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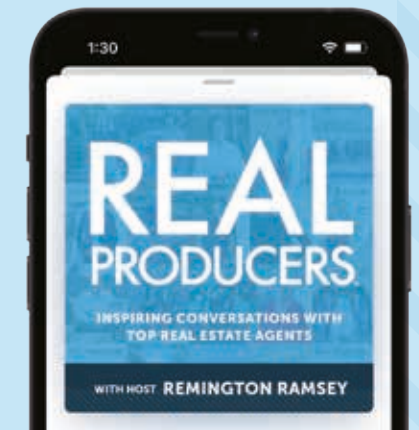
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Philip Mills, Agent

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Allen Nazari

LIVING IN GRATITUDE



Beyond Real Estate

“My happy hour is gym time. I spend one and a half to two hours at the gym every day and really enjoy staying physically active and in shape. I’m also a big car guy, and I enjoy driving my cars and riding my motorcycles.”

Italy and finally landed in California, where his brother lived, in 1986.

“The four-day walk from Iran to Turkey was a whole story on its own,” Allen reflects, hinting at the difficulties of leaving Iran. “It was a journey, and all the transition was very tough.”

This period was immensely trying for Allen, but it also yielded gifts that served him in the years and decades to follow. He became familiar with different cultures and learned several languages along his journey. He also gained a strong lesson in perseverance.

“It was very difficult landing in the US. I didn’t have a passport because I fled and wouldn’t go to war, but I was able to find my way around and learn the language wherever I went,” Allen reflects. “It was a difficult time as a refugee, but I made it. I loved people. Getting to know the cultures, the people, and the customs was amazing.

Allen Nazari can trace his genetic roots back thousands of years to Assyria, an ancient Mesopotamian culture. He was born and raised as a Christian in Iran, not too far from where his people once ruled. But today, Iran is a Muslim country, creating a difficult upbringing for Allen and his family. Here in the US, Christians are a majority group, with about two-thirds of the US population identifying as Christians. However, in other parts of the world, like Iran, Christians are still a persecuted minority.

he embarked on a journey to seek asylum – and, ultimately, a better life. Allen left Iran at 16, traveling to Turkey. Nineteen months later, he moved on to

Following the Iranian Revolution, Iranian media was purged of non-Islamic influences, and life became tougher for Allen. So, as just a teenager,





I got to meet a lot of new people and understand a lot about the world.”

Allen was born in Tehran and later lived in Istanbul and Rome – three large cities. Upon arriving in San Jose, he was faced with a culture shock. Everyone drove cars, and there was little interaction with neighbors on a daily basis. He wondered, ‘How do I make friends here?’ But if there was anything Allen learned along his journey to California, it was how to

persevere. And so, he did. Slowly but surely, he settled into his new life.

“When I came here, I was an old 18-year-old. I’d seen so much compared to other people my age. I was determined, focused, good with people, and could get along with just about everybody.”

Building a Business

Allen first entered the real estate business four years after landing in

San Jose, starting in mortgage lending. He was determined to succeed, turning every obstacle into another stepping stone on his path to success.

Allen began in wholesale lending and soon moved into a mixed role of real estate sales and mortgage lending. By 1994, he started his own mortgage lending business, leading the first franchised mortgage company in California while still in his mid-twenties.

“I was raised to really just not have a whole lot of options. We had to do what we had to do. So what sets me apart from most people is my work ethic. I get up in the morning and do what I need to do. It’s never been an option for me,” Allen says frankly. “I’ve had to be focused on setting goals and do what I had to achieve those goals. I was determined to set my mind and get it done. With that came a lot of hard work.”

Words of Wisdom

“You have to adapt to what’s coming. Adaptation is a big thing. I was never a believer in staying where you are. With the new AI platforms out there, our real estate industry is going to be unrecognizable in the near future. I’m figuring out where to be when that happens.”

