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LINDSEY BROU

NOVEMBER 2024



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Ryan Thomassie

Louisiana Born, LSU Proud: As a native of South Louisiana and former LSU Offensive Lineman, I bring passion to everything I do. A Business Administration graduate, my two decades in the mortgage industry have been marked by a commitment to client success. Married for over 20 years with a son, my free time revolves around sports and outdoor activities. Whether coaching youth sports or cheering on LSU and the Saints, I'm dedicated to staying active. Joining NOLA Lending over a decade ago, I believe in their process and products, ensuring the best service for my clients. Let's achieve your goals together!

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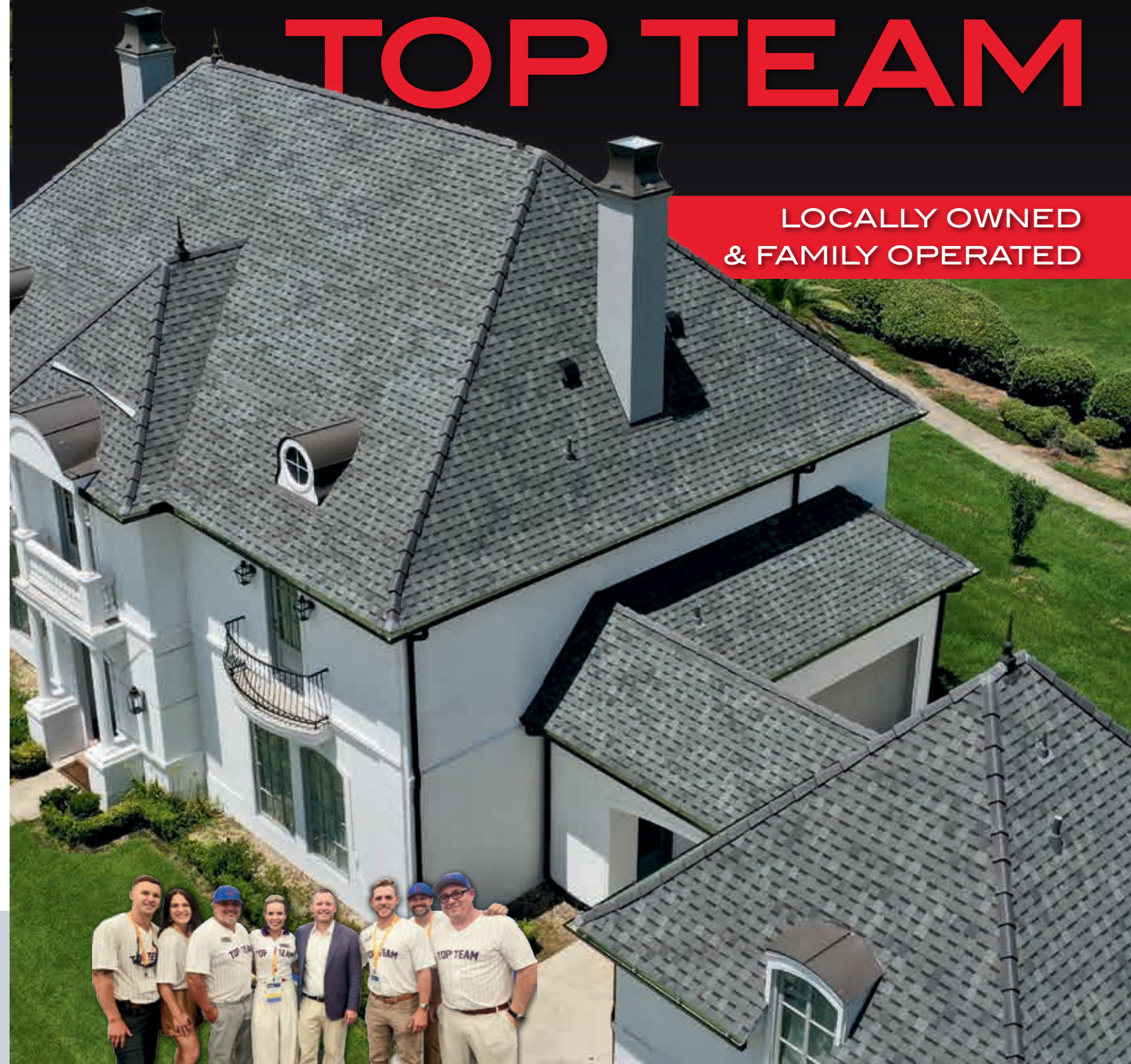
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publisher's note

