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PAGES 40-41

FEATURED REALTOR®

TANNER DEAN

SPOTLIGHT REALTOR®

ELIZABETH SIMMONS

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

LACIE WALTON & SONYA GARCIA
PEOPLES BANK

EDITION 67

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



08
Top Producers:
Gary & Morgan Gates




16
Featured REALTOR®:
Tanner Dean



22
Partner Spotlight:
Lacie Walton & Sonya Garcia, Peoples Bank



28
Spotlight REALTOR®:
Elizabeth Simmons



34
Letter from the President

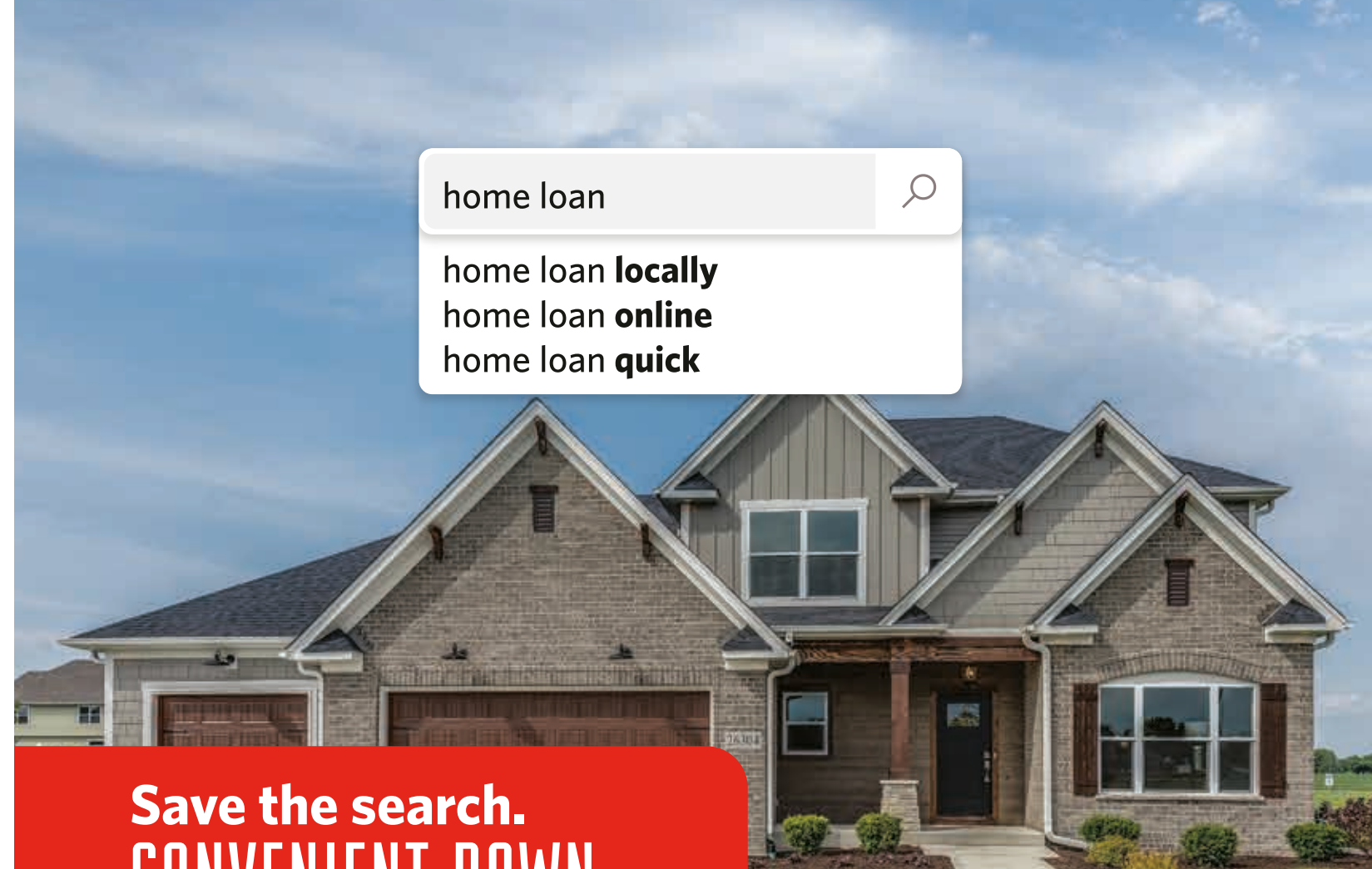


42
Meet the Lubbock Real Producers Team



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GARY & MORGAN GATES

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Gary and Morgan Gates' love story began in 2018 at a Keller Williams Young Professionals Group Texas Tech tailgate party. Morgan, a REALTOR® since 2012 and an Amarillo resident then, and Gary, a Lubbock native and REALTOR® since 2017, would begin dating and tie the knot in 2020. The new parents of a beautiful son, JW Gates, born September 9, 2023, are now a powerful force in the West Texas real estate landscape.

“What’s most fulfilling about our work is taking something stressful and making it as enjoyable as possible.”



Partnering with the Stacey Rogers Real Estate Group at Keller Williams Realty since 2017, Gary and Morgan’s Lubbock Living brand has allowed them to leverage their servant hearts to bless buyers, sellers and investors. In 2023, they helped 85 families buy and sell and closed an impressive \$30 million. With an ever-present dream of giving as much as possible, they aim to become a business that significantly gives to charities. “We’ve got a couple of big dreams, and I would love to start a non-profit baseball facility that trains underprivileged kids without cost barriers,” shares Gary, whose baseball background inspires him to channel his talents to benefit others.

Gary attended Wayland Baptist University to play baseball, earning a spot on the varsity squad. After graduating in 2008 and pursuing a brief stint in independent professional baseball, he moved to Boston, where he worked with a friend training athletes. Returning to Lubbock, he went on to grow as a regional manager of 14 Flat Wireless stores, earn a master’s degree from Texas Tech and flourish as a teacher and coach in the Lubbock school system. “During the school year of 2016-2017, I faced personal tragedy, losing three close friends to drunk driving incidents,” Gary reflects. “This period of loss and reflection led me to reassess my life and career path. Despite feeling comfortable in my

