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▶▶ january 25th mardi gras party & social event

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Photos by Outlaw Photography
By Robert Orso

I want to extend a special thanks to the staff at the Mississippi Antique Galeria for hosting our Mardi Gras Party on January 25th and to Staging Professional, Donna Stallone for decorating the event! And of course, my assistant Sharon Price for planning the event. This was our third social event on the coast and although the weather did not cooperate and we had a major rain-storm, some of our faithful Real Producers braved the storm and made the party fun and rewarding.

Our intent and mission at *Gulf Coast Real Producers* goes way beyond a one-time article for you in our magazine. We are building a social community for the most elite Realtors on the coast. If you haven't already, please engage with us by reading the magazine, joining us on Facebook and Instagram and attending the social events we host each quarter. You will love what we do for the top Realtors we serve for free! Here are a few photos from the event!



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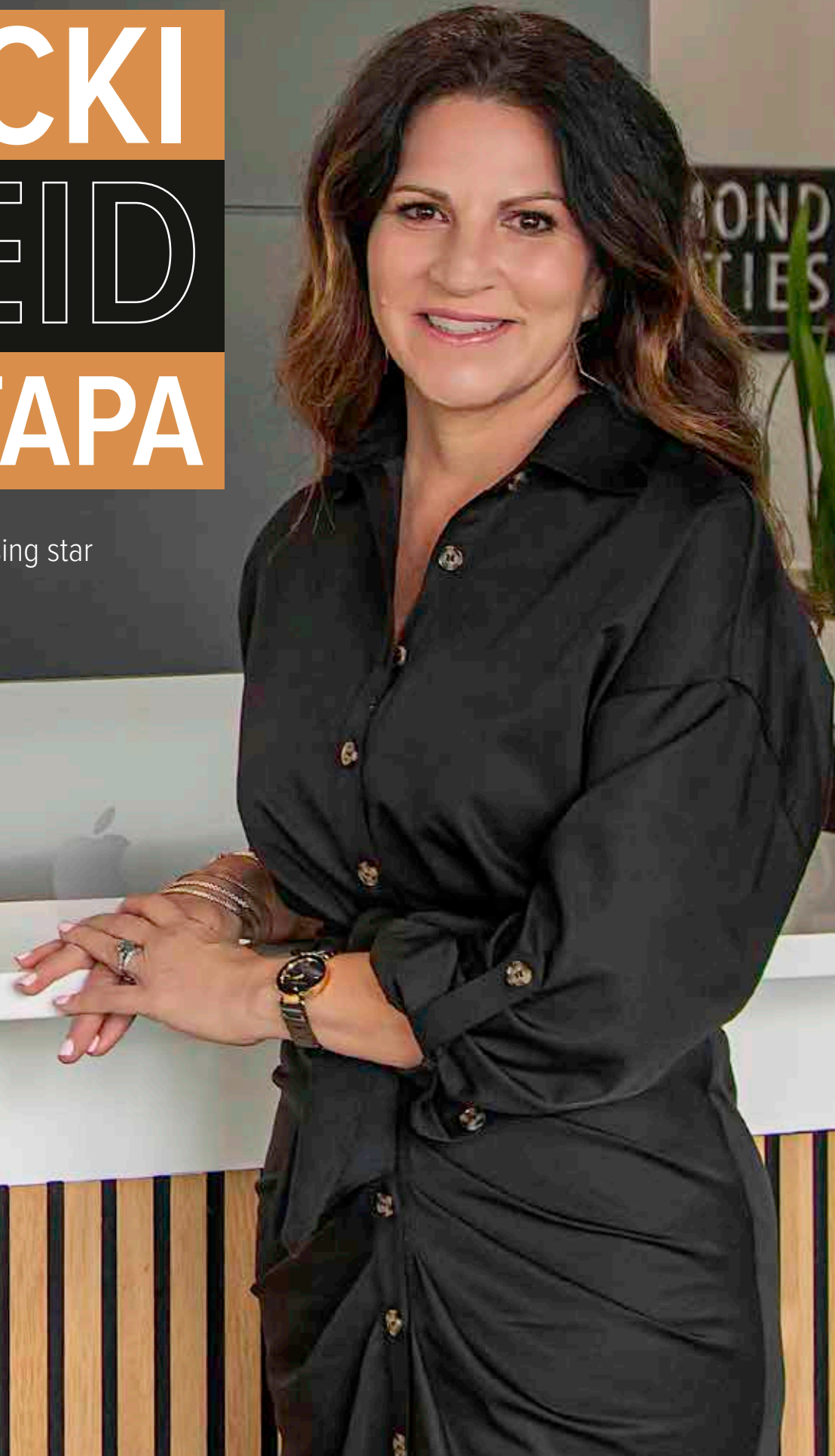
— UPCOMING GCAR EVENTS | APRIL 2024 —