I love November.
I always have.

And as these last two months of 2024 begin to settle in, and we begin preparing for the holidays ahead and the upcoming election, *"insert reminder for your readers to vote"*, it's important to pause and acknowledge the significance of this time of year. It's a season of gratitude, reflection, and responsibility— and a moment when we choose to honor those who have served our nation.



Gary Hand
US Army 1989-1992



John Griffin
US Army 1995-2001



Nathan Tallo
US Army 2002-2008

Veteran's Day, on November 11th, reminds us to give thanks to the brave men and women who have served and sacrificed for our country.

Each month we share a feature article on one of our advertising partners. In this edition, we highlight our Preferred Partner, Monique Briggs, Sr. Mortgage Loan Originator with Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation, who also happens to be a veteran. We want to extend our gratitude to Monique along

with three more of our very own, Nathan Tallo, Gary Hand and John Griffin, all of whom served time in the US Army.

As we wrap up this year, I pray we can come together and focus on the good, and share hope for the days ahead. I encourage you to embrace this time, reflect on the sacrifices made by others, and look forward to the opportunities ahead.

With respect and appreciation,
Gina

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A S H L E Y M A B R Y

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By Laken Foisie
Photos by Stevie LeJeune

TRAITS
THAT
MATTER



T

or Ashley Mabry, REALTOR® with The Sandusky Group of Keller Williams First Choice, people make all the difference. This has been a guiding principle in her real estate journey. With three years of experience combined with a background that reflects her passion for serving others, Ashley is making a name for herself in the Greater Baton Rouge area, transforming her approach to business and life along the way.



Before Ashley transitioned to real estate, she worked as a restaurant bartender and manager where she still works just a few nights a week. Though the industries might seem worlds apart, the skills she developed in hospitality laid a strong foundation for her real estate career. “I’ve always had a passion for working with the public and serving others,” Ashley says. “When I read statistics showing that those with a background in the service industry often find success in real estate, I knew it was time to make the leap.”

Though no one specifically inspired her to become a Realtor, Ashley recognized that her dedication to connecting with people would serve her well in this field. Now, she’s using those same service-oriented principles to guide her clients through one of the biggest decisions of their lives—buying or selling a home. As with any profession, real estate comes with its own set of challenges. For Ashley, one of the greatest obstacles she’s had to overcome is stepping outside her comfort zone to grow both personally and professionally.

“In order to succeed, I had to do things that made me feel uncomfortable,” Ashley admits. “But that’s where the real growth happens. Once I began embracing the idea of pushing past my comfort bubble, I saw significant changes in my business.” She’s quick to point out that while these uncomfortable steps can be daunting, they are also incredibly rewarding. For Ashley, putting herself out there and taking risks has been transformative, both for her career and for her personal development.

When she’s not working with clients, Ashley enjoys life in Livingston Parish with her husband Jeffrey and three boys, Brantley (10), Braden (9), and Benson (3). “My boys are a huge part of my why, and my motivation behind working so hard.” Ashley loves being outdoors when the weather cooperates.

“
”
I KNOW IT SOUNDS
CLICHE’, BUT I TRULY DO
LOVE WHAT I DO.



