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RISING STAR

Jenn Saliba

AGENT SPOTLIGHT

Quentin Carter

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Higher Roof Solutions

Photo by Brendon
Pinola Photography

***Mechanical Engineer Found
His Future in Real Estate***

APRIL 2024

Alabama Professional Services



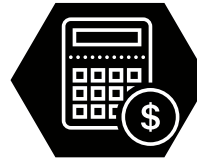
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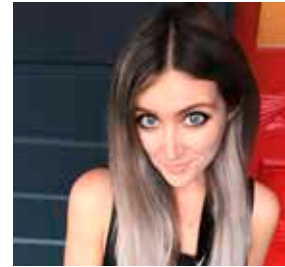
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As we usher in the month of April, it brings me joy to present to you another edition of *Birmingham Real Producers*, proudly supported by our valued featured partners. This magazine is a true testament to the remarkable achievements and unparalleled dedication of the top 300 producing real estate agents in our vibrant city.

Birmingham's real estate landscape is warming up, and at the heart of this are the individuals we spotlight in this issue. These agents have not only excelled in their profession but have also left an indelible mark on the industry through their innovation, resilience, and commitment to excellence, and they are a source of inspiration for professionals aiming to make their mark in the competitive world of real estate.

Our featured partners have been instrumental in making this edition possible and their unwavering support reflects a shared commitment to elevating

the real estate community in Birmingham. We're so grateful to them for their ongoing collaboration and dedication to fostering growth within our industry.

Birmingham Real Producers remains steadfast in its mission to connect, inform, and empower the real estate community. We invite you to delve into the pages of this magazine, to celebrate the accomplishments of our top producers, and to gain valuable insights that can shape your own journey in the dynamic field of real estate.

Thank you for being an integral part of our community. We are excited to share the stories of Birmingham's top real estate agents and the collective spirit that continues to drive our city's real estate success.



Meredith Jones
Owner/Publisher



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▶▶ partner spotlight

Written by Zachary Cohen
Photos by David Graves,
David Graves Photography

JOHN WILLARD

HIGHER ROOF SOLUTIONS

"I have always enjoyed construction, but I didn't realize how much passion I had for construction until then," John shares.