Focusing on Real Estate Sales

Over the next 15 years, Allen achieved tremendous success. He made a shift in his business in 2009, deciding to leave behind his days in lending to focus solely on real estate sales. Although he came from a background of running teams and companies, he decided to sell as a solo agent, founding Park Lane Capital and intending to use it solely for his personal sales business.

– connecting with people,” Allen says. “Meeting people is what gets me most excited about this work. I make friends with my clients that continue well past escrow.”

Allen is immensely grateful for the life he now lives. His wife, Nazy, has been a vital support system, and his four children are thriving as adults; Ryan (24), lives in Oxford, UK, Michael (22) is a USC graduate, Matthew (21) studies at Harvard, and Oiliva (19) attends USC. Allen also has two step-sons, Aram (34) and Emaan (32), who work alongside their dad, helping him manage multiple companies.



Today, Allen is thriving with Park Lane Capital. Although a few agents hang their licenses at the brokerage, he still does the majority of the company’s volume. In 2022, he closed 26 transactions for \$55 million.



After so many years in real estate, Allen remains passionate about his work, especially the opportunity to connect with people from so many different walks of life. His clients appreciate his availability, negotiation skills, and integrity. They find him to be a trusted consultant that will do what it takes to help them achieve their dreams.

“What excites me about the business is the same as at the beginning

After over 30 years in the Bay Area, California has truly become home for Allen.

“More than anything, I am grateful just to be here. I am always thankful to be living here in the Bay Area. This is the best place to live, and I’m happy to have a safe and stable home here with my wife. I cherish this life.”

► svrp agent feature:

By Zachary Cohen
Photos By Teresa Nora Trobbe -
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MICHAEL DEVLIN

A NEW MODEL

Michael Devlin has been in the real estate industry for nearly 40 years. During that time, he's not only made a name for himself as a REALTOR®; he's become one of the Silicon Valley's most well-respected brokers, trainers, and leaders. After over 20 years with Century 21 and another 7 years as a leader with Keller Williams, Mike has landed with eXp Realty, the brokerage he feels is best suited to take his business into the future.

"I've had a lot of ups and downs in real estate," Mike reflects. "I didn't stop. I didn't give up. I kept growing. Even though it took a long time to find the spot that worked for me, I've kept at it, and now, I've found that spot. So don't give up before the miracle happens."

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Mike took a unique route into the real estate business, entering the industry through his role as a trainer. In the mid-'80s, he worked as a trainer

with a large organization that provided training for law students, lawyers, and other professionals, like insurance and real estate agents. So, before getting his real estate license, Mike was training future REALTORS®.

