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If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at [drake.abshire@RealProducersMag.com](mailto:drake.abshire@RealProducersMag.com).

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# a note from the publisher

Providing a platform to celebrate  
and unite the top real estate  
professionals across Acadiana!



By Drake Abshire

## Hello Everyone,

I hope this note finds you well as we dive into the exciting beginnings of summer. Today, on April 25th, I'm reaching out to share some great news and stir up the anticipation for what promises to be a season to remember for all of us at ARP.

First off, I'm thrilled to welcome two new preferred partners to our magazine family. Say hello to Priority Reaux Property Management and Standard Mortgage—two stellar teams whose expertise will undoubtedly enrich our offerings and benefit our network. We're all about connecting you with the best, and our new partners embody just that.

Also, let's mark our calendars! We're gearing up for the Launch Party of the year, which will take place on May 16th at the Grouse Room. We're putting together an event that will be talked about for a long time, so make sure you're there to experience it firsthand!

As we move forward, I want to thank you for your continued support. It's your engagement that shapes us and your enthusiasm that drives us. Here's to a fantastic start to the summer and to all the possibilities it brings us.

Looking forward to catching up with many of you on the 16th!

Best,  
**DRAKE ABSHIRE**  
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# ALL ABOUT ▶▶faq ACADIANA 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.

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 Acadiana.

#### 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 Acadiana's 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 send us an email!

#### 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 Acadiana 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!

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# HOME INSURANCE SAVINGS: A REALTOR'S COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

BY GOOSEHEAD INSURANCE

As a realtor, your role extends beyond just finding the perfect property—it's about ensuring your clients secure the best insurance rates to safeguard their investment. While insurance premiums can vary based on several factors, implementing savvy strategies can help your clients maximize their savings.

Firstly, consider the age and condition of the property. Newer homes often boast modern features and updated infrastructure, making them less prone to costly repairs. Insurance companies typically offer lower premiums for newer properties, making them an attractive option for your clients seeking to minimize insurance costs.

Similarly, the state of the roof plays a crucial role in determining insurance rates. Homes with recently replaced roofs are less susceptible to weather-related damage, leading to reduced insurance premiums. Advising your clients to prioritize properties with newer roofs can translate into significant long-term savings.

Location is another critical factor to consider, especially concerning flood insurance. Properties located in designated flood zones often require additional coverage, driving up insurance expenses. Steering your clients away from these high-risk areas can help lower their insurance costs and mitigate potential flood-related risks.

Additionally, properties with potential safety hazards or liabilities, such as ponds, farms, trampolines, or pools, can lead to higher insurance premiums. Recommending properties without these features not only reduces insurance costs but also minimizes the risk of accidents or liabilities for your clients.

Encourage your clients to maintain a healthy credit score, as it can impact insurance rates. Insurers often offer lower premiums to individuals with better credit histories, reflecting their perceived lower risk.

Moreover, prior insurance claims can influence future premiums. Minimizing prior claims and addressing any issues that may lead to future claims can help keep insurance costs in check.

Finally, cultivating relationships with reputable insurance agents can prove invaluable. These professionals can provide personalized guidance and identify additional discounts or coverage options tailored to your clients' needs, further optimizing their insurance savings.

By incorporating these strategies into your approach, you can empower your clients to make informed decisions that not only fulfill their homeownership dreams but also optimize their financial well-being through reduced insurance costs. As a realtor, guiding your clients toward properties that align with these criteria ensures their long-term satisfaction and peace of mind.



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# TK GROUP

▶ rising star

Photos by Ace Sylvester



Tyler Vallot



**How many years have you been a realtor?** 2.5 years

**What is your career volume as a realtor?** \$10.8 Million

**What was your total volume last year?** \$5, 062,525.00

**What awards have you achieved as a realtor?** Top Producer, Top Standard Team in Louisiana EXP, Top 20 in EXP Louisiana

**When did you start your career in real estate?**

I started my career in real estate in 2021 when rates were under 3%. This was a very different time than what we are experiencing now, but I have learned SO much since the shift!

**What did you do before you became a realtor?**

Before real estate, I did multiple sales positions. Right before, I was an area distributor for a company called Hyla for 4 years. It is extremely similar to Rainbow... It was still vacuums and I sold the heck out of those. I got promoted to open my own location in Lake Charles, LA.