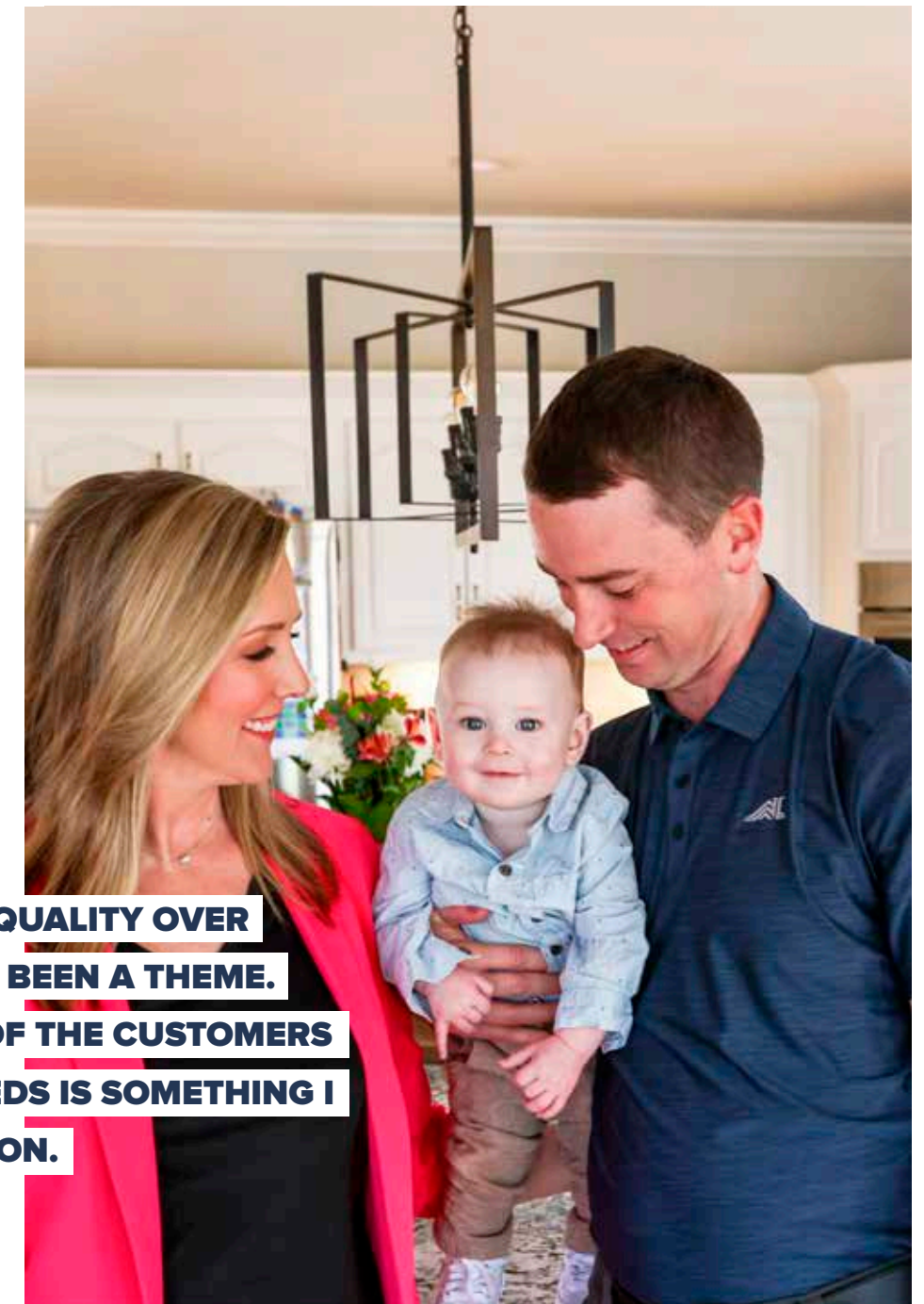
After several years on the job, John realized he had hit his ceiling in his current position. With his first child on the way, he made the bold decision to step out on his own, founding Higher Roof Solutions in May 2023.

"I got to a point where it was time to take a leap of faith and find out what's out there for me," he says.

As the owner of Higher Roof Solutions, John centers his brand on quality craftsmanship and client care. He's not interested in becoming Alabama's biggest roofing contractor; instead, he prefers to be the most well-respected.

"Focusing on quality over quantity has been a theme. Taking care of the customers and their needs is something I pride myself on," John explains. "I'm always focused on putting my clients' needs above mine. As we're tearing apart their

Photo by Kristie Allen Photography



FALLING IN LOVE WITH BIRMINGHAM

John Willard of Higher Roof Solutions may not have been born and raised in Birmingham, but he's proud to call the city home. Since moving south to be with his wife, Lauren, in 2017, John has rooted himself in Birmingham's culture, community, and business network.

John was born and raised in rural Virginia, outside the Roanoke/Blacksburg area. Growing up, he discovered a love for construction, but he didn't envision it would one day become his full-time career. And yet, years later and several states farther south, that's precisely what happened.

John moved to Birmingham in 2017 to join his wife, who had moved to the area to work for CBS 42 a few years prior. Upon landing in Birmingham, he started working in roofing sales. When he realized that construction was a field he was passionate about, John embarked on a journey to learn everything he could about the roofing business. Whether going door to door to gain clients or managing large-scale commercial projects, he soaked up every bit of knowledge he could. He became motivated by a commitment to quality over quantity — a standard he still holds today.

FOCUSING ON QUALITY OVER QUANTITY HAS BEEN A THEME. TAKING CARE OF THE CUSTOMERS AND THEIR NEEDS IS SOMETHING I PRIDE MYSELF ON.



home in a nerve-racking construction job like roofing, gaining the trust of a homeowner is humbling. I just want to make sure they have a good experience.”

