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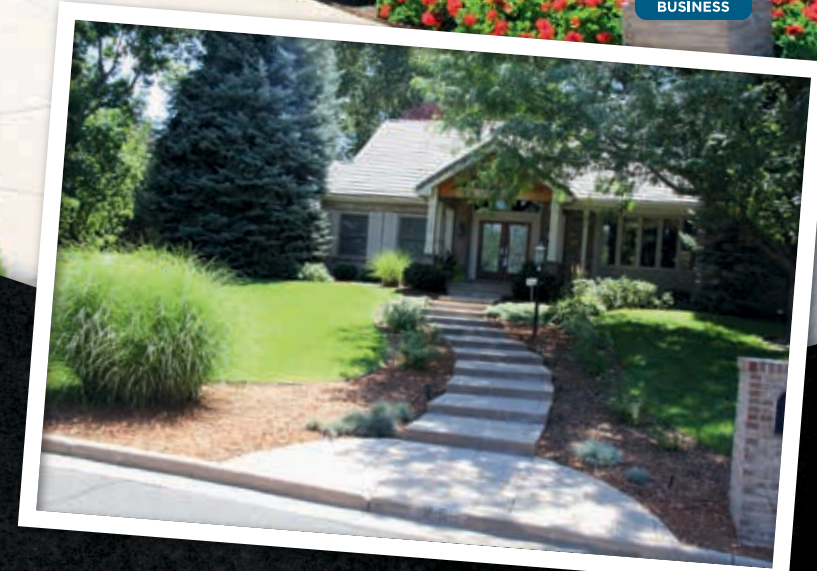
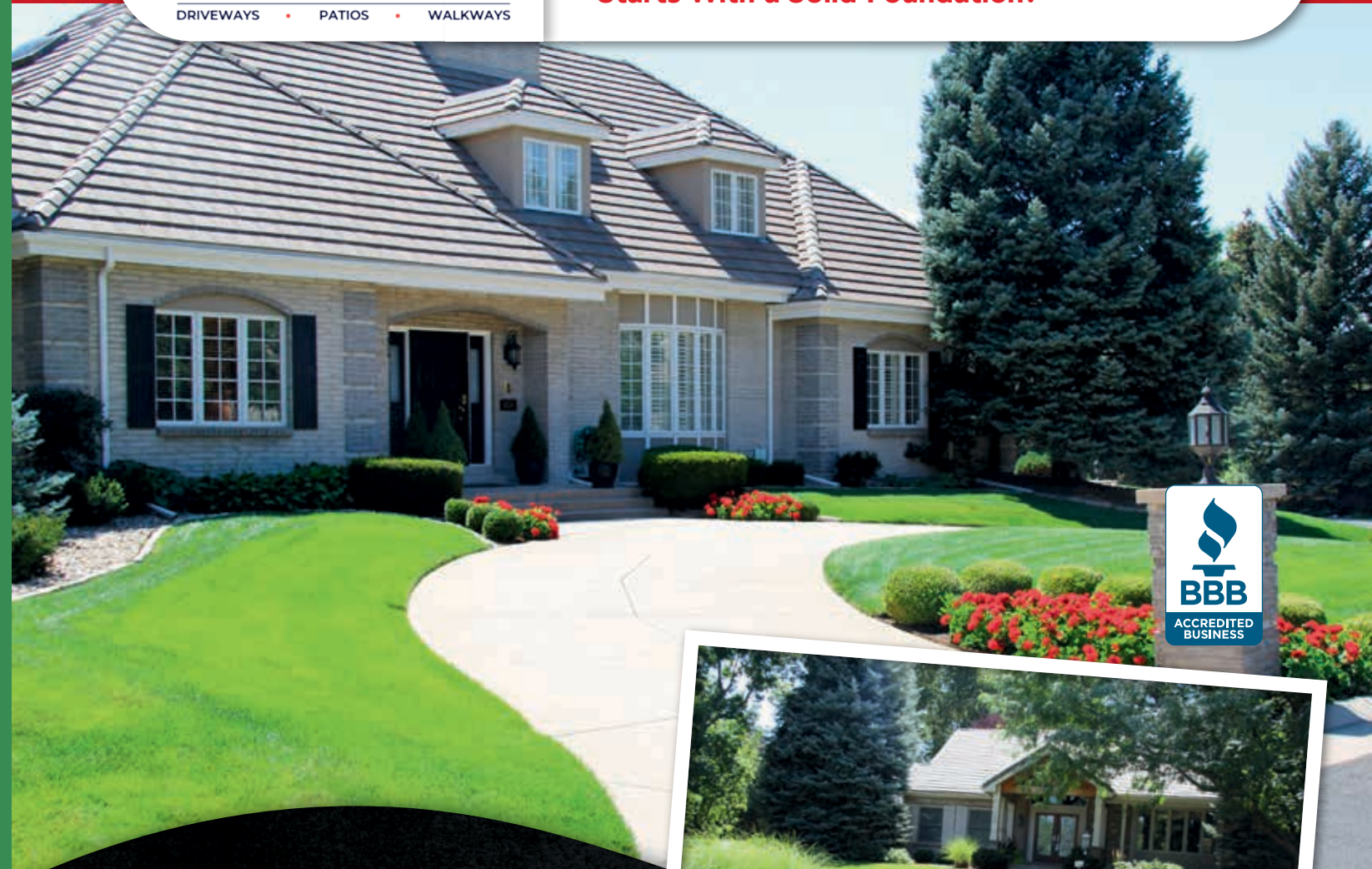


