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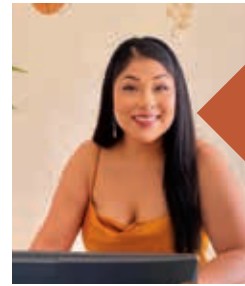
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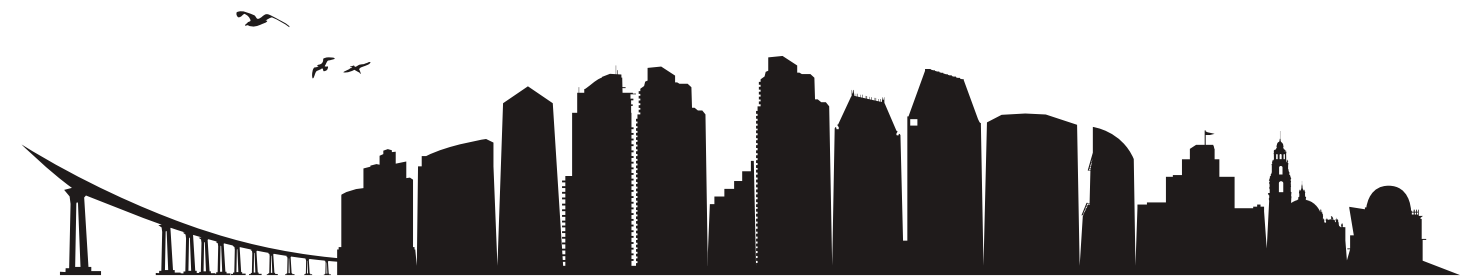




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# Happy mother's Day!

## ►► publisher's note

Greetings!

As May unfolds its blossoms and warmth, we find ourselves drawn to the special occasion of Mother's Day. It's a time to honor the remarkable women who have shaped our lives with their love, guidance, and boundless support.

In this issue, we celebrate the spirit of motherhood, reflecting on the invaluable role mothers play in our lives and the hard work and often sacrifice they make for their families. From heartwarming stories to thoughtful reflections, we invite you to read about this year's real estate Boss Moms; Amber Tannehill, Caroline Rander, Leslie Peraza & Charmaine Orcino-Gonzales. All

have different stories about getting into real estate, but all share one specifically, working to promote a better life for their family. Our Rising Star, Christine Directo, also credits her family for their incredible support of her real estate career and being a definite "why" in her endeavors.

May this month be a tribute to the selfless devotion and unwavering strength of mothers, past and present. Happy Mother's Day to all those who nurture, inspire, and love unconditionally.

Cheers!

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# Christine

▶▶ rising star

## DIRECTO

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

I first became licensed at the end of 2018 after taking the exam while I was almost 9 months pregnant. I really thought that I would be able to take on this new career with a brand-new baby. It makes me laugh just thinking about it now. I would say I didn't truly start my career until the end of 2022. After a lot of prayer, I knew that it was time for me to step out of the home and pursue this career in real estate. The timing was right, and I was confident that our boys would be okay with me being away for a little bit a few days of the week.

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

Before real estate I was a registered nurse at Scripps La Jolla Hospital working in the mother-baby unit. During this time, I already held my license in real estate but wasn't using it yet. I just had our second baby who unexpectedly became very ill. I found myself depressed, stressed out, and exhausted working 12-hour nights wanting so badly to go home. I couldn't sleep on my nights off either due to the severity of his condition, so I quickly swirled out of control mentally. This happened over the course of a little more than a year—the longest, most painful year of my family's life. Finally, two weeks before the lockdown of 2020, I could no longer take the pain of being away all night, tending to all my patients' babies while mine was at home suffering. It was also extremely tough on my husband who was up multiple times at night taking care of our son and then leaving for work early in the morning. It no longer mattered to me how

strenuous it was to land my career, I finally got the courage to say enough was enough and I clocked out for the very last time. I had no idea the world would shut down right after. But as awful as that year was, I couldn't have been happier to be with my family 24/7. Not only that but because I was a licensed realtor, I personally sold our house and now had the ability to afford the care of a well-known doctor in New York who specialized in my son's condition. After only 2 months of treatment, we finally had a healthy, "normal" child. We still can't believe how God perfectly orchestrated that all. Then I decided it was time to try and make an income again to help my husband out. By the end of 2022 I felt the call to really put my real estate license to use.

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

I absolutely love learning about multiple ways to create wealth in real estate! There is so much more we can do beyond our jobs as realtors, and it fascinates me. And it isn't just about us, but how we are able to educate clients, friends and families how they can do the same while assisting them in the process. I love helping traditional buyers think outside the box. Lately, I have been most interested in perfecting the ability to determine whether a potential flip or development play would be a profitable one.