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| 11 | PCDS & The State of the Real Estate Market in MS
The REALTOR® Building- 4 Hours CE
9:30 am | |
| 16 | GCAR New Member Orientation
The REALTOR® Building
9:00 am | |
| 25 | 2024 Beer and Wine Festival
The REALTOR® Building
5:00 pm - 8:00pm | |
| 30 | CE- Real Estate Safety & You
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11:30 am-2:00 pm | |

Details and registration for all events can be found at www.gcarealtors.com

VICKI REID ESTAPA

➤ rising star



LIFELONG LEARNER WITH LOCAL PRIDE

By Jess Wellar
Photos by Chip Jackson, Realistic Realty Photography

With an impressive paralegal career spanning over two decades in the title sector, Vicki Reid Estapa now shines as a promising force with buyers and sellers at HL Raymond Properties.

“I just want my clients to walk away from the closing table having loved their experience of working with me,” Vicki smiles. “It’s not as easy as people think it is though. You spend so much time with one person or one family to build that relationship.”

A NATURAL PIVOT

Born and raised in Hancock County, Vicki pursued a paralegal degree and worked for 22 years as a closer in the title industry. She says she eventually gravitated towards real estate to be on the other side of the closing table. After receiving overwhelming support and encouragement from her friends and family, Vicki made the big leap and never looked back.

“With my paralegal background, I felt that I could really help individuals navigate through the buying and selling process,” she explains. “And as a closing agent, I was able to connect with individuals purchasing their ‘forever’ home, new home, first home, or investment property. It was often inspiring to see the relationships built through the process.”

As a former soccer athlete and coach with over 10 years of experience, Vicki excels as a natural team player, adept at bringing together lenders, closing attorneys, buyers, and sellers to make any transaction happen.

After obtaining her real estate license in late 2022, Vicki trained with her broker in early January 2023 and then hit the ground running.



RAPID RISE

Vicki’s career pivot paid off as she quickly found her stride as a REALTOR®. In her inaugural year, Vicki closed 16 transactions totaling almost \$3 million in volume, earning her Rookie of the Year and the prestigious Bronze Award at her brokerage in 2023. Looking ahead, Vicki has set her sights on doubling her volume, but also points out she doesn’t get too hung up on awards.

“Success to me is helping others without the need for recognition,” she emphasizes. “My passion for real estate is fueled by my dedication to helping others achieve their goals and find their dream home or property. “It’s getting that phone call from a new client saying that a prior client referred them to me,” she continues. “I literally cried when I received that first referral. That was confirmation that I was doing a good job! This is what means the most to me.”

Whether guiding first-time homebuyers through the complexities of the market or assisting seasoned investors in finding lucrative opportunities, Vicki’s unique blend of experience, expertise, and empathy ensures her clients’ needs are not just met but exceeded. She absolutely thrives on building genuine connections and advises up-and-coming agents to do the same.