“You’ll usually find me tending to our chickens, working in the garden, or supervising a DIY project that I’ve tasked my husband with.” She finds joy in working on projects that bring her family closer and make their home even more special.

In her three years as a Realtor, Ashley has identified what she believes are the three most important traits for success in the business: strong communication, putting service over sales, and adaptability. “These traits are essential,” Ashley explains. “Good communication helps you build trust with your clients. Putting service before sales shows that you genuinely care about their needs, and adaptability is crucial because the market—and each client’s situation—is always changing.”

At the end of the day, Ashley wants others to know she’s just a “real gal” chasing her dreams, setting personal goals, and striving to achieve them—all while forming meaningful connections with her clients. “I know it sounds cliché, but I truly do love what I do,” she says. “Even during the challenging times, I’ll stop at nothing to overcome the obstacles in my way.” For Ashley, real estate isn’t just about closing deals—it’s about building friendships, making a positive impact, and continuously pushing herself to grow.



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What's Filling Your Thanksgiving Plate?

Caroline Russell Knaps

Market Real Estate Co

Definitely having fried turkey, dressing but confession we use Stove Top, mashed potatoes with gravy ALL over them, homemade Mac n Cheese and cabbage. ... and my highly anticipated *Apple Crumble* to finish off the yummiel!

Nicole Cotwell Rowell

Realty Executives

My mom makes the best cornbread dressing! My nieces and nephews request my broccoli and cheese casserole and strawberry bowl cake! Food for days then a nice long nap!

Julie Jones

Keller Williams First Choice

Always: Turkey (grease-less fried), cornbread dressing, dumplings, mashed potatoes, gravy, sweet potato casserole, broccoli cauliflower casserole, green beans, cranberry sauce, rolls, pecan pie (grandma's recipe) and sugar cookies... and I always try a new vegetable recipe and a new appetizer. Carb overload and love being with my family!!!

Sheridan Fay

Redstick Financial

Bacon wrapped oysters! We have a huge family and when we used to host the gatherings in New Orleans, my mom would have to ration everyone to two until all were served. Then it was on. Big family rules dictate, "Whoever eats the fastest, get the mostest!"

Cherie' Goudeau Mack

Magnolia Roots Realty

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday! My mom always makes cornbread dressing with chicken stew and it's like a hug on plate! Definitely the food I look forward to the most! We have the usuals of green bean casserole, sweet potato casserole, turkey, ham and like 5 desserts

Laura Buck Smith

Market Real Estate Co

This year, we're doing something a little different and my family will be headed to the Beau Rivage in Biloxi for Thanksgiving! No cooking for me this year, but our Thanksgiving plate will be full of love and laughter and a new adventure, together!

Alex Colomb Polito

Baton Rouge Title

It's not just my Thanksgiving plate...but always...I am sincerely thankful for my life, blessed with a loving family who bring immense joy to my world. My health enables me to share the most amazing moments with my son, even if it means being playfully outdone in basketball or soccer by my energetic 7-year-old. My mental health allows me to remain peaceful in the face of uncertainty, while my spiritual health enables me to embrace opportunities to spread love and be a blessing.

Danni Downing

1 Percent Lists Premier

My family loves our Razzleberry Pie!

Aundrea Fontenot Allen

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My SafeSource team! Literally these people have been my why on so many days. With the insurance and real estate market, Covid and simply life...I know they have my back and I unwaveringly have theirs. I'm a lucky girl!

Gina Miller

Thanksgiving is the best! The food is not my favorite, but over the years I've mastered the art of a good plate! Honey Baked Ham, smoked or deep-fried turkey, my mom's dressing, my cranberry casserole, green bean casserole and a hot buttered roll!



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one to watch Shawn Gee

By Laken Foisie
Photos by Ace Sylvester

MOTIVATED TO CREATE

In just three years, REALTOR® Shawn Gee has transitioned from the classroom to the fast-paced world of real estate with creativity, drive, and a genuine love for his community.