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

The most rewarding part of my business has been the ability to do most of my work from home. I'm also able to schedule most of my work around my family—not the other way around. I love that my business also involves my husband, Eddie. We don't consider this to be solely my business, we consider it to be our family business because it truly involves us all in some way. My mind can be all over the place sometimes, but Eddie is super organized so he helps me a lot in that area. He's a skilled team lead in his workplace so although you may see my face out in public on a sign somewhere, it's really my husband that keeps this business together and flowing smoothly! God knows, I couldn't create an excel spreadsheet for the life of me. That's totally his department. It also helps to have him around when putting out my open house signs! On top of the ability to work around my family, it's been truly rewarding to serve my clients in one of the biggest moments

of their lives. It's so awesome to be part of their lives even long after the sale and celebrating life events together.

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

I think what continues to be my biggest challenge as a realtor is finding some sort of balance in my family and work life. I am married with 3 young boys ages 8 and under and I also homeschool them (as if having 3 rambunctious boys wasn't exhausting enough). It's not impossible to do both because I continue to manage, I am in the "sowing" season of my business where the work can be a bit heavy before I reach my "harvest" season. That's how it is with anything worth pursuing in life. But even knowing this, family is always going to be first and I may not be building as fast as I know I could but that's okay. My husband needs me present, and our boys will only be little boys once in life so I never take on more than I can handle.

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

My favorite part about being a realtor must be having the ability to control when I want to work, and more importantly who I want to work with. I have met some of my closest friends in this industry and I couldn't be more thankful for that but have also come across individuals who didn't have the best intentions. Being a realtor allows me to choose the crowd I want to surround myself with and I choose to surround myself with people who have big dreams, support one another, lift each other up, and truly believe that there is enough for everyone.

### **Tell us about your family.**

My husband Eddie and I will be married 10 years this year in August and we have 3 boys Elijah, Benji, and Eliseo "Seo".





We are big in the Christian faith and do our best to emulate what that truly entails, but of course are human and have imperfections. My husband and boys love jiu jitsu while I stay on the sidelines because I refuse to roll around in someone else's sweat! We also love taking the boys outdoors pretty much anywhere to burn off their energy but especially love taking them fishing. They are the sweetest, little fisherman and their favorite spot is Otay Lakes. Elijah is known for his scholastics. He has been advanced in math since was a preschooler. Benji is known for his huge smile and ability to catch all types of bugs (and unfortunately hide those bugs in containers in the house which startles me every now and then when I come across them). Seo is known for his silly dances and his ability to be on beat even as a toddler. Eddie and I love to go out riding on our Harley Davidson on beautiful days when our schedule allows and love to go shooting at the range or drive out to Dulzura to set up our own range during the open season. We also have just started serving the youth ministry together for our church.

**Any favorite books?**

My favorite book is The Bible. If you need self-help, faith, problem solving, advice, hope, motivation, peace, forgiveness etc., it's all in there! Second place would probably be the Rich Dad Poor Dad series. These books really changed my outlook on creating an income from home.

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

Eddie and I used to be bodybuilders before we became parents so fitness is always going to be part of my life despite how it may change throughout the seasons in my life. I have a full gym at home because I don't like leaving my family if I don't have to, plus finding time for any "me time" is a bit challenging with where we are at in life with the boys. But I would say the next big hobby would be shooting at the range with my husband when we can. Something about focusing on one target and perfecting the skill of aiming and hitting the target is oddly relaxing to me.

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

Some advice I have for anyone in general is that the business and the finances will never be worth it if your family is a mess at home. I know from personal experience that if my husband feels seen, heard, and loved and my boys feel seen, heard, and loved than my work will never be a waste. What's the point of chasing wealth if you can't come home to enjoy the fruits of your labor with your family?



“ I love helping traditional buyers think outside the box.”

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# what NOW?

LIFE IN THE  
AFTERMATH  
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▶▶ legal pointers • Eric R Ginder, Esq

*I've been doing a lot of reading lately. I'll bet I'm not alone. It's definitely been a strange Spring for real estate agents. As I read article after article proclaiming the "consumer victory" that the Missouri lawsuit and its proposed settlement represents, I find myself asking this question: Let's imagine that a fairly well-known, very large national corporation got sued, lost and then announced that as a result of the lawsuit, it would be "dramatically" cutting the wages of most of its employees, perhaps as much as 50%. Would the mainstream media herald that a consumer victory? I doubt it, but that's exactly what's happening here, isn't it?*

Each article states that the lawsuit will likely result in a "dramatic" reduction of real estate broker commissions (2%-3%) generated in real estate transactions. Of course, another way of saying this is that real estate brokers and agents are taking about a 50% pay cut. It's not a victory when you're on the bleeding edge of that cut.

