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**RISING STAR:**  
Aimee George

**DIFFERENCE MAKER:**  
Shannon & Rob Malcom

**EVENT RECAP:**  
Iron Minds Real Estate Summit

**PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:**  
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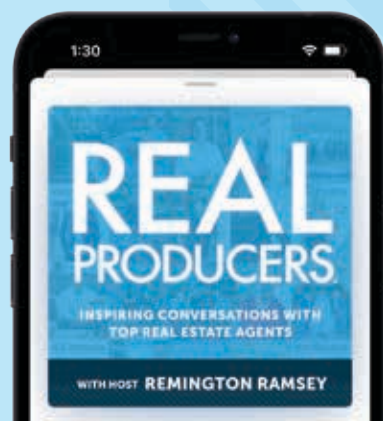
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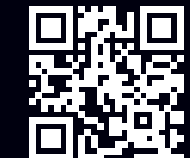
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# Aimee

## George

### Life of Abundance

**“They will have no fear of bad news. Their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.” Psalm 112:7**

A woman of faith, Aimee George embraces optimism and positivity in the face of life’s obstacles. Diagnosed with cancer in December 2023, she sought refuge in the Lord and in others. “Because of my faith, difficult things aren’t as hard as they seem,” she comments.

“I didn’t know what to expect,” she says. “I’ve sold a lot and still work, even during tough times. I wanted to be a 100 percent of a REALTOR®, but I didn’t know what that would look like.” She relied on her cousin, Lauren Preston, while hospitalized for seven days to help her with transactions that she couldn’t do herself.

“I had no fear with this diagnosis,” she candidly comments. She fought the good fight of faith and recently celebrated her final treatment and rang the bell with delight. While her doctor will continue to monitor her numbers, Aimee has a life to live and clients to help.

“It’s been a good journey and I’ve been blessed,” she smiles. “The Lord is gracious and I’ve been able to continue my business,” she adds. So far this year, she has had 8.2 million in sales.

She credits others for helping her, commenting, “When you face hard things, you have a community of people who bear the burden for you.” Aimee is an encouragement to others through her journey.

“I desire others to not be fearful — whether it’s a diagnosis, the future, or even what the real estate market will look like. “Living in fear is not an abundant life,” she says.

#### Living the Abundant Life

For Aimee, living abundantly also means embracing opportunities and unique experiences. In 2007, during a family trip to New York City, Aimee found herself unexpectedly thrust into the spotlight. While Aimee was outside on the Plaza for the Today Show with her husband and sons, producers were looking for someone to participate in a live segment with Kirk Cameron. Aimee started spewing out facts about Kirk which caught producers’ attention, and soon, she was standing between Kirk Cameron and Hoda Kotb, microphone in hand, sharing fun facts on national television.

“We had a great time, and Kirk was very kind, talking to the boys and my husband,” she recalls. It’s one of those unforgettable family memories. It’s this same energy and openness that Aimee brings to her real estate career, always ready for the unexpected and making the most of every moment.

#### Living Her Dreams

Aimee’s road to real estate began just three and a half years ago, in May 2021, but it had been a dream long in the making. Real estate was always in her blood—her parents dabbled in the industry when she was young, and Aimee pursued a degree in finance with an emphasis on real estate, knowing it was her long-term career goal. However, family came first for Aimee, and she spent many years as a stay-at-home mom before transitioning into a part-time role as the creative marketing director for Chick-fil-A.



▶ rising star

Written by Elizabeth McCabe  
Photos by Brendon Pinola Photography



“It was fantastic,” she says. “The fact that I could learn marketing and branding – Chick-fil-A’s focus is on emotional connections – has helped me with my real estate career.”

When her children were grown and she found herself an empty nester, Aimee knew it was finally time to dive into real estate. “I needed something new to do, and real estate had always been on my mind.”

#### Building a Strong Foundation

Aimee’s success as a REALTOR® is deeply rooted in the relationships she’s built over the years. Growing up and staying in her hometown has allowed her to cultivate a close-knit circle of friends and family. “I have friends I’ve known since elementary school, and we still get together. That’s been defining and important for me,” she says.

Aimee’s marriage to her high school sweetheart, David, has been another foundational part of her life. Married for 31 years, they have three sons—Braxton, who is married to Liz and recently welcomed a beautiful newborn daughter named Riley, Dawson, and Deacon. Their boys are deeply involved in sports, and Aimee and David love traveling to see them. “Dawson and Deacon work for universities for their basketball teams,” shares Aimee, “and Braxton referees for baseball.” Her hobby is traveling to see their three children and their granddaughter, which she loves.