teaching and coaching roles, I felt a strong inner calling to pursue real estate.”

Relying on faith and support from his family, Gary sunk his teeth into real estate, and as his career was gaining momentum, he met Morgan. “Together, we have built a successful business rooted in serving our community and clients with dedication and integrity,” he says.

Morgan, a native of Denver, CO, came to Lubbock to attend Texas Tech and began working at a Keller Williams Lubbock brokerage as Director of First Impressions just as she earned her degree in accounting. Later, she moved to Amarillo and pursued a full-time real estate career, becoming a top producer leading a premier team. With a drive to serve in multiple capacities, in 2019, Morgan opened an all-women’s fitness center — Simply Fit in Amarillo — and poured herself into being a business owner and teaching classes. After moving back to Lubbock in 2020, Morgan continued to run Simply Fit, and by 2021, she was full-time in real estate as well. Morgan sold the business in 2022, and she is grateful that she and Gary have built Lubbock Living to be an authentic beacon of goodwill. “We bring our whole selves to our work, and we strive to embody integrity, hard work and compassion in everything we do,” she expresses.

Morgan and Gary are enthusiastic champions of Lubbock. “Lubbock holds a special place in our hearts because of



its unique real estate culture and the genuinely caring and supportive community,” they explain. “Unlike what some may perceive as a cutthroat market elsewhere, Lubbock fosters an environment of collaboration and encouragement among builders, lenders, agents and other professionals. We’ve forged deep connections with individuals from all walks of life, united by a shared goal of helping each other succeed.”

Looking to the future, this dynamic duo sees real estate as an opportunity to serve others on a larger scale. “During the past year, we both have felt led to look for opportunities to teach and help others,” they reveal, adding that they strive to consistently serve 100 families per year.” They also participate in the community. “We love to volunteer our time, and our biggest outreach right now is with the American Cancer Society and the Cattle Barron’s Ball in July,” Morgan notes.

