

BIRMINGHAM

REAL PRODUCERS.®

CONNECTING. INNOVATING. INSPIRING.

REALTOR® ON THE RISE:

Yani Isbell

FEATURED AGENT:

Rita Strauss Maples

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

Brendon Pinola Photography

Stephanie LUCAS

with KW Hoover

Photo by Brendon
Pinola Photography

Fun. Focused.
Flourishing in
Real Estate.

JULY 2024

Amplify Your Organizations Brand With High-Quality Content & Grow Your Business Today

Photography
Videography
Graphic Design
Web Design



Let CRC Creative Show You The Impact You Can Make, Connect with Us Today!

info@crc-creative.com | 205.381.9801 | crc-creative.com

 **SENTRILOCK**

SENTRIGUARD® LOCKBOX

BIRMINGHAM REALTORS®

The *majority* of Alabama REALTORS® now have SentriLock in their markets. Learn how to easily request access to SentriGuard boxes.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®
REALTOR BENEFITS® PROGRAM
PROUDPARTNER



TABLE OF CONTENTS



06
Meet the Team



07
Preferred Partners



10
Partner Spotlight:
Brendon Pinola Photography



14
REALTOR® on the Rise:
Yani Isbell



18
Featured Agent:
Rita Strauss Maples



24
Cover Story:
Stephanie Lucas

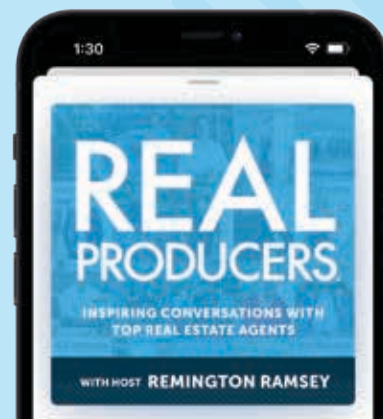


If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at meredith.jones@realproducersmag.com.

DISCLAIMER: Any articles included in this publication and/or opinions expressed therein do not necessarily reflect the views of The N2 Company d/b/a Real Producers but remain solely those of the author(s). The paid advertisements contained within the magazine are not endorsed or recommended by The N2 Company or the publisher. Therefore, neither The N2 Company nor the publisher may be held liable or responsible for business practices of these companies.

REAL PRODUCERS. PODCAST

Inspiring conversations with the nation's top real estate agents.



Same Brand, New Reach – Tune in for free today



podcast.realproducersmag.com



ALLY Makes YOU A Better Realtor!

announcing
PAY AT CLOSE!

Now You Can Pay Your Home Inspection Costs At Closing!



FREE REINSPECTION



FREE 120-DAY HOME WARRANTY



FREE REPAIR PRICER



THERMOGRAPHY SCAN



SEWER LINE INSPECTION



3D INSPECTIONS



ally.

PROPERTY INSPECTIONS
allypropertyinspections.com
205.607.0031



MOVING WITH CONFIDENCE

Free items referenced in this ad are offered only with the purchase of a full home inspection.

MEET THE BIRMINGHAM REAL PRODUCERS TEAM



Meredith Jones
Owner/Publisher



Katherine Fondren
*Editor & Content
Coordinator*



Lanie Schaber
Ad Strategist



Taylor Davis
Ad Strategist



Adrian Lucas
*Relationship &
Event Manager*



Elizabeth McCabe
Writer



Nick Ingrisani
Writer



Zach Cohen
Writer



Brendon Pinola
Photographer



David Graves
Photographer



Ryan Campbell
Videographer

If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at meredith.jones@realproducersmag.com.

PREFERRED PARTNERS



This section has been created to give you easier access when searching for a trusted real estate affiliate. Take a minute to familiarize yourself with the businesses sponsoring your magazine. These local businesses are proud to partner with you and make this magazine possible. Please support these businesses and thank them for supporting the REALTOR® community!

**BAKERY/CATERING/
CLOSING GIFTS**
Rolls Bakery
Katie Cornutt
(205) 490-1111
rollsbakery.com/

**BANKING &
MORTGAGE LENDING**
SouthPoint Bank
The Petrusson
Mortgage Team
Justin Petrusson
(205) 470-8000
mortgagesbyjustin.com

CLEANING - RESIDENTIAL
Southern Bio Clean
(205) 960-1423
southernbiollc.net/

HEATING & COOLING
Veterans Heating & Cooling
Brian Green
(205) 535-5533
veteranshvacal.com