30 days after moving to Lake Charles, Hurricane Laura hit and forced me to move to Baton Rouge, LA and start again. Soon after that, I realized that I was not happy at all. My girlfriend noticed I was miserable every day and told me, "You know if you don't want to do this, you don't have to, right?" That one simple question was what I needed to hear. I knew I needed to make the transition to something I felt

could support my family for the rest of my life and it had to be something that I would truly enjoy: Real Estate!

**What are you passionate about right now in your business?**

I have to admit, what I am most passionate about right now in my business is first-time home buyers & helping other agents succeed. These two pull at my heart strings everyday and make me feel like what I do is not even a job. Selling is in my blood, but real estate makes it super sweet because of the bonds I've gained with so many amazing residents in Lafayette.

**What has been the most rewarding part of your business?**

The most rewarding part of my business is the REFERRALS! It is one thing to sell a home to one person, but when they refer their most prized loved ones to use us, it is the biggest compliment in this business. Never did we think that we would have a referral-based business this early on, but we are so incredibly thankful for the residents, friends, and family that continue to trust us every single day!

**What was your biggest challenge as a realtor?**

I would say my biggest challenge as a realtor is having to take the emotions out of it. I believe I am an empath and sometimes I take on my clients problems as my own. It's a blessing and a curse. Learning to disconnect at the end of the day has been a huge learning curve for us, but it gets better every day!

**How does real estate fit into your dreams and goals?**

Real Estate fits into my dreams and goals by allowing me to get into the investment side of real estate, but learn the ins and outs of the business before investing money into the industry. It's always something I've wanted to get into but did not know where to start. I now have the understanding I need to move forward. (I hope lol)

**What's your favorite part of being a realtor?**

My favorite part about being a realtor is seeing the look on my client's faces when they finally achieve their goals. Whether it's investments or their primary residence, it never gets old. I did not realize the impact that I was going to make on people's lives by negotiating these deals

and securing homes, but it never ever gets old.

**Define success.**

Success to me means leaving an impact on this world that changes generations to come. My definition of success is HUGE because of how large my goals are. I have plans to do really big things in this industry GLOBALLY. Our current organization is home to 33 agents across the United States and we do not plan on stopping any time soon. The value that we provide to these agents have made massive shifts in their lives and businesses. I wouldn't have it any other way.

**Tell us about your family.**

My family is my everything. They are why I am who I am. My immediate family is my beautiful girlfriend & soul-mate, Teagan,



“

BEING IN REAL ESTATE IS SO MUCH MORE THAN THE COMMISSIONS. IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE & CHANGE PEOPLE'S LIVES IN SO MANY WAYS!

”



who inspires me every day to live a life true to myself. We have one yorkie fur baby together named Cruz. I am also extremely grateful for my mom, dad, and triplet brothers who are my biggest supporters in every single journey I drag them on. Yes, TRIPLET brothers who are all 24 years old. No, they do not all look alike.

**Favorite books?**

My favorite book of all time is Rich Dad Poor Dad. That book changed my life.

**What are your hobbies and interests outside of the business?**

I am a travel fanatic! My number one hobby would definitely be traveling and planning a trip to travel. I'm always thinking of the next place that I can travel to. I want to see as much of the world as I can before my exit. Favorite places so far: Ochos Rios, Jamaica and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

**Given your status and expertise, what is some advice you would give the up-and-coming top producer?**

Some advice to the up and coming Top Producer would be to stay the course. No matter how rough it gets and how long it gets between closings, continue to do the activities and DON'T GIVE UP. If you take care of your business, it will take care of you. Always think, if I was my employee would I fire me? Last tip: It's ALL in the follow up... even 8 months later.

**In closing, is there anything else you would like to communicate using this Acadiana Real Producer platform?**

I'd like to thank Acadiana Real Producers for having me in this issue. I'd like to thank The TK Group and The TK Organization for continuing to trust us to lead you to success. You guys have no idea what you do for me.

