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Nick Stevens
Owner/Publisher

Dan Steele
Writer

Dan Allsup
Ad and Content Manager

Zach Constant
Social Media

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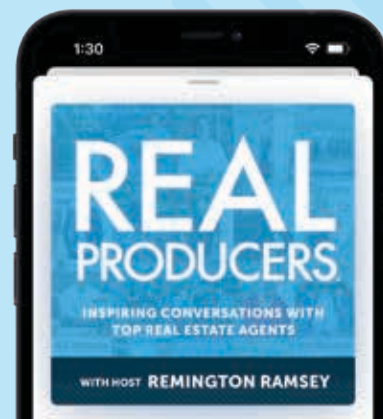


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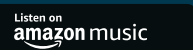
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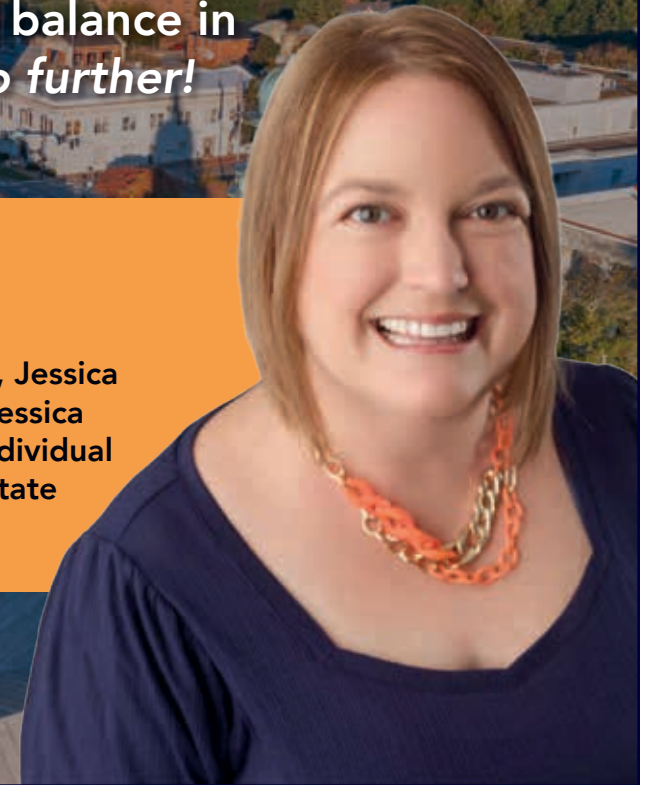
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▶ publisher's note

By Nick Stevens

WHAT IS *Real Producers?*

Welcome to *Mountains, Lakes & Athens Real Producers!*

It's my honor to bring Real Producers to the north and northeast Georgia area and to celebrate everything that makes you all an outstanding part of the Mountains, Lakes & Athens Real Estate Community. I look forward to highlighting your accomplishments, encouraging your dreams and recognizing you for your continued excellence in serving your clients.

Real Producers started as a simple idea in 2015 in Indianapolis and has spread across the nation like wildfire. The Real Producers community is now available in over 130 locations and is changing the way the real estate community interacts across America. As we embark on this journey together, I promise to create platforms to connect this community and forums to recognize and celebrate what makes each one of you iconic. In years to come, I hope to interview every one of you so that I can share your success stories in future issues. I also look forward to celebrating you at our events, providing tools and connections to help you grow your business, and representing your passion for this industry that we all share.

Here are some quick facts about Real Producers:

DISTRIBUTION: This magazine will arrive in the mailboxes of the TOP 300 agents in the Mountains, Lakes & Athens communities of north Georgia each month. These 300 agents are determined through compiled MLS data from 2023. If you are receiving a hard copy of the publication, it is because you belong to an elite group and represent the best of the best in our industry!

CONTENT: This publication is all about YOU, the Mountains, Lakes & Athens real estate community. We will be writing personal and unique stories about members of this community, giving you a platform to inspire greatness in others. As we grow, we will continue to add fresh content focused entirely on the top agents and our Preferred Partners. We have NOTHING to sell to real estate agents as it is absolutely FREE to be featured in this publication. To be featured, the agents must be nominated by a peer, leader, or influencer in the local real estate market. We always encourage nominations and love to hear about agents who are making a huge impact in our market.