**HOME & PROPERTY
INSPECTIONS**
Ally Property Inspections
Meredith Jones
(205) 790-4291
allypropertyinspections.com

Cotten Home Inspections
Chris Cotten
(205) 213-1821
cottenhomeinspections.com

Timberline Inspections
(205) 545-2050
timberlineinspections.com/

HVAC SERVICES
Nick's Heating and Cooling
(601) 917-2238
callnicksheating
andcooling.com/

**INSURANCE: PROPERTY
& CASUALTY**
Alfa Insurance -
The Vail Agency
Jacob Vail
(205) 837-5179
thevailagency.com/

Lambert Agency Insurance
Ashley Lambert
(205) 979-4331
lambertagency.com

**LOCKBOX / ACCESS
MANAGEMENT**
Sentrilock
Andrew Sims
(513) 294-8351
www.sentrilock.com/

MORTGAGE BROKER
MortgageRight
(205) 335-4400
birmingham.mortgageright.
com/lincoln-smith/

Princeton Mortgage
Carissa Rickman
(205) 705-0881
carissarickman.com

MORTGAGE LENDERS
Gagliano Mortgage
Andy Gagliano
(205) 236-5667
birminghammortgage
company.com

PEST & TERMITE CONTROL
Priority Pest and Termite
Justin Russell
(205) 675-7147
prioritypestandtermite.com

**PHOTOGRAPHY-
REAL ESTATE**
Brendon Pinola Photography
(205) 607-0031
brendonpinola
photography.com

**PHOTOGRAPHY/
VIDEO PRODUCTION**
CRC Creative
Ryan Campbell
(205) 381-9801
crc-creative.com

**PORTRAITURE/
PHOTOGRAPHY**
David Graves Photography
David Graves
(205) 422-8610
davidgravesphotography.
mypixieset.com/

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
Real Property
Management Victory
Mary & Bud Ussery
(205) 793-0700
victoryrpm.com

Specialized Property
Management
Jarrod Cook
(205) 767-8821

RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE
Stockton Mortgage
Craig Jemison
(205) 516-0751
Stockton.com

ROOFING SERVICES
Higher Roof Solutions
John Willard
(205) 386-0565
higherroofsolutions.com

**SECURITY & HOME
DEFENSE TRAINING**
Timberline Security Services
Amandalyn Barr
(205) 834-6983
timberlinesecurity
solutions.com

**SOCIAL MEDIA
MARKETING/
MANAGEMENT**
Talking Social
Logan McCabe
(205) 901-1895
talkingsocialllc.com/

TITLE & CLOSING SERVICES
Reli Title & Closing
Hannah Lewis
(205) 970-2200
reli.us

**WINDOW TREATMENT:
BLINDS/SHUTTERS/
SHADES**
Bumble Bee Blinds
of Birmingham
Jeff Sweatt
(205) 651-4889
bumblebeeb blinds.com/
birmingham-al

FINDING INDEPENDENCE

IN REAL ESTATE

Americans love the concept of independence, whether it's annually celebrating our freedom from the British or our individualism. Individualism and independence have been valued since the founding of the United States. As Americans, we tend to believe that we are responsible for determining our own future, and we place a lot of importance on self-reliance.

Owning our own home is the ultimate expression of self-reliance and independence. It stands as a testament to our ability to provide for ourselves and our families without depending on others. When we own a home, we are in control. We decide how to maintain and improve it, and we reap the financial benefits of our investments. Homeownership not only fortifies our financial security but also instills a profound sense of accomplishment and responsibility. By owning a home, we are not just creating a physical space but also carving out a personal sanctuary that reflects our unique identity and autonomy. This is the foundation upon which we build our dreams and safeguard our future.

REALTORS® play a pivotal role in creating independence through home ownership. From identifying suitable properties and negotiating favorable terms to saving contracts from falling through, REALTORS® simplify the complex process of buying a home by navigating legal requirements, financial intricacies, and so much more.

With changes on the horizon in the real estate world, 2024 is a year that may have some Americans thinking that there's no risk to going it alone without their own REALTOR® representation. That is why it's never been more important for our top REALTORS® to be visible in ways that don't just show off the perceived glamour of the profession but show the gritty realities of how you fight in the trenches for your clients every day.



Meredith Jones
Owner/Publisher

Mastering Safety: Tactical Training for Realtors



Tactical Training For Realtors:
Get Your CE Credits
Taken Care of Before Fall



AREC approved 3 CE class for Realtors: Situational Awareness
Recognizing Stalkers • Parking Lot Safety • Escaping Restraints • Open House Safety

Come train with us!



205.834.6893
TimberlineSecuritySolutions.com

YOUR BIRMINGHAM REAL PRODUCERS TOP 300 BADGE

You now have your own badge to use however you'd like to show that you've made it a part of this exclusive community of the top 1-2% in real estate!