Shawn brings a unique background and a fresh approach to the industry. Before real estate, he was a Middle School Band Director, a role that shaped much of his approach to building relationships and staying disciplined in his business. His passion for helping others, combined with his flair for creating engaging content, has our local Realtors entertained, informed and encouraged to branch out and try creating some content of their own.

Engaged

Like many new agents, Shawn began his career utilizing traditional methods of lead generation—cold calling, door-knocking, and hosting

open houses. While these methods are effective, Shawn soon found a different passion within real estate: content creation. “I think it took a little time to figure out how I wanted my business to look,” he admits. “Once I settled on creating content as the primary source of business, keeping myself motivated and seeing it through was the next difficult thing!” This shift wasn’t without its challenges. Building a presence on social media took patience, but his perseverance paid off. Shawn now generates much of his business through creative and engaging real estate content, showcasing his knowledge, as well as his magnetic and warm personality.



Shawn credits much of his motivation to creators like Matt Lionetti, whose real estate videos inspire him to think outside the box when connecting with potential clients. But it’s his wife and dogs that truly ground him. “My wife and my dogs are everything to me,” he says, highlighting the personal support system that keeps him balanced in an industry known for its demands. Along with family, Shawn emphasized his appreciation for Katie Miller. “I have an incredible broker.” He went on to say, “I decided

to join Katie because I admired how she treated her clients and the positive reactions they had towards her. She takes such great care of them, and I aspired to emulate that level of service, while learning from the best.”

Katie feels the same sentiments for Shawn and recognizes that his influencer status has come not because he chases it, but because he literally loves laughing and loves making people laugh. “I admire the type of Realtor he is becoming. He is

the agent that you want to work that deal with.” She continues, “Shawn is fair and level-headed. He’s consistent, helpful and always excited to learn new ways to be better at his job.”

Shawn and Katie both admire the “about the other guy” way to conduct business. Both of them recognizing that trait in one another. “When we talk through client care and transactions, never are Shawn’s concerns about how he can benefit, they are always about how can he do what’s best for his clients to make sure they are protected by him.”



Family Ties

Shawn's journey into real estate was sparked by his family's involvement in property investments and flips in New Orleans. Although he didn't pursue the exact same path, their encouragement led him to explore

something from the ground up. "I enjoy starting projects and growing them," he explains. "I did this with my band program as a teacher, and now I do the same with my social media platforms and real estate business." This philosophy of growth, combined with his three key traits—honesty, empathy, and diligence—drives his approach to client relationships and success in real estate.



When we talk through client care and transactions, never are Shawn's concerns about how he can benefit, they are always about how can he do what's best for his clients to make sure they are protected by him.

the industry. "My brothers thought I'd make a great REALTOR®, so I gave it a shot," Shawn recalls. What started as a suggestion soon became a thriving career, one he's embraced with dedication and creativity.

If you're looking for Shawn around town, chances are you'll find him in Mid-City. Whether he's eating, running, shopping, or filming, this neighborhood provides plenty of local inspiration for his next social media post. His deep connection to Mid-City allows him to not only work there, but also immerse himself in the community, offering clients an insider's perspective on one of the city's most vibrant, and growing areas.

Matters of Growth

One of Shawn's favorite aspects of his work is building



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MONIQUE BRIGGS

▶▶ partner spotlight



A Life of SERVICE



Hard work isn't just second nature for Monique Briggs —it's the foundation of her success and the heartbeat of her business. From graduating at the top of her class as a teen mom to her service in the Army and now, as a mom of three grown children who works in two full-time roles, Monique has always met life's challenges with determination and grit.

Monique was not informed about TOPS and other college scholarship programs in high school, but she knew she wanted to pursue higher education. And she knew she needed to provide for her son. So, at 17, her mom signed papers allowing her to enlist in the Army. What began as a two-and-a-half-year commitment turned into more than eight years of active military service. "I had grown to love it so much," she recalls.

