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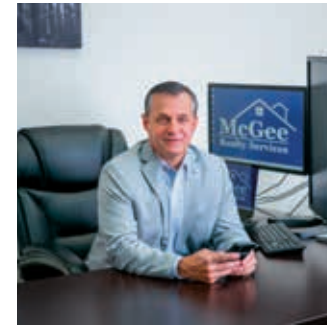
TABLE OF CONTENTS



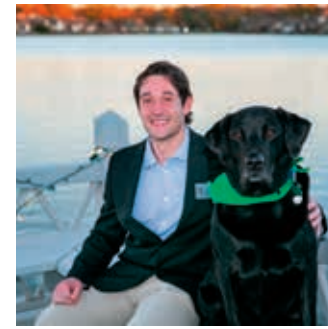
08
Meet the
Central
Mississippi
Real
Producers
Team



11
Publisher's
Note
Dees
Hinton



14
Top
Producer
Chuck
McGee



22
Rising Star
Thomas
Cothren



28
Partner
Spotlight
Mississippi
Pro Design



34
Holiday
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Happy New Year! 2024 Is Here!

Many view January 1st as a clean slate, an opportunity for fresh perspectives and an opportunity to set new goals. This year, our goal is to build and improve upon the amazing things we are currently doing!

Central Mississippi Real Producers' Mission remains the same: To identify, promote and enhance the relationships of top REALTORS® in Central Mississippi and connect these REALTORS® with the top industry partners that help them sell more real estate.

We will strive to reach even more REALTORS® and industry partners to help them connect and grow their businesses. We will continue to do this through:

- Our monthly publication
- Our online publication
- Social media
- The CMRP Podcasts
- Monthly Magazine Reveal Events
- Our large Networking Events
- And More!

As always, we are accepting recommendations of any Top Producer, Rising Star, Icon in the Industry, or just a unique, interesting REALTOR® that you would like to see featured in the publication this year! We want to know who you want to know more about. Just email us!

We also want to recognize and promote any charitable, non-profit, or service work you are involved in! Is your office doing a fundraiser? Are you a part of an organization that gives back to the community? If so, please contact me or Cindy about story ideas in this area! Volunteer work is close to our hearts and we would like to share the good things going on!

We are always open to new ideas and we always want to hear from you!

You can contact us at:

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From the entire staff at *Central Mississippi Real Producers* – Happy New Year!

Dees



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

- Jan. 1 — Shane Saxton
- Jan. 2 — Rick Henson
- Jan. 6 - Tarrah Lockhart
- Jan. 10 - Mitsy Merritt
- Jan. 11 - Melissa Reese
- Jan. 16 - Terri Bowens
- Jan. 20 — Ginger Randall
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LIFE JOURNEY LEADS TO SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN REAL ESTATE

It is said that everything you do in life leads you to where you are today. For Chuck McGee, the journey to being a real estate broker has been a long and winding one. He was born in Grenada, but at age four he moved to the Braxton area when his family built a home. From there on Chuck has lived in the central Mississippi area.

“I went to several schools when I was growing up,” he says. He attended kindergarten and first grade at Simpson Academy, second and third grade at Pearl, fourth grade at Richland, fifth through tenth at Magee, and he spent his junior and senior years at Mendenhall. Attending so many schools gave Chuck a real-life lesson on how to meet and communicate with different personalities.

After going to Hinds Community College, Chuck joined the Air Force, where he worked as a computer systems operator in Holland. When he left the military, he went back to school for a short stint and then looked for other options.

Chuck went to work for a linen company and worked his way up to route sales supervisor, which helped him build management skills before going into business with his stepdad running a crew framing houses. “I learned a lot doing that and used what I learned to expand into also building decks and fences.”

Chuck’s life took a turn when a friend from church who was a real estate appraiser invited him to his office to see how they might be able to work together. “Russell Roberts got me started in the appraisal business. I got my license in December 1997.” He had a business partnership with Roberts and another appraiser and friend, Troy Courtney. “We worked well together because we always looked out for each other’s best interests. This is the only way a partnership will work. We started buying investment properties. We accumulated a good many rental properties and ended up with a good portfolio.”



I realized that I had to start letting go of something or I'd be crazy.

