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RISING STAR:
Sol Martin

MOTHER + DAUGHTER DUO:
Kim Kentera & Alex Whitworth

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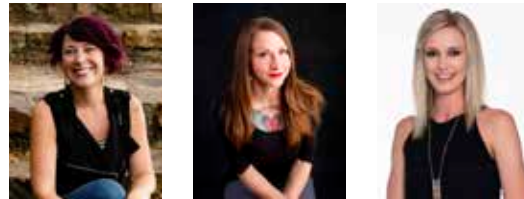
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reflections FROM THE EDITOR

I'm especially proud of this edition and the way we are honoring and celebrating the role of *Mother*. Each of this month's featured agents is a mother and expressed a deep love for her family.

After being "fired" by her 4-year old and becoming a "reluctant REALTOR®," this month's Real Producer Mary Biga has a successful business. Mary also fulfills her deepest "why" through her active involvement with We Fortify, a non-profit providing safe homes for teens and young adults to help them pivot out of poverty. Serving with this special organization is a natural extension of what Mary and her husband had already been doing - providing a safe space and guidance to neighborhood kids in their home.

Rising Star Sol Martin recalls her childhood days of financial struggle but always knew her mom was doing her best. Sol is proud that she can now provide financial security both for her own family and for her mom. Sol's mother took a leap of faith to bring the family to the U.S. and then Sol took a leap of faith herself to completely transform her whole life. Sol puts her family first and honors her roots through her business today.

We are also highlighting the Mother-Daughter dynamic duo, Kim Kentera and Alex Whitworth. The deep bond Kim and Alex share is a strong foundation for a collaborative work relationship that serves their clients well. As they continue to refine the delicate art of balancing work and family, their unwavering love for each other shines through.

Do yourself a favor and read these inspirational stories.

Happy Mother's Day!

Tabby Halsrud

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- Leader of the Year: Wendy Weber
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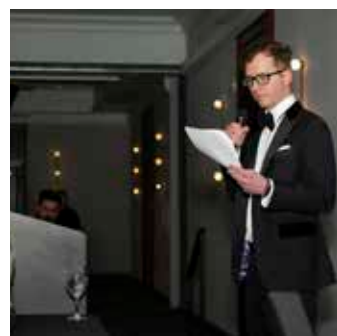