Aimee’s faith has also played a pivotal role in shaping her path. “Often, we are faced with uncertainty and I believe the Lord just wants us to do the next right thing. That helps me to not question the past or be anxious for the future,” she says.

#### Every day, Aimee does five things for her success as follows:

1. Spiritual exercise
2. Physical exercise
3. Work
4. Do something for someone else.
5. Do something for herself (which could be as small as watching a favorite TV show or grabbing a snack while out).



#### Overcoming Obstacles

Aimee’s journey has been one of perseverance, and she firmly believes in the power of prayer. “When you pray for God to help you, He gives you the strength to overcome.”



Her passion for educating her clients is evident in her approach to real estate. “I want my clients to understand the market and make conscious, sober-minded decisions,” she says.

Aimee emphasizes the importance of not letting fear drive decisions, particularly in a competitive market with multiple offers. “If this isn’t the one, there will be another,” she reassures.

As a team leader, Aimee’s goal is to help clients make the best decisions for their current situations without unnecessary pressure. “Too many clients worry about the small things. My job is to guide them with confidence and clarity.”

#### Family, Faith, and Service

Aimee’s love for her family extends beyond her immediate circle. She is actively involved in her community, serving on the Hoover Beautification Board and the Finley Character Education Committee in the City of Hoover. “I find joy in focusing on others,” Aimee explains. “When I encourage others, I don’t dwell on my own circumstances.”

As she looks to the future, Aimee is eager to return to some of her favorite pastimes, such as walking and exercising. “I’ve always enjoyed staying active, and I’m looking forward to getting back to that now that I’ve finished chemotherapy.”

#### Words of Wisdom

Aimee’s advice to up-and-coming REALTORS® is simple: focus on relationships. “I’ve been very successful with a relational business model. I have been fortunate to work my database for a successful business. And I truly value the referrals from family, friends and past clients. You can be successful without buying leads.”

As Aimee George continues to rise as a top REALTOR®, she remains focused on what truly matters—helping others, building meaningful connections, and living the abundant life she’s been blessed with.

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# BRP Partner Q&A

▶ partner spotlight

## Delivering Value in 2024

This month, we asked our trusted partners to reflect on a key moment this past year when they felt they brought significant value to a client and strengthened a partnership. Through stories of standout client interactions and impactful innovations, these leaders share what makes their services invaluable. Read on to see why these companies are trusted resources for top real estate professionals - and how they could bring new value to your business in 2025!

### Meredith Jones Ally Property Inspections



“We started offering ‘pay at close’ for inspections in March, and since then, over 30% of our clients have elected to use it. Clients can defer payment until the property sale closes, making the process more financially manageable, less stressful, and even allows the client to have their inspection paid through closing cost concessions from the seller. Ally is always looking for ways to add value to our clients and REALTORS® that work with us.”

### Ashley & Brian Lambert Lambert Agency Insurance



“In 2024, we had the rewarding experience of guiding a young couple through the home insurance process as first-time buyers. They were overwhelmed by the complexities of coverage options, so I took the time to explain their choices, from replacement cost vs. actual cash value to additional coverage like flood insurance. By providing clear, personalized advice and answering all their questions, they gained confidence in their decision. This experience strengthened our relationship, and we were honored to be a trusted advisor during such an important milestone in their lives.”

### Lincoln Smith MortgageRight



“This year, we’ve had many moments that solidified client relationships and brought real value. From closing loans quickly, 25 of my last 26 in-house loans Clear to Close 10 days early, we focused on making each experience seamless. Implementing new digital tools minimized paperwork and improved efficiency, while collaborating with REALTORS® and added value beyond the mortgage process. We secured low-interest rates, guided first-time buyers with care, and helped clients stay calm through market shifts. Each interaction reinforced our commitment to service and strengthened our partnerships, building trust and lasting client satisfaction.”

### Melanie Sanders Coast2Coast Lending



“Throughout my career as a lender, I have learned one thing: everyone has a story. Everyone’s needs are unique and important. I take the time to listen to my clients and then create a plan that supports their goals. My role is to serve as a guide and create an edifying environment that allows them to move with confidence in their decisions. I am honored to cherish their goals and walk beside them as they make their dream of homeownership a reality. I am grateful to share in this beautiful milestone in the tapestry of their lives.”

