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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**14**  
Agent On Fire:  
Zach Johnson  
The Brokerage



**20**  
REAL Producer:  
Melissa Brown  
Keller Williams Legacy Group



**28**  
Affiliate Spotlight:  
Bluegrass Real Estate Media



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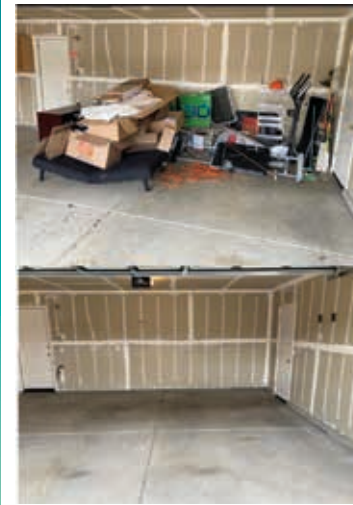
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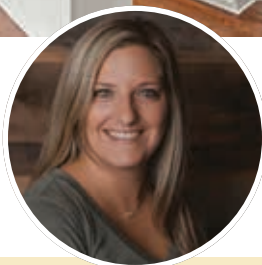
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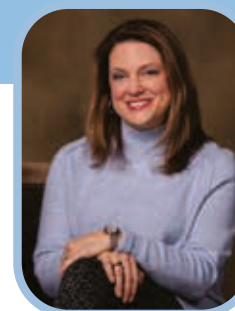
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# J<sup>ZACH</sup> JOHNSON

## THE BROKERAGE

### Hitting a Home Run in Real Estate, **ONE HOUSE AT A TIME!**

“I have played baseball since I was 5,” recalls Zach Johnson, Real Estate Advisor at The Brokerage. “That’s the only sport I played growing up.” As a catcher, he kept his eye on the ball, could throw with precision, and was a valued member of the team.

His baseball days taught him how to work well with others, be a part of a team, and succeed under pressure. “I’m very competitive innately,” admits Zach. “I think a lot of real estate agents are. I try to set new goals for myself and get coaching on my weaknesses to improve them and help the people I’m serving.”

#### Early Beginnings

Zach vividly recalls his days playing T-ball in Oldham County, where he grew up. “I grew up in a middle-class family and attended Oldham County High School,” he comments. That’s where he played baseball all four years and Zach learned the value of coaching.

“Coaching can influence you in personal life, business, and your career in many ways.” Now Zach had a coach in many different areas of his life. “It all goes back to baseball growing up,” he candidly comments.



▶▶ agent on fire

Written by Elizabeth McCabe  
Photos By Kristen Ellis Photography

“

**I’m very competitive innately.**

I think a lot of real estate agents are. I try to set new goals for myself and get coaching on my weaknesses to improve them and help the people I’m serving.

”







Photo by Meghan Potter

“

**My wife is my biggest supporter.**

She is really my best friend and I bounce

my ideas off her. She’s been with me

through the tough few years of real estate.

”

Zach learned life lessons in his youth that he carries with him today. “My parents raised me to be a hard worker and to be willing to help others.” Zach wasn’t a fan of academics, commenting, “I wasn’t a straight-A student who loved textbooks.” Instead, he loved America’s favorite pastime, baseball.

His most memorable moment was his senior year of high school. “I got to play with 11 seniors, and it was very memorable for me,” he recalls. “We played together from 5 years old all the way through high school.” Hanging out together with the same 11 individuals on his baseball team left an impression on him, forging relationships that continue to this day.

#### **A Change of Dreams**

When Zach was younger, he had the dream of becoming a physical therapist and helping others. His major in kinesiology and his time as a technician

in a physical therapy setting were steps on that path. His motivation was clear: he wanted to help people regain their normal lifestyle. This dedication to improving the lives of others has been a driving force behind his career choices.

However, life often takes unexpected turns. Zach’s transition to a career in real estate in 2019 was a pivotal moment. His wife’s encouragement and an invitation from Ryan Hilliard, the owner of the company he works for at The Brokerage, opened the door to a new chapter. Zach’s journey into real estate wasn’t just about sales; it was about building relationships and serving others, qualities that have defined his career.

