals from their clients."

PROFESSIONALISM AT WORK

The list of achievements and positive referrals is massive for the company. Along the way, they have been an 11-time winner of the National Defense Transportation Association (NDTA) Quality Award and nine-time winner of the Fleet Safety Award from the American Moving and Storage Association (AMSA) for having the highest safety levels. In addition, they have been a seven-time winner of the Inc. 5,000 Award.

"We are very empathetic and customer-centric," Bud asserts. "Many of our staff members have come from extensive moving backgrounds. They have captured firsthand knowledge through moving experiences in their own personal lives. A lot of our team members are either spouses of active military or family members of retired service members.

"Typically, when you are in the military, you will move 15 to 23 times... So they have experienced it, lived it, and know it; and when we work with clients, they are able to anticipate what's ahead, and we use that experience to better educate and plan for our customers.

"The normal individual moves once every seven to 10 years," he adds. "We take that experience from our team and help them acclimate to what's ahead for them too."

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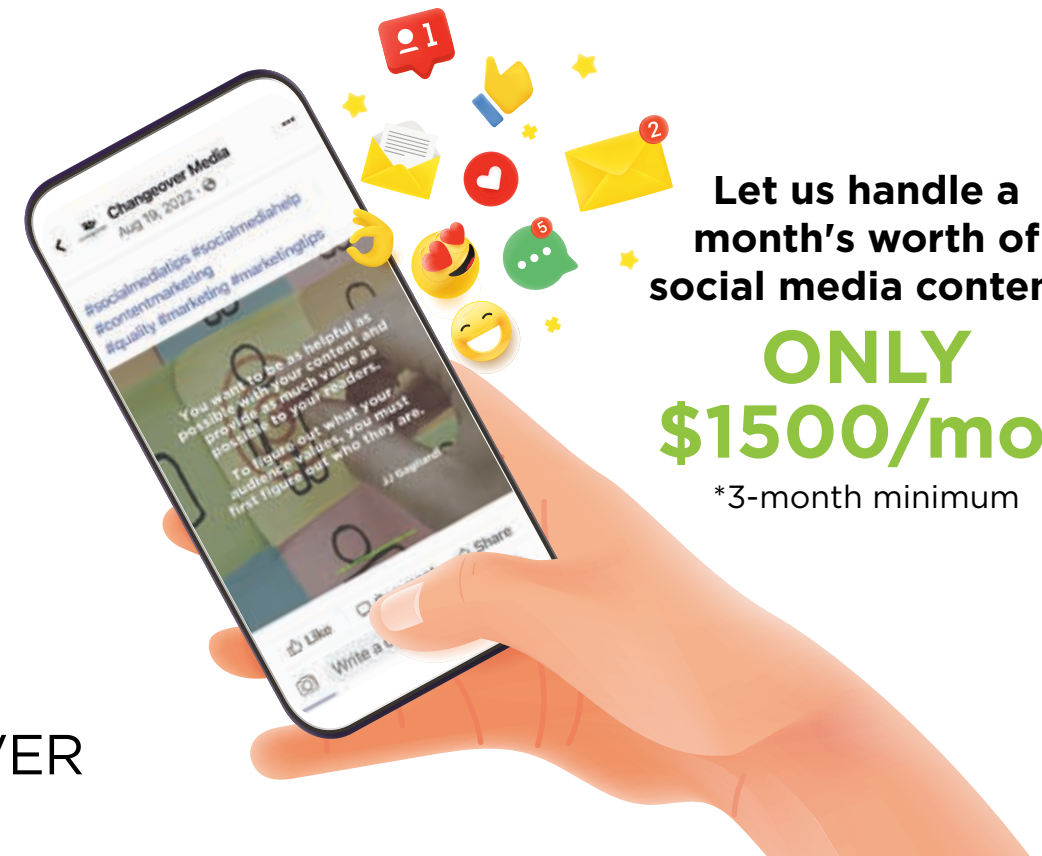
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▶ agent spotlight

By Dave Danielson



**ENJOYING
THE
JOURNEY**

Photo by
Alimond Photography

KELLY STOCK BACON

There's no doubt that the rewards of reaching milestones are real. It means a lot to set goals, plan your path and then successfully reach your vision of the future. At the same time, the process of getting there itself can be just as rewarding. Kelly Stock Bacon is someone who epitomizes that truth.

As a REALTOR® with ERA Teachers, Inc., in Herndon, Kelly pours herself into her clients' goals and enjoys the journey with them.

