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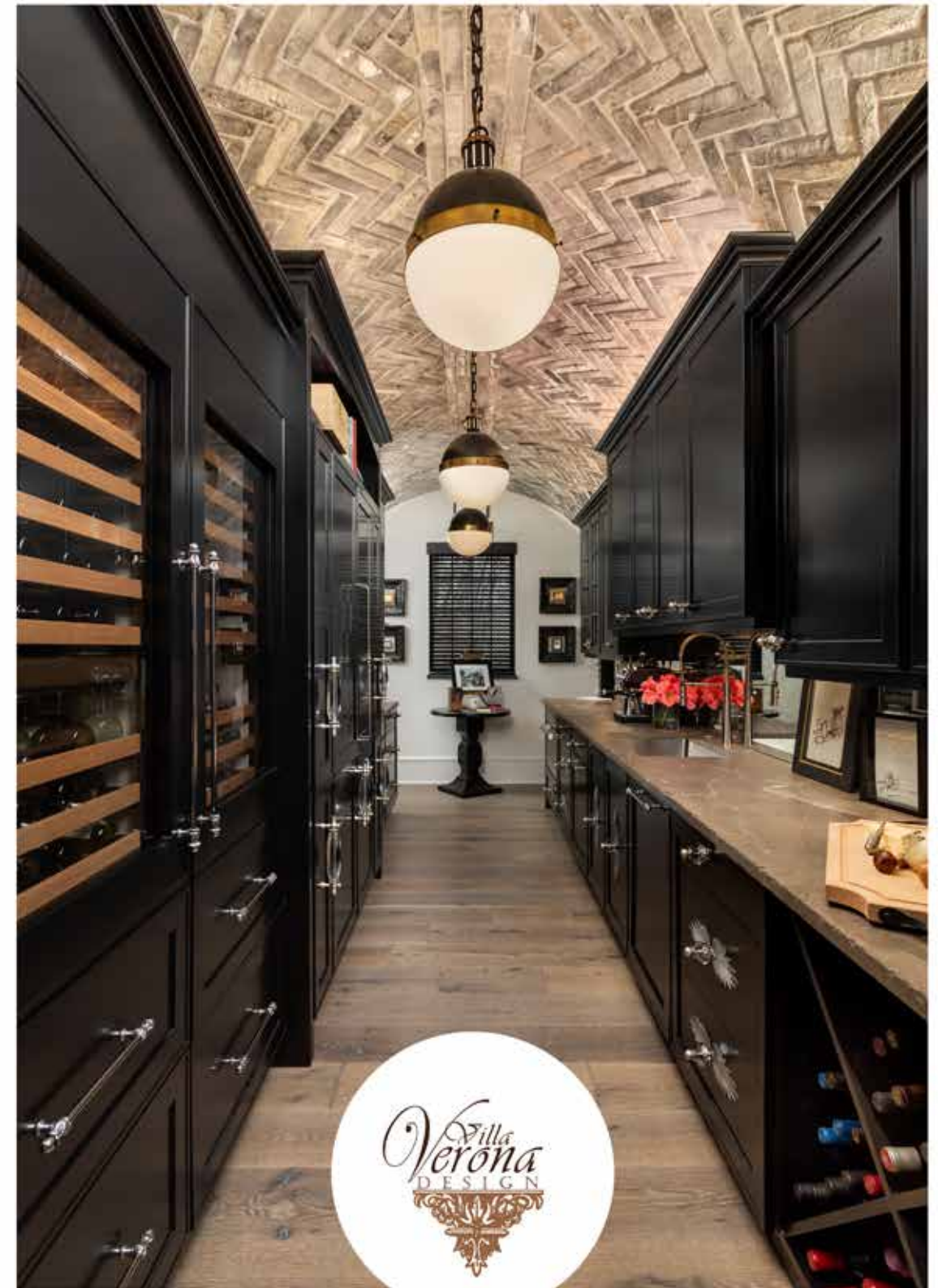
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**12**  
Publisher's Note:  
June