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Cover photo courtesy of **Natalie Jensen Photography**.

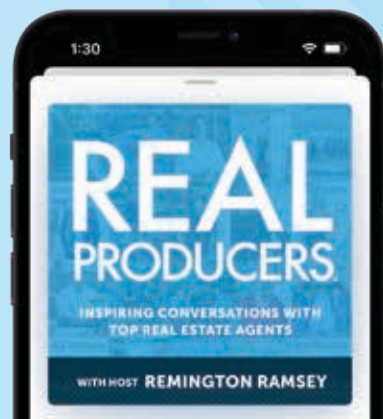


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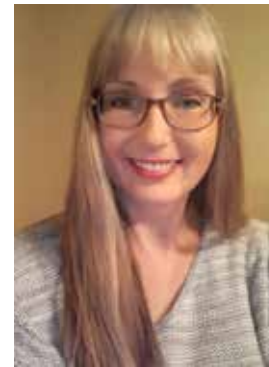
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# GIVING IS A YEAR-ROUND AFFAIR

publisher's note

Dear Real Producers of Omaha,

As we enter the holiday season, the spirit of giving is in full swing. It's a time when we come together, enjoy the camaraderie of family, friends and community, and appreciate the joy that comes from giving. The holidays bring a sense of warmth rooted in the connections we value and the generosity that marks the season.

Your dedication to giving — of your expertise, your time, and your resources — makes a meaningful impact. When you sponsor a local youth sports team, provide supplies to a shelter, or volunteer at a community event, you help lay the foundation for a stronger, more resilient community. As REALTORS®, your commitment to Omaha helps build and strengthen our thriving, interconnected community.

In the face of natural disasters and unexpected crises like we've seen around the country this year, the real estate community has consistently stepped up, not just with donations, but with time, resources, and heart. Whether it's helping a neighbor or supporting local schools and nonprofits that shape the future, the spirit of giving goes beyond

financial support, emphasizing the importance of really being there for one another.

During this holiday season, I hope you take pride in the impact you've had, not just in December but throughout the entire year. You inspire others to give generously and remind us all that small acts of kindness create ripples that reach far beyond the moment.

As you close out the year, may you find joy in both the giving and receiving that fills this season. Here's to a new year of continued generosity and community connection — cornerstones of Omaha and the spirit that binds us all together.

Warm regards,



**Stacey Penrod**  
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# MARI RENSCH

Photo by Natalie Jensen



► cover story

By Jess Wellar

## A Winning Balance

For nearly three decades, Mari Rensch has been an exceptional REALTOR®, as well as team leader, with NP Dodge, working alongside her husband, Jeff, to grow The Rensch Group into one of Omaha's most-respected real estate teams.



The Rensch Group (Photo by Natalie Jensen)

"I always give 110 percent to my clients," Mari explains. "I pride myself on my communication, along with giving the very best advice from many years of experience."

### A Family Legacy

Mari's love for real estate runs deep, beginning with her father, who started in real estate with Byron Reed before transitioning to commercial work with NP Dodge.

"I guess you could say it's in my blood," Mari shares. She initially pursued a different path, earning a degree in communications and advertising from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and working as the public relations director at Marian High School.

In 1986, Jeff began his real estate career, and Mari eventually joined him after a few years of staying home with their young children.