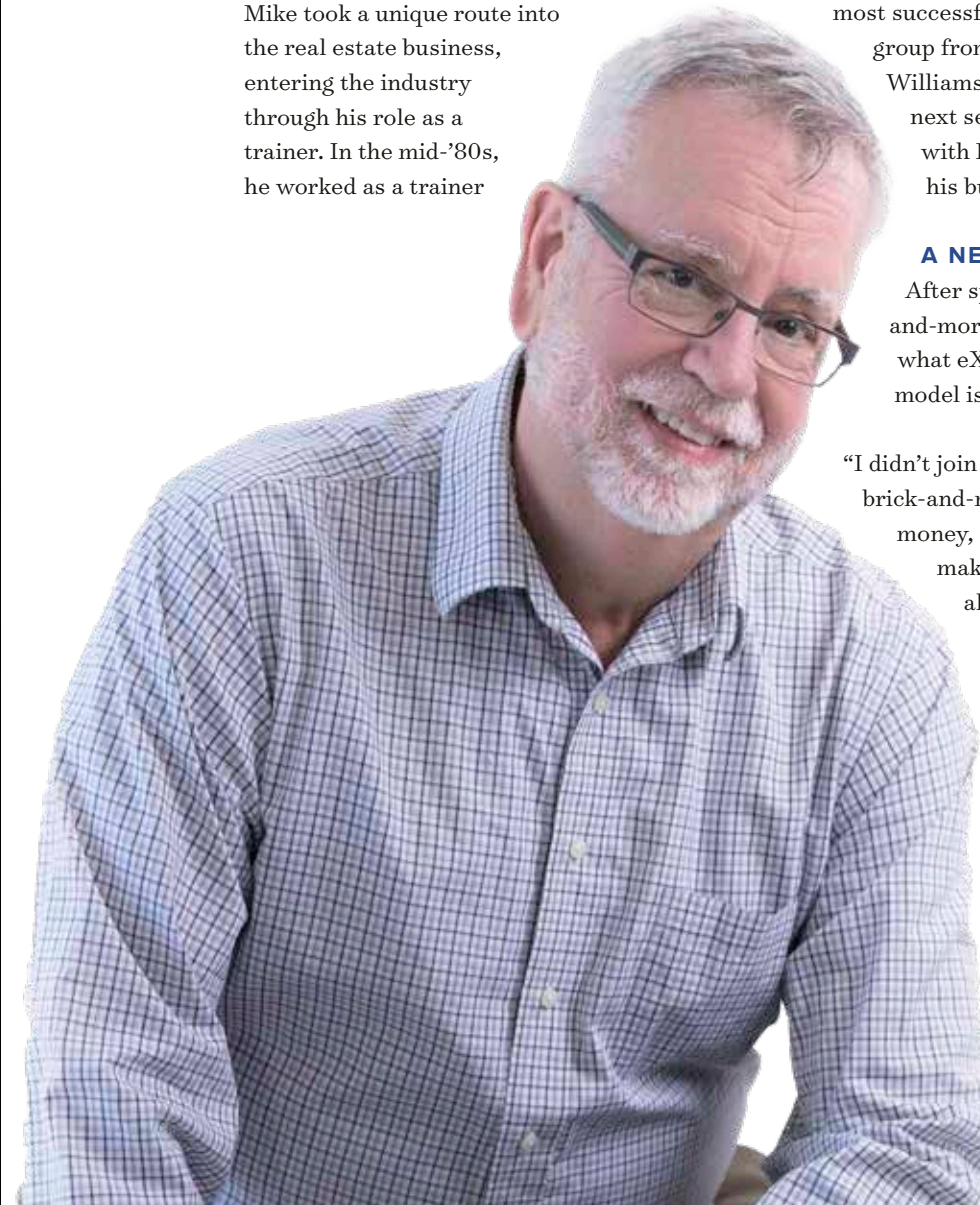
Mike continued as a trainer through 1986, when he decided to take the leap of faith and become a licensed REALTOR®. He initially joined a Century 21 regional office as the Director of Recruiting and Training. In 1990, he became Vice President of a large Century 21 Group, which later became Northern California's most prominent Century 21 group. He sold real estate for the next 21 years while managing one of the area's most successful real estate organizations. He helped expand that group from one location to five; by the time he left for Keller Williams, he had grown the team to over 600 agents. For the next seven years, Mike worked as a productivity coach with Keller Williams. In 2020, he took the next step in his business, joining eXp Realty.

A NEW MODEL

After spending most of his career with traditional brick-and-mortar real estate brokerages, Mike is excited about what eXp Realty offers. He believes their cloud-based model is the future of real estate.

"I didn't join eXp for years because I believed I needed the brick-and-mortar model. But when COVID hit, I made more money, and it hit me — I wasn't going to the office and was making more money. I said, 'Well, why am I paying for all of this?'"

When Mike moved to eXp in September 2020, his business took flight. The cloud-based model has allowed him to build a team that spans the length of California rather than being confined by location. Despite not bringing an existing team with him, he's grown the group to over 80 agents.