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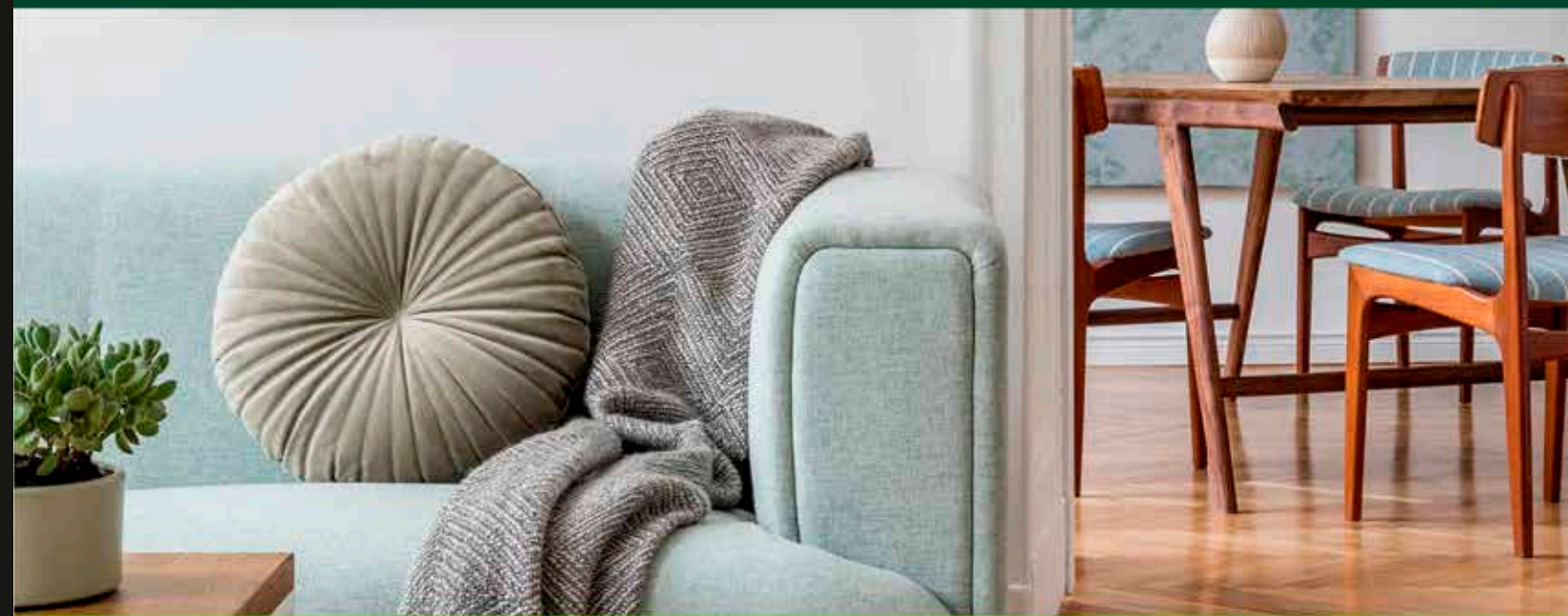
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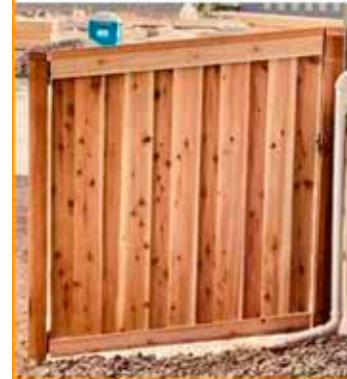
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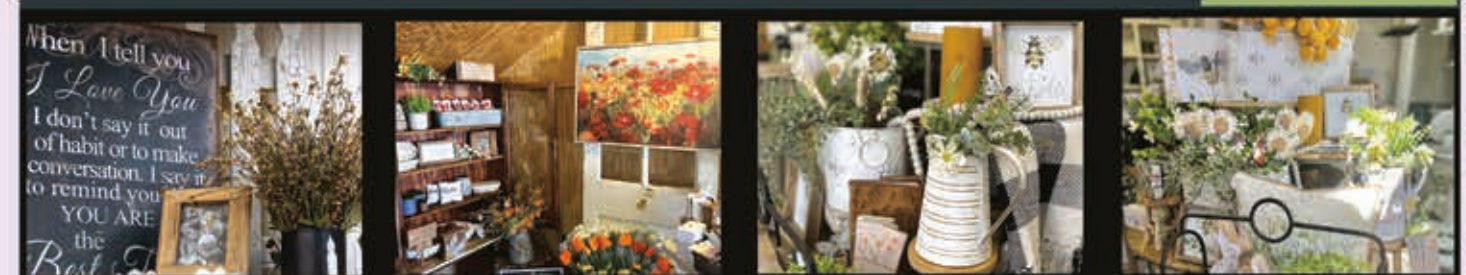
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SOL

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▶▶ rising star

Written by Tabby Halsrud
Casa Bay Photography

Sol Martin was born in Mexico and moved to Colorado with her family in 2004. Although she knew some English when her family moved here, Sol admits it was a culture shock. Young, scared, and feeling intimidated in many of her classes, she found some comfort in her ESL classes. Outside of school, Sol worked to improve her English by watching television with subtitles, writing out lyrics for the music she listened to, and then translating them to learn the meaning of the words. Sol attained her citizenship in 2016.

Sol met her husband in 2016 and they got married the following year by Elvis in Las Vegas. Her husband is active duty and in March of 2017, he left for Romania. Three days later, Sol found out she was expecting their first child together. Not having any family in Colorado at the time, Sol was on her own for the duration of her pregnancy. Their son Logan was born a short three days after her husband returned home.

In 2019, Sol's husband left for Korea and she was working in property insurance at USAA. "That is what piqued my interest in real estate. A friend and I agreed to sign up for classes. I thought real estate would be really good for our family and my husband was very supportive." Later that year, Sol had to put her schooling on temporary hold when her father was murdered and she returned to Mexico to bury him. She remembered, "It was a really tough time. My husband was gone and it was just me and our son. A lot had to be put on the back burner, including real estate school." Eventually, Sol did continue her schooling, taking advantage of the daycare on base for Logan so she could read and study and take the real estate tests.