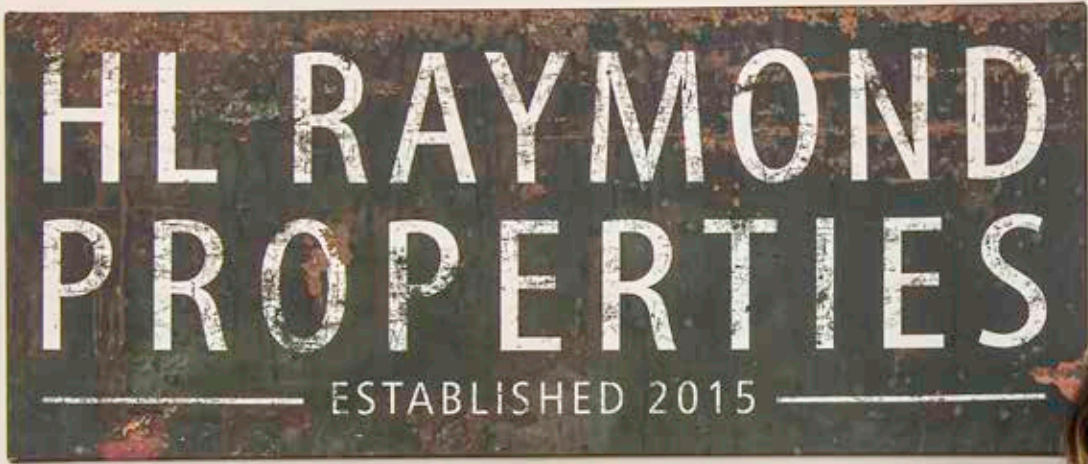
“Listen when your clients talk to you — I mean really listen!” Vicki emphasizes. “You must build relationships with your clients. Yes, what we do is our job, but always take care of your clients as if they are your family or best friend.

“Also be sure to stay updated on all new laws and regulations as this changes daily,” she adds. “I never stop reading and I never stop learning.”

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Beyond a busy work schedule, Vicki’s heart beats for family, including her amazingly supportive husband, Todd Estapa, her two grown sons that now reside in Tuscaloosa, Alabama — Dillan (32) and Austin (24) — and her beloved 14-year-old German Shepherd, Molly.

“I adore animals! If possible, I would have every type of pet,” Vicki laughs. “Just ask my husband I’m sending him daily videos of mini cows, goats, birds, cats, and any other animal video I find.”



“ I HAVE ALWAYS WORKED FOR OTHERS BEFORE — I’M VERY MUCH A WORKER-BEE — AND IT’S SOMETIMES HARD TO SEE THAT YOU CAN BE SUCCESSFUL FOR YOURSELF. ”



A dedicated community advocate as well as animal lover, Vicki is actively involved in various charitable endeavors, serving as a board member with the Hancock County Leadership Program, as a proud member of the Hancock County Women’s Republican Club, and supporting initiatives such as Make-a-Wish fundraisers.

“My love for my community, family, and friends is what truly drives me,” Vicki shares. “Where we live is so special if you just take the time to experience all that the Gulf Coast has to offer. I really enjoy fishing, boating, or just sitting on the beach.”

LOOKING AHEAD
As Vicki glimpses into the future, she aims to have her broker’s license by July 2024, but notes her aspirations extend beyond continuous learning and professional growth.

“I want to help as many people as possible who are ready to venture into the world of real estate, whether selling or buying, and hopefully inspire others to be confident enough to know that they can also go after their dreams,” Vicki declares. “I have always worked for others before — I’m very much a worker-bee — and it’s

sometimes hard to see that you can be successful for yourself.

“But the work you put in will come back in magnitude,” she affirms. “I have heard this phrase a lot in the past year: ‘Plant the seeds and they will grow.’ And let me tell you, it’s starting to grow.”

For questions or comments regarding this article, contact Vicki at (228) 216-3537 or vicki.hlrprop@gmail.com. You can also comment on Facebook at *Gulf Coast Real Producers*.