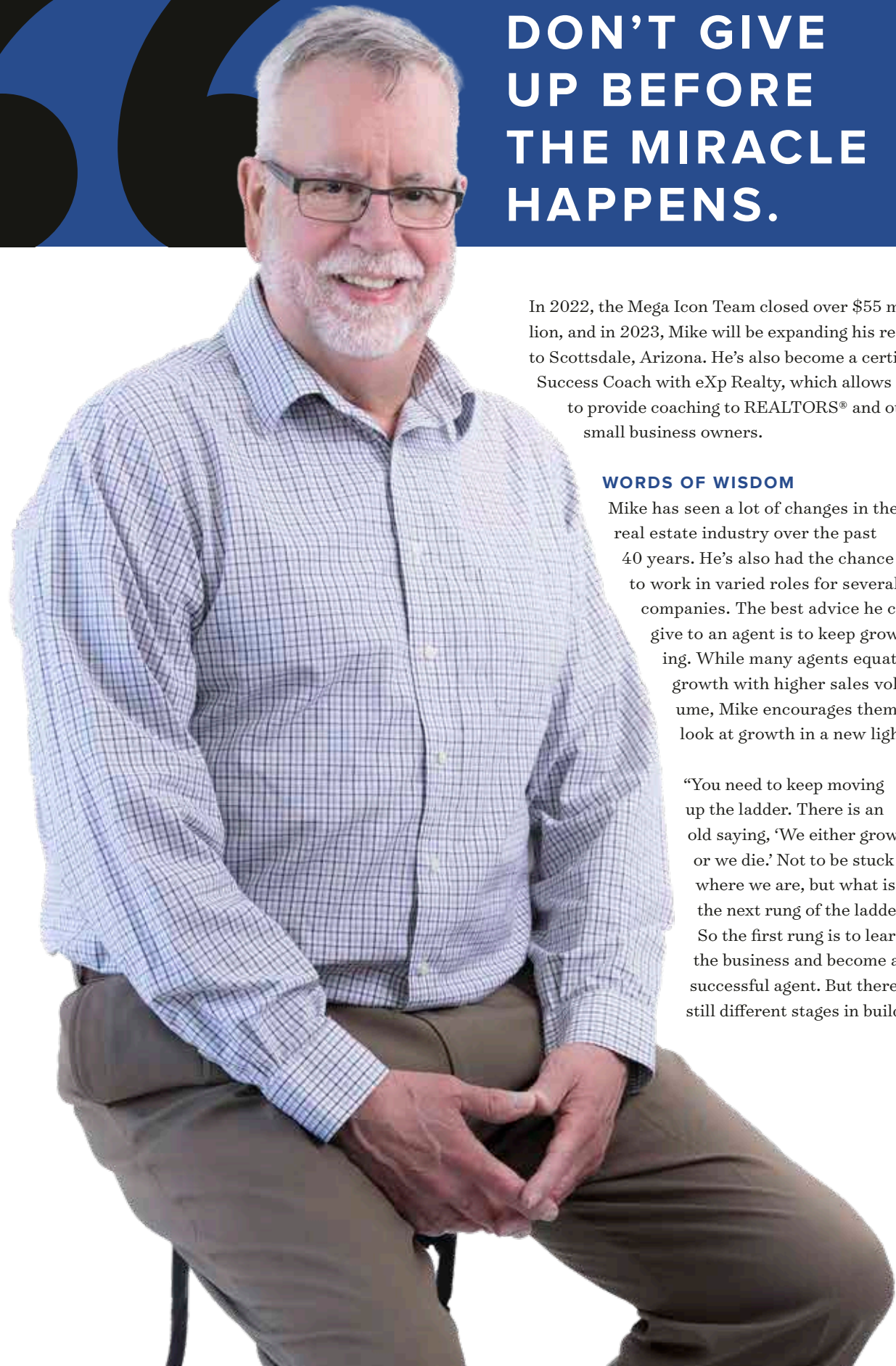
DON'T GIVE UP BEFORE THE MIRACLE HAPPENS.