2023 was a big year for John in more ways than one. Alongside founding Higher Roof Solutions, he and Lauren welcomed their first child, Mason, to the world on July 4, 2023. Lauren now works for ESPN and runs her own public speaking business — she’s an advocate for those suffering from the effects of addiction — so life in the Willard household is always an adventure. Running two businesses and caring for a toddler keeps John and Lauren on their toes, but that’s just the way they like it. Lauren’s support has also been key to John’s success in business.

“We take it day by day,” John smiles. “I wouldn’t have been able to do any of this without her constant support; being an entrepreneur is challenging, but having her take the journey with me makes it all worth it.”

In the meantime, John and Lauren have fallen in love with life in Birmingham. Although they both come from rural upbringings, they have been pleasantly surprised by the benefits of living in a larger city.

“We love the size of Birmingham,” John shares. “We both grew up in very rural towns in Virginia and living in a big city never interested me. But Birmingham feels like home in the sort of people I am networking with, whether I’m getting to know people around church or work. It feels like a small town, but the fact that it’s a bigger city is surprising and fun. We love the sense of community and small-town feel.

“I’m eager to see how my business grows over the next few years, but it’s kind of like raising a toddler; you just have to take it one day at a time.”

For more information about Higher Roof Solutions, visit <https://www.higherroofsolutions.com/>.

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Compassionate. All of those words describe Jenn Saliba. Her down-to-earth style resonates with her clients. When they call her to show a house on a Saturday morning, Jenn drops everything to cater to her clients, often showing up with her hair gathered in a carefree bun, a T-shirt, and yoga pants. It's her style. So are telling bad dad jokes that lighten the mood. “I’m not here to impress people,” she says. She is there to be their partner in helping their homeownership dreams come true.

As she says, “If you have to put nine layers of makeup on and Spanx to see a house with me, it’s not going to be fun.” Being “real” with people is her secret to success, which has led to connections that go beyond the closing table.

ALABAMA NATIVE

Hailing from Huntsville, AL, and having spent the majority of her life in Birmingham, Jenn has always had a heart of service. To this Rising Star, it’s always been about people, even from her childhood days.

▶▶ rising star

Written by Elizabeth McCabe
Photos by Brendon Pinola,
Brendon Pinola Photography



*If you do what
you love, you will
be successful
and it won't feel
like work.*

“I wanted to be a doctor as a child,” she says. However, she jokes that she is “not good in emergency situations.” Instead, serving others in the hospitality industry suited her better. She waited tables, honing her customer service skills, before helping others as a massage therapist.

FINDING HER PASSION

Jenn has always taken her father’s advice to heart, “If you do what you love, you will be successful and it won’t feel like work,” Jenn comments, “I have found this later in life in my 30s. My father’s words have been true. I have been extremely successful because I followed my passion. I followed my calling and I am where I am supposed to be.”

Jenn earned her marketing degree from the University of Alabama and soon discovered her passion in sales. “By chance, I fell into the apartment industry,” she says. When her boss at the Stardome mentioned that she should work with his wife, Amy, to lease apartments, Jenn didn’t say no.

“I did that for 6 months, and when the assistant manager left, I moved up,” she shares. Jenn’s talent was evident, and after 15 months, she was asked to be the property manager. “Other women poured into me

and taught me everything that I needed to know about apartments,” she comments. A self-described people pleaser, Jenn excelled in relationships. “That’s where a lot of my people skills come from,” she says.

In 2020 and in her late 30s, Jenn got her license and decided to leave her job in apartments after spending 15 years in the industry. “That’s when I figured out I was pregnant with Jonas,” she says. “I showed a house 3 days after having a baby. “I hobbled in the house and sold it.” She goes the extra mile for her clients, each and every time.

HER “HAPPY PLACE”

Jenn found her true calling in the realm of real estate. Describing it as her “happy place,” she exudes a genuine love for connecting with people and building relationships, which she believes are at the heart of her success.