DISCOVERING HER PURPOSE

When Sol got word that her husband would be returning home in 2020, they decided to

purchase a home. They fell in love with a neighborhood and wanted to build there. She persistently followed up with the builder representative until a lot became available and they went under contract. "It was a really eye opening experience. I was in the middle of real estate school, we were building a house, and my husband was still overseas. I learned a lot about the process of building a home and through that process I found my calling and knew that this is what I wanted to do."

Sol got her real estate license in 2020 and continued working her regular job for a while to ensure her mortgage and other bills got paid and her family was cared for. In those early days, Sol worked from 6:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and then would do showings after her day job, not getting home until seven or eight o'clock at night. She started on a team before going independent and was proud to close twelve transactions on her own in her first year. "I love being in real estate. I focus on the relationships that I build with my clients and fellow agents - after all we are all here to collaborate and work together. I enjoy the journey of every single family that I have helped - they all have wonderful stories."

Sol is a huge believer that "knowledge is power" and loves sharing her knowledge with her clients. "I like to educate people on the transaction and what the next three to five years can look like after you purchase a home. That's what fulfills me." She recalled a memory of staging for a family who was in Germany and feeling overcome with emotion. "I knew I wanted this to be my forever career. I just love it so much and love helping people. We all come from different backgrounds and have different stories. At the end of the day we can connect over the pride of homeownership." As an immigrant, Sol believes that owning real estate is part of the American Dream. "That's when you know you made it," she added.

GROUNDED IN HER ROOTS

For Sol, being featured in Real Producers is "unreal." She



elaborated, “There are so many great agents out there. They have awesome careers and teams and are doing big things. So for me, it’s such a privilege to be featured among them. It’s great to be able to do what I love. I started Our Casa Group because I wanted it to come from my roots of being Hispanic and Mexican, and the journey I’ve been on to become a citizen and just becoming who I am as a person and a member of this community. I will do anything to help people because I know what it’s like to be in those situations that are unfortunate.”

Sol shared what her childhood was like. “We were always struggling and my mom has always done her best for me and my sister. My dad was not very present, and I remember one time I sold aluminum cans to help my mom. I still help my mom when she needs it. We have the sense of security now that she was not able to provide for us then. I provide it for my family and can also provide it for her and I’m so thankful for what we have now. If it weren’t for my mom bringing us here, my sister, my husband, and all the hard work, I wouldn’t have anything that I have now.” Sol’s mother took a leap of faith to bring their family here, then Sol took a leap of faith herself to completely transform her whole life.

Sol and her husband have three kids: Logan, age 6, Nevaeh age 16, and Alyssa age 19. Outside of work, the family enjoys spending time together - camping, off roading, or just hanging out at home. “We focus a lot on family unity and time together. Growing up my mom would always be working and although I am blessed I had my sister to spend time with back then, we like to be intentional and focus on our family time now, it is very important for us.”



“
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”



“

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▶▶ mother-daughter duo

Written by Tabby Halsrud
Photography courtesy of Heidi Mossman
of Capture Life Photography

Kim Kentera

nurturing mother to their four children while venturing into entrepreneurship, establishing a successful small business. Her altruistic spirit led her to contribute her skills to a non-profit, channeling her energies into meaningful endeavors. Kim's family ties to real estate sparked a curiosity that soon blossomed into a full-fledged passion. Armed with determination and fueled by encouragement from her real estate-savvy relatives, Kim obtained her license six years ago. Since then, she has carved her path in real estate, cultivating a thriving network grounded in trust, loyalty, and a steadfast commitment to excellence.

THE BEGINNING OF A FAMILY BUSINESS

Her business became a family business when her daughter Alex joined her team. Kim shared that adding Alex to her team has been a game-changer for her own work/life balance. "I didn't realize adding a person would simplify my life so much. At first I feared the added responsibility of training and supervision. However, I've come to realize that growth is impossible without the right support. Alex has an exceptional ability to fill gaps where I don't have the bandwidth. Her knack for stepping in precisely where needed makes her the perfect complement. It's been a wonderful revelation for me."

A SHARED PASSION

Alex Whitworth married her high school sweetheart, got her nursing degree, and worked as a nurse before shifting into real estate. She has a passion for helping people through tough times. When Alex's husband entered the military, they moved around a bit before returning to Colorado. She saw the love, passion, and drive that her mom had for real estate and wanted to pursue something different from her nursing career. Now she has her own passion for real estate and enjoys being able to help people in a different way. She loves connecting with people, especially those who are going through the daunting process as a first-time buyer or as members of the military moving to a new state. "I enjoy coming to work and it's such a blessing that I get to do that with my mom."