Let's break this down. The most dramatic result of the lawsuit and settlement is the wholesale elimination of the Cooperating Broker Compensation (CBC) field in the MLS. Ironically, those who have been in the business long enough will remember a time (prior to the 1990's) when the CBC field didn't exist, when buyers didn't always have representation. CBC, ironically, was created at the behest of consumer rights groups advocating for more, and better, buyer representation in real estate transactions. My my, how quickly we forget.

From what we understand at this point, CBC will fade quickly away. Another field, something along the line of "seller concession" will find its way into the MLS and it will be an indication of what the seller is willing to offer in the way of "closing costs". Ultimately, selling agents (i.e., the agents representing the buyers) will have to negotiate their own compensation, both with their own clients and ultimately with the seller.

## ● LISTING AGENTS

"Why would I want to offer the buyer's agent anything? I just read about this lawsuit that said sellers don't have to pay for that anymore, I'm not offering a penny!" Get prepared to hear that a few times from sellers in the immediate future. When you do, ask them this question: While it's true (as it always has been) that each seller is within their right to offer zero buyer broker compensation, what do you think that's going to do the buyer pool? Buyer brokers work pretty hard, and they take on a lot of legal liability. They earn their 2.5%-3%. How many buyers can afford to simply write a check for that amount? Very few. Which means very few of those buyers will have agents to introduce them to your listing. Your buyer pool just went down from virtually every buyer in the market, to those rare few that can afford to pay their own agent, or those large, institutional buyers that have their own in-house sales staff.

"Why can't you just do both, don't most buyers want to work directly with the listing agent anyway?" You'll probably hear that as well. This is the point where you tell sellers, again, that buyer brokers, and dual agents, do a lot of work. As a listing agent, your job is to use your skills to get the property seen by as many qualified buyers as is possible. That's how you earn your compensation. A buyer broker has a different job; to shepherd buyers (often inexperienced buyers) through the transaction, advise them on red flags, arrange inspections, etc; a totally different set of responsibilities, and legal liabilities. You're not going to do both jobs and take on all of the liability that comes with the fiduciary buyer relationship, for 2% compensation. We used to reduce our commission when we represented both buyer and seller, now we're going to do the opposite.

## ● BUYER'S AGENTS

This is where the industry will really see some significant change. Buyers are used to a fairly informal arrangement with their agents and brokerages, at least at first. They walk into your office, call you; email, etc., and you just start showing them houses. No money changes hands: heck, the topic of your payment often doesn't even come up. There is virtually no other industry in which someone starts working for you without any promise of payment. That's about to make big one-hundred-and-eighty-degree turn. Compensation is something buyer's agents are going to address early, and often.

If you're not already familiar with the Buyer Broker Agreement, do yourself a favor and get familiar with it. It's going to be a big part of your life. You know what they say about gravity? It's not just a good idea, it's the law. The same is now true of the buyer broker agreement. Per the proposed settlement, it's now mandatory when you're representing a buyer, and you've got to have it signed before you show a property. Also, make sure your compensation is stated in the agreement; if you don't put anything in the agreement, you're not getting paid. You can't be paid more than the amount stated in the buyer broker agreement and remember, the listing agent is no longer sharing his or her commission with you; this is significant.

Under the old rules, if you did your job, and the transaction closed, you got paid the amount stated in the MLS. If the listing agent tried any funny business and you didn't get paid, you went to the local Association and if the listing agent still didn't pay, they lost their MLS privileges. As such, nearly every commission was paid pretty smoothly. Now, however, your agreement isn't with the listing agent, or the seller. The seller has simply offered a certain amount towards closing costs for the buyer. When the transaction closes escrow, the concessions are paid to the buyer, who then pays (hopefully) his or her agent per the Buyer Broker Agreement. But what if that doesn't happen? What if the buyer decides not to pay?

Can you force the buyer to arbitrate with the local Association? Maybe. Depends on what is in the Buyer Broker Agreement. What happens if the Association awards your compensation and orders the buyer to pay, but they still won't do it? The Associations don't have any power over non-members. You'll have to take the award and order to the Superior Court.

## ● ON THE HORIZON

There is talk of proposing per diem charges for buyer agents showing properties to prospective buyers. Those free rides to multiple houses on any given weekend might be a thing of the past. There's also talk of limited agencies for buyers that don't want to commit to a 2% or 3% compensation. In other words, you might have an agency relationship in which you don't get paid as much, but you also don't do all the work (and take on all the liability) that you once did. This one will be a bit trickier, as it will have to comport with existing California law.

Hang on. It's going to be a wild ride.