Gary and Morgan do not hesitate to name the most rewarding parts of their work. “Taking something that is normally stressful for a family and making it as enjoyable as possible while celebrating the milestones,” they beam. “We also love the Stacey Rogers Real Estate Group and get to work with some of the best people in the business.”

Likewise, Gary and Morgan’s clients consider them the best in the business as they work to bring joy to the homebuying and selling processes by meeting at local spots like Lubbock Country Club,

Las Brisas, The Reserve and Asada Mexican Grill and crafting custom closing gifts. “We go to Hollyhocks or The Maj Boutique and then pair specialty items with a bottle of wine or Bourbon,” Morgan describes. “If clients have kiddos, we like to throw in some activity for them. We also have client events and always have gifts at these events. We try to celebrate their wins for years to come.” Morgan is an expert at creating meaningful experiences for others.

When they are not busy in real estate, Gary and Morgan enjoy spending time with sweet baby JW and their three dogs, Moose, Wrangler and Kane. They love to travel, attend sporting events, go golfing, play games with family and friends and entertain at home.

Morgan and Gary’s journey is a testament to the power of faith, perseverance and the transformative impact of love and dedication. As they continue to make a difference in real estate, one thing remains clear: The best is yet to come for this remarkable power couple.

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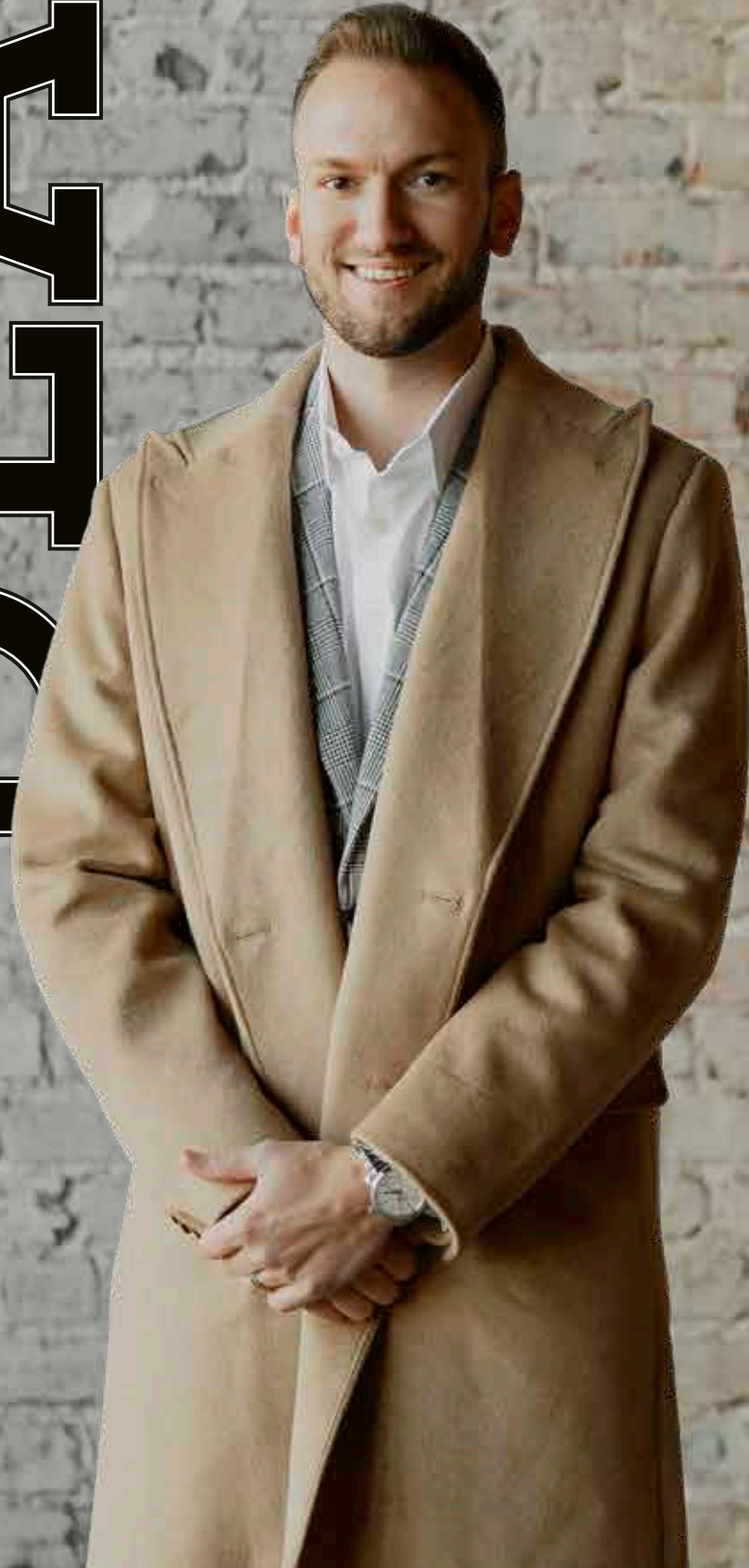
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TANNER DEAN