Kim Kentera and Alex Whitworth, a dynamic mother-daughter real estate duo, share a passion for real estate and a love of their family. Born from humble beginnings, Kim's journey is one of resilience and integrity. Her mom immigrated from Germany with nothing but a backpack and this instilled a deep appreciation for hard work and purpose. Raised with four brothers, Kim naturally evolved into a go-to problem solver. She received an engineering degree from Georgia Tech, where she also enthusiastically cheered for the Yellow Jackets and met her husband. The integration of her technical background and supportive spirit uniquely equips her for the complexities and perseverance needed in real estate.

After dedicating 16 years to the vigorous world of management consulting, Kim embarked on a new chapter when she and her husband relocated to Colorado Springs. Kim embraced the role of

This mother-daughter team truly collaborates to serve their clients. They often meet their clients together, they include each other on



client correspondence, and they make an effort to attend closings together. They appreciate that their partnership supports them in being very responsive to clients.

Kim and Alex both feel honored to be featured in Real Producers. As they look back at their careers, they have learned how important it is to allow time to grow a real estate business. Kim reflected, "While the current market may present some challenges, seasoned professionals recognize that perseverance is key. Real estate operates in cycles, with highs and lows that test us. We want to encourage our realtor friends to stay the course, for within this profession lies immense satisfaction and fulfillment."

AN INTRICATE DANCE

This duo has been learning to balance the passion for their career with the love of their family. Kim shared, "Our work relationship is something truly special and unique, but work can sometimes blur the lines when we're with family. We are in a business that runs seven days a week and it's an intricate dance to keep work/life balance." As they continue to refine the delicate art of balancing work and family, their unwavering commitment to providing unparalleled service shines through, a testament to their passion and dedication.

Outside of work, Alex enjoys cycling, living a fitness lifestyle, and spending time with her husband and their two boys - the couple has a newborn and a three-year old. As for Kim, she is looking forward to growing the business and traveling with her husband more this year, now that Alex is on the team and can share in the workload.

THEIR LOVE SHINES THROUGH

Alex appreciates how caring her mom is. "Real estate is demanding. But she cares so much for her clients' happiness and success. She cares on such a deep level - she's the most caring, giving person I've ever met - both in real estate and with the family."

Kim said of Alex, "She is life-giving. Her presence gives so much life to anybody in the room. It's innate, unique, very special, and magnetizing. It makes you want to be that way, too. She's just a joy to be around."



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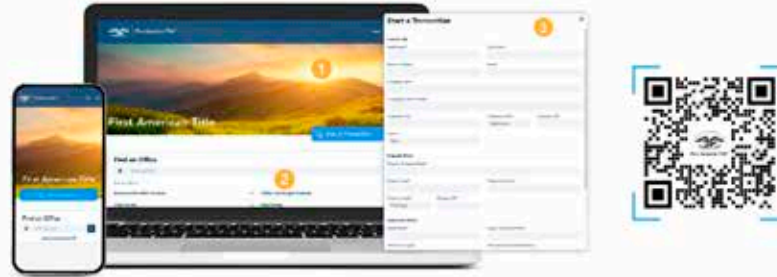
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Meet Your Inspector

Inspections Over Coffee

Certified Master Inspector Molly Edwards

Why did you choose this field?

I've joked about being a Jill of all trades because of my diverse work background, and I decided to make it "official." My background includes being a weapons technician in the Navy, stationed in Japan. I'm a former pastry chef, teacher and coach, door-to-door salesperson, and all-around customer service provider. My adaptability, curiosity, attention to detail, and people skills have made me a great home inspector. Plus, there are not very many female inspectors, and I've always enjoyed careers "outside the box."

What do you love about your work?

I love that every day is different, that I get to see so many different types and styles of homes, and most of all that I'm providing valuable information and protecting homeowners.

Fun facts:

I lived in Japan for four years with the military, and my daughter was born there. I love to travel and kind of grew up on a sailboat as a child. I enjoy all of the "Colorado" outdoor stuff – snowboarding, camping, hiking.