"I've been very blessed with an incredible client base to work with," Kelly says with enthusiasm. "For more than 20 years now, nearly every home sale or home purchase has been a past client or a referral. I like being part of their journey."

Starting Out

Kelly obtained her real estate license in May of 2000. Prior to that, she earned a degree in exercise science from Virginia Tech. Over time, Kelly has



Photo by Ryan Corvello

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Photo by Alimond Photography

also had an up-close and personal look at the real estate industry from observing her father, Lonnie Stock, during his 40-year tenure in the business. Today, he is the broker-owner of ERA Teachers, Inc.

“I entered my senior year of college and planned on pursuing real estate as a dual career alongside the fitness industry,” Kelly recalls. “But I dove in full-time, working as a buyer’s agent for Lisa Nelson for two years. I loved it from the start.”

Motivated by What Matters

Kelly started out strong and has kept rising from there. She has recorded more than 850 career transactions. Each year, she averages \$20 million in sales volume.

Kelly is driven in life and business by her love for her family. She treasures time with her husband, Andy (whom she met while selling him a house), and their daughters, Emily and Zoe. In her free time, Kelly enjoys trail running with Andy in locations across Maryland and Virginia.

When it comes to giving back, Kelly likes to support HomeStretch, an organization that provides housing and resources to help families get back on their feet. Through the course of what they do, HomeStretch supports around 70 families a year.



Kelly Stock Bacon is a REALTOR® with ERA Teachers, Inc., in Herndon. (Photo by Alimond Photography)

Lifting Others

As Kelly reflects on her career, she shares some helpful advice for others who are looking to take their own steps forward.

“I think there are two pieces that are very important. The first is making sure that you find the appropriate mentor for you — someone who is like-minded, personally and professionally, to have them mentor you,” Kelly advises. “And that may mean that you need to dedicate some time and work with them. For example, I learned so much working with Lisa for two years.”

The second piece of advice that Kelly offers is to take advantage of open house opportunities.

“It helps you learn about a new neighborhood,” she explains. “I hosted 50 open houses in a year. That helped me build a strong knowledge base by knowing the builders and local resources in that community.”



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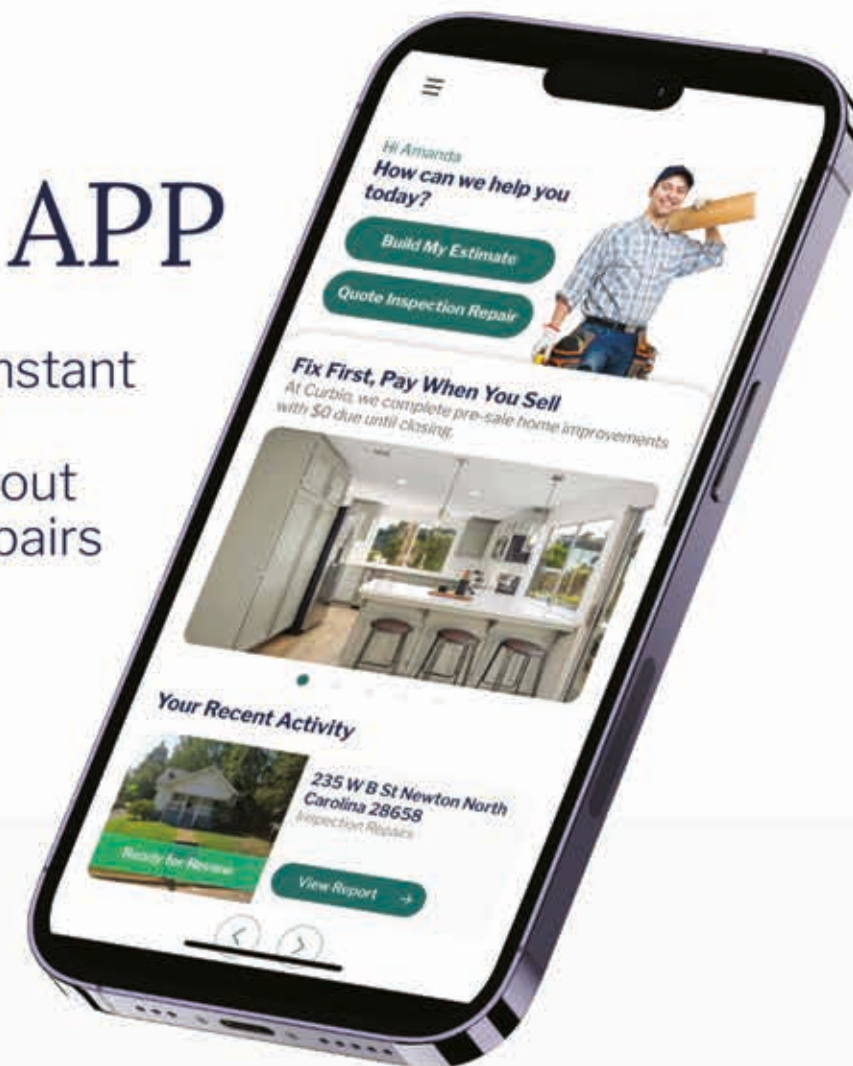
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ADAM BELASCO