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Tanner Dean's arrival in real estate was years in the making. In 2017, Tanner lunched with Jason Ratliff, and the two discussed the real estate industry — the good, the bad and the exciting possibilities on the horizon. At the time, Tanner worked as a Cardinal's Sport Center manager. "I'll forever be grateful for that conversation," shares Tanner, who used Jason's insight and a conversation with his wife, Mackenzie, and ultimately decided to hold off on immediately pursuing real estate.



▲ featured REALTOR®

Story by Caroline Keisick
Photos by Rowdie Bright Photography (unless otherwise noted)

He went on to work on the software team at Primitive as a product owner. Then, in 2022, he decided to jump into real estate. "I held tightly to what Jason had told me five years before but also consulted with others like Doug Duncan, Tara Newton, Rex McKay, Ruben Trujillo, Seth and Chelsea Timmens and others," he says. "All in all, through these conversations, careful consideration and prayer, we decided to jump all in."

Ruben Trujillo and Tanner had previously worked together through different events and were both eager to seek new opportunities to lead and serve. They realized they enjoyed working together and shared many of the same core values. Together, their desire to care for clients and agents prompted them to start their own brokerage, Clear Rock Realty. With the remodel of their new downtown space, they are excited to create an environment to bring in more agents with similar values and beliefs.

Tanner is most passionate about the connections he's made beyond the closing table. One of his most cherished memories is from his second listing. The situation involved a difficult divorce, and vulnerability was pertinent to ensure that conversations were genuine and transparent. He boldly shared his personal experience in watching his parents go through divorce and, in doing so, built a greater connection with the client. "The ability to encourage her in the midst of her difficult circumstances was life-giving to her and me," Tanner explains. "It's important to remember that these relationships are way bigger than transactions or volume. As agents, we have a unique opportunity to walk alongside people where they are in life."

“ I like to spend time with my family, take vacations and create memories that we'll cherish for a long time. ”

Outside of work, Tanner values his family time. He and Mackenzie have been married for nearly eight years and share two daughters, Laken and Addison. "We love playing anything and everything with our kiddos and are amazed by their imaginations," he smiles. "I like to spend time with my family, take vacations and create memories that we'll cherish for a long time. I also like to play golf and take hunting trips, and I have even enjoyed the process of training for a triathlon."

I also like to play golf and take hunting trips, and I have even enjoyed the process of training for a triathlon. ”



Photo by Kindred Hymn Photography

In the future, Tanner hopes to continue to grow, but not just in the sense of sales. He hopes to grow in leadership, character and relationships with those he has the privilege to work with. He aims to uphold his distinctive characteristics of faith, authenticity, transparency and integrity. "When agents or clients get to work with me, my highest priority is to show them care," he expresses. "I show them care through the way I communicate, in being understanding of things that go sideways that are outside of either party's control or even the ability to set work aside for a second and encourage them in the bigger picture." Ultimately, Tanner wants his clients and colleagues to feel heard, valued and encouraged.