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MARY

BIG A

►► real producer

Written by Tabby Halsrud
Photography courtesy of Heidi
Mossman of Capture Life Photography



Mary Biga refers to herself as the “reluctant REALTOR®.” Prior to her career in real estate, she loved everything about being a stay-at-home mom. She was active in her kids’ school activities - spending time in the classroom and going on field trips - until she got “fired” by a four-year old. Mary recalled the day that her preschool daughter said, “I don’t need you in the classroom all the time and you don’t have to go on field trips. You should go find something to do.”

Eventually, Mary did start looking for a job, but initially just wanted to work on the weekends so she could still be there for her kids and so she didn’t have to pay for childcare. One day she flipped open the Gazette and saw a little ad for a weekend receptionist which seemed to be the answer she was seeking. The job ended up being for a real estate company, Metro Brokers Academy, only seven minutes from her house. She interviewed with the owner, Marlenna Davidson (who is also Managing Broker of Davidson Properties, Inc.) and the two hit it off. Marlenna saw a potential in Mary greater than just working the front desk and told her, “You’re going to do great things.” Mary was hesitant - she enjoyed her role as mom. Mary remembered, “Marlenna saw something in me that I didn’t see in myself.” When Marlenna’s assistant quit a short time later, she asked Mary to take on the role. Although Mary still wanted to be home for her kids after school, Marlenna offered to work around her schedule and things progressed from there.

A NATURAL GIFT

Mary learned a lot just by being in the office with the agents and she picked up on needs intuitively. “I would overhear agents talking about properties and I listened to them explain contracts. Marlenna would be on the phone talking to a client and I’d hear her say the address so I would go online and start pulling up tax records and anything else I could find and hand it to her while she was still on the phone. We didn’t plan this - it just happened organically.” It wasn’t long before Marlenna encouraged Mary to pursue her real estate license by having her enroll in school and paying for her classes. Mary studied at home and eventually became Marlenna’s business partner. “It’s just been a very special journey that I’m blessed to have had.” The two have been working together since 1997.

Mary started on the property management side of the business and is appreciative of the valuable skills it taught her. “I think every agent needs to do property management for a year. It really brings you a different perspective with sales because you see the struggles that some of the tenants have.” The company is now co-owned by Marlenna and Mary and its name reflects that: Davidson Biga Realty, Inc. They specialize in both real estate and property management and Mary is still actively involved in taking phone calls and showing houses. For Mary, real estate is family; one of her sons and her daughter-in-law now work on the property management side of the company.

FUELED BY FAMILY

Mary and her husband James have been married for 37 years and family is the most important thing to them. They enjoy spending time with their kids: William, Mark, John, Shauna, and Natasha, as well as their seven year old granddaughter, Maria,



who Mary affectionately calls “our little sunshine.” Most of Mary’s days begin with a 4:00 a.m. date with James at the gym. Mary’s other interests are race cars (an interest she shares with her husband - although they are on “opposite teams”) and any genre of music. She enjoys the likes of Jason Aldean, Elvis, Johnny Cash, Frankie Valli and Tony Orlando. She also enjoys Kiss, Def Leppard, and Bruce Springsteen.

A DEEPER WHY

The Biga home has always been open to the neighborhood kids. “Our house was the house where every kid came to. We had them call their parents to let them know where they were, but we fed them, made sure they did their homework, and followed up on their test scores. At times, we had 19 kids in the house. We also had our God Kids: God gave them to us at the age that we got them.” The Bigas provided what the kids needed - meals, a warm place to sleep, and basic needs like shaving cream. The kids knew the house rules and that they were expected to follow those rules while they were there. Mary shared, “There are still three boys who have our keys and eat out of our house; one got his engineering degree, one is an officer who graduated from the Air Force Academy, and the other was a marine officer and has got his Masters. This just goes to show that kids who want to succeed but don’t have the means, they will succeed.”

Providing for these kids in this way seemed to be some kind of deep calling for Mary. When she met Shelley Jensen, Founder of We Fortify, and learned about the mission of the organization and what it was doing for Colorado Springs youth, Mary saw an extension of what she and her husband had already been doing. When she first heard Shelley talk about the nonprofit, Mary explained, “She used the words ‘youth’ and ‘pivot out of poverty’ and I was nearly in tears, asking what I could do. These kids get into situations that aren’t their fault. Some were born into it and others come into circumstances later - but all of them just need someone who cares about them. We Fortify makes sure these kids are okay and have housing. One of the things I love is that it’s not one house with seven kids - they each get their own space. It’s something they can call their own

and they get to take things like sheets and dishes when they leave. I don’t know why, but this is my why. This is something that sought me out.”