“I am a happy person, and I don’t handle conflict very well,” Jenn admits. “I thrive on loving and supporting others, and that’s what drew me to real estate. Whether I’m showing a client one house or a hundred houses, my focus is solely on them and their needs.”

In her infectious social media videos, Jenn affectionately signs on with her signature phrase, “Hey, it’s your girl, Jenn,” embodying the warmth, authenticity, and unwavering enthusiasm that have endeared her to clients and colleagues alike.

She sees every interaction as an opportunity to sow seeds of kindness and build meaningful connections. “I believe that God has placed certain people in my life for a reason,” she reflects. “I’ve been blessed to be a relationship builder, and I’m surrounded by the best girlfriends in the world. For the first time, I feel truly fulfilled.”

STRIKING A BALANCE

Juggling a thriving career with the demands of motherhood as a mother of four isn’t for the faint of heart.

“I live a crazy life,” Jenn laughs, describing the joyful chaos of raising her children, ranging from ages 11 to 2, alongside her supportive husband, Jonathan. “We thrive and succeed in chaos,” she smiles, emphasizing the importance of embracing life’s unpredictable moments with humor and grace.

When not working, Jenn likes to play poker with her husband. “I’m trying to become a card shark, but I don’t lie very well,” she laughs. “I lose a lot.” She also likes hiking and being grounded in nature. Or, you can find her dancing in her living room.

“I also love to cook and try new recipes,” she says. “I love it when the kids get to be in the kitchen with me.”

BLAZING HER OWN TRAIL

Drawing from her background in sales and property management, Jenn brings a wealth of expertise and a genuine passion for helping others achieve their dreams of homeownership.

“I’ve been blessed beyond measure,” Jenn concludes, reflecting on her remarkable journey. “Real estate has allowed me to give back in ways I never imagined. As much as God has blessed us, we help others.” Recently, she was able to renovate the bathrooms at her church and couldn’t be happier to be of benefit to the community.

Looking over her career, Jenn has nothing but a heart of gratitude for where she is and where she has come from. This working mom of four moves people to the closing table, changing lives in the process. We can’t wait to see what this Rising Star accomplishes next!



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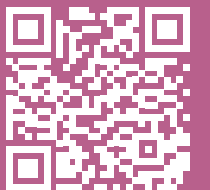


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QUENTIN CARTER

agent spotlight

Written by Nick Ingrisani
Photos by Brendon Pinola,
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From Small-Town Roots to Real Estate Success



Born and raised in the small town of Courtland, Alabama, with a population of just 1,400, Quentin grew up in a close-knit community where everyone knew each other. This early experience fostered a strong sense of connection and understanding of the importance of community, which would later become a cornerstone of his real estate career. After high school, he went to college at Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, where he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in management systems.

His career journey took him from Courtland to El Paso, Texas, and back to Alabama, where he worked in various capacities at a local bank, including branch manager, corporate marketing, and IT. His tenure at the bank was marked by his selection into a highly competitive management training program, which only accepted 36 out of 1,000 applicants annually. This experience allowed him to develop a diverse skill set and an understanding of customer service excellence.

Despite a successful career in banking, he felt a calling towards real estate—a field he had been interested in since buying his first house in 2007. The potential for freedom, the ability to help others achieve the American Dream, and the allure of a lucrative career propelled him to take a leap of faith. He left his stable job without a backup plan, got his real estate license within 3 weeks, and closed his first sale 30 days after that—an unheard-of achievement for a newcomer in the industry.

“I didn’t know a lot about real estate when I got started, but I had learned and mastered the art of customer service.”

Building a Successful Real Estate Business

Quentin joined Barnes & Associates and hasn’t looked back since. By the end of his first year, he had closed 22 deals, significantly outperforming the average REALTOR®. His success continued to grow, with 38 closings in 2020, all without buying leads. In 2023, he was Birmingham’s REALTOR® of the Year and nominated for the State of Alabama’s REALTOR® of the Year.