"My husband and dad were both always encouraging me to get my license," she recalls. By 1994, Mari took the plunge, joining Jeff in the business, and together they gradually built The Rensch Group into a powerhouse mega team.

Reflecting on her early days in real estate, Mari is quick to acknowledge Jeff's guidance and patience: "My husband was my wonderful mentor. I have a higher energy level, and he is so calm. We are a good balance!"

### Strong Foundation

Today, The Rensch Group is a team of 11 agents, including Jeff and Mari, and one wonderful administrative assistant, Kelly Kreifels, who has been with them for over 20 years. "Kelly is the glue to our group," Mari says fondly.

The group operates with a collaborative, family-like culture, supporting each other and their clients every step of the way.

"We are partners with each other, collaborative, and friends. We help each other whenever possible," Mari explains, adding that they've never formally recruited agents. Even their daughter, Ali, joined organically, inspired by her parents' careers.

The Rensch Group has built its reputation on quality service and high standards, consistently winning NP Dodge's top mega team award and leading in transactions for over 25 years. In 2023, they closed over \$94 million in sales, with similar projections for this year.

"It's the day-to-day interaction with clients that keeps me motivated," notes Mari. "Meeting people who want to confide and trust in me, it keeps me fresh. "I feel our success comes from my faith, the love of family and friends, contributing to my community, and having a positive impact on all those I encounter," she adds.



Mari Rensch (left) with her husband, Jeff, and daughter, Ali (Photo by Natalie Jensen)

With years of experience under her belt, Mari has seen plenty of market cycles as the industry continues to evolve. She encourages newcomers to seek guidance, just as she did. “Find a good mentor who can guide you with their knowledge of this business. It is complex on many levels. And always ask questions,” she advises, pointing out that she still learns something new every day.

Mari’s secret sauce centers around authenticity and service. “Setting myself apart is not a goal, but rather being my true self, conducting business with the highest level of professionalism, and helping my clients feel assured as they move forward,” she explains. She also emphasizes that real estate is not a nine-to-five job and that dedication to clients often

means being available outside of traditional work hours.

“My friends and family understand it’s a time-sensitive business,” Mari elaborates, noting the importance of balancing work demands with personal life.

**Devoted Grandma**

Outside of work, Mari and Jeff enjoy staying active with their large brood. Married for nearly 40 years, they have five grown children—Ali, Conner, Gage, Quinn, and Micah—and nine grandchildren, with two more on the way! The couple looks forward to spending time with their loved ones at their lake house outside of Omaha, where they fish and boat together. Mari takes great pride in being a hands-on “Mimi”

who isn’t afraid to bait a fish hook with her grandsons.

“We also like traveling and try to hit some bucket-list destinations yearly,” Mari continues, mentioning a recent trip to Greece and an upcoming adventure where Jeff will captain a 54-foot catamaran in the British Isles.

A true animal lover, Mari’s home is filled with the love of a 10-year-old Australian shepherd named Moxie, and she fondly recalls a household filled with pets when her children were young. She’s also committed to staying active and loves Pilates, walking, and pickleball, and even finds time to snow ski and water ski each year. Her adventurous side still shows in her love of Harley Davidson rides with Jeff and friends.

“ I ALWAYS GIVE 110 PERCENT TO MY CLIENTS.



I PRIDE MYSELF ON MY COMMUNICATION, ALONG WITH GIVING THE VERY BEST ADVICE FROM MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE. ”

Photo by Natalie Jensen



Mari and Jeff Rensch (center) with their children and grandchildren  
(Photo by CK Impressions Photography)

Above all, Mari remains grateful for finding a career she still grows excited about and for the family that fills her life with so much joy.

“Jeff and I feel beyond blessed to have a profession we love and a wonderful family to share our life with,” she concludes. “I truly enjoy helping my clients and being part of their journey, so I look forward to doing that for many years to come.”



Photo by Natalie Jensen

Mari’s passion for giving back to her community is equally profound. Over the years, she’s served on various philanthropic projects, chaired annual fundraisers, and remains active in her church parish, continuing to volunteer “whenever I’m needed.”

With no plans to slow down anytime soon, Mari eagerly anticipates staying involved with The Rensch Group while being available to support her teammates, clients and her grandchildren.

“The future is always bright!” she declares enthusiastically.