On a New Mission

From his early days in the Marine Corps to his rapid ascent as a notable figure in the real estate industry, Adam Belasco's unwavering dedication to his clients and profession radiates inspiration.

Graduating from Hampton University in Virginia in 2014, Adam's life took a pivotal turn when he joined the Marine Corps. His time as an Infantry Officer not only instilled a strong work ethic but also honed his problem-solving skills, setting the stage for his future success in real estate.

Reflecting on his Marine Corps experience, Adam acknowledges it influenced his ability to stay composed under pressure and so much more.

"I owe a lot to the Marine Corps. Between the people I met, the network I built, and the habits and work ethic I created while I was in, it really shaped who I am today and the ambitious attitude I've developed to be successful."

Transitioning from the military to civilian life in 2019, Adam ventured into the tech startup world. However, his fascination with real estate investing quickly took center stage. Delving into everything from rentals to house flipping, Adam had found his passion.

Recognizing the potential to blend his military-bred discipline with his newfound enthusiasm, he obtained licenses in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia during the late fall of 2020, eventually joining Keller Williams Capital Properties in January 2021 and founding Belasco Realty about six months later.

"Within the first few months of getting into real estate investing, I realized starting my own real estate company to help people buy and sell their own house was a great fit for me and something I really enjoy doing," Adam recalls.

Starting Out
Adam's entry into the real estate

realm was met with rapid success. In his first year as a REALTOR®, he clinched the prestigious 'Rising Star' award for Keller Williams in D.C. and secured the 'Rookie of the Year' title for the DMV region.

The following year, he reinforced his standing by winning the 'Top Ten Agents by Volume' award in D.C. for Keller Williams. His military background provided a unique edge, making him a go-to agent for military members.

"In 2022, approximately 70 percent of my clients were military members," Adam notes. "I'm very well versed in the Veteran Affairs home-buying process and loan intricacies."

Balancing Ambitions
For Adam, real estate isn't just a profession; it's a way of life. He finds profound fulfillment in working with first-time homebuyers, guiding them through the maze of property



Rising Star Adam Belasco is a former Infantry Officer and Veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps.

“For example, if I’m fighting for a listing and don’t get it, that’s okay. I can reflect on what I could have done better during my presentation to win the next listing that comes around.”

A Family-Centric Approach

Beyond the world of real estate, Adam’s life is enriched by his engagement to his fiancée, Kelly. Together, they share a passion for real estate investing, nurturing their relationship through joint ventures and a shared vision for the future.

“My first sale and buyer is now my fiancée,” Adam smiles. “When we met, Kelly and I were both reading the same real estate book.”

While work and property endeavors hold a special place in his heart, Adam also cherishes moments spent with his parents and relishes activities like working out and cheering on the Ravens during games.

transactions and ensuring they emerge with a comprehensive understanding of the process.

“I enjoy working with first-time homebuyers because they typically go into



the process knowing nothing about the home-buying process... I also enjoy teaching about real estate, the process, and all the little things that a lot of people aren’t aware of — Realtors included,” Adam states passionately.

As someone who’s immersed in both real estate investment and client service, Adam’s personal and professional aspirations seamlessly converge. He notes his goal is to continue expanding his rental property portfolio and eventually venture into high-end new construction homes.

“Business opportunities are like buses, there’s always another one coming,” Adam says with a grin. “I really like this quote because it reminds me that there’ll always be more opportunities in the future, so no need to jump at the first one that shows up.”



Adam’s dedication extends beyond his professional endeavors, as evidenced by his commitment to charitable work. His annual real estate party serves as a platform to raise funds for veterans’ charities, highlighting his strong connection to his military roots and his desire to make a positive impact in the lives of others.