In 2022, the Mega Icon Team closed over \$55 million, and in 2023, Mike will be expanding his reach to Scottsdale, Arizona. He's also become a certified Success Coach with eXp Realty, which allows him to provide coaching to REALTORS® and other small business owners.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Mike has seen a lot of changes in the real estate industry over the past 40 years. He's also had the chance to work in varied roles for several companies. The best advice he can give to an agent is to keep growing. While many agents equate growth with higher sales volume, Mike encourages them to look at growth in a new light.

“You need to keep moving up the ladder. There is an old saying, ‘We either grow or we die.’ Not to be stuck where we are, but what is the next rung of the ladder? So the first rung is to learn the business and become a successful agent. But there are still different stages in building



your business. After you master what you are doing, you have to bring on leverage and expand to the next level of growth — a team. Then once you've got a team, the next level is to bring on other people that want to have a team. The mark of a true professional is how much they learn after they think they know everything.”

One way to build an organization is to become a broker and start an office, but it's a challenging route. Instead, Mike encourages agents to follow in his footsteps to a cloud-based brokerage like eXp that allows for more possibilities when building a team.

“In 10 years, 90% of the offices will follow a model similar to eXp — cloud-based. The brick and mortar, traditional franchise, is dying,” Mike says. “I see the industry moving from being tethered to a location to a more flexible system. That's what the future holds.”

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CAITLIN BEANAN

From Theatre to REALTOR®

Caitlin Beanan was born and raised in San Mateo, attended Notre Dame High School in Belmont, and graduated from UC Irvine with a degree in drama. Her first passion was for the performing arts, and after graduating from college, she set out to build a career in theatre. Caitlin spent a year in Los Angeles before returning to the Bay Area, where she performed at the area's longest-running musical review, Beach Blanket Babylon in San Francisco.

Caitlin loved her work for Beach Blanket Babylon, spending six years as a full-time performer. In addition to her stint in LA, she spent two and a half years living and performing in New York. Caitlin was devoted to her craft.

"For six years, I was doing seven or eight shows a week. It was so rewarding but also exhausting," Caitlin reflects.

While Caitlin's love for theatre remained strong, by 2015, her professional vision had shifted.

"The schedule was tough. It was tough to make a living," she reflects. "By 2015, I knew I didn't want to do musical theatre as my career anymore."

Caitlin instead turned her attention toward real estate, an industry that had grabbed her attention.

"I love people. I love to hear people's stories," Caitlin says. "I figured it would fit well with my personality. Coming from entertainment, I'm a hustler. I can grind it out. I wasn't afraid to work hard."

After shadowing a REALTOR® friend for a week, Caitlin decided to dive in. She got her license in 2015 and worked part-time in real estate while continuing to perform at Beach Blanket Babylon. In the summer of 2016, she became a full-time REALTOR®.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Eight years into her real estate career, Caitlin couldn't be happier. She finds

real estate sales an exceptional fit for her personality, skills, and goals. She still performs occasionally, but real estate has become her full-time passion.

"I'm an excellent communicator. I never want my clients to be surprised by anything. I am proactive, addressing things before they come up," Caitlin explains. "And we have fun. I think real estate can be serious, but you can also have fun while doing it."

Caitlin has partnered with Kevin Pickett on a small team since 2019. She's primarily a buyer's agent, although their roles are somewhat fluid. In 2022, her husband, Richie, joined the team as the Director of Operations.

"So we're a small team, and we like it that way. Our personalities work well together," Caitlin says.

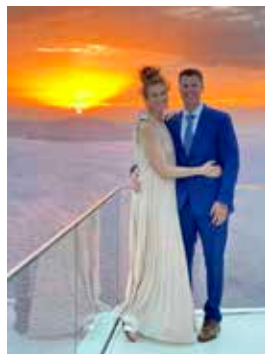
In 2021, the team closed \$60 million, followed by nearly \$50 million in 2022.





THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

Caitlin, Richie, and their young daughter, Grace, live in San Mateo. Although real estate and family life have taken center stage, Caitlin continues to perform from time to time. Her love for theatre remains strong, although she's happier with it as a hobby rather than a profession.