**14**  
Preferred Partner:  
Wizard Washer



**18**  
Top Producer:  
Brian O'Neill



**24**  
Cover Story:  
Patrick Toates



**30**  
Celebrating Leaders:  
Claude Turpin



**36**  
Event Coverage:  
Celebrating Excellence

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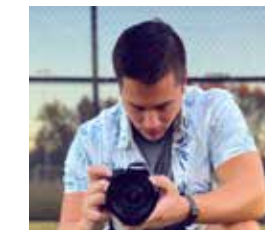
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## ► publisher's note

### CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN REAL ESTATE AND FATHERHOOD

By Robert Smith, Area Director/Publisher

#### Dear Upstate Real Producers,

As June dawns upon us, we embark on a journey of celebration and inspiration within the pages of *Upstate Real Producers Magazine*. This month, we pay homage to the pillars of our communities – fathers – while also spotlighting the remarkable achievements and contributions of our esteemed real estate professionals and partners.

#### Cover Feature Realtor: A Beacon of Excellence

On our cover, we proudly present a distinguished realtor whose journey exemplifies the essence of excellence in our industry. Their unwavering commitment to their craft, coupled with a steadfast dedication to client satisfaction, has propelled them to the summit of success. Join us as we delve into their story, uncovering the insights and strategies that have defined their path to greatness.

#### Top Producer: Setting the Standard

Within these pages, you'll discover the story of a top producer whose stellar performance and unparalleled expertise have set a new standard of excellence in real estate. Their achievements serve as a testament to the power of passion, perseverance, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. Prepare to be inspired by their triumphs and motivated by their unwavering commitment to success.

#### Celebrating Leader: Guiding the Way

In our feature highlighting leaders within the industry,

we shine a spotlight on this individual who not only excel in their professional endeavors but also serve as beacons of inspiration and guidance to their peers. Through their visionary leadership and commitment to innovation, they continue to shape the future of real estate, inspiring others to reach new heights of success.

#### An Amazing Preferred Partner: Powering Success

Last but certainly not least, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to our amazing preferred partner, whose unwavering support and expertise are integral to the success of our readers and the industry as a whole. Their commitment to excellence and dedication to providing best-in-class solutions are instrumental in empowering real estate professionals to thrive in today's competitive landscape.

As we celebrate Father's Day and honor the remarkable achievements of our featured realtors, leaders, and partners, let us also reflect on the profound impact of fatherhood – a beacon of strength, love, and guidance in our lives.

We invite you to immerse yourself in the stories of inspiration and excellence that await within these pages. May they ignite your passion, fuel your determination, and inspire you to reach new heights of success in your own journey.



Warm regards,

**ROBERT SMITH**  
Publisher, *Upstate Real Producers Magazine*

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# WIZARD WASHER

## NICKOLAS ZUKOWSKI

▶▶ preferred partner spotlight

Photos By: Tres Dabney  
(True North Productions)  
Written By: Amy Porter

### WIZARD WASHER

Meet Nickolas Zukowski, the dynamic force behind Wizard Washer, an exterior cleaning business located in the heart of Greer, SC. With a penchant for adventure and a commitment to community, Nickolas brings a fresh perspective to the world of home maintenance.

### ABOUT NICKOLAS:

Nickolas Zukowski isn't your average entrepreneur. Hailing from Rockford, Illinois, Nickolas found his home in Greenville in 2003. An avid outdoor enthusiast, he spends his free time exploring the great outdoors with his family, indulging in pickleball

tournaments, and discovering hidden culinary gems in the area.

One of Nickolas's greatest passions outside of work is pickleball. He's not just a casual player; he's a fierce competitor who thrives on the adrenaline rush of tournament play. Whether he's strategizing his next move on the court or honing his skills during practice sessions, pickleball serves as both a source of recreation and a way to stay active and fit.