Expressing his philosophy of success, Adam concludes, “Success means doing what you love so you never feel like you’re working.”

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LAURA

SCHWARTZ

Paving the Road to Success

At 24 years old, Laura Schwartz was well on her way to professional success. As a cost estimator for a government contractor, she held the corporate role she had dreamed would carry her to fulfillment. She was also nearing the completion of a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University. There was just one problem — she wasn't happy.

"I hated my life," Laura admits frankly. "I was super unfulfilled by what I was doing. I worked for a

gentleman who didn't like women, and I was the only girl on the team. That gave me the courage to leave the corporate job I had previously wanted so badly."

While buying her first condo in Virginia, Laura received a life-changing suggestion from her real estate agent: get her real estate license and join him in the industry.

Coming from a family of immigrants from Belarus that had a history in real estate investing, Laura saw a career in real estate





Top producer Laura Schwartz is an independent agent with McEneaney Associates.

as a natural path forward. In February 2008, she obtained her real estate license, and by April of the same year, she left her corporate job to pursue real estate full-time.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Laura's real estate career began when the market was unraveling. However, she quickly found a unique opportunity to stand out by leveraging the power of online platforms. She created a website called ArlingtonRealEstateNews.com, where she dedicated a page to every condo, townhouse, and community in Arlington. The website became a valuable resource for people searching for information about specific properties, and it helped Laura establish her presence in the market.

"I created the website by myself, which I taught myself to do, and that's how people found me," Laura explains.

As her business gained traction, Laura shifted toward a referral-based lead-generation model. These days, that's where the majority of her business originates.



WORDS OF WISDOM
 "I grew up with two parents who worked hard every day. They followed their dream and created the American dream. They were successful business owners for 40 years. I want my kids to see that hard work pays off. Sometimes when you take risks, like being self-employed, and work hard, those big risks can reap big rewards."

Over the years, Laura's business has evolved and expanded. She spent a decade with Keller Williams before joining McEneaney Associates in 2018. The move to McEneaney allowed her to receive the marketing support she needed to elevate her brand and take her business to new heights. With a focus on maintaining her reputation for integrity and ethical practices, Laura has built a business that speaks to the quality of service she provides.

LIVING HER BEST LIFE

Today, Laura is thriving as a REALTOR®. She continues to operate as an individual agent with no support staff — a model she prefers for the control it gives her over every step of the buying or selling process. She closed an impressive \$34 million in 2022.

"I want things done a certain way, and I have spent so many years building my reputation, which works for me, that I am hesitant to extend my reputation to someone else," she shares. "Clients like working with me because I'm not pushy, and I often give advice that they don't want to hear, which helps them make better decisions. I give the advice of an expert with the delivery of a friend."

Outside of work, Laura lives an equally rich life. She and her husband, Mitch, have two sons, Holden (11) and Noah (8), who keep them busy with sports and other extracurricular activities.

Laura isn't sure what the future holds, but she's excited to see what will unfold in the years to come. For now, she's focused on living in gratitude, running a thriving business, and showing her children the power of dedication.

"I grew up with two parents who worked hard every day," Laura notes. "They followed their dream and created the American dream. They were successful business owners for 40 years. I want my kids to see that hard work pays off. Sometimes, when you take risks, like being self-employed, and work hard, those big risks can reap big rewards."





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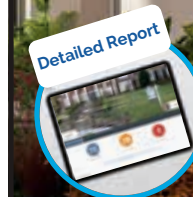
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Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Aug. 31, 2023

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RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL \$
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TOP 250 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Aug. 31, 2023

RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL \$
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Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Aug. 31, 2023

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Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Aug. 31, 2023

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TOP 250 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed Data from Jan. 1 to Aug. 31, 2023

RANK	NAME	OFFICE	SELLING #	SELLING \$	BUYING #	BUYING \$	SALES	TOTAL \$
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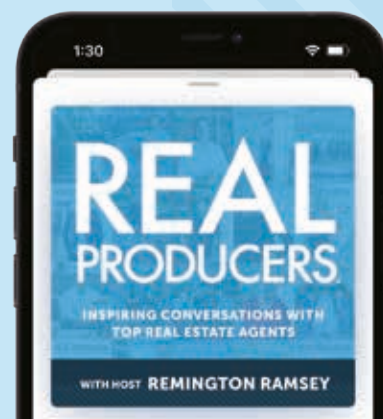
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