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Lacie *Walton* *and* Sonya *Garcia*

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▶▶ partner spotlight

Story by Jacki Donaldson

Photos by Rowdie Bright Photography (unless otherwise noted)

Sonya Garcia has worked in the mortgage industry from both buyers' and sellers' perspectives, and her experience has revealed a common thread that transcends every client experience: "People are people; they are not just transactions," she explains. As Vice President and Mortgage Operations Manager at Peoples Bank Home Loan Center, Sonya is grateful for a work culture that values individuals over numbers. Lacie Walton, Executive Vice President and Mortgage Department Manager, echoes Sonya's sentiments. "Peoples Bank is very family-oriented and truly cares about people," says Lacie, who has worked in lending for three decades and has been at Peoples Bank for 10 years.

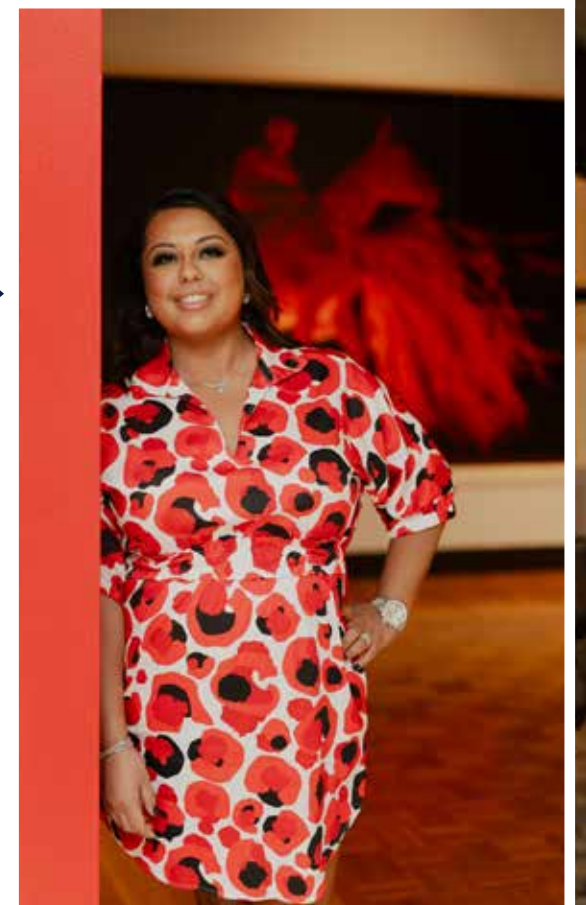
Sonya and Lacie, who had collaborated in business quite a bit throughout the years, joined forces after Sonya, who had worked for a law firm specializing in long-term care and estate planning and then in escrow for Western Title Company, took the opportunity to join Lacie's team. Together, they work with clients and referral partners to deliver a smooth transaction from start to finish. "Whether your clients are buying a first home or a fourth investment property, they all matter and deserve the same level of service," Sonya states. "Our goal is to make each REALTOR® and client happy at the end of the day."

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the lowest around and on-time, low-stress closings, the knowledgeable team is truly your partner in buying a home. Peoples Bank, with a strong understanding of the local economic landscape, also tailors its services to support the growth and development of the community.

Born in Lawton, OK, and a Lubbock native since she was 9, Lacie, who graduated from Frenship High School and Texas Tech University, offers some wise tips for real estate professionals. "Be persistent, kind, patient and smart," she advises. "I have been in this business for a long time, and these practices can truly set you apart from others and keep you successful."

Sonya, born and raised in Lubbock and living for a time abroad and in Austin to attend college, shares, "Be passionate about what you are doing and be persistent in that passion to serve others. Be authentic; authenticity is your greatest asset. Forge connections beyond the superficial and understand your clients' dreams and concerns. Embrace the setbacks; every 'no' is a lesson, and every challenge is an opportunity to grow."