She rose through the ranks - completing basic training at Fort Jackson in South Carolina before Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Fort Lee, Virginia. Then, she earned her 88M, or truck driver, designation at

Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, before reporting to her first duty station at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. There, she served for four years before completing a one-year tour in Korea at Camp Red Cloud (CRC) and returning to Fort Sill for two more years. She concluded her service at Fort Riley, Kansas. During that time, she earned designations as a non-commissioned officer and Squad Leader in a Medevac unit refueling helicopters. Although her active service ended in 2004 due to family obligations, she's a shining example of the lasting camaraderie of service members. Today, many of her proudest moments as a senior loan officer with Fairway Mortgage have been helping fellow veterans achieve homeownership.

IT'S WELL

Balancing roles as a full-time audit analyst for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, a former tax business owner, and a senior mortgage loan officer, Monique embodies perseverance and dedication. Despite technically being part-time, she gives her work as a senior mortgage loan officer with Fairway Mortgage a full-time commitment. Her passion for helping others, particularly fellow veterans, shines through in every aspect of her professional life. Her journey has been far from easy. However, her ability to press forward and focus on her mission has made her an invaluable resource for homebuyers.

“**I AM MILITARY AND HAVE PURCHASED TWO HOMES USING A VA LOAN. I’M MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE PROCESS BECAUSE I’VE EXPERIENCED IT.**”



“Thank God I don’t look like what I’ve been through,” Monique says, reflecting on the tremendous loss and grief she has faced, first, with the death of her fiancé and, years later, the passing of her husband. “I look for the good and everything, or I try to make the best out of everything,” she says. “And so, although I know that that’s not how I wanted those relationships to end, I know it was God’s plan. Because God has a plan for everything, I choose to see it as a blessing that I could be the love of their life for that time. And now I’m getting to experience that myself with the gentleman I’m currently with.”

Always one to find the silver lining, Monique takes pride in doing the same for her clients. Whether guiding first-time homebuyers or helping veterans navigate the VA loan process, she is committed to finding solutions even in the most challenging

situations. This sense of optimism and determination stems from her upbringing, where she learned the values of hard work and perseverance.

LESSONS LEARNED

Growing up in a household led by her grandparents, Monique learned the importance of education and hard work. Her grandfather, David Briggs, Jr., also an Army veteran, worked as a truck driver and instilled a sense of determination in her. “Papa Dee Dee was a hard worker,” she recalls. “He didn’t finish high school, but he worked hard and was a provider.” Monique and her sister were raised by their grandparents, as her mother became a parent before graduating high school. While their mother remained a constant presence in their lives, their grandparents took on the primary role of raising them, providing stability and guidance throughout their childhood.

Her grandfather’s belief in the power of education stayed with her throughout her life and ultimately pushed her to earn a master’s degree in business administration. “He was always big on education and pushed all the grand-kids to get an education. I think that’s why I went as far in school as I did,” she says, noting that her master’s degree was a personal goal rather than a professional necessity.

A VETERAN HELPING VETERANS

Licensed in eight states, Monique prides herself on being a resource and guide for her clients, helping them navigate the often complex process of securing a home loan. Smiling faces and secure financial futures are why she puts in the extra hours, effort and care. “With the peaks and valleys of this industry, you have to love to help people,” she says. Her genuine desire to serve others and intricate knowledge of finance make

her a powerhouse to have working on your behalf - veteran or civilian. And for veterans and active service members, she offers insights she’s learned firsthand.

“I understand how the military works,” she says. “That sets me apart from other lenders. I am military and have purchased two homes using a VA loan. I’m more knowledgeable about the process because I’ve experienced it. I know how to navigate it and exactly who to call to get information when I need it.”

This expertise, combined with her strong sense of camaraderie with other veterans, has made Monique a trusted partner for real estate agents and homebuyers, especially veterans and active military service members. “Helping other military families makes me proud to be a veteran,” she says. “That service member

camaraderie never leaves, regardless of how long you’ve been out of the military or retired. So, I love helping my veterans. I pride myself on that.”