Kate Mouton



**How many years have you been a realtor?** We have been licensed for 2 1/2 years

**What is your career volume as a realtor?** \$10.95M

**What was your total volume last year?** \$5,062,525

**What awards have you achieved as a realtor?** #2 Top Producer in eXp Acadiana - February 2024 #5 Top Producers in Louisiana at eXp - February 2024

**When did you start your career in real estate?** I started my career in real estate in October 2021.

**What did you do before you became a realtor?** I was working at a local Compounding pharmacy in the Accounting Department for 3 years prior to real estate.

**What are you passionate about right now in your business?** I am passionate about building out a system to support

our agents all over the country! We now have agents in our organization in 5 different states, so I've been loving working closely with them on what they need and creating a system around it for everyone!

**What has been the most rewarding part of your business?** The most rewarding part is being able to help people with whatever real estate needs they have. Whether it's a buyer, seller, or agent - real estate has allowed me to lean into my love for helping people and assist people in reaching those goals!

**What was your biggest challenge as a realtor?** My biggest challenge has been a work-life balance. I truly LOVE everything that I do, and I tend to be a raging workaholic if I'm not intentional about taking time for myself. I realized recently that I need to be my best self personally, to be able to put my all for my clients and agents... so we're working on it!

**How does real estate fit into your dreams and goals?** Real Estate fits my dreams and goals in every way. I didn't know what I wanted to do as my career for so long! All I knew is that I wanted to be able to work as hard as I wanted, and be compensated accordingly. Building systems and running my own business was definitely my dream even though it took me a while to realize it.

**What's your favorite part of being a realtor?** This may sound cheesy, but my favorite part is making the buying and selling process as smooth as possible for our clients. This is the biggest transaction most people will make in their entire lives... so being able to walk them through that is SO rewarding!

**Define success.** I truly believe success is relative & different for everyone. For some people it could be a dollar amount saved, reaching a certain level of sales volume in their business, or having the freedom to spend more time with their families. For me, success is reaching financial freedom and being able to live life without limitations.

**Tell us about your family.** I come from a family of small business owners/entrepreneurs. My parents have owned a local office and janitorial supply company, Hi Tech Office Products, for almost 40 years! Needless to say this is where my work ethic comes from. I also have a younger sister, who is my absolute best friend. I keep telling her the day she turns 18, she's getting her real estate license so we can work together forever!

**Are there any charities or organizations you support?** I have always had a soft spot for the Foster the Love organization, who supports the local Louisiana foster system.

**What are your hobbies and interests outside of the business?** As I stated earlier, my hobbies and interests at this moment is all things real estate (oops). I also love to workout and spend time with my family!

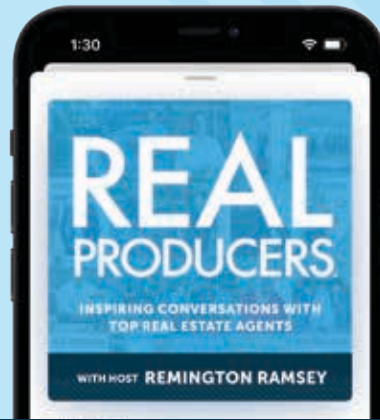
**Given your status and expertise, what is some advice you would give the up-and-coming top producer?** Stay genuine and be nice to everyone - no matter the circumstances. I promise you this goes SO far in this industry. You would be surprised how much business and opportunities will come if you stay true to yourself and treat everyone with respect!

**In closing, is there anything else you would like to communicate using this Acadiana Real Producer platform?** Being in real estate is SO much more than the commissions. It is an opportunity to make a difference and change people's lives in so many ways! The responsibility that we hold as Realtors is not something to take lightly and needs to be talked about more. Be genuine. Be kind. Go above and beyond always. Do extra things even when it may be working for free. The business will come and you will be rewarded for continuing to be a good person and spreading positivity. There are so many negative and horrible things happening in our world... you never know when being a positive light or breath of fresh air for someone could give them the push they need to keep going!



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# CHRIS SOILEAU

CULTIVATING FAMILY



▶▶ cover story

By Jordan Iverstine Photos by Ace Sylvester

**F**rom the very beginning of his journey, Chris Soileau has had the desire to cultivate family at the heart of everything he does. As the youngest in a Catholic family of 6, Soileau understood at a young age the power of community and home. Once he graduated high school, Soileau decided to pursue priesthood at the Catholic Seminary in Covington, Louisiana to learn how to better connect his family's differing religious views together. "I felt a very strong call to connect my family together, and I always liked the idea of service."