Lacie, who would like to be remembered as someone who loved her career and was always kind, eager to help and available for others, enjoys spending her downtime with her husband, Mike, and their daughter, Carley. “We are blessed that most of our family lives here in Lubbock, so they keep us busy,” Lacie comments. “We also have two Goldendoodles and two cats that we love. We love to cook and travel, and we spend a lot of time attending our daughter’s cheer competitions with Texstar Athletics, attending games to watch her dance for Trinity High School’s Pom Team and watching our Red Raiders in anything that they participate in.”



Lacie, Carly and Mike

Sonya, hoping people remember her as someone who loved fiercely, worked hard, played hard, lived life to the fullest and cherished those around her, is also a family girl who cherishes time with her husband, Tony, and their two Yorkies, Milo and McKenzie. “We spend a lot of time working at our restaurant, One Guy from Italy University, and catering events, and when we are not working, we are traveling all over the world,” she shares. “We love college football, basketball and volleyball and attend most Texas Tech home games.” Sonya also volunteers and serves on various boards in the community.

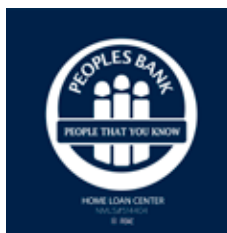


Sonya, McKenzie, Tony and Milo / Photo by Haley D. Photography

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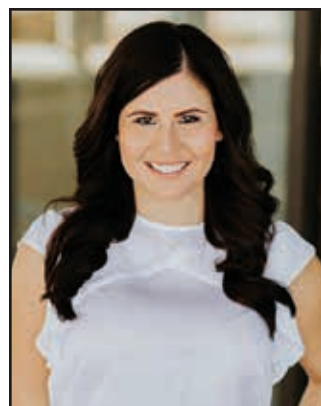
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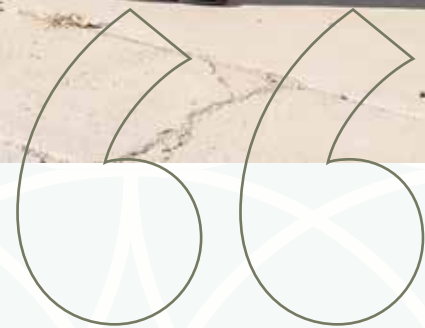
▶▶ spotlight REALTOR®

Story by Dan Steele
Photos by Alicea Jare Photography

Not long after receiving her license, Elizabeth Simmons realized she had truly found her passion and calling in real estate. “I was showing a home to a client and their young child,” she recalls. “They went from room to room discussing who would get which room, how many games they could play in their new backyard and where they’d put things to make the home functional. It literally brought tears to my eyes, seeing this deeply personal, precious moment in a family and being able to serve them to purchase the home. It was an ‘Ah-ha!’ moment; I knew I was doing what I was meant to.”

Elizabeth had to find her way down a winding road before that moment of illumination, with admittedly rocky times. “From a young age, we never had a home that was stable and could call our own, or even a room at times,” she shares. “I worked in the restaurant industry at 14 to try and help my family, which led me to not graduating high school and getting my GED instead.” Despite facing these hardships, Elizabeth expresses appreciation for how her experiences contributed to her personal growth in sometimes unexpected ways. “I’m grateful for the trials I had growing up,” she states. “They made me the person I am today, and through those experiences, I can help others. Not many people know, but as a young child, I frequently helped my dad do jobs, so I’m pretty handy when it comes to roofing, fencing and manual labor.”