LESLIE SUIT

*Not For
The Faint
Of Heart*



Leslie Suit with RE/MAX Results in Real Estate in Gulfport is Gulf Coast Real Producer's Top Agent for April and is a home-grown product of the area, having been born and raised in Ocean Springs.

"I was born and raised in Ocean Springs, went to St. Alphonsus Elementary and then on to Ocean Springs public schools; graduating from Ocean Springs High School in 1990." Suit said.

Leslie learned discipline and honed her competitive spirit, participating in dance from a very young age.

"I was enrolled with Donna's Visual and Performing Arts Center in Ocean Springs from the age of six until eighteen years old. During my junior and senior years, we placed first in Orlando and second in Las Vegas in a national competition up against at least 100 teams across the country. Being part of that team and working together towards a common goal was an incredibly valuable lesson."

Leslie was also a talented student making good grades with a literary flair, serving in leadership roles for two high school publications.

"I graduated in the top 10% of my senior class academically, was president of our literary magazine called Quill & Scroll and served as Editor for the high school newspaper called The Hound's Tale." Suit said.

Upon graduation, Leslie attended college at The University of Southern Mississippi where she earned a degree in English. Graduating in 1994, she went to work for Magnolia Federal Bank and soon became a mortgage originator. This role eventually led her into becoming a Realtor, after the birth of her son.

"I met an excellent married Realtor team, and it inspired me to pursue it as a career. After the birth



► real producer
By Ron Sivak
Photos By Katherine
Sowers Photography

of my son in 1997, Tanner Blacklidge, I stayed at home for a year but then got my real estate license in 1998, eventually going to work for RE/MAX By The Gulf in Biloxi." Suit said.

Leslie initially focused on subdivisions and investment properties, handling transactions on developments and commercial properties. Around 2008, at the onset of the "Great Recession", Suit stepped away from real estate and delved into the realm of entrepreneurship for several years.

"I was involved with several businesses, including an indoor cycling franchise called CycleBar in Hattiesburg. I ended up selling it in 2019 and went back into real estate, joining RE/MAX Results in Gulfport. Jim Atchison was the broker and I have been there ever since. All of this was after I hit the 'husband lottery' and married my current spouse, Achim Suit, in 2016. We've been happily married ever since." Suit said.

Since reengaging five years ago, Leslie has seen great success, with her sales volume increasing substantially every year.

"My business has increased by working hard at building up my client base with last year being my best ever. In January of this year, I was the number two RE/MAX agent in the state of Mississippi, based on transactions." Suit said.

Leslie attributes this acceleration to a very structured program she has implemented since returning to the industry.

"I hired a real estate coach for about a year and a half, and really homed in on working my top 50 contacts. We call it our 'Sphere of Influence' based on friends, family, and past clients, and it's a very specific way of consistently marketing. I keep a very detailed set of metrics and data so I can track every transaction to see what is working and what's not, and it helps me know where to focus my energy and efforts in different categories of the business." Suit said.



She also attributes leveraging Zillow to a high degree as a factor towards her current success.

"I got into Zillow when I first got back into real estate just as a vessel to build my client list back up, but it has turned into a great resource. I've had great success with them, and it now represents between 30% and 35% of my business. I am what's called a 'Best of Zillow' premier agent, and I am consistently in the top 10% of their customer satisfaction scores which are tied to their different metrics of measuring Realtor sales volume and success." Suit said.

Leslie is also appreciative of her long-time relationship with RE/MAX.

"I love this franchise, and as an agent, I especially love that they are the number one recognized real estate brand in the world. The support and credibility of the brand is top notch, and that is the reason why I've gone back to them for a second time." Suit said.

Moving into the future, Leslie wants to focus on a robust work/life balance, fully incorporating her longtime passion for local charities Blessings in a Backpack and animal rescue.

"Blessings in a Backpack is something I became involved with in 2010 with my church, Trinity Methodist in Gulfport. We pack food for underprivileged school children and deliver them to the school nurse on Fridays, so they have some extra food on the weekends." Suit said.

