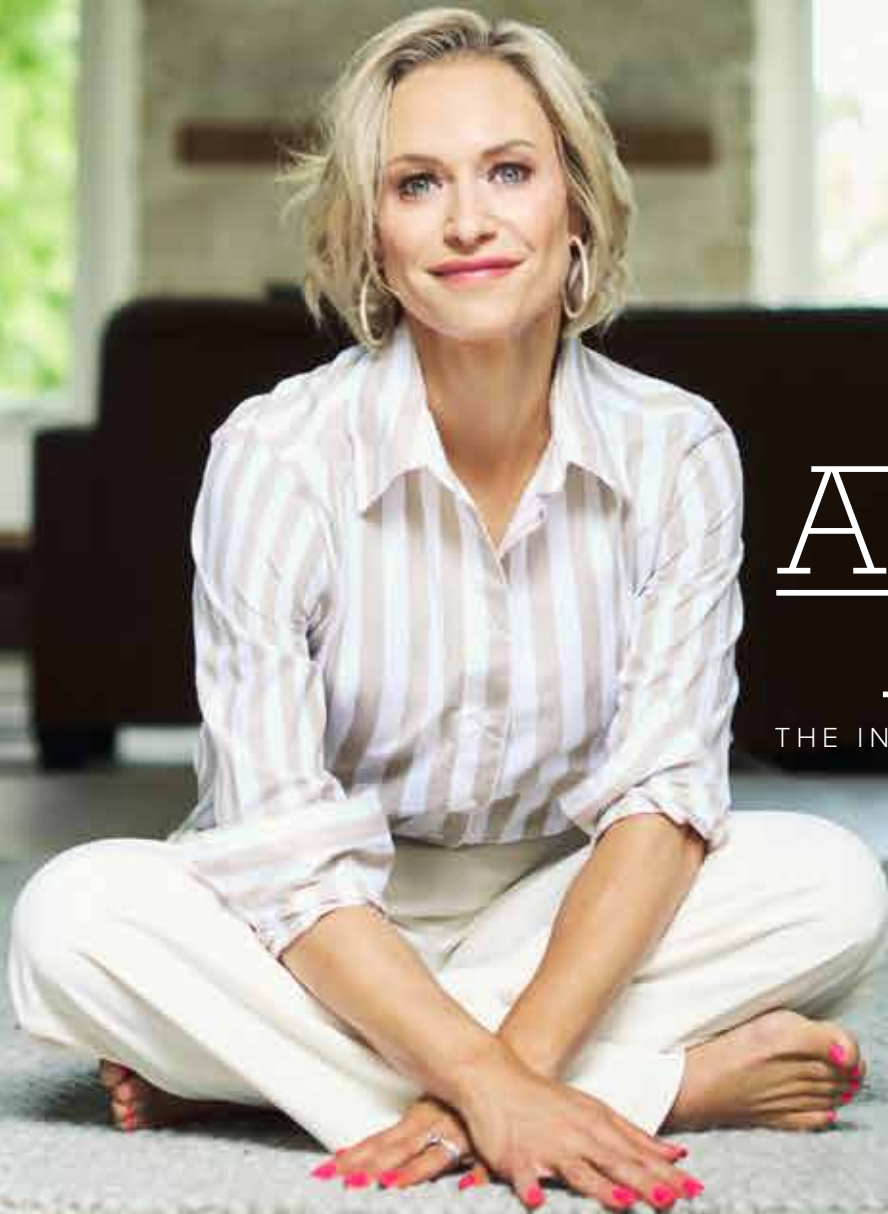


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If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at andrew.schindler@n2co.com.

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Amy

▶ top producer

By Jess Wellar
Photos By Stacy Ideus

Fries



From Left: Carter (16), Amy, Judd and Davis (11)

THE INTUITIVE REALTOR

While Amy Fries can't read your mind, chances are, she will be able to understand your emotions better than most. Three years after first gracing the pages of *Real Producers*, Amy has firmly established herself in the Lincoln real estate market after transitioning from a seasoned psychologist to a dynamic REALTOR at Woods Bros.

"Real estate, much like psychology, is deeply personal. It's about

understanding people, their needs, their fears, and their dreams," Amy explains. "With my background, I'm equipped to guide my clients through these high-stress decisions not just rationally, but empathetically and with sensitivity."