At 20 years old, Elizabeth left the Dallas area and moved to Lubbock to be closer to her grandparents, a move made even easier by her existing love for the city from her frequent visits while growing up. Taking her SATs, she enrolled at Lubbock Christian University for nursing and worked as a certified nursing assistant while also waitressing and bartending until 2017, when a simple question changed everything. “A friend asked me if I ever thought about real estate as a career choice, thinking I’d be good at it,” Elizabeth explains, “and she pointed out that I wouldn’t have to work 12-hour shifts, which I think is funny because now I work 24/7.” The friend introduced her to a local agent who guided her to begin classes, and her route was forever changed. “God has a funny way of creating events in your life to bring you to where you should be,” Elizabeth muses.



Surrounding myself with people for the past two years who have pushed me outside of my comfort zone and have sincerely cared has created a version of me that I'm proud of.

Five years later, that change of direction has brought her to a point in her life she never imagined reaching. Awarded "2024 Top 20 Under 40" by the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals, Elizabeth also serves as Associate Vice President for Bray Real Estate Group, which empowers her to enjoy the best of both worlds, helping clients and her peers. She credits her current brokerage for the support and community that help her achieve her goals and continue growing in the industry.

"It's somewhere I knew I wouldn't get lost being another agent, where I could grow and learn from someone directly working the market at a high level," Elizabeth states about why she chose Bray. "Surrounding myself with people for the past two years who have pushed me outside of my comfort zone and have sincerely cared has created a version of me that I'm proud of. They are some of the most genuine, hard-working people I've met in this industry, willing to teach and share their knowledge and want me to grow. I thank God for putting them in my life."

For Elizabeth, the most fulfilling part of real estate is making a difference with her clients and the community. "I think it's the ability to help in so many ways that does it most for me," she says. "Not only can I help through transactions and individual clients, but I'm also able to mentor other agents and give back to the community with my time and resources, and I get to show kids who grew up like I did that they can make it and my own children what passion and hard work looks like."

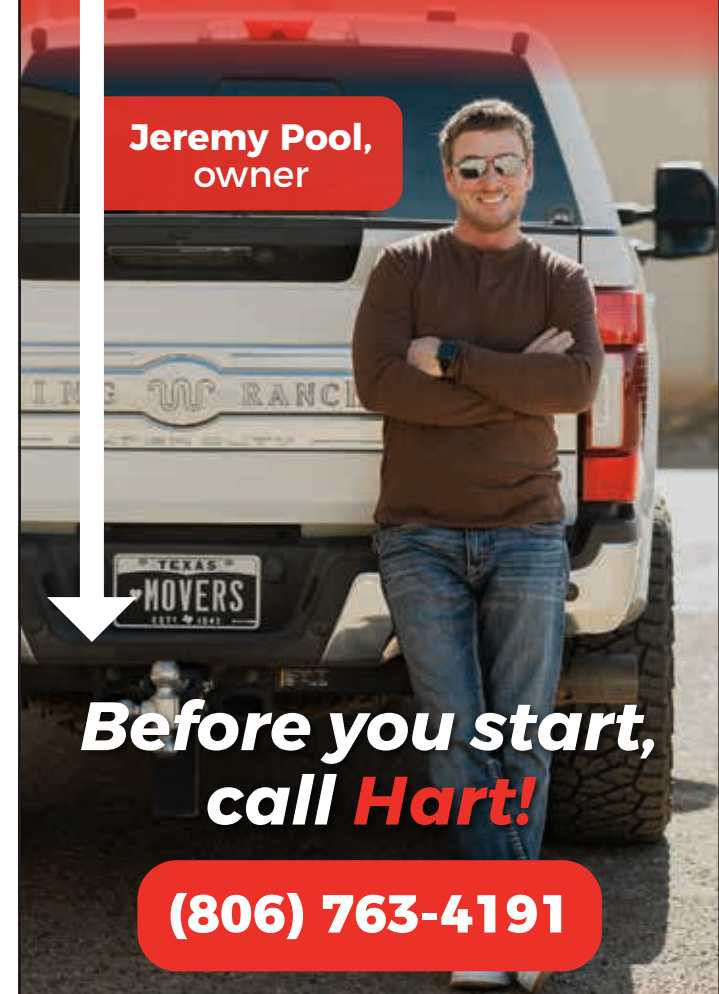
When she isn't working, Elizabeth enjoys gardening and spending family time outdoors with her husband, Rob Simmons; her 8-year-old son, Tripp; her 2-year-old daughter, Bella; and one dog, Cooper. Frequent visitors to Ruidoso, the family enjoys their shared joys of golfing, fishing and attending Live Oak Church.