It's not for the faint of heart.

You must have a very specific plan in place because it's not going to be an instant return and it's not a steady business.



”



"Animal rescue is something that has always been dear to my heart. I got involved with a spay/neuter program years ago with my sister, and we mainly work with our local vets to have feral cats spayed and neutered in our area. We also make sure they are fed every day and looked after. Overpopulation of animals is a huge problem in South MS," she added.

When asked about insight to give to those inspired by her story and wanting to pursue a career in real estate, Leslie provided powerful advice.

"It's not for the faint of heart. You must have a very specific plan in place because it's not going to be an instant return and it's not a steady business. You really must dig deep and be able to possibly make it for a while without income coming in at first. Stay with your plan and be consistent."

For questions or comments regarding this article, contact Leslie at (228) 341-4524 or leslie39503@yahoo.com



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By Dave Danielson
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LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

Vice President Stephen Holden is proud to be part of continuing the legacy of industry leadership that his parents, Bill and Sallie Holden, began when they founded the business. Bill still owns Magnolia Printing and Signs First today.

Years ago, before starting the business, Bill worked in semi-truck sales.

"In time, he decided that he wanted to make a career change and to move to be closer to family. We had been in Texas," Stephen says.

"So we moved here and my mom and dad got into the printing industry in January 1983. In 1988, we moved to our current location in downtown Gulfport. In 1996, I graduated from college and I joined them."

Through time, Magnolia Printing has risen above many challenges, including Hurricane Katrina.

"After that, the market changed and the economy was gradually going down with changing buying habits. People started getting into signs," Stephen says.

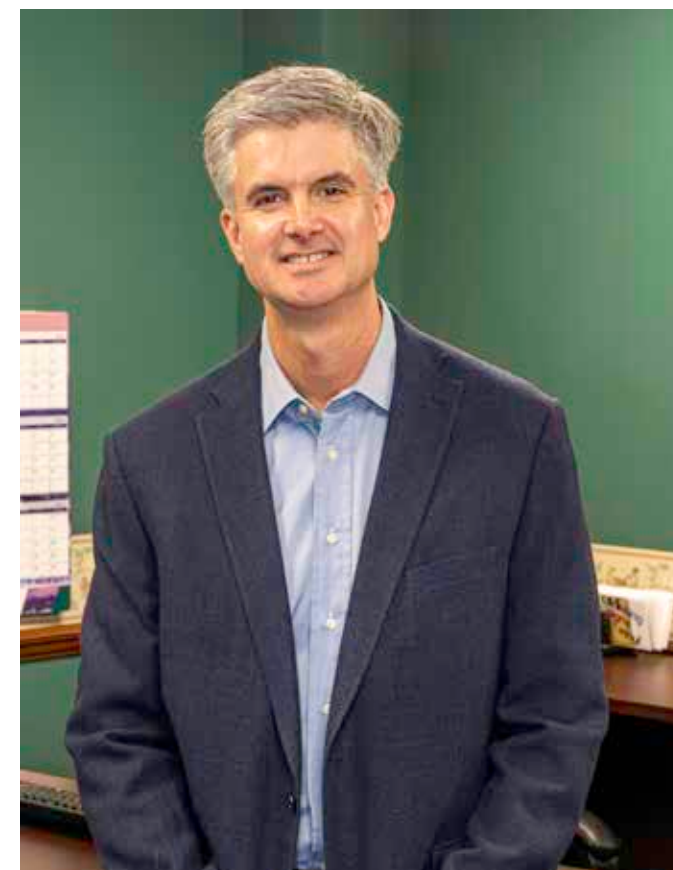
"So we bought a local Signs First franchise in January 2018. Since then we have doubled sales of signs, though printing is still our number one business."

WORKING WITH HEART

The passion that the team members have for their work is clear to see.

"We have a chance to interact with and help a lot of people. I've seen technology grow and it's amazing to see how fast we can produce things. What used to take two to three days we can do much faster," Stephen says.