### THE BIRTH OF WIZARD WASHER:

Wizard Washer wasn't just born out of necessity; it was inspired by a moment of magic. During a routine

house wash, a client remarked, "it's like magic." Nickolas seized upon this comment and transformed it into the guiding ethos of his business. Since its inception in October 2022, Wizard Washer has become synonymous with quality and reliability in the exterior cleaning industry.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

For Nickolas, Wizard Washer is more than just a business; it's a platform for giving back to the community. From pro-bono projects for nonprofits to charitable donations, Nickolas and his team are committed to making a positive impact. Whether it's volunteering at local soup kitchens or

supporting church initiatives, Wizard Washer is deeply entrenched in the fabric of the community.

### CLIENT-CENTRIC APPROACH:

What sets Wizard Washer apart is its unwavering focus on people. Nickolas believes in building genuine connections with his clients, going the extra mile to ensure their satisfaction. Whether it's sharing a post-service chat or lending a sympathetic ear, Wizard Washer prioritizes the human touch in every interaction.

### SERVICES OFFERED:

Wizard Washer specializes in a comprehensive range of exterior cleaning services tailored to meet the unique needs of each client. From roof washes to gutter cleaning, house washing, pressure washing, and window cleaning, Wizard Washer delivers top-notch results that enhance the beauty and longevity of residential properties. Whether clients require a thorough roof inspection or a meticulous window

cleaning, Nickolas and his team are committed to exceeding expectations with their attention to detail and dedication to quality craftsmanship.

### ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESS AND UNIQUE BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY:

Nickolas attributes the success of Wizard Washer to his upbringing and values. Raised to be a relational person, he goes above and beyond to foster meaningful connections with his clients. In a world where transactions often lack personal touch, Nickolas stands out by carrying a lawn chair to jobs, ensuring he can sit and converse with clients after the work is done. His aim is not merely to complete a job and collect payment but to leave a lasting impression and build relationships. Wizard Washer's uniqueness lies not only in its whimsical name but also in its people-centric approach. Nickolas and his team believe that "People are precious," a motto that permeates every aspect of their

business. Whether staying late to discuss personal matters unrelated to the job or simply offering a listening ear, Wizard Washer prioritizes the human connection above all else.

### FAVORITE CLIENT STORY AND DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

One of Nickolas's favorite client stories exemplifies the essence of Wizard Washer's philosophy. A client who initially hired him for window and gutter cleaning became more than just a customer; they became friends. Nickolas still contacts this client regularly to check in and catch up, showcasing his commitment to building genuine relationships beyond business transactions. For Nickolas, success isn't just about financial achievements; it's about making a positive impact on people's lives. Whether it's bringing a smile to someone's face or







## PEOPLE ARE PRECIOUS.

landing a significant contract, success is measured by the quality of relationships formed, the excellence of work delivered, and the honor accorded to those around him. When you choose Wizard Washer, you're not just hiring a contractor; you're partnering with someone who prioritizes laughter, smiles, and building lasting connections beyond the confines of your home.

### SUCCESS AND VISION:

Success, for Nickolas, is about more than just financial gain; it's about leaving a lasting legacy. His favorite quote by James Cameron, "If you set your goals ridiculously high and it's a failure, you will fail above everyone else's success," embodies his commitment to excellence. With Wizard Washer, Nickolas aims to redefine industry standards and set new benchmarks for service and community engagement.

### CONCLUSION:

In a world filled with impersonal transactions, Wizard Washer stands out as a beacon of integrity and compassion. With Nickolas Zukowski at the helm, Wizard Washer isn't just a cleaning service; it's a trusted partner dedicated to brightening lives, one wash at a time.