From Psychology to Properties

Born and raised in the quaint town of Cairo, Nebraska, (population: less than 800), Amy pursued higher education at Nebraska Wesleyan

University, where she ran track while delving into the field of psychology and sociology to earn her undergraduate degree. She continued her studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she obtained both her master's and doctorate degrees in psychology.

Amy then dedicated the next decade of her career to helping others through psychotherapy, a role that equipped her with unique insights into human emotions — a skill she finds invaluable in real estate.

"I think when buying or selling a home, there are a lot of emotions in that huge decision. Being able to understand how that impacts people's decisions, especially in residential, is critical," she points out.

After suddenly landing at a difficult emotional and career crossroads herself, and in need of direction, a good friend suggested to Amy that she give real estate a chance.

"I had a drastic turn of events, and knew enough about myself that working an 8-5 job would kill my soul," she recalls.

Amy decided to make the big leap into the business in June of 2019 with the help of retiring agent Russ Quick, who introduced her to the nuances of the industry.

"Working with Russ for six months gave me a solid foundation, and observing the successful women around me in the industry shaped the Realtor I wanted to become," she reflects.

Consistent Performer

Since 2019, Amy has quickly risen through the ranks, supported by her meticulous assistant, Ashlee Gordon, and diligent transaction coordinator, Manette Kidney. Last year alone, Amy closed 50 transactions totaling north of \$15 million in sales volume and is on track to match or exceed those totals in 2024.

"I feel like it takes a village to be successful in this industry," Amy chuckles.



though, the accolade that resonates most deeply with her is the “Realtors’ Realtor” award she received at the RP Gala last year.

“I truly care about those I represent, but I also truly care about my professional relationships,” Amy emphasizes. “The Realtors’ Realtor award meant so much to me because this work is very collaborative. If we can find common ground and still be respectful and kind to each other, we can work together to get things done and serve our clients well, too.”

Amy readily offers straightforward advice to newcomers in the industry, emphasizing the value of persistence and understanding the human side of transactions.

“Real estate is a grind,” Amy remarks candidly. “Find someone you admire in the industry and watch them — how do they represent themselves? How much do they work? And how do they interact with other agents and clients?”

Beyond Business

Outside of work, Amy’s world revolves around her family life. Married for over 20 years to her wonderful husband, Judd, she is



“Ashlee has been a godsend in helping keep me organized and Manette doesn’t miss a thing. They both really help make sure my contracts are complete and compliant while I’m client-facing.” Amy also credits her work with Jennifer Hagan of Destination Homes as a major factor in her success. “Jen and I love working together and we are proud of how we elevate one another’s business”.

Amy continues to stand out with her commitment to ethics and relationship-building, while also being recognized for these attributes by her colleagues. She was honored with *Real Producers’* Realtor on the Rise for 2022, and Office Salesperson of the Year for 2023. Additionally, Amy has received the Woods Bros Award of Excellence and has been a member of the Chairman’s Club for both 2022 and 2023. Despite all of these impressive recognitions

a devoted mother to two active boys, Carter and Davis.

Whether it’s watching basketball games or enjoying time together at their get-away cabin, Amy’s family is her anchor. Not to forget their adorable pet cockapoo, Bogey, who keeps the family entertained and theoretically safe.

“Bogey is the cutest dog on the planet and is currently trying to protect our yard from an adorable family of foxes that have made a den under our deck (a mama and four kits),” Amy smiles.

In her spare time, Amy prefers to stay active with hobbies like working out, particularly lifting and kickboxing, which she describes as her forms of therapy.

As for the future, Amy sees herself continuing to excel in real estate, but never at the expense of her loved ones.

“I want my kids to see me work really hard, but I also want to show up to their games and activities,” Amy concludes. “Maintaining a balance of work and family is critical for me, that’s why it’s been so helpful to have Ashlee and Manette on board. I want to be a present parent in life while still providing terrific service to my clients and making friends along the way.

“Some of the greatest people I’ve ever met in my life are in real estate.”



“ I want to be a present parent in life while still providing terrific service to my clients and making friends along the way.

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While many REALTORS® purport to seek the ever-gleaming promise of “work/life balance,” Derek Hilgert marches to his own drummer on that point. “I just don’t know if I believe in that!” he chuckles. In this industry, he says, it’s tough to find a way to make that work, at least consistently. Instead he favors what he calls “rest and run cycles,” understanding that there will be busy seasons where work predominates, and other seasons where there is more time for other things in life. Hilgert’s unorthodox views on the American quest for balance are but one example of how this REALTOR® plays his own game. But that commitment to learning what works for him and staying true to it, even if it differs from conventional wisdom or common practice, is in large part why he’s been successful.