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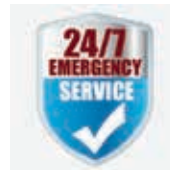
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▶▶ power team  
By Jess Wellar



Photo by Natalie Jensen

## Sallie Elliott &

# THE PRIORITY GROUP

Designing Dreams Together

**When Sallie Elliott first ventured into real estate, she had a clear mission: to create beautiful homes while making the experience of selling, buying, or building enjoyable and fulfilling for her clients. Today, as team lead of The Priority Group at BHHS Ambassador Real Estate, she continues to fulfill that vision.**



Photo by Natalie Jensen





“I truly love building relationships with my clients,” she begins, “whether helping them move on to their next chapter of life or creating one-of-a-kind designs.”

### Entrepreneurial Spirit

Growing up in Illinois, Sallie learned about entrepreneurship and the value of hard work from her own experiences. She lived in Bloomington, Illinois, for 25 years and owned a restaurant and catering company there from 1988 to 1998. “It taught me everything about customer service, design, party planning, and organization. School of hard knocks on that one,” she says with a chuckle.

After moving to Omaha in 2005, Sallie finished her interior design degree at Metropolitan Community College in Elkhorn. She obtained her real estate license in 2008 with the initial idea of flipping houses, but when the market crash hit, she decided to pivot and use her design background to assist other agents with staging while listing her own properties.



Photos by Natalie Jensen

6699

I truly love what I do and the ups and downs of this business.



From left to right: Mary Kay Young, Sallie Elliott, Lezlie Thomas, Taylor Hummel

During those early years, Sallie notes her focus on staging and design helped her stand out in a tough market. Over time, she developed strong relationships with builders and set herself up for success.

### Shared Vision

Sallie started representing Nathan Homes nearly a decade ago and launched The Priority Group to help clients navigate the choices between building new and buying existing property. “I formed the team in 2010, back when groups were not a thing,” she points out.

Nathan Homes, known for their commitment to quality and collaboration with real estate agents, proved to be a perfect fit. Sallie’s power trio includes Mary Kay Young, who has been in real estate since the ‘90s and has worked alongside Sallie since 2010, and Lezlie Thomas, who joined earlier this year after helping complete the sale of lots for the Lake Allure development.

The Priority Group is rounded out with top-notch administrative and design support. “Hannah Hughes is our marketing person and handles e-cards, mailers, team support, and gifting,” Sallie explains. “We also have a design assistant, Taylor Hummel, who works for us through Nathan Homes. She organizes all the painting schedules, flooring, tile, and keeps everyone educated.”

Last year alone, the team closed nearly \$37 million in volume with 68.5 units. For 2024, they’re projected to match or exceed those totals. The Priority Group’s track record of success is evident in the multiple awards Sallie has received, including the Chairman’s Circle Diamond Award, the Legends Award for long-term production, and the Summit Award for highest per-agent gross commission income.

For Sallie, success is simple — it all boils down to one thing: “Doing the hard work no matter the outcome.”

Sallie emphasizes that while she and her agents work independently, their bond is close-knit and she prefers the boutique feel to keep it that way. “We’re all independent agents; they’re not dependent on me for lead generation because they both have their spheres of influence,” Sallie explains. “We meet weekly and have a marketing assistant, Hannah Hughes, to see what everyone needs for open houses, social media promotion, that sort of thing.”

“We have done trips in the past, such as Arizona in the spring several times for a job well done,” she continues. “I like to keep the team small to support each other and to be able to have fun.”



From left to right: Brett and Sallie Elliott’s son Clayton and daughter-in-law Katie (holding grandson Harper, pregnant with Maeve), Brett and Sallie, daughter-in-law Lyndee (with grandson Arthur and pregnant with Woody), and son Connor, with grandson Otis, at their beach house in Ashland.

### Design with Purpose

Sallie’s background and education in interior design gives her a unique perspective on the industry. Whether helping clients buy a home that needs a vision, staging a seller’s home, or creating a new construction dream home, she approaches each project with a designer’s careful eye. Her team even maintains its own staging inventory in a rented warehouse, which allows them to provide comprehensive services to clients.

Sallie’s experience in the design field has also given her an opportunity to shine on HGTV. “I did a couple of shows. One of them was “My House Is Worth What?” with celebrity host Kendra Todd, winner of Season 3’s *The Apprentice*,” she laughs. “It was fun to see people’s reactions when they found out if we listed your home today, we’d offer x amount.”

Naturally, when it comes to growing her team, Sallie is just as particular about finding the right fit as she is with staging the right furniture. “I would potentially be looking for agents that appreciate quality new construction and look at having open houses as an opportunity rather than a task,” she says frankly.