In real estate, Caitlin is looking forward to growing her team to become a \$100 million per year organization. While it'll be tough with just two agents, Caitlin is confident they'll reach their goal.

"I love my job, and I feel so fortunate," she smiles. "I stumbled into it. I was a performer for so many years, and I just wondered, what can I do for my career? It was a huge decision to make a change into real estate. Pivoting is hard and emotional. I feel so fortunate to have found a career that is really fulfilling. It speaks to me, and I have a lot to offer."

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By Jessica Frere
Originally printed in July 2019
(San Mateo County Real Producers)



RINI SEN GUPTA

From Legos to Real Estate: Rini Sen Gupta's Lifelong Love Affair with Houses

Since childhood, Rini Sen Gupta has been smitten with houses.

"I've always liked the whole idea of houses," Rini says. "My parents never really gave me dolls to play with. I got Lego sets. I think my dad felt that that was his way to bond with me. So, I just like the idea of building a house."

As the daughter of entrepreneurs, Rini's early passion for real estate was complemented by a yearning to become a business owner. Her parents encouraged her big dreams and always reminded her that any career chosen, needs a 100% commitment.

Rini was in high school when her mother was diagnosed with cancer. Those were difficult days on the personal front. At this time, Rini and her friends formed a nonprofit, Cancer Awareness Crusade. They traveled to schools in different cities to do away with myths surrounding cancer. This strong sense of being connected to the community, and having faith in a higher purpose has helped Rini battle personal challenges time and again.

Real Estate Beginnings

In 2004, a poor home buying experience prompted Rini to think about a career in real estate. She was still in graduate school in San Jose State, and the thought got pushed to the back of her mind.

After graduating from San Jose State University with a master's in mass communications, Rini joined the Asian American Donor Program. AADP is a non-profit that helps blood cancer patients find marrow matches. In some ways, this was in memory of her mother, and Rini immersed herself in bone-marrow donor recruitment.

"That was actually a very good experience because it was like a 101 in rapport building," shares Rini. "You really have a few minutes to make that connection. And you're actually truly making a difference in people's lives."

Hours at the non-profit were long, and as she began brainstorming potential career transitions, real estate and entrepreneurship once again came to her mind.

Rini's first year in business, 2011, proved rocky for a novice agent due to a high number of short sales in her market. "The way I looked at it was that it would be giving me time to learn so that when things were running, then I would already be up to speed," says Rini. "And I think it really worked out that way."

Finding Success

Finding success proved to be more challenging than expected. At that time Rini was married, and the long work hours and stress of her new career proved to be hard on her marriage.



It took courage and grit, but Rini made the tough decision to walk away from the familiar and go through a divorce. Yet, she knew in her mind that she would need to give her career all of her attention, attain financial freedom, and once again learn to dream.

Volunteering with Life Eldercare's transportation program for home-bound seniors was a wonderful release in those early days of living on her own. And with time, the real estate market picked up, and her business gradually gained momentum. Rini's transactions increased each year until, in 2018, she achieved \$30 million in sales, a testament to her dogged perseverance.

Feeding Her Personal Growth

Two business practices have helped Rini achieve professional growth. First, she views her role as an agent as more of a coach than a salesperson. "I like people, and I know these [real estate transactions] can potentially be stressful situations, but I can be a

very good, calming presence and help [clients] make that decision."

Furthermore, Rini prioritizes setting annual business and personal goals. This yearly activity has helped focus her energies and keep her key objectives top of mind.

"You're talking to your subconscious, and you've schooled every part of yourself in wanting this and working towards it," says Rini. "It's not about wanting something and not achieving it and getting disappointed. It's about knowing that you're putting in your best effort and that you're going somewhere close to it and that it will happen at some point."