### Contact Information:

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▶▶ top producer

# UNVEILING SUCCESS

*The Journey of*  
**BRIAN O'NEILL**  
*in Real Estate*

Photos By: Carolina House Shots  
Written By: Amy Porter



In the bustling world of real estate, where success is often measured by dedication, persistence, and adaptability, Brian O'Neill stands out as a shining example of triumph against the odds. A retired firefighter from the City of Greenville FD, Brian's journey into the realm of real estate was initially fueled by the need for a supplementary income. However, what began as a part-time endeavor soon transformed into a full-fledged career, prompting Brian to bid farewell to his firefighting days and embrace the challenges and opportunities of the real estate industry.

Brian's career trajectory is a testament to his unwavering determination and commitment to excellence. Starting his journey at Wilkinson ERA in Greenville back in June 2016, Brian quickly made his mark in the industry. After honing his skills and expanding his network, he transitioned to BHHS C Dan Joyner for a brief period before finding his home at eXp Realty, where he has flourished as an independent agent. Throughout his career, Brian has remained steadfast in his pursuit of professional growth and success, leveraging his blunt nature and persistence to navigate the complexities of the real estate market.

With a career volume totaling \$7,294,473 and a remarkable total volume of \$9,259,757.50 in the previous year, Brian's achievements speak volumes about his prowess as a Realtor. However, behind these impressive figures lies a story of mentorship and resilience. Wally Bressler, Brian's coach for the past four years, has played a pivotal role in shaping his career, instilling in him the values of consistency and growth. Overcoming challenges has been a defining aspect of Brian's journey, from setting expectations with clients to learning to trust the process. Through perseverance and a relentless pursuit of excellence, Brian has emerged stronger and more resilient than ever before.

Beyond his professional endeavors, Brian is deeply passionate about giving back to his community. His brainchild, Upstate SC Heroes™, is a testament to his commitment to serving those in need. Through this program, Brian has given back to qualified clients to the



tune of \$37,000 since its inception, embodying the spirit of compassion and generosity.

For Brian, the most rewarding aspect of his business extends far beyond financial success. It lies in the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of his clients and community. Whether it's helping families find their dream homes or supporting local heroes through his philanthropic efforts, Brian's dedication knows no bounds.

Outside of his professional endeavors, Brian cherishes the time spent with his family. Married to his wife Breean for over eight years, Brian is a devoted husband and father to their two children, Tatum and Titus. Together, they enjoy attending church regularly on Sunday's at Fellowship Greenville and relish the simple joys of family dinners and shared experiences.

In his leisure time, Brian finds solace in his hobbies, which include working out with his wife, cheering for the Chicago



Cubs, indulging in BBQ delights, watching The Office, and exploring his love for lifted trucks and golfing. Defined by his passion for life and unwavering commitment to excellence, Brian embodies the true essence of success.

Proudly, Brian has also carved out a distinctive brand identity as “The Tattooed Agent®”. This trademark, a badge of honor representing his unique personality and professional approach, is a testament to Brian’s creativity and innovation in the real estate industry.

As he reflects on his journey, Brian’s definition of success transcends mere professional achievements. It encompasses the fulfillment of personal goals, the nurturing of meaningful relationships, and the pursuit of happiness in all aspects of life. He is guided by the philosophy of playing by the rules while embracing ferocity—a mantra that has propelled him to great heights in both his personal and professional endeavors.

In sharing his insights and advice for aspiring top producers, Brian emphasizes the importance of continuous education, effective communication, building strong networks, providing exceptional service, embracing technology, fostering trust, and cultivating resilience. These principles, rooted in Brian’s own experiences, serve as guiding beacons for those navigating the complexities of the real estate industry.

Ultimately, if there is one thing Brian hopes to be remembered for, it is not just his professional achievements but his role as a provider for his family. His greatest legacy lies in being a devoted husband, a loving father, and a compassionate human being—an epitome of success in its truest form.

In the words of his favorite quote by Phil Knight, “Play by the rules, but be ferocious.” Brian O’Neill exemplifies this ethos in every facet of his life, inspiring others to pursue their dreams with unwavering tenacity and unbridled passion.