### Bud & Mary Ussery Real Property Management Victory



“At Real Property Management, adding value to our personal relationships with our clients in 2024 consisted of many things. Looking back on these relationships over the past year, one thing that stands out the most is how we come alongside our owners and partner with them and share the responsibility of taking care of their investments. We have many owners who live out of state all across the country who own properties in and around the Birmingham area and they are looking for a solid management team that is communicative, willing to go the extra mile, and handle any situation that may arise. Whether it’s a tree falling on a roof during a storm, a sewer line backup causing plumbing issues in a home, having the property deep cleaned and touched up so it’s showroom ready for a new tenant, or giving recommendations for a local company we might recommend for a specific need, it is our priority to go above and beyond to talk with our owner clients and reassure them that they truly have a friend in us. Their appreciation and praise for the help we give and the work we do, not just in helping them protect their investments but in finding them great tenants, is one of the most important ways we nurture our relationships with our clients year after year. The Real Property Management Team is ready to help you with all of your property needs.”

### Justin Petrusson SouthPoint Bank - The Petrusson Mortgage Team



“Reflecting back, I’m reminded of the day our team had the privilege of helping a remarkable single mother achieve her dream of homeownership. She had adopted two children and was raising two of her own, all while navigating a journey many would find overwhelming.

Through our bank’s resources, we were able to secure a grant. This grant covered all of her down payment and most of her closing costs and made it possible for her to keep her money in her pocket for her and her family! Together, we secured a place where her kids would no longer be cramped into two bedrooms and could attend a school that gave them a better start. It was humbling to witness the joy and relief in her eyes as she finally had a place to call her own.

While this is just one story among so many, it’s one we hold close, reflecting the heart of what we do. We’re proud to help families in similar situations every day, yet moments like these remind us of the deeper impact we have in making dreams come true for people who truly deserve it.”

### Craig Jemison Stockton Mortgage



“Our team combines deep guideline knowledge with expert loan structuring, ensuring a smooth path to closing. Stockton’s training equips us to navigate complex requirements, finding tailored solutions for each borrower. Recently, we helped a first-time homebuyer after another company denied their loan just weeks before closing. We restructured the loan, secured their approval, offered a better rate, and lowered their closing costs, ultimately closing within three weeks.

We met with a new client who was stuck leasing-to-own. Our team saved them the expense of bringing any money to close, ahead of schedule - and now they’re a happy homeowner.”

### Logan & Caroline McCabe Talking Social



“At Talking Social, we’re a dedicated team committed to driving your growth. Our primary goal is to create social media content that not only aligns with your unique analytics but also supports your business’s goals. While many of our clients operate in similar industries, every strategy we design is completely tailored to their specific audience. Selling to your customer is a personalized journey, and partnering with Talking Social helps translate your strategic advantage into your social media presence. Stop guessing what will resonate with your audience. By harnessing your analytics, Talking Social can help you develop a standout strategy that truly moves the needle.”



▶ difference makers: new development

Written by Zachary Cohen  
Photos by David Graves Photography



# Shannon & Rob Malcom

## The Long Way Still Gets You There

“If your life were flashing before your eyes, what would you do right now?” Rob Malcom asks. “I’ve been in that place—seeing my life flash before my eyes. No matter what people are facing, we want to show them that it’s possible to rise up out of it.”

Two decades ago, Shannon and Rob Malcom were on a path of self-destruction. Embroiled in the throes of addiction and homelessness, the couple seemed to be on the fast track to the bottom. In 2007, they hit the bottom, and, by the grace of God, they found a way to rise up.

“Rob and I have an incredible testimony of coming from polar opposite families,” Shannon reflects. “I was born into a poor family with generational addictions and abuses. Rob came from a Christian home where his parents did everything they could for their children. But we both found ourselves on a path of destruction with substance addiction.”

In 2007, Shannon and Rob were arrested on a charge with a maximum prison sentence of ten years. While this event could have sunk them, somehow, they used it as a means to create a better life for themselves.

“Both of us didn’t want to go to prison,” Rob shares. “We were given an opportunity to not go to prison, but we had to do a lot of really hard





work. Everyone, including the judge, thought we were going to fail. But we did it. We found a way.”

Shannon and Rob entered recovery and slowly began piecing their lives back together. With grace and grit, they found their way.

As Shannon said in a previous publication in 2023, “We were on a path of destruction; but, the Lord had a better plan for our lives than we could see in that moment. He placed us in circumstances where people offered us opportunities to turn our lives around.”