# VERONIQUE MIRAMONTES

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By David Cornwell  
Photos by Elizabeth Ireland Photography

If you only had one word with which to describe Veronique Miramontes—Vee for short—it might be unique. That uniqueness begins the moment she talks to you, her French roots quickly apparent with her distinctive accent. But it's when she starts talking about her love of motorcycles and her business, Transactions Realty, you realize just how exceptional she is.



Starting her real estate career as an agent, Vee says she realized early on that there was one particular aspect of the business she particularly enjoyed. “I realized I loved paperwork,” she says of her business’s origins, becoming a transaction coordinator for a brokerage before opening Transactions Realty in 2009.

“Puzzles are one of my passions and paperwork is like putting a puzzle together for me. A transaction coordinator is a bit like that. I’m actually having fun while I’m working and being paid for it. So, it’s a win-win.”

Her other passions include motorcycles and her husband, Denis. She rides a Honda Shadow and he

an Indian. “It’s hard to explain to those who don’t ride the sense of freedom you have on a motorcycle,” she says. It was motorcycling that first brought the couple together years back, when Denis, a native of Quebec, Canada, attended the same California motorcycle event as Vee. Ten years ago, they married.

In addition to touring on their bikes, Vee says they also enjoy taking in baseball games and tennis matches together. At the time of her interview, she and Denis were just back from the Indian Wells Open. “We love it and go every year,” she says.

Vee moved to the US when she was 25, settling in New Jersey where she worked as an au pair for about a year, but says she wasn’t really happy. “So, I decided to go to the other side of the country and see what California had to offer.”

“That’s when I kind of stumbled upon real estate by accident. I don’t think anybody grows up saying ‘I’m going to be a real estate agent,’ but it was a good fit for me.”

As for her love of motorcycles, she traces it to a moped she rode growing up. “I’m from a big family and as the second oldest had a lot of responsibility for helping raise my siblings—making sure everybody was dressed, fed and where they needed to be,” she says. “My parents couldn’t pay for my driver’s license and certainly couldn’t afford a car for the things I needed to do, so I had a little moped. I loved it.”

And while it is a different type of freedom than that felt on a motorcycle, she says the freedom of being a transaction coordinator was part of what attracted her to the profession. “I work from home and can take my



laptop and be gone for a month without anyone knowing and without anyone needing to know,” she says. “It gives me the flexibility to work from anywhere in the world.”

With family in France and Denis’s family in Quebec, that flexibility is important, she says, adding that Transactions Realty gives Realtors flexibility, too. “A lot of agents don’t realize that it takes so much time to take care of the paperwork,” Vee says, and Transactions Realty is a cost-efficient way to take that responsibility off their shoulders. She says her experience, among other things, helps set her apart. “Over the years, I’ve seen the ups and downs and changes in real estate, the continually



“

I DON'T MIND WORKING HARD. IT ALWAYS PAYS OFF.

**BUT I'M LUCKY THAT WHAT I DO ISN'T REALLY WORK.**”



changing forms and documentation,” she says. “Having worked on so many different transactions and situations makes me ready for anything and I go out of my way to stay updated.” Plus, she says, having worked as an agent with buyers and sellers, “I know what agents are going through. That makes a big difference and helps me be a bit more sympathetic to what they’re facing with every transaction.”

For Vee, her success can be traced to her parents, who she says, “taught us how to work really hard.” “I don’t mind working hard. It always pays off,” she says. “But I’m lucky that what I do isn’t really work.”



Elizabeth Ireland  
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# CAROLINE Rander

Photos by Brandon Pease- Linked Preview, LLC



Gratitude  
Brings  
Success

**Tell us what life experiences have shaped who are both personally and professionally.**

My childhood experience in war torn Beirut definitely instilled in me a deep sense of gratitude merely for being alive. The incident that marked me happened when I was 9 years old - a bomb fell inside our building and it was absolute chaos. It's a miracle we made it out alive, and what ensued where 8 days of packing and leaving our home behind in hopes of finding a better future in Canada where my parents moved us to. Since then and to this day, I wake up each morning with a grateful heart and tell myself, "I have been given another day, how can I make the best of it?". Every day is definitely not easy, but starting each day with that mindset helps me do my best.

**What were the life events that led you to become a REALTOR®?**

I worked in corporate for over a decade prior to becoming a Realtor. I held roles as a software engineer and project manager primarily but for the second half of those years, I would leave work every day feeling empty, wondering if this really was my calling because I wanted to make a direct impact in people's lives so much. It was difficult to feel that in the roles I had. Considering we lost our home when I was so young, and the sense of identity that went with that, home meant a lot to me also having been uprooted and having moved so many times as a teen. I realized homeownership is also people's largest investment. I also had two very poor experiences with realtors when I sold my first property, so I dove into the courses to become a Realtor vowing to myself I would have higher standards and provide an elevated experience to clients so that people wouldn't go through what I did. That is actually also why I co-wrote my first book about selling a home successfully!