"We have surrounded ourselves with people who are very good at what they do ... five other people, including two on the signs side and three on the printing side."





A rewarding part of what Stephen enjoys is putting his marketing degree to work helping customers with their brand management efforts.

“We do our best to make sure that signage adheres to any regulations from the state. Mississippi has put some rules on real estate agent cards and signs,” Stephen says.

“Some people want to shop online, but the problem is you can’t have that interaction and resource to consult

with. Here we can have a discussion and support the local economy at the same time.”

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Those who have the chance to know and work with the team appreciate the fact that they have one stop to handle their printing and signage needs, as well as other marketing efforts, including fliers, business cards, signs and more.

Plus, Magnolia Printing offers two graphic artists on staff, which eases

the process of coming up with creative solutions.

WHAT MATTERS MOST

Away from work, Stephen’s world is made much richer by his family, including his wife of 27 years and their three children.

In his free time, Stephen loves spending time with his family and playing golf. He also likes to support their children through their busy lives.

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As Stephen says, “We love coming up with the solution ... taking what seems to be a complicated project for someone else and making it simple.”

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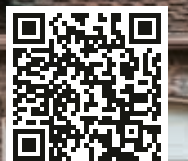
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► the 2024 trailblazers at gcar

By Sharon Price
Photos by Grayfish Photography

Discover the unique flavors of the remarkable group that makes up the 2024 Board and Staff blazing new trails to support the Gulf Coast real estate scene.

Paulette Snyder: President & Adventurist

Re/Max Coast Delta Realty

Paulette boasts 28 years in real estate. Engaging in local boards since 2017, she's a Leadership MAR alumni and joined the MLS United Board in 2022. With over a decade in GCAR, Paulette believes involvement brings not just new knowledge but also enriches a real estate career.

Paulette's Secret: "I'm an adventurer! I enjoy speed and love to drive really fast!"

GCAR Goal 2024: Engagement, education, involvement. "There are so many changes happening in our industry that these three pillars are critical for a REALTOR® to stay ahead of the curve. Dive into a committee to see what works for you."

Summer Newman: President-Elect with a Wild Card Spirit

Next Level Realty

Summer enjoys 12 years in real estate. Juggling a bustling household with 6 kids, 6 bulldogs, and a granddaughter, Summer's life is a whirlwind and her passion is to help individuals unlock their full potential. With a decade of active involvement in GCAR, from committee chair to President-Elect, she thrives on hands-on involvement. Known as "Muscle & Heels," Summer dives into grunt work at events. "I just don't like to sit still so that's the fun stuff!"

Summer's Secret: "I'm not a do things because that's the way it's always been done. I'm a wild card - a

professional wild card. I want to push some envelopes."

GCAR Goal 2024: #1 objective is to see more involvement, to see new faces get involved.

Angelia Clark: Treasurer with a Dash of Disney Sparkle

Re/Max Results

Angelia began her real estate journey in 2006. She sees helping families invest in their future as the best job ever. With seven active years in GCAR including roles on the board and at MLS United as well as the Mississippi Association of



Realtors, she's big on volunteering. "There's a true need for help, but the benefit is real too."

Favorite GCAR Experience: Angelia enjoys Realtor Day at the Capital. She's amazed at the impactful achievements made through RPAC and highlights one accomplishment - RPAC helped swiftly designate REALTORS® as essential workers in Mississippi during the pandemic while other states faced prolonged real estate shutdowns.

Angelia's Secret: Angelia loves Disney! She has a whole room dedicated to Disney and three Disney half marathons under her belt. (Florida, California, and Paris)

Sandi Pickard: Past President Guiding Forward

Coldwell Banker Alfonso Realty

Sandi started in real estate in 2006 and has been active at GCAR for 10 years. Reflecting on a successful year in 2023 as President with the GCAR Board, she notes a proud list of accomplishments, including launching the Affiliate Program and raising a record amount at the Beer & Wine Festival for the Center for Non-Violence (to name just a few)!