Missing your badge?
Email Meredith.Jones@
realproducersmag.com

Using your badge? We'd love to see how! Show us how you are using your badge, and you may just find a picture of what you shared in the magazine! Social media, email signatures, web, listings, marketing material... nothing's off limits!



Our RP-vetted businesses have been carefully selected to be a part of this community and have their own badge as well! They have been recommended by your peers in the top 500 and are some of Birmingham's' most elite businesses. Look for this badge to know that you are working with one of the best, recommended by the best!



YOU SELL HOMES WE MANAGE HOMES

Ask about our Realtor Referral Program. Partner with Specialized to create a seamless experience for rental home investors and gain an even stronger advantage over your competition!

Call 205.767.8821 or email
jarrod@specialized247.com today!

Specialized247.com
2320 Highland Ave. S. | Suite 175 | Birmingham

Strategic Partnerships, Seamless Transactions

THE REAL MOMS Join Forces with The Real Moms



CARISSA RICKMAN | NMLS 1591415
Americapital Funding Corp
Mortgage Loan Originator
(205) 705-0881 | carissarickman.com
Carissa@realmomsmortgage.com



▶ partner
spotlight

Written by
Zachary Cohen
Photos by
Brendon Pinola
Photography

BRENDON

— PINOLA —

BRENDON PINOLA PHOTOGRAPHY

IN HIS ELEMENT

The first time Brendon Pinola picked up a camera, he was still a college student. His first exploration of photography was simply as a hobby, but something about shooting photos clicked for him. It offered him an artistic outlet and an outlet for his tech-loving side — a combo that can be hard to come by. Although it would be a few years before he took up photography professionally, Brendon knew he had come across a craft that would forever be a part of his life.

By 2008, Brendon was ready to turn his passion into a career. He was working as a journeyman electrician at that time, but he knew he had the opportunity to pursue his passion. So, he set aside his toolbelt and picked up his camera.

Brendon's first break came from a wedding photography franchise. He was thrown into a management position; the company taught him how to shoot, and he got his foot in the door. Though the company didn't turn out to be a long-term fit, he gained the experience needed to venture out on his own. Brendon learned how to take photos, communicate with clients, and run a business.

In 2011, Brendon took the next leap of faith, founding Brendon Pinola Photography. He continued shooting weddings through 2013, when the birth of his second set of twins shifted his priorities.



“When my wife had our second set of twins, working nights and weekends at weddings just wasn’t viable. I had to get into something with a 9-5. I had a nebulous idea to do commercial photography, so I went for it,” Brendon reflects. “I went to networking groups like BNI and had so many people hounding me about real estate and no doors opening elsewhere. So, I gave it a shot. I built the business slowly and found my way.”

When Brendon was initially asked to do real estate photography, he hesitated, wrongly assuming it was low-tier work. In the years since then, he’s learned that real estate photography can be as technically demanding as any other form.

“It turns out this is my dream job. I really enjoy it,” Brendon smiles. “I want to do well. I want to produce provocative images. And I don’t think everyone approaches it that way. This is what I love to do, and I think that shows in my work.”

Brendon has specialized in working with interior designers, home builders, luxury real estate brokerages, and architects for over a decade. He’s in his element on the technical side of the business and is continually learning about the best new techniques, equipment, and approaches to photography.

Brendon’s technical prowess, combined with his knowledge of the real estate industry, makes him one of the best in the business. He may charge more than the average photographer, but that’s because he provides more.

“It pays to have the best,” Brendon says. “I want to cultivate the perspective that photography is essential. It’s not taken for granted that any house will sell. A lot of agents do things the same way. There’s not a lot of secrets in real estate, but the presentation of how people see you is portrayed through the media you put out there. My work can help you look like the best agent out there. It can be beneficial on multiple levels, from selling a house to marketing your work.”

More than anything, Brendon prides himself on his trustworthiness. His career is built on relationships, just like the agents he serves.

“The result is that I don’t have to do much advertising. I let my work speak for itself.”

Family Spotlight

After hours and on weekends, Brendon can be found with his wife, Laura, and their two sets of twins. Abby and Jackson are 17, and Hannah and Leah are 10.

For more information, visit www.brendonpinola.com.



SOUTHERN - BIO

Ensure Your Listings Shine: Partner with Us for Spotless Homes

Pre-Showing Home Cleanings
Post Construction/Remodel
Move-In/Move-Out Cleanings

On Call 24/7 Contact us today to schedule a cleaning and make your property shine!