Mary proudly shared that on January 29 of this year, We Fortify was selected for an award for funding through the Affordable Housing Financing Fund Land Banking program. “The Colorado Housing and Finance Authority received 113 letters of application for the grant and I am very proud to say that of that We Fortify was one of only sixteen applicants awarded! We are so honored to have had Governor Polis make such a wonderful announcement!”

We Fortify and Working Fusion at Mill Street was featured in the February edition of *Colorado Springs Real Producers*. Mary encourages everyone to go back and read that story to learn more about what this organization is up to. As another natural extension of her why, Mary was recently elected to serve as the President of the Board of Directors for We Fortify and is excited to be even more involved in something so near and dear to her heart.

EMBRACING HER CALLING

In addition to her involvement with We Fortify, Mary is serving her second term on the Pikes Peak Association of REALTORS® (PPAR) Board of Directors. Mary runs her business with dedication, professionalism, and integrity. She proudly shared that her spirit animal is the pink flamingo and she embodies its energy in this way: “I have one leg up and I’m just going.” Mary also believes in treating others how she wants to be treated and added, “When you follow the golden rule, everything else falls into place.” Mary encourages people to find what they are passionate about, be open to whatever comes their way, bring joy to others, and raise others up.

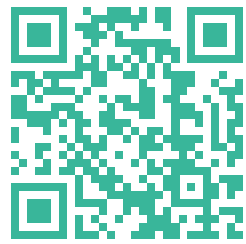
For Mary, “real estate isn’t always about the money; sometimes it’s a person that I meet like Shelley.” This woman, once a “reluctant REALTOR®,” had this to say of her calling now: “This is in my DNA and I’ll never retire. It has opened so many doors. It’s given me confidence and strength, and it’s helped me find my voice. There’s no way I can picture myself doing anything else.”





“ THIS IS IN MY DNA AND I’LL NEVER RETIRE. IT HAS OPENED SO MANY DOORS. IT’S GIVEN ME CONFIDENCE AND STRENGTH, AND IT’S HELPED ME FIND MY VOICE. THERE’S NO WAY I CAN PICTURE MYSELF DOING ANYTHING ELSE. ”

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Hometown

I have considered Colorado Springs my home for a little over 16 years now. Prior to moving to the Springs, I lived in the Bay Area, California for many years. Even though the majority of my life was spent in California I have always considered myself an Oregonian. I was born in a small town called Medford in the Willamette Valley in Southern Oregon. Those who have visited Oregon will know the beautiful rivers and great fishing in this area of our country. Anyone who knows me well knows that I am a huge University of Oregon Ducks fan and follow any of their sports that I can watch on TV here in Colorado.

How long have you worked in the industry?

I entered the Mortgage industry specifically about six years ago now. The Real Estate Industry has been in my blood pretty much since birth. My father was a Real Estate Developer, and I was looking to follow in his footsteps. I ended up working as a title sales representative a couple of years after graduating college. My Title Career lasted over 25 years leading me to Colorado, eventually being the Division President of Stewart Title in Colorado Springs. After spending that time in title insurance, I decided to make a change to originate mortgages, and that has been the best decision I have ever made.

What is your favorite part of being a lender?

Originating mortgage loans has been such a thrilling experience. When I made the move to this career, I was not sure what to expect. I have had the opportunity to contribute to the process of seeing hundreds of buyers successfully purchase a home for themselves and their families. Being at the closing table and seeing the keys being handed to the new owner never gets old. The thrill and elation of this experience really have no rival. Sometimes this process takes months to years from beginning to end and it is worth every second. Seeing the smiles of the borrowers and their children, if they have them, is more satisfying than most things I have ever been through.

What is one thing you would tell a first-time homebuyer?

Buying a home can be the most significant financial transaction that is experienced in one's life. When I am working with someone who is buying their first home, I definitely want to make sure they are completely understanding what they are doing in the process. Changing your status from a renter to an owner is a huge step and I take that very seriously. The main message which I make sure that new buyers understand is that they are now paying down the principal on their own home as opposed to paying it for someone else. There are very few other investments available that can build wealth and prosperity as much as owning real estate.

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