Here, Soileau was given his first taste of independence from his large family. Like most, this life after college was a groundbreaking experience, leading Soileau to fall in love with the pursuit of knowledge. "At St. Bens, we had a very strict schedule. It was all guys," he notes, "and we would wake up at 6am, have morning prayer, followed by community breakfast, classes, noon mass, community lunch, more classes, evening prayer, dinner and night prayer. It had lots of structure and I loved it."

After a year and a half, however, Soileau realized he needed to experience his formation in the world, and switched gears to pursue a degree at the University of Louisiana in Lafayette, studying Kinesiology. With the intent of getting a degree in Physical Therapy but having no financial support from his parents, he was resolved to put himself through college with his earnings from two jobs, one in food service and one at a physical therapy clinic.





“

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A few semesters passed and life was going well, but Soileau was growing restless. He enjoyed learning and the experiences of college, but he was growing weary of the food industry and wanted to pursue something real. “I ended up taking a year off of school, and connecting with one of our patients at the PT clinic I worked at,” he explains, “He was Catholic and a real estate investor. I made a connection and I got really interested in real estate. I begged him for a job, and while he told me no, his business partner overheard us. Eventually he called me and offered me a job as a property manager.”

Soileau decided to take advantage of this prosperous opportunity and

changed direction. “Out of school, I quit my job in the food industry, and began managing 110 rental properties for this man for the next two years. I never thought I would end up in real estate... I never wanted to because I thought everyone and their mom was an agent. However, Property management was something different. I absolutely loved it,” he says, laughing. While beginning to learn the industry, Soileau immersed himself into all aspects of real estate, including the buyer’s side. “I learned so much, during that time, I bought a house and flipped it, then bought my first rental property in my second year doing that,” he relates.

Soon after, Soileau was approached by his current brokerage, ReHive, and after a few years of working for them part-time, he made the plunge and sealed his career path by signing on with them full-time.

Now, Soileau wears several different hats in the real estate industry, from landlord, to real estate agent, working primarily with builders. “While I do represent buyers, 70% of my clients are sellers, particularly in new construction. I have a lot of relationships with builders around town,” he notes, “As one of ReHive’s few agents, and because we are a smaller brokerage, I have the freedom and the ability to be flexible for builders. I can be flexible with pricing because



we don’t have this huge corporate ladder to climb for approval. Because of this, I’ve made a ton of deals with builders in the area, and as a result, we have a bigger volume of clients.”