205-960-1423 or 205-388-2242
southernbiollc.net

HIGHER ROOF SOLUTIONS

WE’VE GOT YOU COVERED
All of Your Roofing Needs
Roof Repairs, Replacements & Inspections

HigherRoofSolutions.com | 205.386.0565
john@higher-roof.com

Home Insurance Built For You

AUTO • HOME • LIFE • BUSINESS

Jacob Vail
The Vail Agency
2815 Greystone Commercial Blvd.
Ste. 200
Hoover, AL 35242-2662
(205) 980-9933
JVail@alfains.com

AUTO / HOME / LIFE / BUSINESS



YANI ISBELL

▶ REALTOR®
on the rise

Written by
Elizabeth McCabe
Photos by Brendon
Pinola Photography

**ONE TO
WATCH**



***Yani Isbell
excels in
residential
real
estate,
one sale
at a time!***

“I love real estate,” says REALTOR® Yani Isbell at eXp Realty. She has been in real estate for five years, transitioning from being a stay-at-home mom to helping her clients with all their real estate needs. Originally from Honduras, Yani came to the United States in 2012, eager to discover a better life.

“Real estate was my first job,” Yani shares. “When I started real estate, I went to a small brokerage with Freddy Guerra. He taught me everything I knew,” she says with a heart of gratitude. “He took me by the hand like I was a small child.” With Freddy’s help, Yani learned all about the real estate business.

To date, Yani has done remarkably well, with a sales volume of \$16 million in 2023. “I originally got into real estate as a way to help my husband pay bills,” she admits. Little did she know that it would turn into a successful career. Real estate

had always been in the back of her mind. “In Honduras, I had an embroidery company. I always liked customer service and being in sales. I thought real estate was something that I would like to do,” she candidly comments. It turns out she was right. Connecting with others, listening to their real estate needs, and helping them find the homes of their dreams comes easily to her.

“I like the opportunity to help others,” says Yani. Real estate has also helped her find freedom with work-life balance. With five children, her father-in-law, Herbert, who lives with them, and her parents, Victor and Beatriz, also residing with Yani and her husband, it’s a full house.

“I have a lot on my plate, but the easy part is real estate,” Yani remarks. Her children include two girls, Valerie (19) and Genesis (18), and three boys, James (14), Matthew (10), and Luke (8).

Overcoming Challenges and Embracing Opportunities

Passing the real estate exam was a significant milestone for Yani. “When I came here, I didn’t speak good English, so it was really hard,” she recalls. From the beginning, she knew she had to take her career seriously. “I knew I had to do real estate all day. Putting extra hours into this business can really help you. I don’t know how anyone is a part-time agent,” she emphasizes.

Yani’s husband, Paul, whom she met in Honduras during a mission trip, has been a pillar of support. Paul, an engineer who sells boilers, never complains if she comes home late or if dinner isn’t ready. “Having that freedom has helped me succeed. I feel so blessed with the husband God gave me. My parents help me, too. A supportive husband is key to success,” she says gratefully.

Passion and Personal Life

Yani is passionate about helping others achieve the American Dream. “In Honduras, everyone talked about the American Dream. This is the American Dream. If you work hard, you can get a house. I help people by talking to them and showing them that they can buy a house,” she says. Every time she closes a deal, she feels a deep sense of fulfillment. “That makes my heart happy.”

Outside of work, Yani enjoys driving and spending time with her family. Her children are involved in football, a sport she initially thought was too aggressive but has come to appreciate through her husband’s enthusiasm. They also try to visit Honduras for a month each year, making sure to stay connected to their roots.

They also have two adorable dogs, a Labradoodle puppy named Hudson and a Chihuahua named Chloe.

A Heart for Helping Others

Yani’s dedication to her family and clients is evident. As the oldest child, she has always felt a responsibility to help her siblings and support her parents and in-laws. Her father, Victor, mother, Beatriz, and father-in-law, Herbert, all live with her, adding to the bustling household. “We are where we are because of God’s grace. I can help others because of God’s grace on me,” she reflects. Her favorite quote, Psalm 19, reflects her faith and the guiding principles that have shaped her journey.

Yani’s advice for aspiring real estate professionals is simple: “Treat real estate like a regular job and continue educating yourself. Put effort into it.” There are no shortcuts to success in the competitive world of real estate.

With her heart set on helping others and a passion for real estate, Yani Isbell is undoubtedly one to watch in the real estate industry.



Photo submitted by Yani Isbell

NICK'S
HEATING AND COOLING

KEEP YOUR CLIENTS COMFORTABLE. WE'LL HANDLE THE HVAC.