Shannon and Rob married in 2011. Soon after, Rob founded a construction company and began flipping homes. Shannon got her real estate license in 2017 and became a top agent and broker. Rob joined her as a REALTOR® in 2021.

Today, Shannon and Rob co-own EXIT Realty Birmingham, and Shannon is the qualifying broker. They both actively sell homes, while Rob continues to put his efforts toward flipping houses. Shannon and Rob believe everyone deserves home ownership, regardless of their price point.

In October 2024, Shannon and Rob released the book, “The Long Way Still Gets You There” (<https://www.riseuponline.info>). Part autobiography and part motivational content, Shannon and Rob hope the book inspires others to rise above their challenging circumstances. It offers insights into the mindset to see opportunities instead of obstacles, a practical roadmap to make progress, and the motivation to stay inspired.

“If you want something bad enough, you can accomplish it, and we share that mindset in this book,” Rob explains. “The book is a seven-part path to rise from where you are to where you are designed to be. We’ve taken different sections of our lives and told those stories in the book. Hopefully, it’s not just a story but a tool for people to follow our path.”

“I want it to provide hope to the people who read it,” Shannon adds. “People get comfortable in the normalcy of life, but so many people want more and don’t know how to get it. We want to show people what is possible. We want people to understand if we can do it, so can they.”

Shannon and Rob are devoted to helping others find their purpose in more ways than one. Alongside real estate and their book, they give back through ministry work, support the local recovery community, and counsel those in abusive relationships. They even have a plan to give away a house in 2027.

“We want to show people that your past doesn’t define you,” Shannon says.

“It’s never too late to shoot for your dream,” Rob closes. “We didn’t get started until we were nearly 40 years old, but we’ve made the changes. You can, too.”

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# Helen DRENNEN

## Exceeding Expectations from Start to Finish!

A trailblazer, a go-getter, and a hard worker — Helen McTyeire Drennen at RealtySouth is all of those things. The youngest of five children, Helen's role models in life were her parents, who paved the way for her solid work ethic, drive, and determination.

"My family owned Birmingham Ornamental Iron Company, which also manufactured Meadowcraft outdoor wrought iron and aluminum furniture," she explains. "My mother owned an antique gifts and interior design business for over 60 years. She is a big inspiration for me — a trailblazer for women in an era when women didn't work. My parents instilled a strong work ethic and encouraged me to do what I loved to do so it didn't feel like work."

Taking their advice to heart, Helen was inspired to find a career that she loves. She double majored in French and economics while attending Hollins College, now Hollins University, in Roanoke, Virginia. Eager for adventure, she spent her "Sabrina year" in Paris in 1979 and is still quasi-fluent in French today.

### Excelling in Banking

Following college, Helen entered a management training program in commercial banking with First Atlanta. Then, she furthered her education at the Darden School of Business in Charlottesville, Virginia, where she attended specialized banking courses for executives.

Most of Helen's banking career unfolded in Nashville with SunTrust Bank, where she developed expertise in health-care lending and private wealth management. Her career path even led her to work alongside McKinsey & Company, a global consulting firm focusing on strategic planning for SunTrust's holding company. "It was an enriching experience, but eventually, Birmingham was calling me home," she reflects. By the early 1990s, Helen had returned to Birmingham, where she balanced her professional endeavors with raising her family. Today, she is a proud mother of two daughters, Evelyn and Virginia, and though she eagerly awaits grandchildren, she enjoys traveling and spending quality time with her girls.

### Rising in Real Estate

A turning point came when Helen's mother, shortly before her passing, encouraged her to consider a career in real estate. "She knew me well and felt it was the perfect blend of my interests in architecture, finance, and connecting



Photo courtesy of Christina Hontzas Photography

with people," Helen recalls fondly. In 2013, at a time when her children were grown, Helen took her mother's advice, launching a real estate career that has since catapulted her into Birmingham's top 0.5% of agents. "The timing was perfect, as I had the flexibility to give this career my all," Helen says. "Real estate isn't a part-time job; it's a flexible, all-the-time job."

Helen brings a unique combination of skills to her role as a REALTOR®. Her background in corporate banking gave her a solid understanding of finance, which she seamlessly applies when helping clients navigate the complex decisions surrounding home purchases. Her interest in architecture and interior design also comes into play, as she loves discussing design possibilities with clients.

"I enjoy helping clients see the potential in a space, whether it's their future home or a listing they're preparing to sell. It's incredibly fulfilling to enhance a property's value and make a difference in my clients' lives," she shares.