Around the time Chuck turned forty, he had a desire to go back to college. "I took a real estate class at Hinds that prepared me for the broker's exam. I sat for the exam and got my license."

and running. "I realized that I had to start letting go of something or I'd be crazy." It was time to make a choice and Chuck chose to put his sole focus on his real estate business.

For a few years, Chuck was working both the appraisal business and getting his real estate business up

McGee Realty Services in Florence is a full-service agency. The business averages about a dozen agents that



cover all of central Mississippi, including Rankin, Hinds, and Madison counties. "I'd say most of our business is south of I-20, in Rankin and South Hinds County." As a broker, Chuck says his primary concern is growing the business and helping his agents be as successful as possible, although he is actively involved in selling homes. "I still sell a good amount of the business we do here. I use my appraisal knowledge to help both sellers and buyers. That's something extra I can offer."



Chuck's wife, Melissa, plays a key role in the business. She got her broker's license in January 2023 and enjoys training new agents. "Melissa is an RN and started her career in labor and delivery," says Chuck. "When our two sons were born, she became a part-time nurse and stay-at-home mom. Nursing is a huge passion, so she still works one day a week in the nursing field, the rest of the week is dedicated to real estate."



Chuck served as the 2023 president of Central Mississippi Realtors®. "I got



Serving the CMR in a leadership capacity has been a growing experience for me. **I have learned so much during my time as president.**



involved in the organization on the MLS side in 2013. I volunteered to serve on the MLS committee and provided input to the Board of Directors, and eventually served on the MLS Board of Directors, where I was president in 2016.” That position gave him a seat on the CMR Board and in 2020 he was asked to serve again on the Board. He was nominated to be the Board’s 2021 First Vice President, President-Elect in 2022, and then President in 2023. He’ll serve another year, as next year he will be in the Past President position on the Board. “Serving the CMR in a leadership capacity has been a growing experience for me. I have learned so much during my time as president.”

Outside of work, Chuck enjoys deer hunting when he has free time. A few years ago, he purchased some hunting land in Madison County where he and his family can get away from the hustle and bustle and recharge. Chuck has other passions also. “I am a drummer and I have played on worship teams in the churches we have attended in the past, but I also have a love for running sound. I gained a lot of skill from running sound in the church I grew up in and a small recording studio I built at my home several years ago, where I worked on projects for local musicians.” Chuck has used his talents for almost two decades at his church, Cornerstone Church in Pearl.

Chuck and Melissa’s two sons are quite accomplished and Chuck says that is thanks in large part to Melissa’s guidance. “She has been so good with them, always encouraging them to strive for excellence. They are good boys and both have a heart for people.” Ian (20) is in his third year at Mississippi State majoring in chemistry with a minor in biology. Tyler (16) is a sophomore at Florence High School where he plays football. “We are very blessed,” says Chuck.

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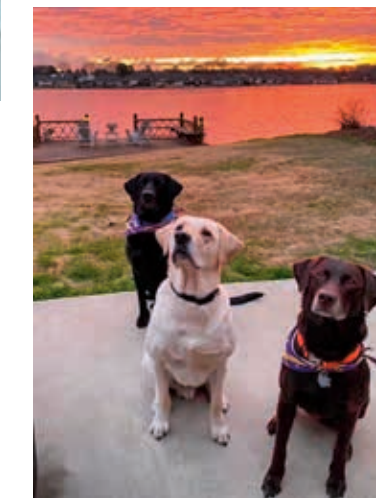


Thomas graduated from Mississippi College during the challenging times. Not to be deterred, Thomas thought about the things he found interesting “I always loved doing marketing and I was always fascinated with architecture, the outdoors, land, and houses. I’m a great negotiator and I’m a people person. With a knack for negotiation and a love for connecting with people, I saw real estate as a path guided by faith. There is no doubt that God led me to Dream Home Properties.”

A pivotal figure in his journey is Aliscia Oglesbee, the broker of Dream Home Properties. Thomas speaks fondly of her impact on his decision to become a Realtor, appreciating her unwavering support and guidance. “Aliscia is not only my mentor, but she’s also my aunt,” explains Thomas. “She had a big impact on my decision to be a Realtor®. She took me under her wing and made me the Realtor® that I am today.”