For Hilgert, the vast amount of time he spends working with his clients is ultimately worth it. “All of the best REALTORS® in Lincoln are really problem solvers who happen to sell houses,” he says. “That’s the key to this job — you have to demonstrate your value to the client.” It’s one reason referrals mean so much to him — every referred client shows clearly that he has given someone a service experience that they found valuable. And to Derek Hilgert, raised on hard work and high expectations, that is a just reward for his patience and perseverance on his clients’ behalf.

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Josh Phillips

▶ on the rise
By Jess Wellar
Photos By Corey Rourke Photography

The Humble Helper

Josh Phillips will assist anyone with anything — colleague, client or complete stranger. As a promising REALTOR® at Excel Realty Group, it's little surprise Josh received the brokerage's Selfless Contribution Award last year.

"I'm just a country kid from a small town and truly love to help people," Josh explains. "In order to succeed for myself, I have to help others succeed as well."

Ready For A Change

Josh grew up in Central City, a small Nebraska town that fostered his love for the outdoors and a simple, genuine approach to life. He attended college for computer programming but eventually realized that sitting in front of a computer all day wasn't for him — he needed human interaction.

Josh switched gears and went into the restaurant business, managing a local Brewsky's and also worked as a video production coordinator for Miss USA, demanding roles that kept him busy but left him yearning for more family time.

As a single dad of four, Josh knew he had to make a change. He loved the family that owned the beauty pageants and still does five shows a year because of his bond with them, but he couldn't continue the demanding travel schedule full-time.

It was this relentless desire to be more present in his children's lives that led Josh to consider real estate.

"I wanted a flexible schedule to spend more time with my kids. I also liked the possibility of earning money by working hard. I was on a salary before, so no matter how much I put into it, it wasn't ever going to equate to more money in my pocket," he notes.

Finding Satisfaction

Josh's entry into real estate started with a Facebook post from a Realtor. Intrigued yet nervous, he picked up the phone and called that Realtor's broker, the legendary Craig Larabee, founder of the revered Larabee Real Estate School.

"I called and I was so scared... I had had no interactions with agents before, other than buying my first house at 22," Josh laughs. "But I talked to Craig, and we just chopped it up for over an hour and a half, not even mentioning business. And then, at the very end of the call, he invited me in," Josh reminisces. "I just had to meet this guy."

Josh went to meet Craig shortly after making that call. Craig soon became Josh's mentor while he studied for his real estate license.

"I sat in Craig's office every day while I was working on my real estate studies, and he would take all the time in the world to explain things to me," Josh shares.

Unfortunately, Craig passed away just before Josh got his license in September of 2021, but his legacy lives on through his daughter, Jacque, who continues to be a great friend and supporter for Josh, who notes "the apple certainly didn't fall far from the tree."

Despite not tracking his stats, Josh's success is evident in his refreshing approach to the business.

“

Success to me is having a balanced life filled with things that bring you joy and happiness. **Family, career, friends — providing for those that depend on you while also bringing a smile to those around you.**



“I honestly do not care to look at numbers; I don’t want to be fixated on money and stressed about reaching goals. I just do my best and strive to do better every year,” he emphasizes. “I can tell you with certainty I helped 41 buyers all together, but that’s all I know.”

Ready To Assist

Josh’s humble and helpful attitude sets him apart in what can often be a “dog eats dog” industry, as he puts it. Thankfully, he found the perfect match for his altruistic approach where he landed.

“We are truly a helpful family at Excel Realty Group,” Josh beams. “We like to build each other’s business up and support each other in any way we can.”

His connection to the motorcycle community has also been a unique avenue for repeat business.

“I have ridden a Harley most of my life and have been a part of the motorcycle community for a long time. Much of my business has come from my biker friends,” Josh shares. “Bikers get a bad rap, but I’m proud to say our motorcycle club is the number three donor to the Shriners; we do so much good giving back to the local community, it’s incredible.”

Outside The Office

Outside of work, Josh is a proud father of four wonderful children: Bryce (23), Drake (19), Collin (15), and Brooklyn (14). Bryce and his wife Taylor have given Josh a granddaughter and are expecting a son in September. Josh values family time above all else, and his active clan enjoy outdoor activities together like deer hunting, fishing, camping, golfing, and playing disc golf.