24/7 HOURS

205.583.6864
CallNicksHeatingandCooling.com

Integrity is Our First Priority.

Offer Your Clients Peace of Mind with Guaranteed Comfort from Our Locally Owned Family Operated Company!

LAMBERT AGENCY
THE PREFERRED CHOICE FOR HOME INSURANCE

YOUR CLIENTS DESERVE THE BEST SERVICE!

Local & Independent Agency | Client Focused | Competitive Rates

ESTD 1995

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION!

LAMBERT AGENCY INSURANCE **205.871.9101**
LambertAgency.com

TALKING SOCIAL

DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

THEIR GOAL: TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES REACH NEW HEIGHTS AND GOALS THROUGH THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL ADVERTISING.

Logan and Caroline are the sister duo of the digital and social media marketing business, Talking Social!

At Talking Social, they offer social media management for any platform as well as logo design. In addition, they offer audit services where they will go through your social media to see what you could do better based on your specific data, setting you apart from your competition by honing into your specific customer.

Reach out to them about buying their Social Media Guide for Realtors!

LOGAN@TALKINGSOCIALLLC.COM
WWW.TALKINGSOCIALLLC.COM



▶▶ featured agent

Written by Nick Ingrisani
Photos by David Graves Photography

RITA STRAUSS MAPLES

A Heartfelt Journey of Passion, Service & Creativity



Rita (r of center) receiving the Rockstar Award with (l to r) Jackson King, Everett King, and Sam Maples
Photo by Tiffany Owens, Nostalgia Media Photography

“I lead with my heart. That’s the way I am.”

An Alabama native, Rita spent her early years surrounded by the vibrant Italian community in Birmingham. This close-knit environment laid the foundation for her deep appreciation for her family, community, and her Italian heritage—values that would later become central to her real estate career.

Before finding her calling in real estate, Rita pursued her passion for art. She majored in commercial art at the University of Alabama during the tumultuous 1970s, a time of social upheaval and change. Rita’s artistic talents led her to a position as the assistant art director at a local NBC television station.

Her strong work ethic reflects the spirit of her upbringing. Rita’s mother passed away when she was just 14 years old, setting the tone of her approach to her career and life.

“I’ve been in charge of my life since my mom died. I was raised by my dad and two brothers, surrounded by men in a 1950s family, coming from that men’s mentality to take charge of things. I thought if I didn’t get it done, nobody would. That’s something that just keeps me going. If I can’t find somebody to do something, then I’ll try my best to do it myself.”

Her creative journey didn’t stop there; she ventured into decorative painting, adding a touch of artistry to homes across Birmingham. These experiences, combined with her Italian heritage’s emphasis on helping family and community, shaped her unique approach to real estate.

Getting into Real Estate

Rita’s entry into the real estate world came later in life, which she humorously refers to as her “midlife crisis career.” Encouraged by friends who were decorators, she initially started with murals and decorative



Over time, she found her niche in an approach that's both old-school and innovative. Rita combines traditional personalized marketing with thoughtful, creative initiatives like sending Mother's Day cards with flower seeds to her clients. Ultimately, Rita views real estate as more than a business; it's a way to connect with people, make a difference in their lives, and create lasting memories. It all comes together in her welcoming tagline, "Just Call Rita."

"I try to treat everyone the same, basically like family. It is business, but I like to treat my people as if they're mine," Rita says.

"I have a lot of past clients that I've gone to their weddings and baby showers... their kids will call me Nonna or Mama Rita. So, I'm building real relationships with people. That's how I like to work. Being positive, caring, and treating people the way I'd like to be treated."

Rita's hard work has paid off. She recently won the Rockstar Award, which is given yearly to honor one of the finest real estate agents across the ERA King Real Estate's statewide footprint. This award recognizes an exceptional sales professional over the last 12 months and considers business accomplishments, contributions to the community, and commitment to tools and training offered by ERA King Real Estate.

"If you buy or sell a house from me, you're not going to forget my name because I keep in touch."

Life Outside of Real Estate

"The spirit is young, but the hair is grey."

Beyond her professional achievements, Rita lives a rich life filled with creativity and community involvement. She continues to paint, with some of her works displayed in local galleries. She also supports local artists by purchasing their works as closing gifts, adding a unique and personal touch to each transaction.

Above all, Rita thrives in a house full of laughter and love. She raised her two boys as a single mother and now enjoys nothing more than sharing Italian traditions with them and her grandchildren whenever she gets the chance.