LIFE-CHANGING

In addition to her personal touch with clients, Monique thrives within the support system at Fairway Mortgage. “We have a great team,” she says. “Even though I’m physically here in Louisiana and everybody else is in Texas, we have so much support from my team and the company itself.” She values the resources available to her and the company’s commitment to helping clients, no matter the complexity of their loan.

One of her proudest moments as a mortgage loan officer came when she helped an older couple purchase their first home after renting for over 30 years. “That’s what makes all the hard work worth it,” she says. Crunching

numbers is fun, but the opportunity to change lives truly fuels her. Monique’s devotion to her clients is evident in her work ethic, attention to detail, and personal connection with each buyer. “I make sure loans are underwriter-ready when I turn them in for processing,” she notes.

In her 27th year of federal service, balancing careers and caring for her family, Monique continues to lead with heart, discipline and genuine care for others. When she’s not working, she enjoys traveling and watching movies, often from the comfort of her bed on a weekend with no plans—a rare moment of rest for a woman who never stops. Whether serving her country, raising her family or guiding homebuyers to their first home, Monique approaches life with the perspective her grandfather taught her: work hard, serve others and never stop learning.

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Since adopting Gardere Christian Community School in the fall of 2014, the Christmas Give has been dedicated to ensuring that every child has a properly fitted pair of shoes.

With the kind support of New Balance of Baton Rouge/Big River Footwear Co., we've been able to provide brand-new New Balance shoes to these deserving students. The smiles on their faces when they receive comfortable footwear are truly priceless and serve as a reminder of the impact our community can have.

This year, we aim to provide 170 pairs of shoes, with each pair averaging around \$50. To achieve this goal, we are reaching out to compassionate individuals like you to contribute to our cause. Your donations will not only help us purchase shoes but also enable

us to provide each child with a pair or two of socks — making the season even brighter.

New Balance of Baton Rouge/Big River Footwear Co. has graciously offered us a 40% discount on each pair of shoes, along with free shipping, allowing us to maximize the impact of every dollar donated. Additionally, they have added a special touch by personalizing each shoe box from Santa, creating a magical experience for the chil-

dren. We will add these shoes to a gift bag filled with other donations we are gathering such as: a cozy new fleece blanket, snacks, dental hygiene bags, thanks to Nguyen Dental, and a small toy.

To contribute, please make your donation checks out to "New Balance" and drop them off at the following address:
Team Smith's Office, 4983 Bluebonnet Boulevard, Suite A, Baton Rouge, LA 70809

The drop-off deadline, for donation checks written out to New Balance, is December 6, 2024. Your support can truly change lives and bring joy to those who need it most.

For any questions or further information, please contact Laura Buck Smith at 225.413.3365 or Christie Viso at 225.505.6710.

Together, let's spread the gift of comfort and joy this holiday season!

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LINDSEY BROU

IT'S IN THE DETAILS

Lindsey Brou has built a life filled with the things she loves most: artful interiors, strong relationships and the joy of family. As a child, her great-grandparents' mid-century modern ranch sparked her interest in interior design with its curved brick partition wall, bubblegum pink bathroom tiling and built-in planters sprinkled throughout. Today, she channels that enchantment into helping clients discover the details that make a house feel like home.

As she approaches a decade in real estate, she's found her niche, blending her keen eye for distinctive architecture with her innate ability to connect with people. Her wife, Amber, has been her unwavering support throughout this journey, and their daughter, Rowen, is her ultimate motivation. Grateful for the life and career she's built, Lindsey is thriving as a Realtor, wife and mother—embracing every moment with grace and excitement.

Family Matters

Lindsey's passion for art, architecture and design is exceeded only by her love for her people, particularly her family. "Amber has been my absolute biggest supporter," she smiles.