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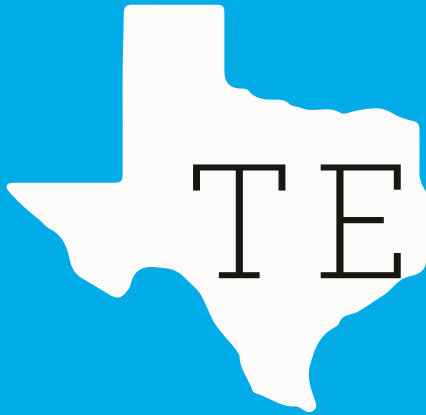
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▶▶ letter from the president

By LAR President Michael Hutton



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Happy March, *Lubbock Real Producers!* We are entering the start of our busy spring selling season. I hope the luck of the Irish is with you and you find your pot of gold at the end of closing rainbows. We've had a great start to 2024, and I want to keep that momentum going.

We all know that tragedy can strike at any time, in any place. Look at our friends in Matador and the devastating tornado that tore through the community or the devastating fires in Maui. As REALTORS®, we are in a unique position to help facilitate help through NAR's REALTOR® Relief Fund and the Texas REALTORS® Relief Fund.

Last year, when Matador needed help, the Lubbock Association of REALTORS® stepped up and set the ball in motion to provide help for that community through the Texas REALTORS® Relief Fund, which was not something the people of Matador asked for. We saw a need and immediately jumped into action to help our friends.

During the NAR NXT Convention in Anaheim last November, I had the opportunity to stop by the REALTOR® Relief Fund booth at the Expo. I learned more about how the fund helps communities across the country recover from disasters. It is gratifying for me to see how much REALTORS® care for their communities. And as we strive to share even more of our REALTOR®

stories this year and show our REALTOR® Value, we will be able to reinforce that REALTORS® are stewards of the communities they live in.

It has been said before that as the top producers in Lubbock, we have an obligation to lead by example. I hope you will learn more about NAR and TR's relief programs. And I hope that you will continue to share your stories with us.

I close this month's message with a traditional Irish home blessing:

May you always have walls for the winds,
a roof for the rain, tea beside the fire,
laughter to cheer you, those you love near you,
and all your heart might desire.
May joy and peace surround you,
Contentment latch your door,
And happiness be with you now,
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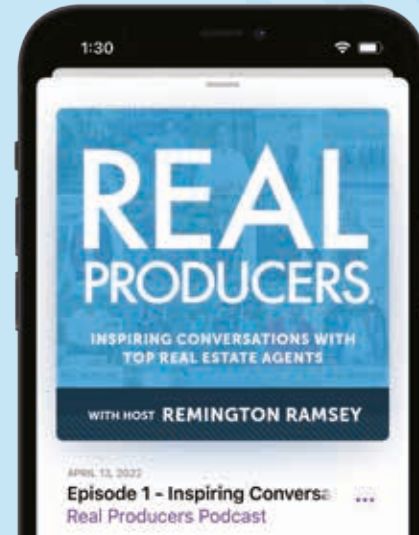
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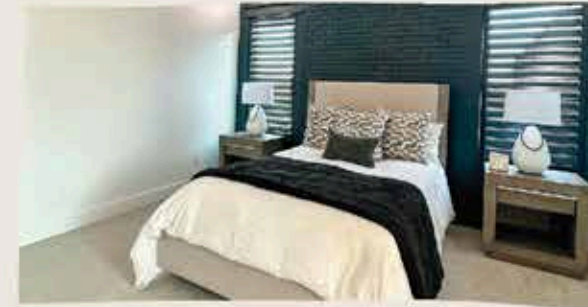
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