Sallie Elliott represents Nathan Homes.  
(Photos by Natalie Jensen)



### A Full Life

Outside of real estate, Sallie's life revolves around her loved ones. She and her husband Brett have been married for 33 years and have four wonderful children — Chase, Mallory, Connor, and Clayton — and six grandchildren between them.

“Our favorite time in the whole world is getting to babysit and spend time with our kids and grandkids,” Sallie beams. Whether boating on their pontoon at Lake Allure, baking with her brood, or enjoying family vacations to Charleston, South Carolina, the Elliotts cherish their time together. Sallie also loves to work out (she taught aerobics and personal training, pre-restaurant days) and qualifies “quiet time with my husband” as her favorite hobby.

Sallie also makes it a point to give back to the community. She and her husband actively support their church, Love Church, and its outreach ministries, while her team at The Priority Group is involved with Open Door Mission.

As she eyes the future, Sallie is focused on continuing to grow The Priority Group and her partnership with Nathan Homes. The Elliotts are also in the process of building their own Nathan Home at Lake Allure, reminiscent of their beach trips in South Carolina, and Sallie looks forward to the day they can move in.

“I truly love what I do and the ups and downs of this business. Long term, my goal is to continue to educate myself and create beautiful, one-of-a-kind homes with Nathan Homes,” she concludes. “Who knows, maybe one of my grandchildren would like to be a part of the real estate-design business someday!”



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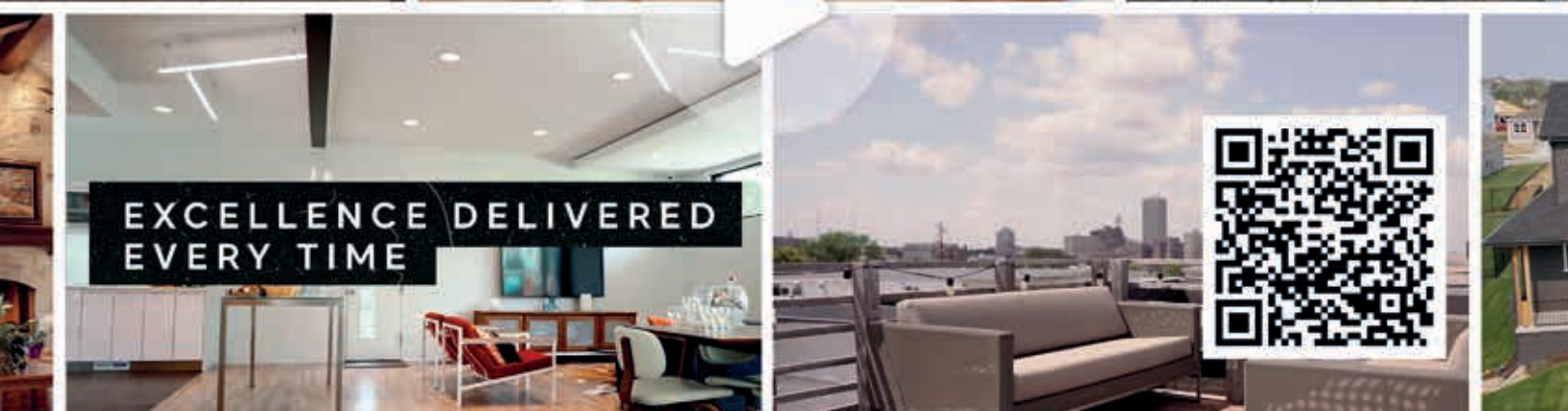


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# MELISSA GERDES

## Pursuing Her Purpose

It's true that success tends to follow those who work with a positive sense of purpose — people like Melissa Gerdes, a REALTOR® with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Ambassador Real Estate.

## Taking a Chance on Herself

Before venturing into real estate, Melissa spent years working in social work, a field she deeply loved.

“I was passionate about helping people,” Melissa says, recalling her time at Project Harmony, where she worked closely with children and families. Despite this passion, Melissa felt a pull toward something new. “The pandemic really made me reflect on life,” she says. “I wanted to spend more time with my family, and I realized how quickly things can change.”

It was a conversation with the Realtor who sold her home in 2017 that planted the seed of a career shift. “She saw something in me, something that could help others in real estate. I prayed about it, and eventually, I took the leap,” Melissa explains.