“We also like to play family games like Magic the Gathering, Catan, and Mancala,” Josh shares.



His beloved pets, Pig and Oakley, bring additional entertainment to the Phillips’ home. Pig, a short-haired cat rescued from a barn, prefers Josh over anyone else. Oakley, a gray Maine Coon, “acts more like a dog,” chewing on things and enjoying human interaction. Josh also has a flying gecko, a tropical lizard that adds an exotic flair to the household.

In addition to family time, Josh’s charitable efforts are extensive. He’s actively involved with Negril Pup Rescue, the American Red Cross, and through his motorcycle club, the Sesostris Shrine.

Looking to the future, Josh’s vision is to continue building momentum in real estate to one day leave behind a legacy for his loved ones.

“Success to me is having a balanced life filled with things that bring you joy and happiness,” he concludes. “Family, career, friends — providing for those that depend on you while also bringing a smile to those around you.”



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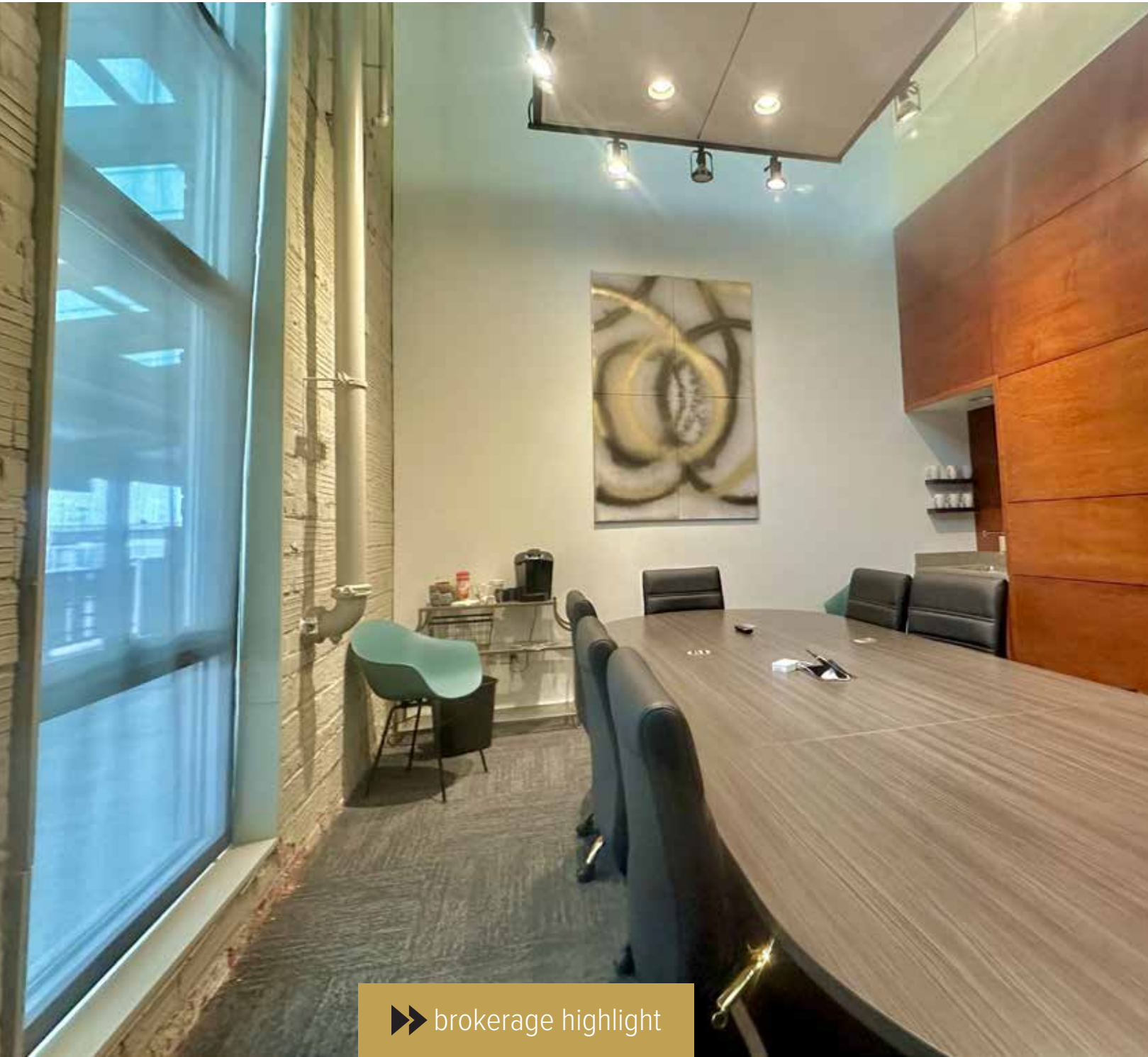
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Realty ONE Group Sterling opened their doors in 2019 and has been growing steadily in Lincoln, Omaha, and Council Bluffs. The Lincoln office is currently located in the historic Saw Mill Building, in the exciting Haymarket. Just a block from the Pinnacle Bank Arena and steps from the Railyard. The building fits the company's focus on community as a U.S. Green Building, LEED-Silver certified. Currently there are 26 agents working in the Lincoln office, with a total of 72 agents between all three Sterling offices. The agents are not limited to one geographic area and work within each office as their license, experience, and determination provides. Susan Buettner, Broker in the Lincoln office stated, "Realty ONE Group Sterling has been a game changer for my personal business, as well as our team. There is a family feel with individualized focus on agents, but with a global reach."