PREFERRED PARTNERS: Anyone listed as a "Preferred Partner" in the index of this publication will also be a part of this exclusive community. You will see them advertised in every issue, attending our private events, and being a part of our online community. We do not cold call businesses off the street to join us, nor do we allow any business that approaches us to be a part. One or many of you have recommended every single one of these Preferred Partners that you see in this publication. Our goal is to give you as many resources as possible to add to your arsenal so that you always remain that trusted referral source to your clients and customers.

EVENTS: Along with our monthly publication, we will be hosting various social and educational events throughout the year. Our goal is to bring the best of the best together while supporting our local communities. And we fully intend to have a good time doing it! We will be communicating information on upcoming events through the publication, monthly emailed newsletter and social media.

CONTRIBUTION: If you are interested in contributing, nominating REALTORS® for certain features, know of additional top-notch affiliate partners who would be a great fit for our community, or would simply like to learn more, please reach out to me anytime. I look forward to meeting with every one of you in the future. I would also like to give a HUGE THANK YOU to the Preferred Partners who jumped on board with us so that we could bring Mountains, Lakes & Athens Real Producers to life. Also, a huge shout-out to my team that pulled this together without much guidance. You all are incredible and this first issue is dedicated to you!

I appreciate you all and I look forward to seeing you all at our launch party coming soon!



NICK STEVENS
Owner/Publisher
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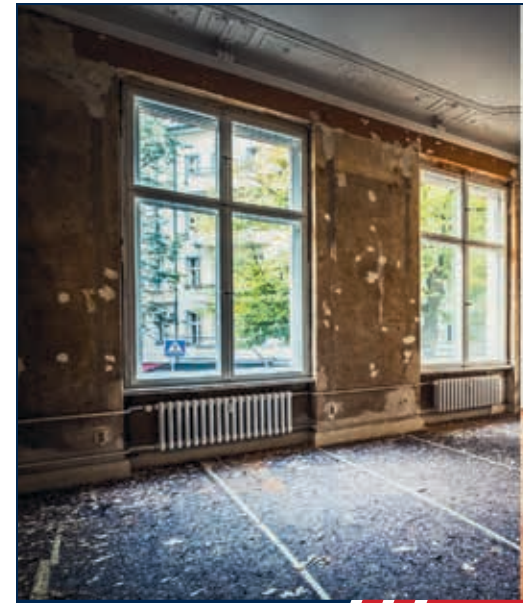
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Maria Keller,
Founder

ALEX
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Occasionally, when two or more things are unexpectedly brought together, the resulting combination proves so successful that it seems strange how rarely it occurs. Maria Keller has done just that with her law firm, bringing together three areas of real estate and related business in a distinctive way.

“I added estate planning and asset protection to the real estate closings I already offered through my firm and created a unique system,” she explains. “When you’re buying real estate, especially investment properties, and planning for the future, it makes sense to create a legal entity around that property to protect it from what I call “creditors and predators” and ensuring the heirs receive those assets.”

Breaking down one particular client experience, Maria explains how her system helps people secure their assets and investments. “My client had acquired an impressive mix of real estate and business assets, but as a doctor, he was at high risk of being sued, and he had not done any estate planning or asset protection,” she relates. “He is great at building up business and investing, but he’s just not good with the administrative side of it all.”



▶ partner spotlight

Written By Dan Steele
Photos By Alexa Flacker

After a two-hour consultation, Maria helped him organize his assets, execute an estate plan, and put the assets into various legal entities to protect them in the event of a lawsuit. “We built an Asset Map for him where he can see all of his assets in one place, see how they are titled, what entity they are in, and see how they all affect his retirement and legacy,” she elaborates. “We can even remove different assets and people, so we can see how life changes will affect his estate. It is a very valuable tool that only my firm provides, and the client was ecstatic.”

Like her firm’s service, Maria’s career path was a unique one. “I went to Law School late in life – after I raised my 3 children,” she reveals. “My youngest child had special needs and once she was old enough to go to school all day, I needed to build back our savings and start planning for a special needs trust – to take care of her after I passed, so I decided to try to get into law school.” Despite her own doubts, she was accepted to John Marshall Law School, graduating within three years and, she adds with justifiable pride, passing the bar exam on her first attempt. “The whole process showed me that when you are on God’s plan, things miraculously work out!” she says.

She practiced as a family law litigator, but eventually found herself worn down from the nature of the legal specialty. “Litigation is not “happy” law,” she says. “You work with a lot of stressful and sad cases, and you’re at the mercy of the court when it comes to your time.” For example, Maria says, vacation cannot be taken without the court’s approval and must be given with 30 days notice, but up until the day of the vacation, it could still be revoked. “I want to be able to take my granddaughter to the beach without permission,” she says.