▶ rising star  
By Dave Danielson  
Photos by Natalie Jensen



In April 2021, Melissa earned her real estate license and quickly discovered that her background in social work gave her a unique approach to the business. “Real estate, in many ways, is about guiding people through significant decisions in their lives, just like social work,” she explains. “I realized I had a passion for educating people and making the process as smooth as possible for them.”

#### Thriving Through Time

Melissa’s first year in real estate was nothing short of remarkable. During that time, she sold over \$5 million in sales volume. “It was beyond what I expected, but it affirmed that I was in the right place,” she says.

Her success didn’t stop there. This year, Melissa expects to close nearly \$8 million in residential sales volume and has expanded into commercial real estate, with \$4.7 million in listings yet to close. “This year has been a lot of firsts for me, and it’s been exciting to branch out into commercial real estate,” she says.

Her secret to success? Melissa believes it’s all about relationships.

“In social work, it was always about the people, and I’ve carried that with me into real estate,” she says. “I focus on building strong relationships with my clients and colleagues. It’s important to me to empower my clients by giving them the tools they need to understand the process. I want them to feel confident and supported every step of the way.”

Melissa has even developed a concierge service for her clients to ensure their experience is seamless and memorable. “I want to make sure my clients feel taken care of, whether it’s their first home or an investment property. I’m there to guide them and make sure everything goes smoothly,” she points out.



Melissa Gerdes is a Realtor with BHHS Ambassador Real Estate.

I want to make sure my clients feel taken care of, whether it’s their first home or an investment property.

#### Family Foundation

One of the most rewarding aspects of Melissa’s career is the opportunity to work with her family. She recently hired her eldest daughter, Katherine, as her assistant.

“I’m so excited about what’s to come. It’s such a blessing to be able to work with my daughter,” she says. Melissa is also the proud mother of three other children: Dylan, Jacob, and Emily, who continue to be her source of inspiration and motivation.

When she’s not busy with real estate, Melissa enjoys spending time outdoors, particularly kayaking in the local lakes. “Kayaking is so peaceful and relaxing,” she shares. “It’s one of my favorite things to do in the summer. It gives me time to reflect and recharge.”

Melissa also enjoys baking, a passion that has led her to create cakes for a couple of weddings in the past. “I love being creative in the kitchen. It’s another way I unwind,” she shares.

#### Giving Back to the Community

Melissa’s commitment to helping others extends beyond her real estate



career. She continues to volunteer with Project Harmony, offering interpretation services in Spanish.

“Helping others is at the core of who I am,” she says. She also volunteers with Catholic Charities, working at food pantries to serve those in need. “It’s important to me to give back to the community. I’ve been blessed in so many ways, and I want to share that with others.”

**Advice for Aspiring REALTORS®**

When asked what advice she would give to those considering a career in real estate, Melissa emphasizes perseverance and faith. “Never give up,” she says. “Real estate can be challenging, but if you have faith, perseverance, and a heart to help others, you’ll be successful. On hard days, remember to have a heart of gratitude. That will keep you going.”

From social work to real estate, Melissa’s dedication to helping others has remained a constant. “I want people to see that I’m a positive person and that my faith is a big part of who I am. I love people, and I love helping them achieve their dreams,” she says. “We’re all a family in this business, and I’m so grateful to be a part of it.”



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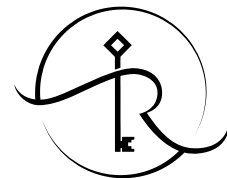
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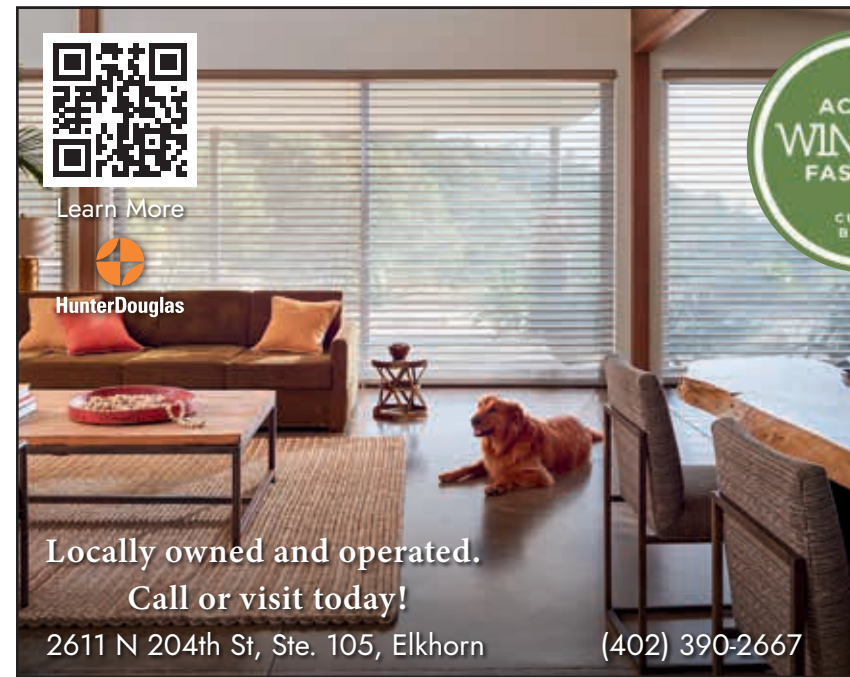
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# Where Elegance Meets Tranquility