**What do you believe are the biggest reasons for your success?**

I constantly stay educated, always striving to perfect my services and adapting to

people's needs, the changes in our industry, technology, etc. I also take people's trust seriously and will do anything to see my clients succeed. I also highly attribute my success to implementing what I am taught by the best in the business. I highly believe in accelerating one's success by learning from others who have been there before you and then giving it your own spin.

**How have you juggled the demands of motherhood and your busy real estate career?**

To be honest I don't know that I juggle this as well as I'd like. I carry mom guilt though it has gotten better the more I learn to give myself grace. I believe that quality is more important than quantity, and I try to carve time out where I give my undivided attention to my girls together and separately with each of them. I have noticed it's not so much the amount of time we are together that matters but rather, how attuned I am to them and their needs when we are together. I have also learned that you can't balance everything perfectly at all times; sometimes the focus will be more on real estate especially when it gets insanely busy, other times the focus will need to be on relationships, family, self-care. I don't think it's realistic to expect all areas of life to be balanced perfectly/equally at all times.

**What has been the most rewarding aspect of real estate while raising your children?**

As hard as it is to constantly feel like you could work 24/7 and still have a ton of work left to do, I think that using the flexibility that comes with being an entrepreneur in a positive way is the most rewarding aspect. Being able to take my kids to school, pick them up, volunteer at their school sometimes, get a workout in daily, take them to Birthday parties, attend their important events, has all been a blessing. It's much harder to do that with 9-5 type of job. I absolutely love being my own boss and getting out of my business what I put into it.

**Who was your mentor when you got started?**

Mike Marmion was a phenomenal mentor to me in my early years when I was with Windermere. For the past 3 years and to this day, Krista Mashore is my coach, and she exemplifies all the qualities, intelligence, drive, passion, values, expertise that I admire. She helped me understand the power of mindset and rewiring our brain to release old, limiting beliefs - which often times are scripts told to us in our upbringing, but they are not who we are. It's amazing the power our mind and inner dialogue has. When you start letting go and uncovering your full potential, the sky is the limit!

**What has been your happiest or proudest moment?**

Strictly business speaking, my proudest moments are when I feel my clients' emotions when they are turning the key to their new home for the first time, or when I hear their joy when I make the call their offer got accepted, or when they get all choked up during our 1:1 initial session where I go deep with my questions to uncover why they want to move. That type of direct impact is exactly why I got into this business and it's what fuels me to keep going.

**As a successful businesswoman, what legacy would you like to leave for your children or others?**

To remember that we come with nothing and leave with nothing but that the impact we make on others last a lifetime and beyond. The ultimate goal isn't how much we accumulated though I do think a positive relationship with money is healthy.

**Do you have a favorite quote or mantra that motivates you?**

I have several but one that resonates is "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that" by Martin Luther King. It's true in so many ways, where darkness can be symbolized by failure, despair, hurt, or whatever

might be causing us pain at any given moment. Instead of turning toward more darkness, light to me is synonymous with hope, kindness, courage, compassion, acceptance, especially toward ourselves.

**How do you take care of yourself?**

I love self-care! I carve time out to dance 6 days a week and currently working very hard to implement a consistent nighttime routine with no screens where I get to journal, meditate and practice yoga on my mat before sleep. Easier said than done but I will get there. I also love massages and escaping to the beach any chance I get. There is nothing like being grounded, toes in the sand and all senses overtaken by nature's beauty. I wish I could do it more often. I live for the sun and ocean (along with coffee and chocolate!)

**Who inspires you?**

My grandma. She is the most optimistic person I have ever known and has an unshakeable faith in the higher powers. For decades, she has repeated her mantra, and it has stuck with me, "eat, pray, dance and you will be just fine".

**Tell us a goal that you are trying to achieve.**

I would love to expand my growing business by hiring like-minded professionals so that together we can do even greater things and help more individuals and families who need us!

**Seeing your success now, what would you tell your younger self when you were getting started?**

Don't worry so much, don't overthink so much, and trust that as long as you maintain your work ethics, passion for life and your belief in yourself and others, you will find your happy journey.

Oh, and please trust your emotional intelligence as much as your head. You have no idea how that perfect blend of sensitivity and logic is going to help you!

