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ARLA SLAUGHTER

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

RISING STAR:
Miles Santiago

BROKER FEATURE:
LaTonia Riggs

ASK THE EXPERT:
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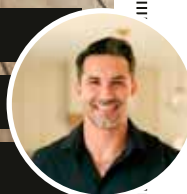
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a note from the publisher



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



By Drake Abshire

Dear ARP,

I'm writing you this note as the publisher on March 20th for the May issue. We're thrilled to announce that we've reached our 3rd edition of *Acadiana Real Producers!* With spring heating up and summer just around the corner, we're hitting the ground running. Exciting plans are underway for our first ever in person event and we can't wait to send out invites and reveal what's in store for everyone. Keep an eye on your emails and social media for updates and announcements about the event.

We're excited to introduce our newest partners, Krewe Construction, Reliant Mortgage, Prime Title and Acadiana Home Inspectors, as part of ARP Preferred Partners. All of them offer top notch services and high quality products.

We are so excited to have you all here as part of our exclusive network. Stay tuned for more captivating content and stories throughout the year. Remember, you can nominate people to be featured or businesses that would be a great fit to partner with us.

If we haven't had a chance to connect in person or take a photo together yet, please don't hesitate to contact me via phone or email. I'd love to schedule some time with you to not only get to know your story but, to share more about Real Producers as we continue to grow! Happy spring!

DRAKE ABSHIRE

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MILES

SANTIAGO

▶▶ rising star

HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN A REALTOR? 3 years

WHAT IS YOUR CAREER VOLUME AS A REALTOR? 8 million

WHAT WAS YOUR TOTAL VOLUME LAST YEAR? 4 million

WHAT AWARDS HAVE YOU ACHIEVED AS A REALTOR?

Keller Williams Acadiana Top Producer 2023

WHEN DID YOU START YOUR CAREER IN REAL ESTATE? I started my real estate career as a licensed realtor in 2021 while being a sophomore at the University of Louisiana Lafayette. I bought my first rental property in 2020 which is when I first had a taste of real estate and prompted me to get my license.

WHAT DID YOU DO BEFORE YOU BECAME A REALTOR? I was a full time student working as an equipment manager for ULL football and before that I was a full time student athlete at the University of Arkansas Little Rock for a year before Covid sent us home.

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT RIGHT NOW IN YOUR BUSINESS? Currently I am extremely passionate about building wealth and increasing my net worth! I have a goal to reach millionaire status before 2025 so I am currently heavily invested in flipping and renting real estate.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR BUSINESS? So far the most rewarding part of real estate has truly been helping clients obtain what they believe to be unobtainable, which is homeownership. The feeling and joy I get from truly changing a client's life and situation while helping them make an investment in their future is indescribable.

WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE AS A REALTOR? My biggest challenge as a realtor is definitely my age! I have since overcome that obstacle, however, it did hold me back for my first year or two. I was in my own head because I believed I wasn't experienced enough to help others obtain real estate, which as I started buying and investing myself, I quickly learned that it simply was not true.



“

**EACH PERSON WILL
DEFINE SUCCESS
DIFFERENTLY.**



**TO ME SUCCESS
IS BEING ABLE TO
CONTROL YOUR TIME
AND HAVE FREEDOM TO
DO WHAT YOU DESIRE.**

”

HOW DOES REAL ESTATE FIT INTO YOUR DREAMS AND GOALS? Real estate is just my language. It comes to me naturally and makes sense to me. My ultimate goal is to own a night-club/casino in Las Vegas as well as have a dozen other business ventures that will all require real estate. For me it is simply a tool to acquire wealth!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PART OF BEING A REALTOR? My favorite part of being a realtor is the connections I make with people from all walks of life. It truly is special the different cultures that I get to experience through different housing styles and clients.

DEFINE SUCCESS. AHH, THIS IS A DIFFICULT ONE. Each person will define success differently. To me success is being able to control your time and have freedom to do what you desire. Whether it be spending time with family or taking a vacation, time is something that you can't get back and you truly are successful when you can control your time versus external forces controlling it for you.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY. I have a large family of 6 and an extended family that is uncountable! They are very supportive and I am forever grateful. They show up and show out no matter the occasion! I wouldn't be able to do what I do without them and the drive that they give me!