## Discover a Private Sanctuary in West Omaha

Nestled in West Omaha's prestigious enclaves, a luxurious estate redefines opulence and tranquility. Set behind a secure gated entrance, this residence offers privacy and direct access to the picturesque Zorinsky Lake Trails — perfect for nature lovers.

Built in 2014 by Grace Homes, this estate features a timeless, all-brick and stone exterior with a durable DaVinci roof. Inside, soaring 11- to 18-foot ceilings enhance the expansive feel.

Elegant travertine flooring and plush carpets contribute to the luxurious ambiance, complemented by plantation shutters and 8-foot solid wood doors. The home also features zero-entry access from the garage, a dedicated laundry area, and a drop zone for everyday essentials.

The primary suite serves as a retreat, featuring a spacious bedroom with a sitting area, fireplace, and custom built-ins. The bathroom includes

a barrel ceiling, heated floors, and designer tile, creating a spa-like atmosphere with a jetted clawfoot bathtub and a large walk-in closet.

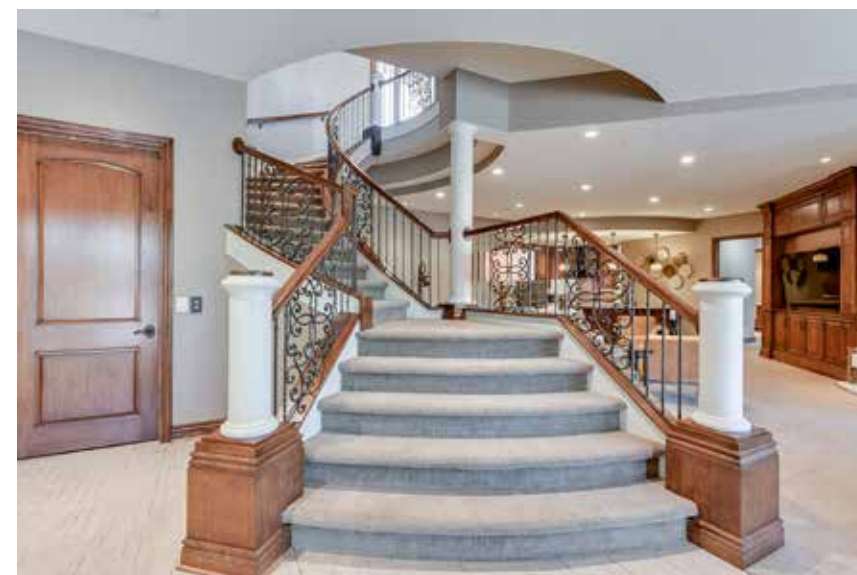
The lower level, designed for comfort, features custom wrought iron balusters and includes a second full kitchen, a second laundry room, and two additional bedrooms — one of which can be divided for added flexibility. This versatile space is ideal for independent living, equipped with garage access



and essential amenities. Two dual locker rooms/bathrooms with private showers are perfect for post-adventure cleanups.

The upper level includes a spacious 6+ car garage with dual heaters and epoxy flooring. Stairs lead to both an above-garage loft and a lower garage. The lower level also offers a 4+ car heated/cooled garage with 12-foot ceilings, perfect for larger vehicles or a mini sport court.

A safe room in the lower level, with reinforced concrete walls and ceiling, provides peace of mind in any situation.







The main level kitchen is a chef's dream, featuring a 10-foot island ideal for meal preparation and casual dining. Equipped with state-of-the-art appliances, custom cabinetry, and a walk-in pantry, this kitchen is designed for entertaining. An open-concept layout allows for seamless interaction between cooking and dining areas, enhanced by large windows that flood the space with natural light.