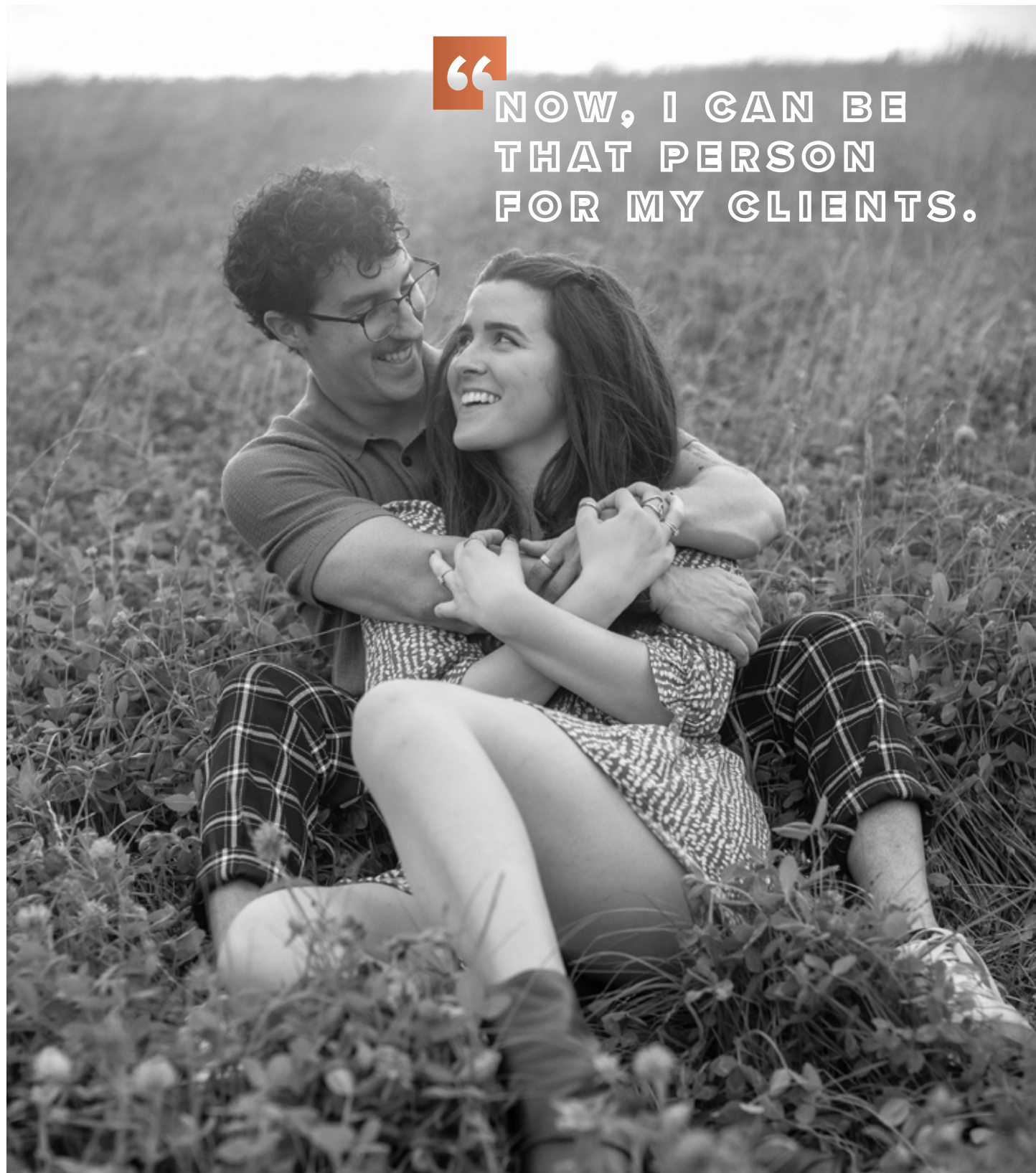
As an agent who has always been focused on helping his clients find community, his number one priority is building relationships and putting himself in his client’s shoes. “I do pride myself in getting to know my clients. I get unique closing gifts for each one, making sure it’s super personal, like UL tickets or an adult Lego set,” he relates. In 2018, Soileau reconnected with a woman he met in high school, Makenna. “I met my fiancé my junior year of high school at a Catholic conference in Covington, Louisiana, on the grounds of the Seminary actually. After high school, of course, I decided to follow a call towards the catholic priesthood,” he states. Unable to pursue this relationship, Soileau lost touch with her until four years later. At this point, Makenna had become an established artist in the Southern Louisiana scene.

The two got engaged in 2023 and plan on getting married in Banff, Canada this September. “She is my inspiration to be more creative. I may not be a painter, but there are so many ways to be involved in Real Estate, it brings out my creativity!” he relates.

Though Soileau did not start out searching to be a real estate agent, his career path makes sense with his original intent. “The reason I was attracted to



“NOW, I CAN BE THAT PERSON FOR MY CLIENTS.”



the priesthood was because when someone needs a priest, they pick up the phone no matter what day or time it is. They are always available to the people. They leave in the middle of the night

to go on hospital calls,” he notes, “and now, I can be that person for my clients.” As an agent, Soileau has the ability to bring countless families together, whether that’s helping his clients build beautiful houses or

directly helping families find their perfect home, he gets to pursue his passion of bringing people together every single day.