After a friend encouraged Lindsey to list their home, she found the push she needed to dive into real estate—an industry she had never considered. "I had this preconceived notion of what a Realtor is supposed to be, and I just knew that I was not that," she recalls. But that nudge became the catalyst for her to get licensed and start her new career, and all along the way Amber was right there cheering her on. "She was the one saying, 'No, just do you, be you, and people will come.'"

Lindsey credits her vibrant and creative personality to the time she spent with her relatives growing up, as well as the teachers who recognized her penchant for art at an early age. "My dad's side of the family is artsy, creative," she explains.



“My mom is the person I credit all of my structure, responsibility and ingenuity—she taught me how to work with what I’ve got,” she laughs. Lindsey may have grown up an only child, but she comes from an enormous extended family. With her mother being one of five siblings and her father one of seven, she grew up around dozens of cousins. She fondly remembers holiday gatherings where family would come together, creating memories that have shaped her strong sense of family and belonging.

Built for This

Lindsey has embraced every step of her journey—from earning a bachelor’s degree in interior design to a management role in retail that took her across North America. The lessons she learned and the skills she honed throughout each chapter, combined with her energetic, can-do attitude empower her to thrive as a successful Realtor. When she needed a painting to add personality to a listing, instead of searching online for the perfect piece, she picked up her paints and created a custom artwork that matched her exact artistic vision. A true doer, Lindsey loves finding solutions that work for everyone. That same passion extends to showcasing the remarkable and nostalgic properties that she’s come to be known for.



“

Knowing people trust me with one of the biggest decisions of their lives fuels me to continue learning and becoming my best self year after year.

”

She’s drawn to mid-century modern design, relishing the nostalgia of winding covered staircases, expansive open floor plans and those iconic floor-to-ceiling windows. Though, any time capsule will do. “I have such an appreciation for anything done well in its time and well-preserved,” she says. She finds hidden gems—mosaics, stained glass windows, original fireplaces and boldly repeating arches—and gushes about their

She deeply admires the homes she calls time capsules, particularly because in South Louisiana, the elements are relentless in their assault on historic homes. Hurricanes and harsh weather conditions have made well-preserved period properties increasingly rare. As the years go by, fewer and fewer homes survive, leaving only a small fraction of what once stood as a testament to each era’s craftsmanship and design.



Authenticity in Action

Lindsey has carved out her niche marketing these distinctive homes, though she helps homebuyers with any type of property. She applies her interior design background, showcasing each home individually in its best light. And her success goes beyond expertise—she delivers exceptional service with a personalized touch, treating each client’s concerns as if they were hers. Though she admits her deep empathy can feel like a challenge at times, it fuels her commitment to achieving the best outcome for every client. The rare homes she markets embody

history and purpose in architecture and interior design. While others might pass right by, she has a keen eye for the architectural details that make a house not just a home, but a work of art.

more than just architectural history—they stand as symbols of resilience, like Lindsey herself, flourishing in an industry that demands passion, knowledge and resourcefulness.

"I don't cold call. I've never door-knocked. I think people come to me gravitationally because they know they'll be taken care of, and I think that's indicative I'm where I am supposed to be," she says. Her philosophy of trusting the process, being true to herself and believing that what's meant to be will naturally fall into place became

me with one of the biggest decisions of their lives fuels me to continue learning and becoming my best self year after year. I'm truly thankful for the trust and friendship of my clients."

“

I decided that I'm going to be me, and I'm going to do it my way—and it worked.

”

As Lindsey looks toward the future, she feels an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the life she has crafted—a life rich with cherished relationships, iconic interior elements and the joys of motherhood. She's exhilarated by the fact that each day brings new opportunities for growth and connection. And with every scroll-stopping photo of a dream home she finds, she celebrates the artistry of architecture while helping others find their everyday sanctuary. She remains committed to her philosophy of authenticity and trust, ensuring that her clients feel valued and supported. With excitement for what lies ahead, and fueled by the gratitude and passion she brings to everything she does, Lindsey is poised to make this her best year yet.



her guiding principles, and she confidently embraced her unique approach. "I decided that I'm going to be me, and I'm going to do it my way—and it worked."