Favorite GCAR Experience: "Not just one thing! It's being involved. Serving our community and nurturing relationships with other agents is a huge priority for me."

GCAR Goal 2024: Fostering more opportunities, education, support and FUN for the members.

Tiffany Marshall: Director & Dual Citizen

Exit Magnolia Coast Realty

Tiffany was raised in real estate, with family roots embedded in the industry. Bringing 17 years of experience, Tiffany teaches property management at Real Estate University. Serving the GCAR community for many years, she has now been on the Board for three.

Favorite GCAR Experience: Tiffany's most memorable experiences include the Habitat Hang Out Fest and repelling off the IP Casino

GCAR Goal 2024: Ignite agent engagement by showcasing the power of networking. "GCAR provides so many opportunities to get to know the real estate experts in specific niches. Developing these relationships makes work easier and a lot more fun."

Jacki Thornburg: Director with Heartfelt Dedication

Exit Realty Heart Properties

Jacki entered real estate after graduating college, making it her career of choice. She started in the mortgage industry in Michigan and moved to the MS Gulf Coast in 2009, bringing a unique blend of experiences to GCAR. Involved with committees for many years, Jacki is now starting her 4th year on the Board. "The more involved you are, the more you know what's going on, the more you can help your clients."

Favorite GCAR Experience: Jacki's highlight is "Realtor Day at the Capital," an event that allows her to witness





Serving our community & nurturing relationships with other agents is a huge priority for me.



the legislative process first-hand, showcasing the strength of REALTORS® in numbers.

GCAR Goal 2024: To get more agents & brokers involved and increase the level of professionalism through increased broker roundtables & education.

Anthony Pace: Director & Clean Connoisseur

Keller Williams Gulfport Market Center

Anthony boasts 13 years of real estate experience. Active in GCAR for 5 years with 2 years on the Ethics Committee, he talks about the need for involvement. “The value in participating enhances your life and your business. I can’t tell

you how many transactions came out of being involved.”

Anthony’s Secret: Anthony is a soap connoisseur – he loves fancy soap! One of his favorites is L’Occitane Lemon Verbena.

GCAR Goal 2024: To get REALTORS® at my own brokerage more involved.

Jacob Ainsworth: Director & Farmer

Re/Max Coast Delta Realty

Jacob boasts 8 years as a REALTOR® being actively involved in GCAR since 2018. Prior to his career in real estate, Jacob was a banker and brings this rich knowledge base to help clients understand the financial advantages of homeownership.

Favorite GCAR Experience:

Jacob enjoys RPAC emphasizing its importance. “I’ve seen first-hand what they’ve accomplished for Realtors and homeowners in Mississippi. It takes the top agents to keep this moving forward.”

Jacob’s Secret: Jacob loves to try new things. He secretly wants to be a funeral director, a vet, and a doctor but will stick with what he really loves – being a REALTOR®, farming, and raising chickens.

Paul Williams: Director Cooking Up Success

NextHome Simplicity

Paul brings 8 years of real estate experience and a rich background as a mortgage lender for 23+ years in Louisiana. A retired Air Force Reserve member, Paul has been involved with GCAR since 2003. His first year on the board has been characterized by a love for teaching classes and participation in community service.

Favorite GCAR Experience: Paul’s favorite event is the Food Drive for Food Pantries, embracing his passion for giving back to the community.

GCAR Goal 2024: Do more in education, get younger people to see real estate as a mainstream job. Collaborate with Pathways2Possibilities to share hands-on real estate experience with kids.

Randy Richardson: Director & Curator of Classics and Cleanups

Century 21 J. Carter & Co Realtors

Randy has 7 years of experience in real estate. Reflecting on his journey, Randy shares, “God had different plans. After 3 years with a serious illness, I found a new passion - the world of real estate.” He has been active in GCAR for 3 years on various committees and this is his 1st year on the Board. “GCAR moves our profession forward and I’ve gotten twofold back what I’ve put in.”