Thomas was born in Hammond, Louisiana but moved to Madison in 2010, where he grew up. He appreciates the area’s charm and values the family atmosphere of Dream Home Properties. “I especially love training new agents. Our company is growing and I’m excited to be a part of that growth.”

After obtaining his license in 2020, Thomas navigated the dynamic real estate market, facing challenges such as the Covid pandemic, fluctuating interest rates, and inventory shortages. Reflecting on his journey, he advises new agents



not to expect immediate calls for home listings or purchases. “When I first started, I thought that would happen, and when it didn’t I was a bit surprised. But I tell the new agents that we are very similar to farmers. My grandparents were farmers and looking back on the lessons I learned from them, I know now that you must plant your seeds, patiently nourish them, and allow success to grow over time.”

Turning Houses into Homes and Dreams into Realities

Thomas Cothren’s journey into real estate is a deeply personal one, rooted in his passion and resilience. As a college student at Mississippi College, he initially aspired to be a sports reporter, majoring in communication. Fate, however, took an unexpected turn during the COVID era when his internship at WJTV ended and job opportunities in broadcast news were scarce nationwide.

For Thomas, the ultimate satisfaction comes from walking into a house with clients and seeing their faces light up when they have found their dream home. “Witnessing that moment, that spark in their eyes, it’s priceless. I just know when it’s the one.” He believes in going above and beyond, treating each client like family. He envisions a lifelong career in real estate, cherishing the feeling of helping clients through such a significant life decision.

At 25 years old, Thomas knows how to overcome difficulty. In 2021, Thomas suffered the loss of his vision in his right eye due to multiple sclerosis and the loss of his father the next



year. “I remembered his advice to use my talents. Life threw challenges my way, but I turned them into stepping stones to becoming successful.”

Despite setbacks, Thomas perseveres. “I faced adversity, but with passion and perseverance, I turned my dreams into reality.” His passion for real estate keeps him driven. Specializing in assisting first-time home buyers, he strives to make the process stress-free. His marketing skills shine when working with sellers and he is excited about recent transactions with out-of-state clients. “I work hard to make what can be a stressful experience non-stress-



ful for my clients. I get to use my marketing skills and that’s something I enjoy.”

In those rare moments when work takes a backseat, Thomas finds pure bliss in the simple joys of life. He enjoys casting a line into Lake Caroline and hunting at his family’s property in Centreville, Mississippi. “Turkey hunting is a passion of mine,” he says. Yet, amidst the great outdoors, his true companions are his three beloved Labrador retrievers, Boudreaux,



Buster, and Blaze. “They’re not just pets, they’re family. We share the thrill of the hunt together,” he laughs. On Saturdays, you can find Thomas in front of the TV, cheering for his beloved LSU Tigers.



Reflecting on life, Thomas sees his role as more than a Realtor. “I’m not just a Realtor, I’m a guide through life’s significant transitions. I turn houses into homes and dreams into realities.”

2024

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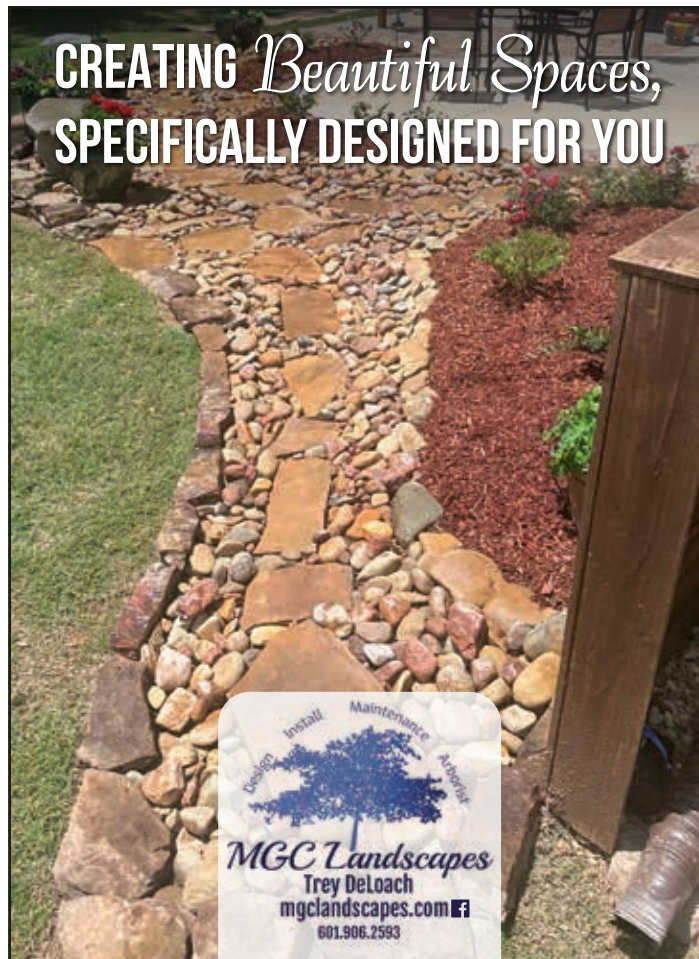