Realty ONE Group is a modern, purpose-driven lifestyle brand and ONE of the fastest growing franchisors in the world. The brokerage was founded in 2005 by Kuba Jewgieniew, who has been named one of the top of T3Sixty's prestigious SP200 list for the 3rd year in a row. Realty ONE Group has grown rapidly since its inception and has expanded its operations across the United States and globally. The company was voted the Number ONE Real Estate Franchise for under \$50,000 by Entrepreneur Magazine in 2024. Realty ONE Group International claimed the No. 1 spot for real estate franchisors for the third year in a row on Entrepreneur's highly competitive 2024 Franchise 500 list. With over 19,000 real estate professionals in more than 490 locations, including 20 countries and territories.



The company is known for its unique business model that emphasizes agent support, technology, and a vibrant corporate culture. It is often referred to as the "UNBrokerage" because the company has focused heavily on technology and support for their agents first, so they can be more successful with their clients and customers. Realty ONE Group offers a variety of real estate services, including residential and commercial sales, luxury sales and marketing, property management, and real estate investments.

Realty One Group focuses on the 6 Cs of business success. The business culture (Culture) is a unique work



environment that blends professionalism and fun. At Realty ONE, the agent is the brand. It is a YOU first focus. Business marketing and technology **Connects** the agents with national branding campaigns, recruiting and lead generation systems as well as local marketing content and resources. Business Support provides a **Caring** environment with seasoned brokers and managers as full-time resources and local experts. There are systems and tools to manage business and transactions with ease. With business **Coaching** through online and in person coaching, training and education for all levels, an agent has as much or little support as they need. Realty ONE's business impact focuses on **Community** and giving back to local neighbors and neighborhoods. Realty One Group created ONE Cares, a 501(c)3 non-profit, that is designed to give back to the global community. As of February 2024, there were over 9,000 community members served and supported by the ONE Cares initiative, with over \$50,000+ in foundation giving. Finally, the focus on agents includes helping agents achieve greater success, faster, including keeping 100% of their **Commission**.

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Jamie MEYER

NAI FMA REALTY, PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR

Committee Statement of Purpose:

1. To promote the property management profession through education and the exchange of ideas.
2. To be aware of government actions that affect the property management business and the rights of property owners.
3. To join with others in promoting fair housing and affordable housing.

We asked Jamie about himself, his career and the Property Management Committee. Here's what he had to say:

Q: How did you first get involved in the REALTORS Association of Lincoln?

A: I was informed by my supervisor that there was a Property Management Committee with RAL and he encouraged me to attend a few meetings to see if it was something I thought I could benefit from.

Q: What made you want to volunteer your time as a part of this Committee?

A: The meetings provide a great space to openly discuss a wide range of topics related to Property Management and I immediately recognized the benefit of this and when the opportunity came up to help lead this group, I knew it would be well worth my time.

Q: What's one area you want the Committee to focus on in 2024?

A: Technology in the rental world. From online applications and taking rent digitally, to signing leases and interacting with the city via the internet.

Q: What's your favorite thing about your job?