**“PLAY BY THE RULES, BUT BE FEROCIOUS.”**

-PHIL KNIGHT



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Finding a good, reliable contractor that I can count on is important in my business because the referral to my clients reflects on me personally. I am always confident when I pass along the contact for Owners Choice to my clients.



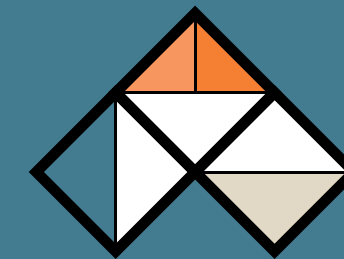
I have had great experiences with Owners Choice Construction. They are professional and responsive. Yes, you read that right. A construction company that is professional and responsive is like finding sasquatch. These guys are great and their work is quality. I'm a real estate agent and I recommend them to all of my clients for repairs or renovations.



The crew at Owner's Choice is amazing!!! They show up on time, are diligent and communicate wonderfully. As a real estate agent, I appreciate their willingness to get repairs completed quickly, efficiently and also they guarantee their work! They are professional with my buyers/ sellers and I honestly don't know what I would do without them!



**In real estate, we know that a referral from a trusted friend is everything.**



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I'm a Real Estate Broker, and I've recommended Owners Choice for repair lists on multiple occasions over the years. In my experience, they are responsive, their estimates look professional and are detailed and itemized, and they stand behind their work!



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Ben and the entire Owner's Choice team have given myself and our team professional great service over and over. As an agent, I know when Owner's Choice does the repair, it is done right!



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# PATRICK TOATES

Photos By: Tres Dabney (True North Productions) | Written By: Patrick and Anna Toates

The year is 1996, and 10-year-old Patrick is in the back of Dad's green Suburban overhearing him on the Motorola bag phone counseling a client on how much to offer for a home. He tagged along with his dad – Tim Toates – to put out signs for his open house while secretly hoping the trip would include a stop at Taco Casa for his favorite lunch.

25 years later, and while some things have changed (like the interest rates and home prices) others have not. You can still find Patrick riding along with Tim – albeit now in the front seat – and will likely find them at Taco Casa on any given day.

Real estate, Patrick discovered, is in his genes.

After earning a B.S. in Health Science from Clemson University, Patrick quickly realized his “dream job” of being a Dentist wasn't what wanted after all. He jumped into corporate America like his friends and even moonlighted as the Zamboni driver at The Pavilion Ice Rink. Still, he felt the pull of what had been there all along.

After finally dipping a toe into the family business, Patrick knew it was right where he needed to be. The years of observation and overheard conversations between his Realtor parents had, without him even knowing it, deeply embedded a desire to serve clients well, without the fuss, in his own unique style.

For Patrick, being a successful Realtor isn't just about closing deals; it's about embodying values that resonate with both clients and colleagues alike. His clients describe him as reliable, genuinely kind, and personally invested in giving advice that makes a difference. He's rarely the loudest voice in the room, but when he speaks, you lean in to listen. And notably, other agents would describe Patrick the same way. Patrick has noticed that the agents with true

“staying power” in the industry – whose reputations have withstood the decades of an industry that can push your resolve – are those who are consistently professional, communicate well, and are honest.



# REAL ESTATE IN THE TOATES HOUSEHOLD IS A FAMILY BUSINESS.

AND THOUGH IT LOOKS A LITTLE DIFFERENT THAN IT DID IN THE 90S, PATRICK IS EXCITED ABOUT WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON.



Patrick considers his father to be one of those seasoned and respected agents, and perhaps it's the motivation for his desire to stand out in the real estate industry. Growing up in a family where real estate was not just a profession but a way of life, Patrick learned the importance of treating clients with the utmost care and respect. Tim's example of balancing zealous representation with kindness and integrity left a lasting impression on Patrick, shaping his approach to business and relationships. Despite coming from a "legacy" real estate family, Patrick has had to carve his own path in the industry. With no built-in referrals, he embraced the opportunity to create a book of business, distinguishing himself by his approachability and natural "know-how."

commitment to the value and importance of making sure everyone has a place to call home.