Her heartfelt approach to real estate, combined with her artistic flair and deep-rooted values, has made Rita not just a successful real estate agent, but a beloved figure in her community.

finishes in people's homes. The transition to real estate was a natural progression, spurred by her desire to connect with people and use her creativity in new ways. At the age of 50, with her children grown and a new marriage, Rita embarked on this new career path with enthusiasm and determination.

Her first marketing effort captured the personal tone at the foundation of how she'd run her business—by building genuine relationships and treating her clients like family.

"My first postcard was a wedding picture saying, 'New name, new career, same old Rita.' I put it out so people could see what I was up to. I sent out those postcards to all my friends and family."

Rita's initial days in real estate were full of learning and adaptation to the role. She would spend a lot of time at the office to be surrounded by successful agents. But at her first open house, she naturally clicked with a woman who was downsizing. Rita listed her house, somebody came in wanting to write an offer, and she got to represent both sides of the transaction.

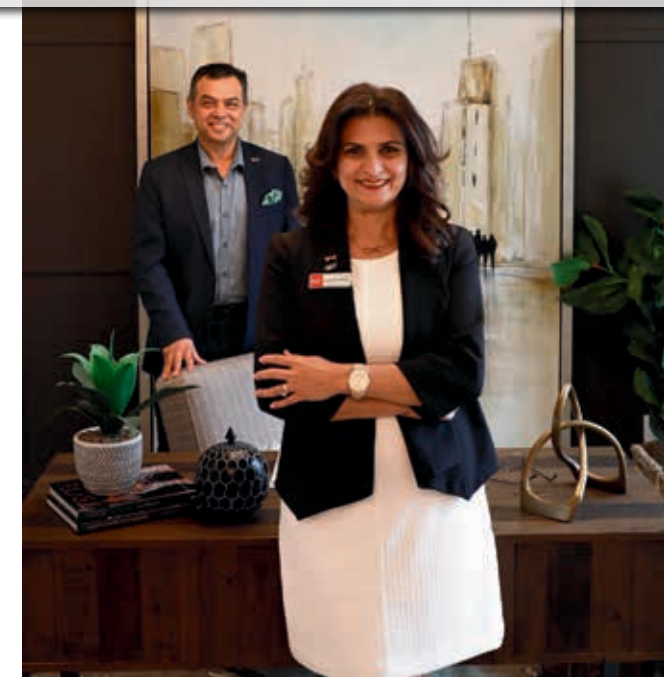
DAVID GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHY

*Headshots
are Personal*
Look & Feel Like YOU.

**PORTRAITS THAT FEEL PERSONAL
AND SET YOU APART.**

*Let's Talk About A Headshot
Event for Your Team!*

"David is an exceptional photographer who brought a unique blend of creativity and professionalism to our collaboration. His keen eye for detail and ability to capture the perfect moments made the entire experience seamless and enjoyable."
- Kulsum Budhwani



David Graves

205.422.8610 | @DavidGraves_
DavidGravesPhotography.com

TRUSTED EXPERTISE FOR YOUR CLIENTS' COMFORT



*Your Dependable HVAC Partner
for Real Estate Success*



**INSTALLATION
REPAIR • AIR QUALITY**

Satisfaction Guaranteed • 24/7 HVAC Service



AL#21006

Brian Green,
Owner

UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE VETERAN
(205) 535-5533

VETERANSHVACAL.COM

SCAN TO REQUEST
A FREE QUOTE



**Elevate Your Listings
with Stockton Tailored
Mortgage Solutions!**

Are you looking for mortgage professionals who understand the intricacies of the local market and can provide your clients with seamless, personalized service? **Look no further.**



Thomas Dickinson
Branch Manager NMLS 40424
205.907.4721
thomas.dickinson@stockton.com



Craig Jemison
Branch Manager NMLS 40427
205.516.0751
craig.jemison@stockton.com



Stockton Mortgage NMLS 8259
Equal Housing Lender | nmlsconsumeraccess.org | For Industry Use Only
1 Riverchase Office Plaza, Suite 204, Hoover, AL 35244

TERRITORY
RP

2023

BY THE NUMBERS

HERE'S WHAT THE TOP AGENTS IN BIRMINGHAM SOLD IN 2023...

 **\$3,569,021,132**
SALE VOLUME

 **8,469**
TOTAL TRANSACTIONS


 **\$11.8 M**
AVERAGE SALES VOLUME PER AGENT

 **28**
AVERAGE TRANSACTIONS PER AGENT



LEADING THE FUTURE

Joining Forces to Create a Partnership That Is On Point.