A: Helping people find a place that they love.



THE MEETINGS PROVIDE A GREAT SPACE TO OPENLY DISCUSS A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS RELATED TO PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND I IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED THE BENEFIT OF THIS...

Q: What is the best piece of advice you have received?

A: If it's not life or death, and it rarely is, sometimes you need to take a step back to see the bigger picture.

Q: What would you want the title of your biography to be?

A: "How to Make it on Your Own with a Lot of Help from Others"

Q: When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: Shortstop for the Chicago Cubs.

Q: What do you like to do in your free time?

A: My wife and I have two corgis which demand a lot of attention and I also enjoy going to Husker basketball, baseball, and football games. On a totally free weekend

I'm usually in my shop in the garage tinkering with some woodworking project.

Q: If you were to win an award, who would you thank in your acceptance speech?

A: My family first and then who ever influenced me in the field the award was for.

Q: If money was no object, what would your dream house look like and where in the world would it be?

A: I would probably have a traditional looking house, a bit on the rustic side, but of course it would have all the modern conveniences on the inside. I would live in either the Amalfi Coast or Venice, Italy.

To get involved in this committee or learn more about our other committees and opportunities to get involved, please contact feedback@lincolnrealtors.com or (402) 441-3622.



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Our Vision: To ensure the longevity of the REALTOR[®] profession through community awareness of our value and by equipping our members with the tools necessary to promote professionalism, ethical conduct and the value of personal property rights.



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» financial focus By Edward Jones

TALK TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT WEALTH TRANSFER

Are you anticipating an inheritance someday? If so, you may want to discuss it with your parents or other family members who may be leaving you the assets — because early, open communication will benefit everyone involved.

However, many people are reluctant to have these conversations. More than a third of Americans do not plan on discussing a transfer of wealth with their families, according to a recent study by Edward Jones in partnership with NEXT 360 Partners and Morning Consult. And the same study found that only about a quarter of Americans have actually discussed generational wealth transfer with their families.

Perhaps this low level of communication is not surprising — clearly, talking about wealth transfer and estate plans can be emotional. But having these discussions is important, for several reasons:

- **Strengthening family bonds** — Generational wealth transfer shouldn't be seen simply as a transactional event. By discussing your parents' plans and wishes, and your own expectations, you can build a sense of unity and shared purpose. And you can develop a common philosophy about how your family's legacy goals will be carried forward through the succeeding generations.
- **Avoiding unpleasant surprises** — If you or other family members are expecting a certain inheritance and things turn out differently, disappointment and bad feelings may occur. But this can be avoided by having a discussion beforehand that clearly outlines your parents' intentions. You still may not agree with them, but at least you'll know what to expect — and you won't make the mistake of acting in advance on any assumptions about what you'll inherit.
- **Developing appropriate strategies** — Passing on wealth to a new generation as part of an overall estate plan can be more complex than you might think. Are your parents using tax-smart strategies? Would they benefit from establishing a living trust? Are the beneficiary designations on their retirement accounts and life insurance policies accurate and up to date? If you suspect your parents may not have properly addressed these issues, you may want to bring up the benefits of working with an estate-planning attorney and a tax advisor.
- **Protecting against incapacitation** — Many people go through their senior years with few, if any, physical or mental impairments. But there are no guarantees. If one or both of your parents were to become incapacitated and unable to handle their financial affairs, it could cause serious problems with

their wealth transfer and estate-planning goals. But if you can discuss your parents' plans with them while they are healthy and alert, you can encourage them to take the proper steps, such as reviewing outdated estate-planning documents and designating you or another family member as power of attorney to make health care and financial decisions on their behalf should they become incapacitated.

While the benefits of having wealth-transfer and estate-planning discussions are clear, starting the conversations can be tricky. You need to show that you want to initiate these talks because you're concerned that proper plans need to be in place and understood by everyone involved. If you have a good relationship with your parents, you should be able to start these conversations, but you'll still need to be sensitive when bringing up the subject.

One final word: Estate plans can take some time to develop — so, the sooner you have these discussions, the better.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors are not estate planners and cannot provide tax or legal advice. You should consult your estate-planning attorney or qualified tax advisor regarding your situation. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

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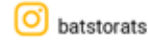
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As the proud co-owner of AllERICA Aesthetics, Erica Carey wants every person who walks through her door to feel welcomed, loved, and comfortable.