For Quentin, a successful real estate business is all about networking and building relationships.

“The average person thinks networking is talking to people you know, but networking is going to places where you don’t know anyone. So, I did a lot of that and it has really paid off. I keep a very good CRM system to check in with people constantly throughout the year.”

The cornerstone of Quentin’s business is a commitment to stellar customer service at every step of the way. He’s committed to making every transaction feel easy and seamless—even if they’re in the midst of an overwhelming situation.

“Conflict resolution is very important in this process. I need to be able to deal with different situations and make a client feel comfortable.”

Outside of his real estate business, he is deeply committed to his community and family. He is very active in his university’s alumni association and fraternity, and he also serves as the president of the board for the Greater Alabama MLS, marking a significant accomplishment in his career. He also comes from a large and close-knit family who gather regularly, celebrate each others’ life milestones, and go on a cruise every year.

Quentin acknowledges that with 6000 registered REALTORS® in the city of Birmingham, it’s vital to make his business, approach, and personality stand out from the pack. Something he used to do was sit in local coffee shops with a sign that said, “Want to talk about real estate? Let me buy you a coffee.” People would often approach him and he ended up getting many referrals and deals from it, even if the people he met weren’t interested in buying themselves.

Looking to the future, he aims to continue growing his business, mentoring new agents, and helping first-time home buyers and recent college graduates navigate the real estate market. His leadership skills, fast learning ability, and passion for training ensure that he will continue to be a success story in the real estate world.

“I just want to continue to grow my business and be the person people can depend on to get the job done.”

“Conflict resolution is very important in this process. I need to be able to deal with different situations and make a client feel comfortable.”

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JAMES RODGERS

MECHANICAL ENGINEER FOUND HIS FUTURE IN REAL ESTATE

When James Rodgers got into mechanical engineering, he loved the work but didn't like the future it held for him. Although the income potential was excellent, the work-life balance was not.

"My supervisor would go to sleep with his phone on high under his pillow in case a shop call would come in the middle of the night. That wasn't the life I was looking for," says James. Instead, James had a higher purpose in mind.

"When we got engaged, my wife, Ginny, and I envisioned traveling the world and sharing the Gospel with people. We wanted to bless people and help them live the life that they deserved to live while knowing more about God." His goal was to fund this life through his own business. Engineering wasn't the right fit for this driven entrepreneur.

After James completed a wholesale/contract assignment deal during lunch breaks, he envisioned a future in real estate. He had read *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* and started obsessively learning about real estate investing. He pondered, "What if I did wholesale deals all day, every day?"

His wife, who stayed at home with their two kids, gave him the support he needed to venture into real estate. "That was the sign I needed to give it a shot," comments James. "I left my W2 job." It took longer than he expected to have success. "I did not know how to run a business," James adds. "All I knew up to that point was how to be a good employee." When he quickly burned through available savings, a change was in order.

"I realized that I had to go back to my old job," James recalls, reflecting on the difficult decision to re-enter the corporate world. When that position was no longer available, James began interviewing for entry level positions in engineering. Even in the face of adversity, James remained resolute in his pursuit of a career that aligned with his passions.

However, he wasn't going back to the corporate world without his real estate license, which he earned on November 1, 2017. Interviewing didn't go very well, since he was too honest when asked the question, "Where do you want to be in 5 years?" Despite facing rejection and financial uncertainty, he persevered, doing any job necessary to support his family while building his real estate business from the ground up.

"I had two little babies at home, so I was doing odd jobs to pay our immediate bills," he says. He started his days at Starbucks from 5 a.m. – 10 a.m. before being a Shipt shopper until 7 p.m. "I would try to make calls and earn clients in the meantime," he says. "In my first 6 months of being licensed, I sold one house," he admits.