Local Operations
High Level of Expertise
Personalized Service

SOUTH POINT HOME MORTGAGE

Justin Petrusson
VP – Mortgage Banker
C: 205.470.8000
jpetrusson@southpoint.bank
NMLS#: 351335

MortgagesByJustin.com
3501 Grandview Parkway, Birmingham



TERMITE CONTROL

PEST CONTROL

MOSQUITO CONTROL

priority pest & termite

FREE Pest Spray & Inspection With A 12-Month Service!
SAVE \$99!

 **SCHEDULE TODAY!**
205.508.0028
prioritypestandtermite.com



WWW.RELI.US



▶▶ cover story

Written by Elizabeth McCabe
Photos by Brendon Pinola Photography

Fun. Focused.
Flourishing in
Real Estate.

Stephanie LUCAS

with KW Hoover

“Treat your business like a business, fall in love with the boring stuff, and take care of people,” says REALTOR® Stephanie Lucas with KW Hoover. She also emphasizes the importance of not comparing yourself to others. “Comparison is the thief of joy. Focus on your own journey and purpose.” That’s exactly what Stephanie did.



Known for her down-to-earth personality and unwavering commitment to her clients, Stephanie has carved out a remarkable career selling over 550 homes. She tells her clients, “We’re going to be best friends!” Surprising and delighting her clients is one of her trademarks. “That’s been my focus this year,” she smiles.

Stephanie, who has a heart of gold, prays for her clients. “My business is my ministry,” she points out. She does anything she can to help her clients. She wants them to feel like part of her family.

From Nursing School to Real Estate

Stephanie’s journey into real estate was not a straightforward path. “I did almost everything customer service-oriented before becoming a REALTOR®,” she shares. “I even quit nursing school, realizing it just wasn’t my jam.” Stephanie discovered her true calling in real estate in 2006, thanks to a pivotal moment in her life.

“I was a single mom with three kids, working as a medical secretary at UAB and struggling to make ends meet,” she recalls. Her now-husband suggested she try real estate, inspired by his

mother’s success in the field. Initially skeptical, Stephanie took the plunge when he offered to pay for her real estate classes. Working full-time by day and studying online at night, she obtained her license within a month.

Hard work was nothing new to this fun-loving Birmingham native. She attended high school in Center Point and started working full-time after becoming a teenage mom at 17. Despite the challenges, she persevered, driven by the desire to provide for her family. “Becoming a teenage mom wasn’t in my plans, but it shaped everything about my life,” she reflects. “I worked full-time and took care of my baby. That was the driving choice to be successful.”

Meeting her husband, Danny, in 2006 was another transformative event. “We met on MySpace through a shared interest in a local band,” she laughs. “We chatted online for three weeks before meeting in person.” They married in 2008, and Danny, who works as a software engineer, has been a steadfast support. “He allowed me to jump into real estate full-time, which was crucial for my success,” she says.

Danny got his real estate license in 2007 and he sold real estate with Stephanie, along with Danny's mother, who has always been Stephanie's biggest supporter.

"When we got married, Danny needed a real job," she laughs. However, Danny is planning on returning to the real estate scene, too. "Within the next 4 years, he will be retiring from his 35-year IT career and will return to the business selling with me," she says.

Overcoming Challenges

Stephanie's journey hasn't been without obstacles. From working low-paying jobs to balancing motherhood and a career, she's faced many trials. "Danny was the reason I was able to move past those hardships," she says. "My faith has always pushed me through. I believe God will always make a way."

In the real estate business, Stephanie's biggest challenge was setting up effective systems. "As a solo agent, my focus has been revamping my systems and loving on people at a high level," she explains. "My business is 90 percent referral-based, so maintaining those relationships is crucial."

Stephanie's passion lies in mentoring and building a supportive environment. She emphasizes the importance of treating your business like a business and protecting family time. "You have to balance work and family. The business can eat you alive if you let it."

Family, Fun, and Faith

Stephanie and Danny have a blended family with three adult children: Kaitlin, Austin, and Kelsey. Kaitlin, 28, is an esthetician in Arkansas. Austin, 25, is a car salesman in Hoover. Kelsey, 24, enjoys being a labor and delivery nurse at UAB. They also have two grandchildren, Jude and River. Their household includes two rescue dogs, Cooper and Jaxon, who are best friends despite their different sizes and breeds.



Photo by David Graves

Outside of work, Stephanie's hobbies include indulging in Mexican food, reading cheesy romantic fiction, listening to true crime podcasts, and lounging by the pool. She and Danny also enjoy traveling to visit their grandchildren and attending Church of the Highlands, where they serve together on the administrative team.