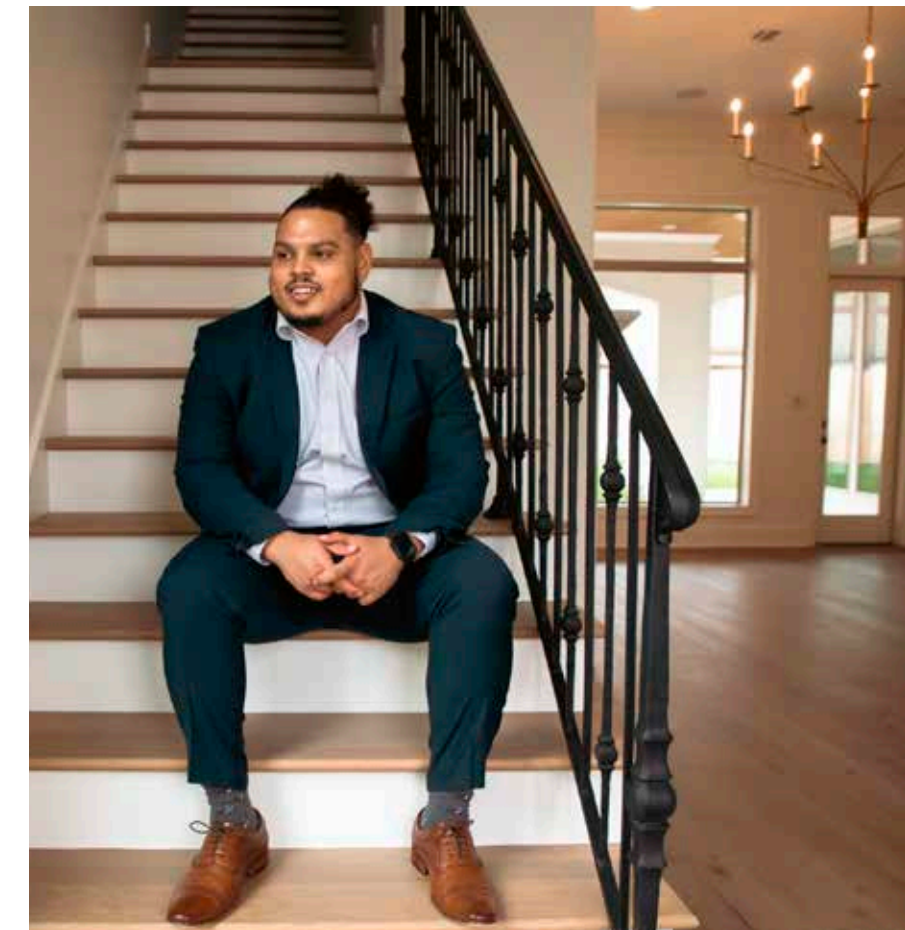
FAVORITE BOOKS?
48 Laws of Power; Rich Dad Poor Dad; Tribe of Millionaires

ARE THERE ANY CHARITIES OR ORGANIZATIONS YOU SUPPORT? Yes! I am a member of the National Eagle Scout Association so I am a big supporter of the Boy Scouts of America and everything it represents. The core values that they promote helped shape me and shape the future men of the world.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES AND INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF THE BUSINESS? I am naturally competitive so it only makes sense that I am huge into sports! I help coach the wrestling team at Teurlings Catholic High School and it is definitely an experience. Those kids keep me on my toes and are just as competitive as me! In this industry there are constant high stress negotiations and problems, and being in the wrestling room around those kids will make all of those problems disappear! Plus its good to stay youthful, I don't want gray hairs anytime soon!

GIVEN YOUR STATUS AND EXPERTISE, WHAT IS SOME ADVICE YOU WOULD GIVE THE UP-AND-COMING TOP PRODUCER? Go all in and believe in yourself! Don't have one foot in and one foot out. Invest in yourself and increase your self worth then everything around you will fall into place! Be authentic and your clientele will find you.

IN CLOSING, IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO COMMUNICATE USING THIS ACADIANA REAL PRODUCER PLATFORM? I am truly blessed and favored by God to have the family, friends, and clients that he has placed into my life. It is through his will that I have gained these accomplishments and I pray that he continues to allow me to achieve new feats and the unimaginable!





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▶▶ cover story

Written by Jordan Iverstine
Photos by Ace Sylvester



ARLA SLAUGHTER is not the typical realtor, at least, she's not what most people think of when they imagine who will be showing them the home of their dreams. When driving up to a home, most people imagine a prim, put-together property princess, a fake smile covering the desire to sell the home as quickly as possible to make as much money as possible. On the contrary, Arla Slaughter is a realtor quite unlike any other because the story of her career starts where you would least expect: marine biology.