Step outside to a covered deck with elegant tile flooring and a

remote-controlled retractable screen, providing stunning backyard views. The outdoor area includes a heated 20x45-foot saltwater pool with a retractable cover, a charming brick pool house with a premium Wolf gas grill, a cozy gazebo, and a gas firepit.

Set on 1.76 acres with nearly 90 mature trees, the property features professionally landscaped grounds and landscape lighting for enchanting evening gatherings. An on-site well supplies the sprinkler system and pool, ensuring the landscape remains vibrant year-round.

Equipped with two geothermal units and backup HVAC, this home offers energy efficiency and comfort.

This estate is more than a home; it's a lifestyle. With unparalleled amenities and a serene location, it invites you to indulge in the finest aspects of living in West Omaha — where luxury meets nature and privacy meets elegance. Don't miss the chance to own this masterpiece.

3303 South 168th Street, Omaha, NE 68130 | \$2,995,000

For more information, call Shari Grimes or Karen Wilwerding with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Ambassador Real Estate.



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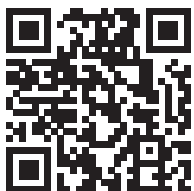
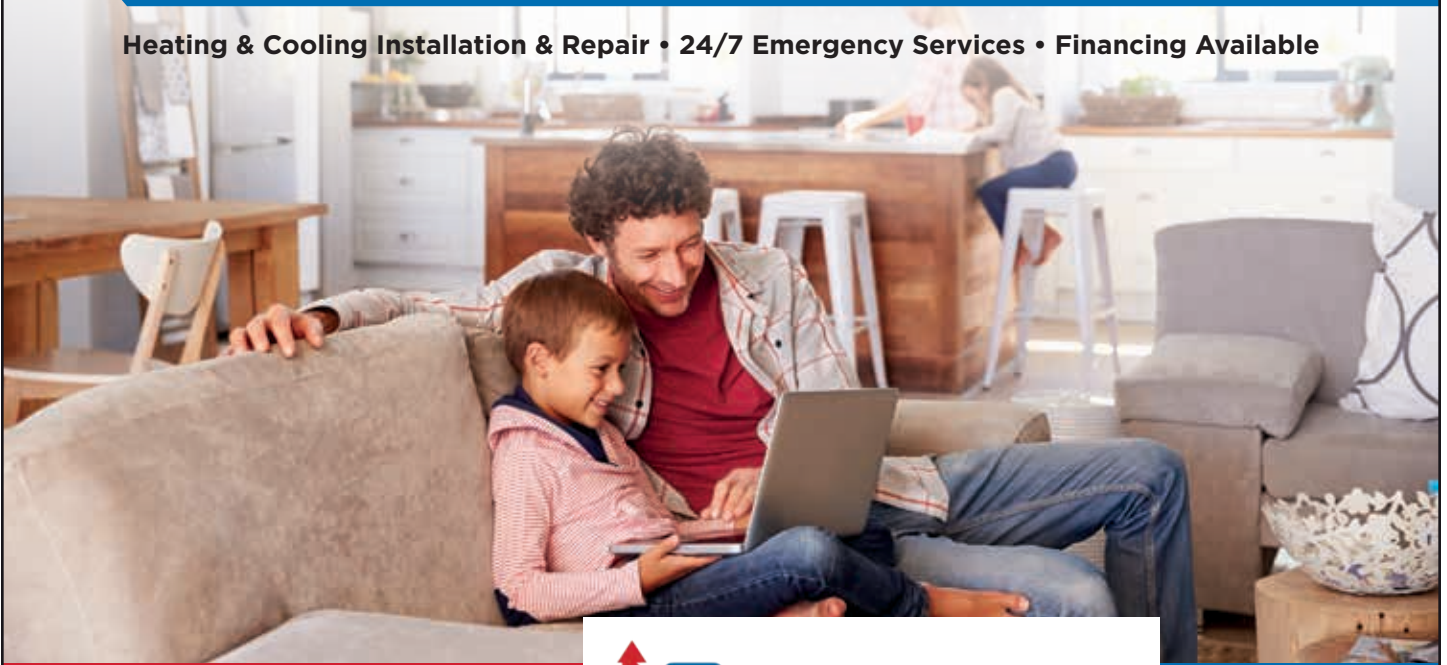


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