“ I want leave a positive impact with the work that I do, and real estate does that.”

Her mother helped her find the change she needed. “My mother, who was raising six kids in the ‘80’s, had invested some money she inherited in a small farmhouse in Alpharetta” Maria explains. “We lived in Dunwoody at the time, so Alpharetta was the middle of the country, but that property is now where North Fulton Hospital sits, so she made a tidy profit on that.” Recalling how her mother continued to reinvest over the years and had done quite well, she began investing herself and found the change she needed in real estate. Changing practice areas, she left litigation and moved into real estate closings, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Although her business strategy has proven to be a great success, Maria has no plans to expand in the same manner as many other firms. “I don’t want to be the new Morgan & Morgan,” she states. “I see my firm growing, but still keeping its boutique feel, with a select number of clients who require our services.” Being able to help others protect their assets and investments is the most fulfilling part of her work, and she hopes to build positive relationships with her clients that last a lifetime. “I want leave a positive impact with the work that I do, and real estate does that,” she says.

When she isn’t working, Maria enjoys spending time with her husband, children, and granddaughter, as well as her three dogs and cat. They enjoy watching UGA football together, as well as exploring new breweries and wineries and hiking. Maria herself enjoys meditating daily, growing fresh herbs in her garden, and has recently taken up making her own sourdough bread. “I do still buy bread too, but it is fun on weekends to bake my own loaf,” she laughs.



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TIM GIBSON



A career in music might seem radically different from one in real estate, but when Tim Gibson decided to become a real estate agent, he found surprising similarities between the two that helped him achieve his success. “As a musician, I was always an independent contractor and always worked for myself,” he reveals. “I had to be very business focused. When you’re a musician, for the most part, you’re paid a day rate: if you don’t play, you don’t get paid. Commissioned sales is not really that different, so it has worked out for me.”

Growing up in Jacksonville, Florida, Tim inherited a passion for music from his father and has been playing bass since he was 15. Moving to Atlanta, Georgia in 1999 to attend the Atlanta Institute of Music, after a year he started actively touring in the Christian music industry, performing with different artists and bands across both the country and internationally. He even found some success with television and movies, appearing in the Jennifer Garner movie, *Miracles from Heaven*, as well as an episode of *Duck Dynasty*. But, after 20 years of touring, Tim was ready for a change. “I wanted to be home with





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GOD, FAMILY, AND BUSINESS...
MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD,
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my family more. I got tired of life on the road all the time; plus, I knew the pay would be more lucrative," he recalls.

Besides an enhanced income stream, real estate offered Tim many of the aspects he deeply loved about the music industry. "One of my favorite things was meeting new people, making bonds with the people you're traveling with," he explains. "You're basically networking all the time, so when I realized I wanted to switch careers, I wanted to find something that let me keep doing that, as well as work independently." He found that not only could real estate offer him the means to achieve both his personal and professional goals, but he would not have to abandon his life-long passion in pursuit of it. "I had friends in real estate who told me about it," Tim explains, "and one of my friends was doing both, playing music while still finding success in real estate, so I decided to jump into it."

Despite all the similarities, Tim admits that the transition was still challenging, and he found himself struggling at times. "Believing in myself early on was something tough," he remembers. "I was a bass player for 20 years; who would want me to sell their house? It felt daunting. But I never quit. The encouragement from my wife, who has always supported me, was huge." After a \$143,000 listing for a friend from his church, it was three months before he got his second sale, but when he did, he also found the book he credits with completely changing his mentality about the challenges of real estate. "I came across *Ninja Selling* by Larry Kendall about that time, and it was a game changer for me," Tim says. "It sounded like mumbo jumbo at first, but I followed the recommendations of the book, and it worked! From then on, whenever I've set a goal, I've been able to achieve it with those principles."

The key to making those principles work, he says, is his love of helping people, and that is what makes real estate more a vehicle to help people than merely a career for him. "I view myself more as an advisor and advocate than anything like a salesperson," Tim relates, and explains his view that every transaction provides an opportunity to go above and beyond in a different way for each client. "Sometimes, I think realtors get a bad rap and people can kind of view us like used car salesmen, someone taking advantage of someone else's needs just for their money. I really want to dispel that notion; my job is to smooth out the rough spots and make the transaction as effortless as possible for my clients." It drives his focus on service and passion to delivering experiences to clients that exceed what they expect, and he recounts moving furniture,

backing an RV into a driveway, and even clearing firewood so a client could put up a fence. "There's a story behind every real estate transaction and helping my clients move to the next chapter is always an honor," he says.