As Patrick drives around Greenville negotiating deals and putting out signs, he now has his own back-seat passengers, Shepherd (5) and Eli (2). While he sharpens his negotiation skills with them: bartering a

few minutes of quiet for a Taco Casa trip, he secretly hopes they glean something positive from his example. As a father, his aim is not just to be a Realtor his children will admire, but to show his boys what it looks like to be a Dad who's wholeheartedly involved, mostly patient, and always compassionate.

Patrick is married to Annah Toates, his wife of nine years, who owns Toates Law Firm in Greenville. Their marriage provides a unique dynamic allowing

them to learn from each other at home and in the industry. Having Annah's legal perspective as a real estate attorney and her savvy real-time feedback has been an asset Patrick can share with his clients. In turn, Annah has seen what it's like for Realtors to face the practical implications of contract matters and the strain of endless weekend showings. Mutual appreciation, profound respect, patience on long days, and a teamwork mentality help these two thrive.

The Toates family is busy to say the least, most recently cheering on Shepherd at t-ball games while trying to keep little brother Eli (wielding his ball and bat) off the field. As true Greenvillians, they love the festivals and farmers' markets but also enjoy finding the roads less traveled for family adventures. Patrick and Annah are members of Thornblade Club, where the boys love to play golf and Annah dutifully drives the cart.

For Patrick, success isn't defined by sales figures or accolades; it's about the ability to manage his business while nurturing a happy and healthy family. His vision is to leave a legacy of integrity in the real estate industry but more importantly at home. Does Patrick love to hit his production goals? Sure! But the chief aim for him is to glorify God by doing his job the right way, putting his client's needs above his own, and being the best dad and husband he can be.

Real estate in the Toates household is a family business. And though it looks a little different than it did in the 90s, Patrick is excited about what's on the horizon.

If you haven't done a deal with Patrick, we'd encourage you to do so. Who knows, he may just end up being your best friend in real estate.



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# CLAUDE

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## THE BEST B.I.C. IN TOWN

Written By: Heather Spruill  
Photos By: Tres Dabney (True North Productions)

*With the support of his family and community, Claude Turpin manages to make dreams come true in the Upstate. From helping his many clients enter new chapters to instilling strong values and work ethics into new agents, this BIC knows how to handle any real estate venture.*

### A STUDENT & TEACHER IN REAL ESTATE

Before real estate, Claude was a volunteer firefighter and worked in the restaurant industry, retail, and at the mill. He knew his time at the mill wasn't meant to last forever, and after a conversation with a colleague, he decided to make a big move in a new direction.

In 2005, he earned his license and joined a small company called the Baron Agency.

Claude states, "I learned so much in my short time working there. Our BIC was a former college professor who also owned a real estate school, so every Tuesday and Thursday morning, no matter how much experience we had, he taught a class. Every week!"

By 2007, Claude was ready to take on more responsibility, so he moved to the number one team in the area: Xtreme Team with RE/MAX Foothills. There, he met an agent, Mama Y, who would show him how to be a strong leader and, as she would say, the correct way to sell real estate. Within a year, he had closed more contracts than ever before and helped many to find their dream homes.

"Shortly after the housing crisis of 2008 took place, Xtreme Team decided to no longer stay in business, making me a full-time RE/MAX agent, which cost a lot at that time, especially as a father of four. So, I decided to switch to Coldwell Banker Hugh Durham and Associates. While I worked there, I learned about REOs and land sales, which helped to further my career and knowledge during such a wavering time in real estate."

In 2012, Claude joined AgentOwned Foothills. With many years of development, he successfully learned how to juggle her personal and professional life. Then, in 2021, he was offered an opportunity for advancement: BIC of AgentOwned Realty Preferred Group - Anderson.