“Injectables and skin rejuvenation treatments can be scary to newcomers, or sometimes to people that have had bad experiences,” Erica acknowledges. “As a boutique spa, we love to form personal relationships with all our clients. Each person is unique and beautiful, and we aim to help our clients feel confident in their individuality.”

INSPIRATION IN THE OR

As the nurse injector at her Med Spa, Erica and Dr. Allie Sohn didn’t start out as business partners — they were colleagues in the operating room at Nebraska Heart Hospital for five years.

Erica, a former scrub nurse, and Allie, who still operates there as a vascular surgeon, spent their free time discussing medical aesthetics and the exciting possibilities of starting their own aesthetic practice together.

“We talked off and on over the years about how amazing it might be to use our medical backgrounds to bring something new to Lincoln,” Erica recalls.

“I had always wanted to dive deep into medical aesthetics and was looking into education for that specialty,” Erica continues. “And Allie had a deep passion for skincare, a trait she attributes to her roots since she moved to the U.S. from Korea when she was 12. Skincare is a significant part of Korean culture.”

In the summer of 2021, the friends took a leap of faith as their discussions turned to action. They headed to New York to train, and through plenty of time and effort, they formed an LLC and landed on the name ‘AllERICA’ by combining their names. AllERICA officially opened its doors in October 2021 in a ‘9 x ‘9 room in the back of Eve Salon in the Prescott shopping area.



NOT JUST ANY SPA

AllERICA’s business quickly took off, catching both women by surprise.

“We started part-time and then quickly realized this is not a part-time gig since we were growing pretty fast!” Erica remembers.

Allie continued her work as a vascular surgeon, while Erica left the hospital to focus full-time on their burgeoning business. Over

partner spotlight

By Jess Wellar
Photos By Stacy Ideus



Erica Carey (left) and Allie Sohn (right)

the past three years, Alleric Aesthetics has added several other employees including a laser nurse, two estheticians, and an administrative assistant while moving next door to Eve A Salon, where they first started.

Erica notes their business continues to grow by standing out from the mass-produced spas popping up on every corner for several reasons.

“We have traveled across the country and internationally as far as Seoul, South Korea, to study, learn, and personally experience from the top medspas in the world,” Erica explains. “Through personally educating ourselves, we

have been able to incorporate the best treatments and techniques into Alleric’s offerings.”

Alleric also prides itself on its integrity. Erica notes they avoid unrealistic promises and extreme discounts.

“Being a boutique medspa ensures that we will remain small, personal, and unique, tried and true to our values,” she affirms.

Lastly, their emphasis on the personal touch also helps sets Alleric apart. This warm, customized approach has led to glowing testimonials from clients.



“We love hearing, ‘I don’t wear any makeup besides my tinted SPF anymore!’ or seeing the new confidence in our clients when they are back for follow-up appointments,” Erica shares. “The relationships we have made with our staff and with our clients mean more than anything.”

“We are very passionate about our clients and their results. We will do anything for them,” she adds.

BEYOND THE BUSINESS

Outside of work, Erica and Allie lead fulfilling lives surrounded by their families. Erica is married to her husband, David, and they have three children: Ruth, Freddie, and George.

“We love to travel and play outside,” Erica says of her family’s active lifestyle.

Allie, on the other hand, spends her free time with her husband, Grant, and their four adorable dogs: Charlie, Sophie, Sasha, and Archie.

“Allie and I also love to travel together,” Erica adds. Their favorite destination? Seoul, South Korea, of course.

“We recently took a trip there to visit, and if it was up to us, we would go every year. I am already looking forward to going back,” Erica says with excitement.



Looking ahead, Erica’s enthusiasm extends to Alleric’s future growth.

Since COVID-19, she notes their spa has seen a significant uptick in business as attitudes shift.

“There has been an increase in people’s skincare and how they take care of their skin. Because of FaceTime and Zoom, you’re seeing your face all day long, whereas at the office, you weren’t looking in a mirror all day. With people posting on TikTok, etc. too, people are more open to trying anti-aging services,” Erica explains.

“We want to keep the personal feel while continuing to grow our business, expanding our facial services and bringing in techniques from Korea to make us unique,” Erica concludes. “Through our growth though, we will remain extremely passionate about providing an elevated and personalized experience to our clients.”

Ready to face your best self? Schedule a consultation with Alleric Aesthetics today by visiting alleric.com or call 402-781-4195

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