Looking to the future, Tim hopes to continue growing his business, building up his sales and investing divisions, as well as serving others in the real estate industry by coaching and mentoring. Ultimately, he says, as long as his business allows him to serve both his clients and community, as well as the freedom to enjoy time with his family, then he considers it successful. "I'm so grateful for, to put simply: God, family, and business," Tim states. "My relationship with God, a family I love, and a business worth owning."

When he isn't working, Tim still plays music, but also enjoys hiking, trout fishing, going to the gym, and most of all, spending time with his family. "I have the most amazing, supportive wife of 20 years," he tells joyfully. "I owe a lot of where I am to Natalie's constant love and support, and we have 3 awesome children together: August, who is 15, Pierce, 14, and Annabelle is seven." They share in his love of outdoor-related activities and enjoy traveling together, especially to the beach.



Trusted Key Properties Team OF PEND REALTY

▶ featured
agent

Written By Dan Steele

In an ever-changing market landscape, a career in real estate requires perseverance, patience, and above all, passion for the trade. Celebrating both a decade of success since entering real estate in 2014 and becoming an Associate Broker after achieving her license this January, Chasity Miller is helping her team navigate its way to success through the challenges in real estate and provide the best transaction for their clients.

Key to providing their clients with unparalleled service is how her team actively works to anticipate the obstacles that can pop up in any transaction and less a client's overall experience. "We try to anticipate all of them and stay ahead of the curve," Chasity explains. "Our team has processes in place to ensure a smooth transaction for all parties. We have the mindset that timelines and contingencies are not suggestions, they are legally required, and we aim to meet or exceed them every time. No exceptions." Empathy for their client and remembering the impact the transaction may have on their lives drives their commitment to this, explains Natoya McClure. "Some people have no idea how to go about purchasing a home and it can feel very overwhelming, even just going through the application process for the lender. To walk someone through it and see the excitement and gratitude on their faces at closing is absolutely the best part of this career."

Her team thrives on being different, and she has a passion to help the agents on her team to think outside the box as they grow their business. "It's so nice to be able to help them to not just sell real estate but also break stereotypes we find in this business," Chasity elaborates. "Too many people get trapped in the mindset that they're limited to helping people sell or buy their homes, but there are so many different avenues out there, like commercial, foreclosures, or rentals." She relates how recently a team member who had never worked on a commercial deal branched out and found success, working on a second deal almost immediately after obtaining their first.



CHASITY MILLER

Being able to handle a variety of real estate scenarios not only offers the agents more opportunities, but also allows clients to meet all their real estate needs with them. “I want my agents to be able to be a “one stop shop” like I learned to be,” Chasity explains. Team member and also mother of Natoya, Vivian Keeton, for example, brings her 30 years of single home and multi-family property management experience to the team. “I became disappointed and overwhelmed with the direction that property management was taking me in the corporate world. The industry that I loved became the industry that I dreaded,” she explains on why she entered real estate. Knowing both Chasity and her daughter were finding success at PEND, she joined up with them and has reinvigorated her passion with building their property management company, HOST Property Management. “It is very rewarding building a company that will aid in alternative housing for those who are not quite ready to “pull the trigger” on home ownership,” she says. “Additionally, this allows us to build relationships so that renters feel more at ease when it does come time to purchase, and our current homeowners can rest knowing that we manage their investments as though they are our own.”



KATE VARN

Gaining more varied experience and knowledge will only help agents better assist clients and continue to drive their high service level, and that extends to knowing about construction too. “Having the knowledge about what’s going on in the home helps the client with their transaction because you help them know what they might expect,” Chasity relates. Utilizing said knowledge, she is able to ensure her clients know important details about the properties they are purchasing, and it is a point of pride for her that while working with several builders they found her to be more thorough about the property than some foremen working on the job. “There’s so much more that goes into a home than just carpet and paint, like the mechanical and construction aspects. There are also more unusual situations: I just was able to walk into a home from 1810 and go through with the designer on what could be modernized and what stayed original.”