Slaughter's desire to study the ocean began when she was only 10 years old. She still thinks fondly of memories sailing the Caribbean with her parents and snorkeling for shells in Pensacola. "My parents were 100% the reason I wanted to be underwater as much as possible," she muses, "which is what led to my dream of working in ocean science conservation." After graduating from the Academy of the Sacred Heart, Slaughter left her home state of Louisiana for the shores of South Carolina where she studied marine biology. Later, after earning her masters in zoology, she landed her dream job as a naturalist on one of SC's barrier islands, Dewees Island.

For the next 7 years, Slaughter lived and breathed surf, salt, and sand. Only accessible by boat, the island she worked on was a sustainably developed community, which meant that the community was focused on using the island's resources in a renewable way. "I lived in a little house with a red, tin roof. Everyone gets around by golf cart, and there were no restaurants or paved roads," she notes. Slaughter's job was THE amenity of the community, wherein she would take care of all things related to the environment. "I would teach property owners how to throw cast nets, to not feed the alligators, started the sea turtle nesting program, summer camps for kids and school group tours," she relates. "When something big and stinky washed up on the beach, I would do a necropsy, which is basically an autopsy for animals. Everyday was an adventure."

Years later, Slaughter was reunited with someone that changed the course of her life. On a random visit home for the holidays, Slaughter connected with a childhood friend, John Slaughter, and they fell in love. "His parents and mine were good friends before we were even born, so we grew up together. But, being six years older, I never saw

ARLA
SLAUGHTER



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him as anything but a goofy kid. I actually dropped him off on his first date when he was 12,” she laughs. Now that both of them were in their 30s, it wasn’t long before their shared pasts brought them together for a beach wedding. In 2007, Arla moved back to Louisiana to be with her new husband, leaving behind the beach for the boy.

Slaughter relates that, initially, this was a huge shock to her previously salt-water exclusive lifestyle, but she regrets nothing. Slaughter knew she wanted a family, and there were no sea turtles to rescue in Lafayette, so she began pondering a career change. “My husband was the one to suggest real estate,” she imparts, “due to his family having several different commercial properties. He knew of a good company, now known as Latter and Blum. I reached out to them to begin my journey.” Though she was able to begin this new career fairly swiftly, Slaughter did not have the easiest time as a new agent. “I didn’t sell a single house in my first year, but I realtor nerded out and got every conceivable designation” she admits, and further explains that she did not find real success until about five years later, when she believes she finally figured out the secret to her stride. “Lori McCarthy, who



“

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”

is now my Broker, took me under her wing in the beginning of my career. She taught me the confidence I needed to work with people,” she says, graciously. “I realized that what helped me to stand apart was treating my clients how I would want to be treated. I tried to talk to my clients as if they were my family, and be honest with them, no matter what.” Not surprisingly, following this golden rule and being religiously transparent, she began building a fiercely loyal client base, which meant she had repeat clients and referrals through the roof.

Now, as her kindness has boosted her reputation into the top 10 real estate agents in Lafayette, and #1 with her company, Slaughter also attributes her success to the “unicorn relationship” she has with her partner, Jessie Melancon, who is the sea to her shell. “Technically, she’s my “assistant”, but that barely gives her the credit that is due. She is my right hand,” she states fervently, “and balances out my weaknesses with her strengths.”

Today, Slaughter and her husband are raising their teenage son, Jack, and she couldn’t be happier. Because of the flexibility of her schedule, she doesn’t have to compromise her love of travel for her career. One moment, she could be celebrating the latest closed transaction, and the next, she’s back on the beach collecting shells for her personal collection. She’s been able to enjoy her family and help the vibrant people of Acadiana find their own perfect fit, while also maintaining much quality time with her first love, the ocean.





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▶️ ask the expert!
By Bradley Moreau

WHAT IS TITLE & WHY TITLE INSURANCE?

As real estate professionals, title attorneys and real estate agents are all in the same boat (“dirt”) in many ways. Most importantly, we each owe a duty of loyalty to our mutual client by making sure the client is protected throughout negotiations contractually, keeping those negotiated terms enforced while under contract and making sure those terms are accurately reflected in the final closing package.

Despite how well we have done our respective jobs, there remain actions or inactions beyond our control that could affect our client’s ownership down the road. Owner’s title insurance is a practical solution for those unforeseeable risks and provides added protection for our client beyond the closing table. Beyond our respective competent professional services, owner’s title insurance can provide affirmative coverages that are an affordable way to further protect your client’s property.

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LaTonia RIGGS

MEET



OF EVOLVE REALTY, LLC

» broker feature

Written by Elizabeth McCabe • Photos by Ace Sylvester

“I WAS 40 YEARS OLD WHEN I FINALLY GOT INTO REAL ESTATE,” SAYS BROKER LATONIA RIGGS OF EVOLVE REALTY. SHE REMEMBERS THE DATE FONDLY, MARCH 1, 2017. SHE ALWAYS HAD THE DREAM OF GETTING INTO REAL ESTATE.