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# M A N U E L B U I L D E R S



Greg & Missy Manuel - Owners

## THE MEANING OF HOME

By Jordan Iverstine

IF YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES AND SOMEONE MENTIONS THE WORD “HOME”, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF? MAYBE YOU PICTURE YOUR CHILDHOOD HOME, WITH HAZY MEMORIES OF YOUR FAMILY, RUNNING AROUND THE HOUSE ON CHRISTMAS MORNING. OR PERHAPS IT IS THE FIRST HOUSE YOU EVER BOUGHT, ATTACHED TO IT THE SENSE OF PRIDE YOU FELT WHEN HOLDING THE KEY FOR THE FIRST TIME. NO MATTER WHAT YOU PICTURE, A DORM ROOM AT COLLEGE, A VACATION HOME IN THE MOUNTAINS, OR YOUR BEST FRIEND’S LIVING ROOM, THEY ALL TAKE PLACE IN THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF A WELL BUILT HOME. MANUEL BUILDERS, A HOME CONSTRUCTION COMPANY CENTERED IN SOUTH LOUISIANA AND NOW IN THE GREATER HOUSTON AREA OF TEXAS, UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE THAT A HOME HOLDS IN A PERSON’S LIFE, FROM THE FORMATIVE YEARS TO THE GOLDEN ONES. THIS HOMEOWNER-FOCUSED BUSINESS EVEN HAS ITS BEGINNINGS WHERE ALL HOMES SHOULD: IN FAMILY.

In 1959, Sylvan Manuel, the founder of the company and Greg Manuel’s father, launched a residential construction company in Lafayette that provided buyers with the ability to be intimately involved in the building and customization of their future home. Greg began learning the trade with his dad at the age of 13 in various phases of the process until he left for the military. In 1979, Greg returned from the military and rejoined his father in the business. He and Sylvan prospered by working with clients to create a place they could raise their children and be forever homes. At this point, they worked by building completed homes and then transporting them to the site. In 1986 Sylvan retired and Greg took on the family business. At this point, he decided to expand the plan inventory and geographical coverage while abandoning the concept of moving completed houses. Instead, they would work with buyers to find the preferred location, then construct the home on the land itself. With

this refresh in process and owner, this was also the time when the company got its current name - Manuel Builders.

As it continued to prosper into the 21st century, Manuel Builders expanded into 16 parishes and by 2011 the company continued to grow astronomically, multiplying clients through referrals and word of mouth. By the end of 2021, Manuel Builders celebrated a new office space and design center in Lafayette to further grow the customer experience.

Manuel Builders has a long history of family-backed excellence, which has helped to cultivate their perspective on the importance of the home. “A home is such an impactful piece of someone’s core,” says Allison Babin, Manuel Builders’ director of marketing. “We all deserve a space to do life and make memories. Homes leave a mark, especially during formative years and we are honored to be a part of creating those spaces.”





**WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON BEING A  
GREAT PLACE TO WORK AND A GREAT  
PLACE TO DO BUSINESS.**

Manuel Builders understands that the house is what receives you at the end of the day, so everything from the wood of the floors under your feet, to the shingles on the roof over your head need to be comforting and inviting. “We envision a world where “home” becomes more than a space — it’s a sanctuary of love and pride, a cradle of connection and enrichment,” she states. Babin also emphasizes that their commitment to their clients’ happiness is made possible by the solid foundation of trust in the office. “We face challenges every day from all aspects of the business. From initial client experiences that fall short, to build delays and material shortages, we know that problems will arise. It’s what we do with the obstacles that matters,” she states, “We rely on coming together as a team to solve issues. We lean into conflict with the perspective that conflict is an opportunity for us to solve a problem and grow together.”

This cooperation in the office is cultivated and encouraged through the strong leadership of Greg and Missy Manuel. “They are adamant that they

invest in the people that work for this company and that extends past the time spent at the office. We work hard to have a great culture and rally around our core values. We pride ourselves on being a great place to work and a great place to do business,” Babin says.

Through this resolve to overcome anything that may arise, Manuel Builders has developed a trust with their clients that has made them one of the most successful home construction companies in Southern Louisiana. “We are launching new communities in 2024 all across Acadiana as well as increasing the number of homes that we are building on people’s own property,” she says proudly. “We have had an increase in focus on customer experience and we’ve seen improved survey scores from that focus as well.”

Whatever type of home you are looking to build, Manuel Builders will make sure to create a home you and your family will enjoy because, with them, family is at the center of it all.



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