*We spoke to Caroline Rander of eXp Realty, a woman who as a child fled war-torn Beirut, to begin life again in the safety of Canada then the United States. Her dramatic childhood has led to an attitude of being grateful for life and living every day to its fullest. Her children are an enormous motivator, and the well-being of her clients is also something she takes seriously. Let's hear more about this strong, resilient woman and how she manages her life and career in Real Estate.*



# AMBER TANNEHILL

REAL  
ESTATE,  
A FAMILY  
AFFAIR

Photography By Brandon Pease-Linked Preview, LLC

*With a mother and grandmother in the Real Estate industry, it wasn't a surprise to Amber to follow their lead. She began working in Property Management after high school and jumped into Real Estate several years later. Now she is managing several offices for CBW, while juggling life as a mom of two. Let's hear a bit more about her story.*

## What were the life events that led you to become a REALTOR®?

I started managing multi-family properties when I was 19 years old. My first "real" job was managing a large apartment community in Ventura, CA. I started as a leasing agent and made my way up the ladder. With my roots deeply intertwined in Real Estate, with both my grandmother and Mother in the field - I didn't have much of a choice.

## What do you believe is the biggest reason for your success?

Having moved into management in 2022, I always remind agents to stay consistent and show up. Real Estate can be a very demanding profession. You have to create systems to market yourself, to manage transactions and always be filling a pipeline for future business. The market will forever be changing and agents need to stay ahead of the shifts in order to thrive. I also subscribe to the philosophy that "people will never forget how you made them feel". I think it is

important to do what you say you are going to do (and more!) and always communicate along the way.

## Tell us about your family.

I have two children of my own - my son Blake is 23 years old, and my daughter is 12. They are definitely my "why" and without them, I would be one lonely old lady.

## How have you juggled the demands of motherhood and your busy real estate career?

I can't say I've done the best job at this, however, the older I get, the more I realize how important it is to plan ahead - at least a month - but more if you really want to find success. I have also discovered that I can get about 85% of the work I need to do, done, IF I start (very) early in the morning. As a manager, I spend most of my day on the phone fielding questions and solving problems, so the morning gives me a chance to get ahead and get a larger portion of my work done before most are getting out of bed.

## What has been the most rewarding aspect of real estate while raising your children?

This is both a blessing and a curse, but the flexibility has been the most rewarding part of having this career. Real Estate has allowed me to be present for awards assemblies, swim meets, soccer games, football games and family vacations. Granted I have missed a lot as well, but I'm 1000% sure that I would have missed a lot more if I was punching a time clock.

## Who influenced how you do life the most? What did he/she teach you?

My very first mentor was my mother since she started her career in the 90's. I also worked with an amazing group of seasoned agents - in my first few years in real estate, that showed me the importance of establishing a database and consistently staying in touch with those people and the importance of maintaining strong relationships.

## What has been your happiest or proudest moment?

Very cliché, but true, I think that would be a tie between the day my son was born and the day my daughter was born. They both make me a very happy momma.

## As a successful business-woman, what legacy would you like to leave for your children?

First and foremost, I want my children to remember me as someone who loved to spend time with others and who enjoyed a good laugh. I want my kids to understand there is a balance to being a successful businessperson and also just being a good person. While money may make some things easier, it doesn't solve all of life's problems.

## Do you have a favorite quote or mantra that motivates you?

The way to get started is too quit talking and begin doing. - Walt Disney

## How do you take care of yourself?

Every now and then I "book" a day off. I get a massage and I get my nails done. I also try and spend time at the beach - preferably when the weather is warmer. The sun, the sand and a good book will always restore my soul.

I thrive when I feel like my life is harmonious. There are several ways that I feed my soul - but the most important is by delegating mundane tasks. I hired a housekeeper about 8 years ago and that is the single most amazing gift I have ever given myself. Now I just need to figure out how to

afford a personal chef! I also find joy in being in the company of other people that find happiness in the little things - like playing pickle ball and going out for Tacos!

## Who inspires you?

I am inspired by people who work hard and who are always looking to stay ahead of the herd as opposed to following it. However, I will also say that my maternal grandmother was my biggest inspiration as she somehow found a way to spend time with us. She also loved to laugh and have a good time. She had a lot of 'isms' that I still share to this day. My favorite - "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger".

## Tell us a goal you are currently trying to achieve?

I recently traveled to Europe - Ireland - for the first time in my life. I realized when I was there is so much more to see and do. I am now on a mission to travel to a new destination every year - both in the US and in Europe. Greece, Spain and Iceland are all bucket list items for the next 5 years.

## Seeing your success now, what would you tell your younger self when you were getting started?

I had my real estate license when I was 19 years old and I really wish I had gotten into real estate much earlier. I was 36 when I finally took a leap of faith and moved from a salaried position into a commission only role. If I knew then what I know now, I would have made the transition much sooner.