#### **Overcoming Challenges**

Transitioning from a traditional W2 job to self-employment was a significant challenge for Zach. The uncertainty of providing for his family while building a real estate career required courage

and resilience. Separating work from family life in a profession that often demands 24/7 dedication has been an ongoing challenge. However, Zach’s dedication to both his family and career keeps him focused and driven.



He and his wife are proud parents to two children. “My wife is my biggest supporter,” he raves. “She is really my best friend and I bounce my ideas off her. She’s been with me through the tough few years of real estate.”

Together, they have two boys, ages 2 and 2 months old. “I want to teach my boys a great work ethic, make great decisions, and set them up for a great future,” says Zach.

#### **The Value of Relationships**

For Zach, success is defined by two main factors: relationships and freedom. Building and nurturing long-term connections with clients is at the heart of his professional philosophy. He believes in the power of the long game, and the satisfaction of helping the next generation of real estate professionals mirrors the mentorship he received from others like Ryan Hilliard and Chris Schuetz.

Networking and personal growth have been instrumental in his success, and his involvement in groups like BNI, where he served as a president and mentor coordinator, speaks to his commitment to building meaningful connections.

#### **Life Beyond Real Estate**

Outside of his real estate career, Zach enjoys spending quality time with his family, traveling, working out, golfing, and cherishing precious date nights with his wife.

“We like taking two trips a year,” says Zach. Making

memories is what it’s all about to this dedicated dad and husband.

#### **A Man of Character and Transparency**

When it comes to business, Zach values character and transparency above all else. He is straightforward and genuine in his dealings, leaving no room for ambiguity. Zach’s unwavering commitment to ethical excellence is admirable and what defines him as a real estate professional.

In real estate, where character meets competency, Zach Johnson is a shining

example of how integrity and relationships can take a professional to great heights. He learned the ropes of real estate investing through the guidance of mentors, emphasizing that success is not rocket science; it’s about being in the right company and being open to learning and taking chances.

Zach’s story serves as a reminder that true success isn’t just about numbers and transactions; it’s about the lives you touch, the relationships you build, and the ethical excellence you bring to the table.



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By Brett Rybak

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## Realty a Family Affair for Melissa Brown

# MELISSA BROWN

## KELLER WILLIAMS LEGACY GROUP

When Melissa Brown got into real estate five years ago, she likely wasn't completely sure the impact the profession would have on her and her family. A devoted mother of two who lives in Mount Sterling, Kentucky, Brown has realized real estate has become much of her family's life now – providing for them, watching them help during open houses and even as much as helping install signs for her new listings.

Brown first started her real estate journey when her oldest daughter was just a baby. Raising Katherine, now 16, and other pressures of life sidetracked her pursuit of her license for a time. But when she was pregnant with her son, Case, now 8, she was determined to finish. She stayed steadfast while having and raising a newborn and received her license in 2018. Brown initially started with a small, independent brokerage in her hometown before moving on to Keller Williams Legacy Group. From that point on, Brown has not looked back.

"The brokerage is out of Richmond but they went to work immediately to open up a branch here in Mount Sterling, which is awesome," Brown said. "Dana Gentry, our operating principal, has done everything to give back to the agents and goes above and beyond to show her appreciation for us. She holds a bunch of events and keeps everybody happy. She's the happiest person on earth and I have a ton of respect and look up to her. I'm very grateful to have Dana and, of course, my wonderful broker, Yvette Kelly, in my life."

But it's not only the people she works alongside who create the enjoyable career she has built for herself.



"I love to help people and work step-by-step with my clients," Brown added. "I absolutely love getting to travel the Bluegrass and see places I haven't been with clients. I enjoy getting out, traveling and looking at real estate and properties in areas I haven't necessarily seen before."

Quite often Brown turns showings into family road trips.

"We love to stop at state parks we've never explored and try new restaurants," Brown said. "I feel like I'm a pretty fun mom!"