Lindsey effortlessly blends joy into her busy, fulfilling life as a mom, exploring unique homes and building deep, lasting connections with friends and clients alike. "It means everything to me to be client-employed," she says. "I'm incredibly grateful for my career and the path that led me here. Knowing people trust

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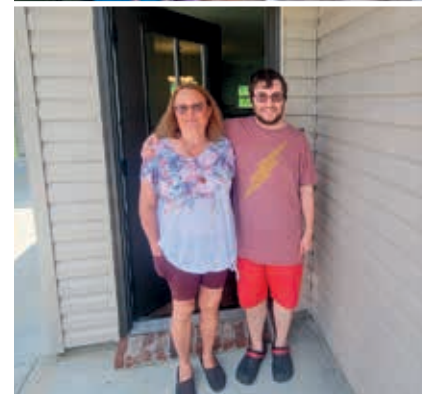
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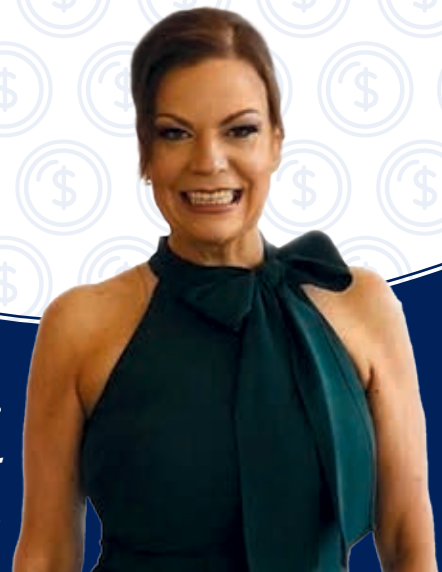
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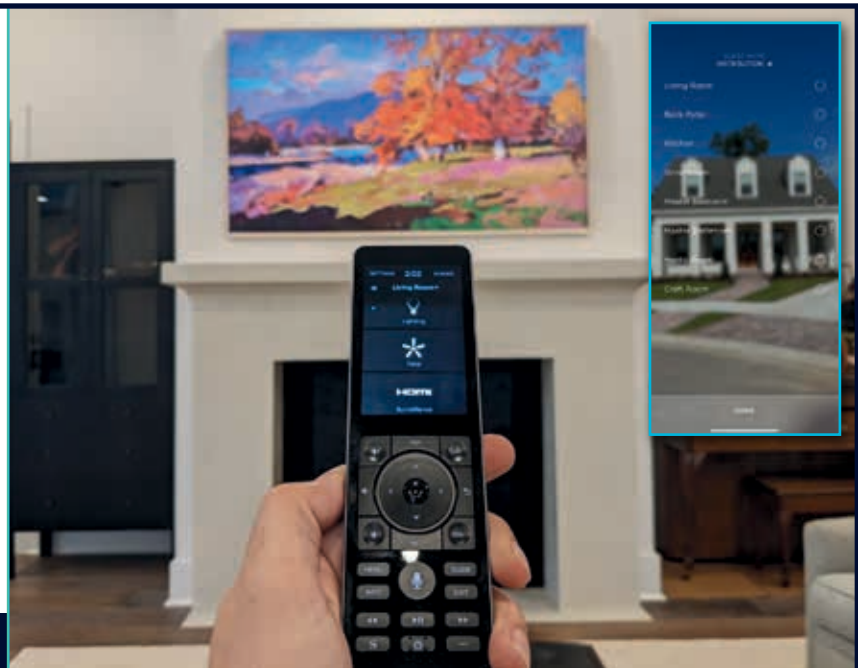
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