In Helen's view, her work is about more than helping clients find homes—it's about helping them transition to new seasons in their lives. She finds great joy in working with a wide variety of clients, from first-time homebuyers to empty nesters and newcomers to Birmingham. "Each client is at a unique point in life, and I love supporting them through that," she explains. "When we get to closing day, I know I've done more than just find a house. I've made a friend."

#### Building Lasting Relationships

For Helen, real estate is more than a transaction; it's about building lasting relationships. She often finds herself staying in touch with clients long after closing day, seeing them as friends and trusted connections. Preparing a home for the market is a process she approaches with great care and precision. "I believe in making a home look its absolute best before listing," she explains. "That can mean hiring

a stager, rearranging items, or doing minor staging myself. It's all about showcasing the property's potential, and it pays off in the end."

Helen's knack for preparation even extends to her love of gardening and flower arranging, skills that come in handy when ensuring a home's curb appeal. She recalls a memorable summer when she and her daughters, Evelyn and Virginia, launched a small business called "Best Buds," arranging and delivering fresh flowers throughout Birmingham. "It was a fun project we promoted through Facebook and emails," Helen says, laughing at the memory. "It taught my girls the value of hard work, and it was a wonderful way for us to bond."

#### Active Interests

Outside of her busy real estate schedule, Helen is an avid gardener, a golfer, and a new fan of pickleball and mahjong. She recently purchased an



Helen with her daughters, Evelyn and Virginia, in NYC at Thanksgiving. Photo provided by Helen Drennen.

e-bike, which she enjoys taking on scenic rides, and treasures her travels with her daughters, one of whom she recently biked with through Canada.

"It was super fun," she smiles. "I love to travel with both of my girls."

Blending her love for family, travel, and adventure is a priority for Helen. Taking time to reconnect with friends and family is never overrated.

#### Top Tips

When asked about her advice for up-and-coming agents, Helen emphasizes the importance of building relationships within the industry. "Treating colleagues with respect and integrity is essential. Real estate is competitive, but approaching it with professionalism makes a world of difference. Building good relationships with other agents benefits your clients and enriches your career."

Helen exemplifies what it means to approach a career with passion, dedication, and a true heart for service. Her clients, colleagues, and community recognize her as a professional who goes above and beyond, making Birmingham not only her home but a city she is proud to share. What an inspiration!



Photo courtesy of Christina Hontzas Photography

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# The Iron Minds Real Estate Summit

October 18, 2024, Vestavia Hills Civic Center, Vestavia Hills, AL



On October 18th, we had the pleasure of hosting an unforgettable Iron Minds Real Estate Panel at the Vestavia Hills Civic Center. The Magnolia Room was alive with energy as eight of our industry’s leading experts, including top brokers and leaders, gathered to offer their insights on navigating success within the ever-evolving real estate landscape.

Our panelists shared valuable advice and perspectives, focusing on the outlook for 2025. Key themes emerged, such as the importance of collaboration over competition, embracing new technology, and continuously enhancing the value REALTORS® bring to clients. The conversation resonated with our audience, who engaged enthusiastically by asking thoughtful questions that deepened the discussion, particularly on adapting to recent industry changes and preparing for upcoming economic shifts.

### Key Highlights:

- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Knowing your data was emphasized as crucial for success in a changing market.
- **Investing in Real Estate:** Panelists encouraged a proactive approach to investment, underscoring its potential in building long-term wealth.

- **Recession-Proof Strategies:** The panel explored ways to future-proof businesses, urging attendees to plan ahead to safeguard their practices against economic uncertainties.
- **Bringing this event to the *Real Producers* community** was a privilege, and attendees gained invaluable insights from those who’ve successfully paved the way in real estate — soaking in the value of being in a room of brokerage diversity.
- Our panelists emphasized the value of learning directly from industry veterans, highlighting that being in the right room with the right people is a surefire strategy for success.

A heartfelt thank you goes to our event sponsors, who elevated the experience for all attendees. **Rolls Bakery** delighted guests with delicious cinnamon rolls and snacks, while door prizes provided by **Southern Charm Cleaning, Priority Pest and Termite, Talking Social, Real Property Management,** and **David Graves** added a memorable touch to the day. We’re deeply grateful to our panelists and partners for their support, and we look forward to continuing this tradition of collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and community building in the real estate industry.

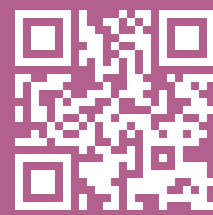




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