It is a trickle-down effect from Brown to her clients that makes the relationship so valuable to both sides.

"My main priority is for my clients to be happy," Brown said. "I want to help make their dreams come true and ensure that whatever decision they make at the end of the day is the absolute best one for them and their family. I want to provide a stress-free process for them, helping them fulfill their need. It's important that they know they can trust and put their faith in me."

While helping her clients continues to be her main priority professionally, the job has provided an additional reward to Brown. She has learned values that have been passed down to her children.

"I believe my children really look up to me and have inherently obtained a certain kind of work ethic and the importance of always doing the right thing," Brown said. "That way you know in your heart you did your best. I am of Christian faith and was extremely close to my grandmother, Christine Brown, who was an angel on earth and the best wife, mother and grandmother anyone could ask for. I often find myself asking how she would handle a situation."

Brown's kids have adapted to the real estate way of life and understand schedules could change in the blink of an eye but are always eager to help with showings.

"Case will go through and turn all the lights on for me and Katherine enjoys taking in all the homes have to offer and admiring the characteristics and qualities each home offers,"

Brown added. "She has a strong work ethic instilled in her, as she has worked steadily since she was 15 and plans to obtain her real estate license as soon as she turns 18. Although I work around the clock, when I set time aside for them, they know they will get Mom's full attention. I'm adamant about having quality family time, including Case's oldest sister who attends UK, and meals at the dinner table at least twice a week, if not more when our schedules allow. We all need that time."

With her kids being so much a part of her life outside of work and on the job, Brown thinks it's important to continue to educate them and provide advice for whatever path they go down.

"First, I think it's important to find your passion, something you absolutely love and go after it," Brown said.

"When you are rewarded with knowing you have helped someone to the best of your ability and your clients appreciate you striving for them, it's not work at all. That's a feeling that makes it all worth it and when you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life. On top of that, just take a moment – don't immediately respond, but go over all the best options as to what your response will be and always do what is best for your client."

“My main priority is for my clients to be happy. I want to help make their dreams come true and ensure that whatever decision they make at the end of the day is the absolute best one for them and their family.”

So what does Brown do to take a load off in those few down moments?

"I love planning big vacations with the kids, as well as mini staycations," Brown said. "Just being outdoors and taking in nature. I often find myself in the Natural Bridge area for work, so I enjoy hiking and trying to take advantage of the opportunity to breathe it all in. Also, I love farms and horses and the barn is like therapy. I am so excited that real estate provided me the opportunity to purchase my Papaw's farm. It is my happy place and my escape and I couldn't be more proud and excited to have been able to carry on our legacy and recently purchase the property."

Down moments or not, Brown surely is enjoying this path she chose to travel with her family.



“  
 When you are rewarded  
 with knowing you have helped  
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Written By Dan Steele  
Photos By Bluegrass Real Estate Media

# Bluegrass Real Estate Media



“I love being the face of what I do,” says Aaron Bradley, “and I love to work with people who motivate me and push me to the next level, and I love to do the same for them.”

When he graduated from Frankfort High School in 2018, real estate was the last career that Aaron Bradley had on his mind. Initially going to Western Kentucky University for political science with law school to follow, he realized after two years it wasn't the career he wanted. Always having had an interest in marketing, he transferred to the University of Kentucky and pursued a business marketing degree but didn't find satisfaction in that either.