NATOYA MCCLURE

But no matter what the real estate situation may be, the most important aspect is the client’s experience and providing agents with full support is critical to agents providing their exceptional

service. “I don’t care if it’s a mobile home or a mansion; we treat it the same,” declares Chasity. “Anything that keeps them from working on the sale takes away from the clients and from their business. We make sure to offer each agent their own website and full office and administrative staff, so our team is able to focus on what they’re best at.” Her agents are committed to meeting the obstacles of every transaction and going above and beyond for their clients. “Every deal has its own set of challenges. It’s a matter of pivoting and bringing the client what needs to happen to get the deal done,” explains Mckenzie Nuedling. “I’ve done everything from babysit to laying mulch beyond the scope of simply selling the home.” Being able to overcome the challenges their clients face in their real estate journey is the most fulfilling part of their work, says Kate Varn. “I love when we are able to achieve the impossible for clients, whether it involves financing challenges, negotiating contract terms or navigating inspection issues!”

While being on a team may not work for everyone in real estate, Chasity found it to be among best decisions she made careerwise. “I probably would have gone on a team sooner,” she reflects when asked if she would do anything in her career differently. “As an individual agent, I had to learn a lot of stuff the hard way. I didn’t see the value of having the mentors and team members then.” Chelea Corless agrees, explaining how her need for advisement led her to Pend and the team. “I had hung my license with two other brokerages and, while they are great, I really needed more guidance,” she says. “I personally know our broker and he suggested that I interview with Chasity and join her team. At the time, Chasity was actively growing her team. We met once and really hit it off- she told me if I did what she said and followed her lead that I was guaranteed to be successful. It was the absolute best decision I have ever made in my career!”

Although she sees the team continue to grow, it is important to Chasity that they do not lose what makes the team great. “I want to grow slowly and strategically,” she says. “It’s important to me to keep the culture of our team unique. We are a group of professionals that support one another, drive each other to be better and work harder, and help out when a team member has a question. It’s nice to see everyone jump at the opportunity to help another team member out.” Working together, the team is committed to the success of their clients and to each other, standing together as they move forward in the tumultuous world of real estate. “I am grateful to be a member of such an elite team, which I also consider a sisterhood,” says Velissa De La Cruz. “I am also grateful to have the opportunity to change lives as I live out my purpose.”



GABRIELA VITELLI



VELISSA DE LA CRUZ



CHELEA CORLESS



MCKENZIE NUEDLING

FAQ

ALL ABOUT MOUNTAINS, LAKES & ATHENS REAL PRODUCERS



Real Producers magazine started in Indianapolis in 2015 and is now in over 130 markets across the nation and continues to spread rapidly.

Q: WHO RECEIVES Real Producers MAGAZINES?

A: The top 300+ real estate agents across north and northeast Georgia.

Q: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS MAGAZINE?

A: We believe that we are better together. When we surround ourselves with other successful, like-minded people, we grow to new heights. Real Producers is a platform that brings together the most elite individuals in the North Georgia real estate industry.

We take the top 300 real estate agents and RP-vetted businesses in every market, and we build an exclusive community around that group. We share their stories, successes, market trends, and upcoming events — really, anything that will connect, inform and inspire, we put in our monthly publication.

Q: DOES Real Producers HAVE EVENTS?

A: Yes! We will have specific networking events throughout the year.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: It's really simple. You have to be on the top 300 list, and we take nominations seriously. You can nominate other real estate agents, businesses, brokers, owners or even yourself! Office leaders can also nominate real estate agents. We will consider anyone brought to our attention who is in the top 300 because we don't know everyone's story, so we need your help to learn about them. We cannot guarantee a feature, but we encourage you

to meet with one of our team members, support Real Producers and attend our private events to increase your chances.

To submit a nomination, please email: Nick.Stevens@RealProducersMag.com

Q: WHAT DOES IT COST A REAL ESTATE AGENT/ TEAM TO BE FEATURED?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing to agents, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share **REAL** stories of **Real Producers**.

Q: WHO ARE THE RP-VETTED BUSINESSES?

A: They are one of the best businesses in north and northeast Georgia in their category, and you can find them listed in our index! We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. Many of the top agents have recommended every single business you see in this publication. We will not even meet with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our team will further vet every business to make sure they are a good fit and bring value to our community. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for the best real estate agents in the area but the best businesses so we can grow stronger together.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A BUSINESS?

A: If you want to recommend a business that works with top real estate agents, please email or message us! **Email: Nick.Stevens@realproducersmag.com**

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