“I am in my Broker Era of life, and I love it! I still sell real estate to stay involved with the community and its developments, but I enjoy teaching the next up-and-coming real estate superstars.”

Seeing clients fulfill their goals and helping fellow agents reach their potential is the most rewarding part of Claude’s career. Becoming a part of someone’s story warms his heart and only pushes him to do more for his community.

#### SETTING THE STANDARD

During his time away from the office, Claude serves as a Master Mason, and his fraternity helps and supports many local organizations. He and his AgentOwned Realty team have donated to Anderson County’s AIM, a food pantry for those in need. They also contribute to The Lot Project, another organization that also helps feed and minister to those who have fallen on hard times. Claude and his wife, Andrea, sponsor many local charities in the surrounding area, such as First Responders, and go out of their way to find housing for veterans.

Claude is a fantastic broker and a devoted family man. With his wife of 24 years, he has been blessed to raise four beautiful children: Amber, Ansley, Aaron, and Addison. Along with their Labrador Retriever, Lucy, this family of six loves spending time together at the dinner table, where no technology is allowed. While breaking bread, they talk about everything and laugh about anything. They enjoy traveling to Disney World and family holiday traditions like watching Charlie Brown Thanksgiving, participating in Sibling Santa, and much more.

“ I AM IN MY  
BROKER ERA OF  
LIFE, AND I LOVE IT!

Claude’s business is to set others up for the best possible outcomes and opportunities. As a leader in this industry, he hopes to help others on the journey to becoming REALTORS.

Claude concludes, “Learning how to understand people is a true art in this business. Get from behind a screen and take the time to get to know them face-to-face. They will appreciate you, and you will come to appreciate it too.”



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# CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

## Recap of the Upstate Real Producers Choice Awards Event

Written By: Amy Porter



The first annual *Upstate Real Producers Choice Awards* held on Wednesday, March 20th, 2024, at the Zen in Greenville, SC, was a night to remember for the real estate community. From 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM, the event brought together top-performing agents from across the Upstate, along with preferred partners of the publication, for an evening of recognition, networking, and celebration.

to the festive ambiance, setting the stage for an unforgettable experience.

Central to the evening were the prestigious *Upstate Real Producers Choice Awards*, which were nominated and voted on by some of the top real estate agents in the Upstate. These awards recognized excellence in various categories, highlighting individuals and teams who have made significant contributions to the region's real estate market.

Located at 924 S Main St, the venue buzzed with excitement as attendees arrived dressed in their finest business attire, ready to honor the hard work and dedication exhibited throughout the year. The atmosphere was filled with anticipation as guests mingled and connected before the official ceremonies commenced.

As the winners were announced and applause filled the room, it was evident that each award represented a culmination of hard work, dedication, and expertise. From top producers to rising stars, the recipients of these accolades exemplified the highest standards of professionalism and service.

Throughout the evening, attendees were treated to a delightful spread of food and beverages, creating the perfect backdrop for conversations and camaraderie. The upbeat music added

In addition to celebrating the accomplishments of 2023, the event also served as a platform to build connections and foster relationships within the real estate community. By bringing

together like-minded individuals who share a passion for their industry, the *Upstate Real Producers Choice Awards* event not only honored excellence but also strengthened the bonds that drive continued success.

As the evening drew to a close, attendees left with a sense of pride in their achievements and excitement for the future of the Upstate's real estate market. The inaugural *Upstate Real Producers Choice Awards* event had set a high standard for excellence, promising even greater things to come in the years ahead.

In conclusion, the *Upstate Real Producers Choice Awards* event was a resounding success, bringing together the best and brightest in the region's real estate industry for an evening of celebration and recognition. With its focus on honoring excellence and fostering community, this event is sure to become a highlight of the Upstate's annual calendar for years to come.







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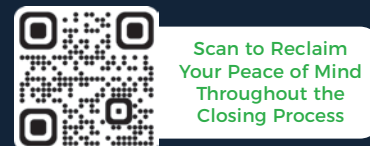


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