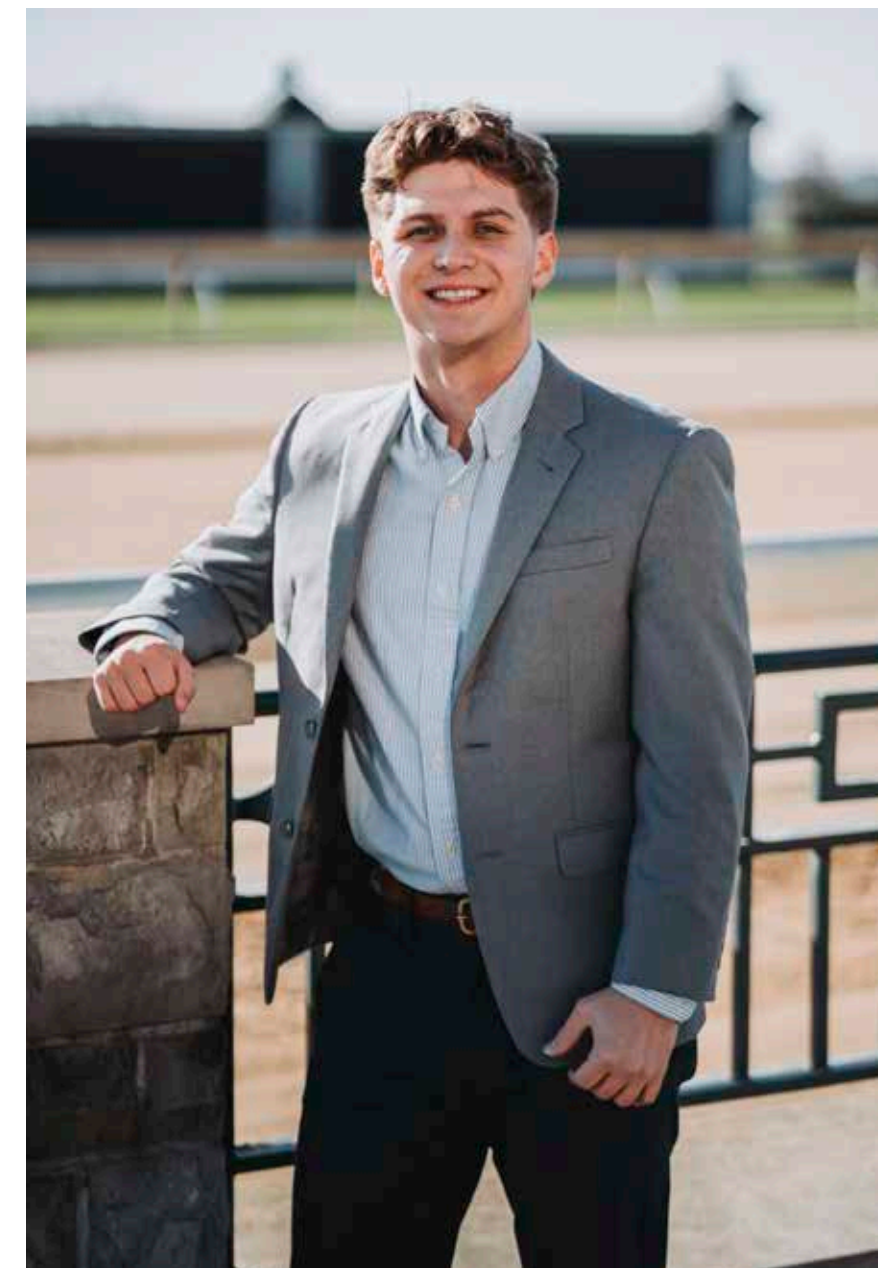
“College is great, but it isn't for everyone. I felt like I was drifting.”

Flooded by the feeling he was just going through the motions with school, he took a leap of faith and decided not to finish his degree, becoming a leasing agent for Newtown Crossing Apartments. It was a difficult decision and transition, and he admits he has been very fortunate to have had great family support for his career during that time and since. “They've been there for me from the start and supported everything I've done.”

Upon taking up the challenge of managing over 900 student apartments, Aaron found a calling he had never expected and his introduction to the field of real estate whet his appetite for more. Wanting to learn how to invest in real estate and take his career to the next level, he moved on to managing properties for RevitaLex Properties, and Aaron credits owners Chris Schuetz and Scott McIntosh with the mentorship he needed to continue growing in the industry. “Professionally speaking, they made such a huge impact in my life.”