While Rini places importance on maintaining her thriving business, she refuses to adhere to an 'all work and no play' mentality. Travel is her all-time favorite pastime, and her dad is her favorite travel buddy. The duo selects a new location to visit

together each year (past destinations have included Turkey, New Zealand, Japan, and an African safari) and consider their annual adventures a prime opportunity to connect and bond.

As the cherry on top of an already jam-packed life, Rini recently took on an exciting, personal undertaking that pays tribute to her youthful obsession with home design: a move to Menlo Park and the purchase and remodeling of a 1947 home there. After recently transitioning her business to the area, she felt it was a fitting progression that she, too, physically relocate there and immerse herself in the community and its culture. She hopes this decision will propel her forward professionally and, in turn, lead her towards her ultimate goal: to achieve the financial security needed to fuel her long-time passions for travel, philanthropy, and, above all, personal freedom.

From the looks of things, she's well on her way to turning her dreams into reality.



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PHIL CHEN

cover story
From the Street Skate to Real Estate Sales: Continuing to Take the Leap of Faith

“I eventually dropped off, while my friends became professionals. In their Thursday Magazine interviews they would say things like, ‘I need to skate with Phil Chen, but he says, ‘I will never forget that.’”

“I remember I took a four-year off and when I was in college, I registered and took my first ‘Phil Chen’ course. ‘I told my parents, ‘I’m going to register this my whole life. I’m going to get schooled and go get it. But I never did it. And I am going to regret it my whole life. I was too young to enjoy or see what the potential would be.’”

Despite the sense of loss from a skateboarding career that never was, Phil’s path has led him to great things: first, a career in fitness, and now, a blossoming real estate business. He still takes lessons from his early years on a skateboard with him every day.

With the nature of a skateboarder, Phil remains willing to take chances when the time is ripe. “I’m constantly rolling the dice and taking risks and chances. That’s my nature. I’m not conservative towards it. I’m always going to take the leap of faith,” he explains.

“The business I learned from skateboarding is a true determination. Living, sleeping, breathing what you do, it becomes natural and instinctive. In a little way, it’s a sense of what being an elite athlete was like. I could go to sleep, dream a trick, and do it the next day. I tell my kids now, try to be the best at whatever you do.”

In college, Phil dated into another skateboarding magazine, *Thrasher*. “I was a top real estate agent in the highly competitive area of Hillsborough. I remember the ‘Best Kept Secret’ award. Phil opened his own boutique brokerage, Jlybrius, without ever working for a larger brokerage, using the knowledge he accrued mainly on his own through his family’s investments, observation, intuition, and experience. By 2010, he put himself on the map as a top real estate agent in the highly competitive area of Hillsborough. Coming to Compare from Hyderabad, which he operated and ran for the better part of a decade, has given Phil a unique perspective on the state of the local real estate market. “Compare is a unique spending freight train right now,” Phil comments.

“The fortunate to have had three careers that I was passionate about, however, really great in and made me success.”

Regardless of the brokerage where he hangs his license, Phil knows his reputation is what carries him to success. “People trust me. Reputation is an important cover any deal or commission. That’s the reason an usually one of the first choices amongst an many talented agents in the Bay Area.”

Phil stays motivated by staying humble and continuously striving to improve in all aspects of his work. “I’m still hungry, so watch out.”

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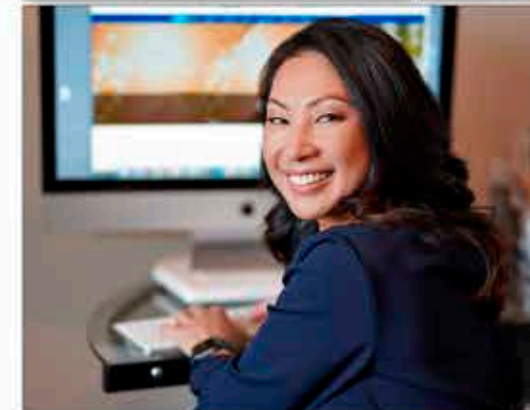
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