James continued to press on, being resolute in his efforts to make it in real estate. A determined and driven individual, James began to gain traction in the industry. He explains, "To get my feet underneath me, I connected with a boutique start-up brokerage. They were a decent-sized local investment group, property management company, and wanted me to launch their retail brokerage to bring all of their investment-side resources to the retail world. We negotiated a salary up front until I paid

▶▶ cover story

Written by Elizabeth McCabe

Photos by Brendon Pinola, Brendon Pinola Photography

them back from closing commissions. That allowed me to be in real estate full-time and drop the smaller jobs."

LEARNING FROM THE BEST

In Fall 2018, James switched brokerages to Keller Williams, where he learned how to follow proven models to build a successful business, and found mentorship and support from seasoned professionals like Brian Kelleher. Under Brian's guidance, James honed his skills and expanded his network, laying the foundation for a successful career in real estate.

"I wouldn't be where I am today without him," says James. "It was the best business relationship that I ever had."

Brian was James' team leader and mentor and James worked as his buyer's agent for a couple of years. "He supported me and let me be part of the incredible business that he made." Brian followed proven systems that caused James to have success in real estate.

Today, James is a top-producing agent at Keller Williams Homewood where he leads by example, empowering others to achieve their goals. He attributes his success to models learned at KW, a willingness to do what it takes, and a commitment to serving others.

"In 2020, I started working by myself and it's been a ton of growth every year since," reflects James. In 2021, James hired his first assistant, Ashley DeForest, his former CrossFit coach. "She was a game changer for me," he comments. "She brought a ton of excellence and drive into my world, and we set goals and worked hard to achieve them." James couldn't be happier that Ashley is now building a successful career as a REALTOR®. He says, "To see Ashley and the other agents working with me succeed is probably the





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most fulfilling thing professionally. It's a form of repaying the people who invested in me," he points out. "I want to help them build a career that they are thankful for. That's one of the most rewarding parts of the process, for agents and administrative staff who are working for me to build a life by design."

Last year, the James Rodgers Realty Group went from 52 transactions in 2022 to 67 transactions in 2023 despite the market being down 20% year over year. "I'm really proud of that," he says. "I attribute that to staying committed and being in quality relationships with as many people as we can." He is also proud of the agents who are working with him.

TOP TIPS

James has some advice for new agents. He says, "Get a mentor. Find someone you can watch and help so you can make money together. Be right next to them when they are doing great things. It is the shortest and most effective path to being profitable and stable in your business."

He also encourages new agents to focus on having as many real estate conversations as possible. "Make sure that every single person you know in the world knows what you do and how you can serve them," he says. "If you are willing to have intentional conversations on a consistent basis, you will help a lot of people." That's a core aspect of James' business.

FAMILY FIRST

When he's not working, it's all about family to James, a devoted dad and a loving husband. "My kids and my wife are my highest calling," says James. He and Ginny are blessed with five children: Gracious (10), Deborah (7), Eden (5), Benjamin (3), and Noa (1).

"My kids are everything to me," adds James. The oldest girls love to come to his office to earn a little bit of money helping where they can.

His main hobby is CrossFit, and he is at Redefine Fitness almost every day (his kids love to come, too). "Some of my best friends are in that gym," he notes.

He also likes singing and playing music along with his wife as well as spending time with his "incredible community of friends in Southside." James explains, "We get deep into the nitty gritty things of life. We know each other well and support each other."

A savvy investor, James also feels fortunate to have purchased two rental properties so far.

GIVING BACK

James also wants his business to directly support communities in Birmingham outside of investing in real estate. He says, "In 2024, we are starting the Be A Good Neighbor Fund. We are investing \$100 from every closed transaction to one of four charities - Firehouse Ministries, Build UP, The WellHouse, and ELI (Empowered for Lasting Impact)." His team is committed to investing \$10,000 this year to help others.

FINAL THOUGHTS

"At the end of the day, the reason I've been successful is because I have been able to trust God," says James. Here is what that trust looks like: "If I commit to taking care of the person in front of me, everything is going to work out," he smiles.



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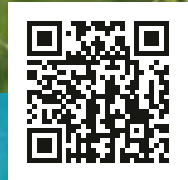
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