Stephanie is one of the most transparent people you'll meet, known for her terrible singing but enthusiastic carpool karaoke sessions. She also has two different colored eyes, a unique trait she embraces. "It's part of my weirdness, and I love it," she says with a smile. "I'm sure I could get contacts if I wanted to be normal," she candidly comments. "But who wants to be normal?" She was designed to be different.

Making Dreams Come True

Stephanie is an inspiration with her hard work and passion for helping others. From teenage mom to Top Producer, anything is possible for this dedicated real estate professional who wears her heart on her sleeve. With a supportive family and a thriving business, she continues to make a significant impact in the real estate world.

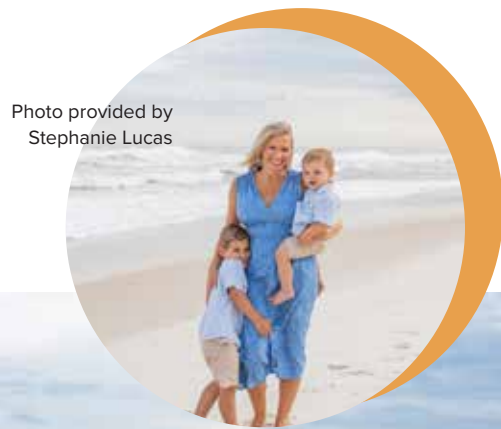


Photo provided by Stephanie Lucas



Photo provided by Stephanie Lucas

BUMBLE BEE BLINDS™
Window treatments to *Buzz* About

FREE In-Home Consultation, Installation and Warranty!

205.858.5311
Bumblebeeblinds.com/
birmingham-al
Locally Owned & Operated



announcing
PAY AT CLOSE

Now You Can Pay Your Home Inspection Costs At Closing!

TIMBERLINE INSPECTIONS

OUR INSPECTION SERVICES

- Residential
- Commercial
- Multi-Family
- Sewer/Septic Line
- Mold Testing
- Radon Testing
- Thermography
- New Construction
- Pre-Drywall Phase

205.545.2050
SCHEDULE ONLINE!
timberlineinspections.com

Gagliano Mortgage, Inc.

Two Events Per Month Focused On Helping You Grow Your Business

Lunch & Learn | 1st Thursday of the Month 11:00 - 12:30
Our Lunch and Learns focus on mortgage and real estate based tools and strategies that you can immediately implement in your business.

Mastermind | 3rd Wednesday of the Month 9:30 - 11:00
Our Masterminds feature a guest speaker who will teach a topic focused on helping you or your business grow.

To see our schedule of upcoming events and to register to attend, scan the QR code!
We look forward to meeting you!

(205) 979-4412 | BirminghamMortgageCompany.com
4500 Valleydale Road, Ste F | NMLS #204149
Andy Gagliano | NMLS #208486

brendon  pinola photography



Turn Browsers into Buyers – Connect with Us.

205.907.4095 | BHamHomePhotos.com | BrendonPinolaPhotography.com




BLUE
sushi sake grill

LINCOLN LIKES IT!

Experience: ★★★★★
Food: ★★★★★
Price: \$\$\$

All Real Producers should try it!
205.335.4400
LincolnsMortgage.com

Ask me about the Shishito Peppers!



MORTGAGE RIGHT
NMLS# 351964
NMLS# 2239



Your Partner in Property Management!



Scan to learn more about our Realtor Referral Program!



REAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT VICTORY
a neighborly company



Bud & Mary Ussery
205.793.0700 • VictoryRPM.com
4625 Valleydale Rd, Birmingham



Relationship Focused • Professional & Trustworthy
30+ Years Experience • Exceptional Service

Set Your Event Apart With Catering From Rolls Bakery!



Our Memorable Treats Will Shine, Think of Us For Your...

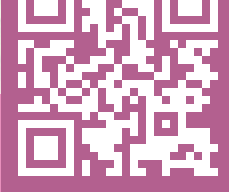
Catered Lunches | Open Houses
Vendor Breakfasts | Client Appreciation | + More



RollsBakery.com

205.490.1111 | 621 Montgomery HWY | Vestivita Hills
Sun/Mon - Closed | Tues-Friday 7-1PM | Saturday 8-1PM

Order Something Yummy for Your Next Showing, Scan Now!





20 YEARS OF
THE N2 COMPANY

Your Partner for Residential & Commercial Inspections

WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU CLOSE THE DEAL FAST!



CottenHomeInspections.com

205.213.1821

CHI is the home of FLAT FEE INSPECTIONS.

The fee is \$380 on ALL inspections for homes under 3,000 square feet. All homes 3,000 + square feet will be priced at the normal inspection rate.

Chris Cotten
Founder & President of
Cotten Home Inspections Inc.