Inspired by HGTV, Latonia never grew tired of watching houses on the big screen. Little did she know that she would help people find the homes of their dreams years later.

FROM HOME HEALTHCARE TO HOUSES

“Before real estate, I was the director of a home health-care company for 12 years.” With her business acumen and her Business degree in Business Administration from UL, she was eager to help her mother.

“I had over 50 employees, which gave me the tools I needed. I learned to be a good leader at that point,” she reflects on her experience. “That trickled over to my brokerage.” Working as a leader helped her to hone her skills, which were essential in real estate.

As soon as her mother was grandfathered in, Latonia found the freedom to follow the desires of her heart. She raves, “I was excited to get my license. I stayed up late at night watching YouTube from one class to the next, studying the market.”

Learning all that she could was essential to build a solid foundation in real estate.

TASTING SWEET SUCCESS

During her first year, Latonia had two sales, but she wasn’t deterred. Laying the framework for success served her well. She did buyers seminars and started going live on Facebook “Tuesday Talks W/Tonia,” which helped her to connect with future clients.



Her second year, Latonia became a Top Producer. She gained people’s trust, one satisfied client at a time. Latonia is also passionate about what she does. “Homeownership is so important,” she points out. She caters to her clients and they know that she is an expert in her field. “They saw that I had the knowledge,” she says.

A NEW CHAPTER

Latonia then took the next step in her career. She shares, “I became a licensed Broker on January 12, 2023 and opened Evolve Realty, LLC on paper on December 22, 2022.”

As for the name Evolve Realty, Latonia comments, “The name made perfect sense. It was an evolution to get here, and my agents are evolving daily. That name is just a blessing. It just fits.”

Currently, Latonia has 13 agents (three of whom are new) and is thankful for the careers that they have built. “It’s going great,” smiles Latonia. “They’ve been with me for a very long time and I recently got two new real estate agents.”

With a culture of family in the office, it’s a supportive atmosphere for all involved. Working in integrity and

growing in knowledge are the hallmarks of the brokerage. "I'm constantly training my agents," says Latonia. She is eager to help them be the best that they can be.

A Producing Broker, Latonia continues to sell homes. "Trust me, it's hard," she says, "but I love being a Producing Broker. I love working with my clients and not letting that go. I believe in working hard for the things that you love and want." A go-getter at heart, Latonia loves that every moment is different in real estate. "You can never get bored," she points out.

Her favorite moment is opening her own brokerage and giving her agents a place to really call home. To this dedicated Top Producer, that is priceless.

FAMILY + FAITH

When she's not working, it's all about family to Latonia. "I am a wife of 24 years and a mother of four," smiles Latonia. Her children, two girls and two boys, range from 11-23. She is also proud that her daughter is in real estate with her, working as one of the agents in her office.

Latonia's husband Murphy is a pastor and she finds solace in her church community and cherishes moments spent with her loved ones. Traveling, particularly to the sunny shores of Florida, holds a special place in her heart, offering much-needed relaxation and rejuvenation.

In her rare moments of solitude, Latonia indulges in self-care rituals like a soothing bath accompanied by an audiobook, finding tranquility amidst life's hustle and bustle for some much needed "me time." Guided by the Bible verse, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7), she faces each day with courage and conviction, unwavering in her pursuit of excellence.

FINAL THOUGHTS

As she continues to make her mark in the real estate industry, Latonia Riggs exemplifies the epitome of dedication, resilience, and unwavering faith. With Evolve Realty, LLC as her platform, she is poised to lead her team to even greater heights, transforming dreams into realities, one home at a time.



“

GOD HAS NOT
GIVEN US A SPIRIT
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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!

EMAIL: DRAKE.ABSHIRE@REALPRODUCERSMAG.COM



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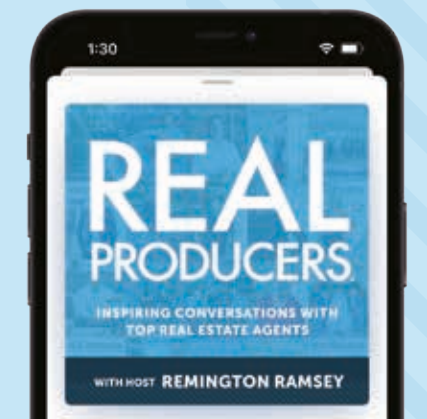
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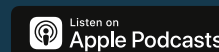
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