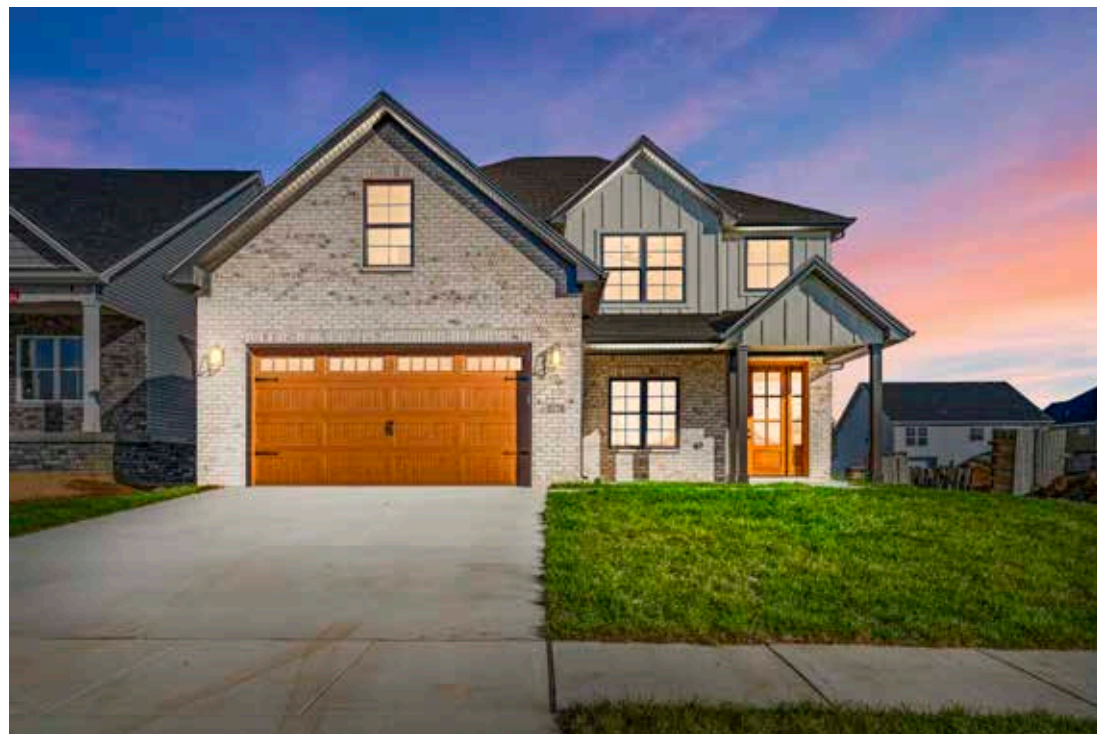
It was there that he realized the power of marketing in real estate, and Aaron credits the professional level quality marketing used

by RevitaLex as key to their success at bringing in and retaining high-quality tenants in the properties. “It brought people to us, instead of us having to search for them,” says Aaron. “As far as getting vacancies filled and having great tenants fill those spots, it was like shooting fish in a barrel. That's what made me realize just how powerful a tool marketing can be.”



Inspired, Aaron left RevitaLex about a year and a half ago to start his own full-service real estate marketing business, Bluegrass Real Estate Media, and offers his clients the opportunity to showcase their properties with not only premium-level photography, but also full 3D video tours, drone footage, and social media branding. Driven by the love of building something bigger than yourself and giving back to the real estate community, Aaron has made helping other professionals elevate their marketing a goal of building his own business. He loves the relationships he builds in the business and thrives on the personal aspect. "Clients are the best part of the work, and working with them motivates me. I honestly feel like I work with and have worked with some of the best clients and agents in the industry; they've propelled me to new heights."

While he still juggles the dual role of sole owner and photographer, Aaron's business has been successful enough for him to begin implementing his plan to hire a full team. He no longer handles social media management directly, having recently hired a manager to take over those duties, and looks to begin expanding as soon as possible. Always ready to take on bigger, more exciting challenges, Aaron is enjoying every opportunity he can to deliver the excellent marketing content to his clients that he knows they deserve and take his business above and beyond.



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