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▶ partner spotlight

Written by Susan Marquez
Photography by Abe Draper Photography

MISSISSIPPI PRO DESIGN

Mississippi Pro Design is the One-Stop Shop for Building and Remodeling Needs

There was a time when Jim Meng and his brother were the fourth-largest home builders in Atlanta. “We built 2500 houses a year,” he says. But that came crashing down when “the world fell apart in 2008.” Jim says he had to find something else to do and after no response to the 5,000 resumes he sent out, he read an article in *Home Builder* magazine that Jackson, Mississippi was in the top fifteen markets nationwide for home remodeling. “My wife, Rosa, and I packed our bags and moved to Mississippi, and in 2010 Invision Construction was founded.”

But moving into a market where he knew no one made it difficult to get established. “That’s what led us to start Mississippi Pro Flooring,” he says. “When I did a remodeling job for someone, I realized how time-consuming running all over town and picking everything out was for our clients. I decided to make it easier on everyone and I opened my own place.”

Now known as Mississippi Pro Design, the business is truly the only one-stop shop in the area. The business was established in 2014, and in the beginning, it was just flooring. Now they carry everything for new construction and remodeling from

windows, floors, doors, lighting, cabinetry, countertops, and more. “We work with builders and retail customers on jobs of all sizes.” They pride themselves on continually evolving to provide quality products and services using the latest trends and technology. For example, they offer 3-D design services that bring a client’s project to life and make it much easier to make decisions. “My background in construction means that we pay close attention to detail – we do a complete job 100% of the time,” says Jim.

David Webb serves as the company’s COO, and he says he likes it when Mississippi Pro Design



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is on the preferred vendor list for Realtors®. “Whether people are buying or selling, we want them to feel treated like family. It’s important for us to build trust with all of our clients. When it comes to property managers or commercial Realtors®, we are their one-stop shop. We offer competitive prices. When a house isn’t selling for whatever reason, we come in to give it an updated appearance, and it doesn’t have to be paid for until after the house sells.

Understanding that any real estate deal can be stressful, David says that when customers are handed off to them, they do all they can to make things as stress-free as possible before sending them back to the agents.



“We are proud to have the largest selection of all things needed for building in the state. From towel bars and plumbing fixtures to lighting and appliances, Mississippi Pro Design has people to walk customers through the process from design to installation. “We have an 80” television screen in our conference room where we can show clients tile, lighting fixtures, appliances, and more without them having to drive from one location to another all over town,” says Jim.

A family-owned and run business, Mississippi Pro Design now has two locations. The original location is at 1138 Weems in Pearl, and the Flowood store is located at 213 Promenade Boulevard in Flowood. They attribute their success to treating their customers like family and providing the highest quality service and materials. “Deciding to move forward on a home improvement project is a huge step and can feel overwhelming at times,”




Jim says. “We do everything in our power to minimize that.”

Come visit Jim and his team for all of your home improvement needs and let them show you the Mississippi Pro Difference. They have built their company on it.

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HOLIDAY SOCIAL NIGHT!

Photography by Abe Draper Photography



We enjoyed a beautiful Holiday Event at Table 100 in Flowood on November 30th!

Over 150 REALTORS® and Preferred Partners enjoyed great food and drink, lots of door prizes, networking with old and new friends and an appearance by Santa himself!

It was another night to remember!

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