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# Charmaine

## ORCINO-GONZALES

Photos by Brandon Pease- Linked Preview, LLC

*When meeting Charmaine, you are instantly put at ease. Her personality is lively and fun, you can't help but smile around her. Being a mom to 3 and serving on multiple committees' for both her job and kids, she can handle anything, and it shows. This is what she told us:*



### Busy mom, Busy agent

*Tell us what life experiences have shaped who you are both personally and professionally?*

There were two specific life changing experiences that shaped me into the person I am today. Although they were both extreme and changed the course of my life for the better, it was not obvious at the time and they were very difficult to work through. It is definitely true that achieving success in the face of adversity is a whole lot sweeter. The first was back when I was in college. I was actually a dance major and aspired to dance professionally. I ended up injuring my knee when I was rehearsing for a show in Las Vegas and ended up needing surgery. I was devastated. This changed the trajectory of my career because all of the energy I put into dancing was then shifted to work while I was working as a part time bank teller. I ended up accelerating quickly after the shift. Had I not injured my knee, I wouldn't have shifted my focus and discovered that I had other valuable skills that would serve me well in life. The second was when I made the decision to transition to real estate. I planned to stay with my former employer until the wheels fell off, but I was finding myself in situations that forced me to rethink my career, with all signs pointing to me needing to make a change and choose my family over everything else. It was a difficult decision to leave behind the only career I knew in my adult life to transition to something new. Turned out to be the best decision I ever made.

*What were the life events that led you to become a REALTOR®?*

I had a successful 19-year career in banking before transitioning to real estate. I was ready for a change and wanted more autonomy with my schedule to allow me to be more present for my family. I felt like I missed so much with my oldest son and the early years for my second son were passing by so fast. Even though I work more now, I can plan around my family's schedule. Additionally, I wanted to do something that had more meaning and helped others in a more meaningful way.

*What do you believe is the biggest reason for your success?*

This is a difficult question to answer because I feel like I have a long way to go in terms of achieving success by my definition as it relates to my real estate career. I will say that I'm proud of many other things that I've accomplished, such as serving as the Chair of the PSAR YPN Committee and REAL Awards and as PTA President for the last two years and those attributes to the success I find in those things is my commitment and my vision. I'm very clear on what I want to accomplish, make sure to clearly communicate that vision to everyone involved, and remain committed to see it all the way through. I'm also a little crazy, which helps lol!

*Tell us about your family.*

I married my high school sweetheart, and together, we have 3 children: Alijah, Jeremiah, and Adeleiah.

*How have you juggled the demands of motherhood and your busy real estate career?*

I won't pretend that I have it all figured out because in all honesty it is an ongoing struggle and the mom

guilt is real. I do my best to be present in what I'm doing at the moment so I can be focused on what's in front of me at the time, so I can feel like I'm closing loops rather than juggling all the balls in the air at the same time and not accomplishing anything. To avoid the mom guilt, I try to involve my family with my work as much as possible so I don't have to compromise spending time with them. I'm very lucky that my husband and kids are my biggest cheerleaders and fully support all of the aspects of my career. They enjoy chipping in the workload to help, whether it be putting stamps on mailers or putting out open house signs, they are there for me.

*What has been the most rewarding aspect of real estate while raising your children?*

The most rewarding aspect is seeing my kids witness the impact I make in my clients' lives by helping them achieve their homeownership goals.

*What has been your happiest or proudest moment?*

It's tough to choose any one moment since I feel so blessed and grateful for everything in my life. But I'm happiest spending time with my family and friends and I'm proudest when I see my kids achieving great things and being great humans. Workwise, I've been blessed to be a part of so many special journeys, it is so hard to choose one. But if I had to choose one to highlight, it would have to be a very special client that I helped purchase her first home at the age of 69. She wanted to surprise her family, so no one knew about it the whole time, which was almost a whole year. Her family found out when she asked them to meet us when she got her

keys. It was such a special experience and I'm so thankful I got to be a part of it.

*As a successful businesswoman, what legacy would you like to leave for your children?*

The legacy I want to leave for my children is to always put God first, which will ensure you do everything with integrity, never half-ass anything you commit to doing, and remember that nothing is more important than family.

*Do you have a favorite quote or mantra that motivates you?*

"If you really want to do something, you'll find a way. If you don't, you'll find an excuse." - Jim Rohn

*How do you take care of yourself?*

I make sure that I have some alone time or a rare couch day every now and then so I can recharge, and an occasional massage helps to keep my crazy in check.

*Who inspires you?*

I find so much inspiration everywhere. I'm very intentional with who I surround myself and spend time with. I try to take bits and pieces of them all.

*Tell us a goal that you are trying to achieve.*

The ultimate goal is to achieve financial freedom, but I have some other goals that I'd like to achieve along the way.