Favorite GCAR Experience:

Randy’s favorite event is the beach cleanup, where families and fellow realtors come together to do something positive.

GCAR Goal 2024: To visit brokerages and find out what GCAR can do to provide more value.

Mariel Williams: The Communication Virtuoso

GCAR Communications Director and Professional Standards Administrator

Mariel has worked for GCAR 7 years. Prior to this, she worked at the Baldwin County Association of Realtors. Managing social media, website, and collaborating with the board, Mariel is committed to enriching Realtors® value to the public. She is excited for upcoming events like EDCON in March.

Favorite GCAR Experience: Mariel’s favorite event was the Gatsby Gala.

GCAR Goal 2024: To help REALTORS® understand how to best highlight their experience, expertise, and education to make public aware of the true value they bring to a transaction.

Danny Lee: From Volunteer to CEO

Danny began his real estate journey in 2006 at the age of 18. “It was

my first job choice. I knew several REALTORS® and it looked like they were having fun.” As a REALTOR®, Danny had been active in GCAR since 2012, serving as President in 2018. In 2022 he transitioned to the role of CEO at GCAR. “Going from being a volunteer to staff was a big change. I think to myself, this is my job now, so I have to be a lot more committed.”

Favorite GCAR Experience: Danny discovered that the Coast REALTOR® Leadership program made a significant impact on his life and the lives of fellow REALTORS® and hopes to reinstate the program soon.

GCAR Goal 2024: To remind realtors that they are resilient. Realtors can get through anything - market crashes, hurricanes, pandemics etc. “Sometimes you need a reminder that you got this.”

A Captivating Conclusion

Every member contributes their own unique flavor to this exceptional group, bringing their expertise to form a symphony of professionals dedicated to enhancing the real estate experience. As GCAR’s story unfolds, it promises an engaging and captivating 2024 for REALTORS® along the Gulf Coast through a journey of support, education, and involvement.



FAQ

RP Welcome to *Real Producers*! Some of you may be wondering what this publication is all about, which is why we have created this FAQ page. Here, we will answer the most commonly asked questions from around the country regarding our program. My door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100% designed to be your voice!

Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The top 300 agents in the Gulf Coast Area. We pulled the MLS numbers (by volume) from Jan. 1, 2022, through Dec. 31, 2022, in the MS Gulf Coast market. We cut the list off at number 300, and the distribution was born. For this year's list, the minimum production level for our group is \$5 million in 2022. The list will reset at the end of 2023 for next year and will continue to update annually.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The process is simple. Every feature you see has first been nominated. You can nominate REALTORS®, agents, affiliates, brokers, owners, or even yourself. Office leaders can also nominate real estate agents. We will consider anyone you bring to our attention because we don't know everyone's story, and we need your help to learn more.

A nomination currently looks like this: Email us at robert.orso@realproducersmag.com with the subject line "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)" and explain why you are nominating the individual. Maybe the person has an amazing story that we need to tell, or perhaps someone overcame extreme obstacles, is an exceptional leader, has the best customer

service, or gives back to the community in a big way. The next step is an interview with us to ensure a good fit, and then we put the wheels in motion for our writer to conduct an interview and for our photographer to schedule a photo shoot.

Q: WHAT IS THE COST TO FEATURE A REALTOR®, AGENT, OR TEAM?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. **The feature costs nothing**, my friends, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share real stories of Real Producers.

Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

A: Anyone listed as a preferred partner in the front of the magazine is a part of this community and will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our quarterly 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 preferred partner you see in this publication. We won't even meet with a business that you have not vetted and stamped for approval, in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network for the REALTORS® and agents in the area and for the best affiliates so we can grow stronger together.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A PREFERRED PARTNER?

A: If you have a recommendation for a local business that works with top real estate agents, please let us know. Send an email to robert.orso@realproducersmag.com.



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