*Seeing your success now, what would you tell your younger self when you were getting started?*

Show up every day, especially on the days you don't want to, and success will come.



# PSAR

## PERAZA

### CREATING A FAMILY DYNASTY

Photography By Brandon  
Pease-Linked Preview, LLC

We spoke with Leslie Peraza, Chula Vista native and successful agent, one who has repeatedly been listed in the top 1% of all agents in the Pacific Southwest Association of Realtors. Serving clients has always been a priority, both when working at a grocery store and working in real estate. Let's hear her story, and plans for the future, which includes her sons in her real estate business as well!

#### What were the life events that led you to become a REALTOR®?

Back in 2003, the grocery stores went on strike for 6 months. At the time, I worked at Ralph's Grocery Store as a cashier for over 17 years. This job helped me put myself through college and graduate from SDSU with a bachelor's degree in social work. I loved my job, and the best part was serving my customers. During the strike, I felt betrayed, and I decided that I wasn't going to go back to work for the grocery store.

I took a leap of faith and decided to pursue my Real Estate License. I literally told my husband, "Give me 5 years and if I don't make it as a realtor, I'll go get a real job." 20 years later, I absolutely love being a Realtor and still feel that I haven't work a day in my life.

#### What do you believe is the biggest reason or reason for your success?

I believe that my positive attitude throughout my life has been a huge reason for my success. You have to be able to believe in yourself and your abilities to overcome challenges in life.

Positive thinking will always help you overcome obstacles and keep you driven even when things don't go your way.

#### Tell us about your family.

I come from a family of 4 and we all reside in Chula Vista, California. My mother, older sister, younger brother and myself. Raised by a single parent, my mother instilled, education hard work, respect and perseverance.

I'm happily married to Luis E Peraza of 32 years and have 2 wonderful boys. Our oldest son is Luis E Peraza II, age 26. Luis graduated from Gonzaga University with Bachelor's in finance and entrepreneurship and a master's in business administration. Our youngest son is Angelo Trinidad Peraza, age 22. Angelo attends the University of San Diego and plays Baseball for the school. He's a senior and majoring in Business Administration, an emphasis in Real Estate and will be graduating in May 2024.

#### How have you juggled the demands of motherhood and your busy real estate career?

Throughout my Real Estate career, I've been so blessed with family support.

The first 10 years of my career, I worked long hours but always tried my best to work around my boys' school schedule and extra- curricular activities.

#### What has been the most rewarding aspect of real estate while raising your children?

The most rewarding aspect of being a realtor and raising my boys has been the freedom to write my own schedule. I loved dropping off and picking them up from school, watching them play sports and eating dinner together as a family.

#### What has been your happiest or proudest moment?

This is a hard question to answer because I don't give myself enough recognition to say I made it! I'm proud to share that I've been recognized top 1% of Realtors the last several years in San Diego County out of 22,040 active licensed realtors. The REAL Awards are formal recognition from the Pacific Southwest Association of REALTORS® (PSAR) for sales production. The REAL Award stands for REAL ESTATE ACHIEVEMENTS & LEADERSHIP. PSAR is very excited to publicly honor San Diego County's top-producing agents, brokers, and

teams who have exhibited excellence through their sales achievements and industry leadership.

I'm also very proud of my two boys. They've grown up to be respectful members of society, with a higher education, hardworking, humble and world travelers.

#### As a successful businesswoman, what legacy would you like to leave for your children?

The legacy that I would like to leave behind is that always treat people with respect. It doesn't matter their gender, ethnicity, or economic status. I want people to always remember me by the way, I made them feel. I genuinely love helping others, and I will always do my best to make an impact in someone's life not expecting anything in return.

#### Do you have a favorite quote or mantra that motivates you?

I Believe- I Can - I Will

When I'm having a bad day ...

I start saying this out loud and start changing my thoughts.

#### How do you take care of yourself?

I'm proud to tell you my age. I turned 55 years old a few months ago and feel great! The last 10 years, I've made a conscious commitment to take care of myself spiritually, emotionally and physically. I called this my self care days. I work-out 3-4 times a week. I love to take Yoga, Box and Sparkcycle classes on a weekly basis. I enjoyed my monthly acupuncture sessions, manicures, pedicures, lunch dates with my BFF's, family time and traveling.

#### Who inspires you?

My mother of 77 years old inspires me to keep going. I've never known someone so committed to working hard, so loving and always being there for her family.

#### Tell us a goal that you are trying to achieve.

My goal is to become a broker, open my own brokerage with my 2 boys and build a DYNASTY!

#### Seeing your success now, what would you tell your younger self when you were getting started?

Dream Big!







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# PSAR REAL AWARDS 2024

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