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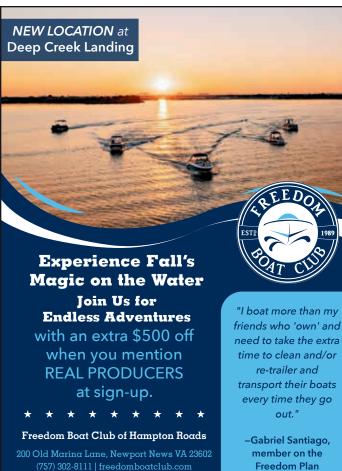


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If you are interested in contributing or nominating real estate agents, affiliates, brokers, owners or even yourself for stories, please email us at **joni@realproducersmag.com**.

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Cover photo by Mason Murawski, Mason Murawski Photography





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Story by Dan Steele Photos by Mason Murawski Photography

ReNaye Dane

GLOUCESTER REALTY

If you heard that ReNaye Dame was a third-generation REALTOR® and that not only had her grandfather founded Gloucester Realty in 1955, but her mother had been a REALTOR® and Principal Broker there as well, you might think that she had always intended to follow them into the family business. According to ReNaye, that wasn't the case. "My first decision was to follow in my oldest sister's footsteps and be a nurse," ReNaye reveals. "My sister worked at Riverside Regional Hospital as a nurse manager of the ICU, and she had, it seemed to me, a great career."

ReNaye, a student at Christopher Newport College, joined Riverside through its summer student program, going on to hold various positions throughout the hospital—first as a nurse's aide in a medical-surgical unit, then as a phlebotomist, and finally landing in emergency room admissions on the evening shift—an experience she fondly remembers and describes as wild, to put it mildly. "I saw some stuff," she reflects, "but I also learned to stay calm in emergencies while comforting people in their times of need."

Betty, sat down with her and asked if she had ever considered working with her family in real estate. There, ReNaye found herself starting down a new career path. She is still at a loss as to how it all happened. "I hardly remember the conversation," she admits amusedly. "It was so uneventful. I really hadn't thought about

One day, ReNaye's mother,

it; as a kid, I would come in on Saturdays for extra money to help my granddad and my mom by answering the phones and filing." While she may not remember the details of that life-changing conversation, ReNave proudly labels it a testament to her mother's persuasion skills. "What I take away is that's how persuasive my mom was; she convinced me to change majors while I hardly even realized she did it," ReNaye laughs. "If not for that conversation with my mom, I would be a nurse today."

Although both careers seem as if they couldn't be more dissimilar, ReNaye understands important parallels between them. "They're both helping people, just in different ways," she explains. Both fields provide deep personal access to clients and patients, and profound connections can be forged beyond the professional side of the relationship.

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"We go through so many deeply personal experiences with our clients," ReNaye comments. "We are with people at their highest highs and their lowest lows. We're not just there to open a door and sign a contract. I had a client recently who I feel came into my life for a reason. My mom had just passed, and she'd lost her mom around the same time. We both leaned on each other because we were going through the same thing while I helped her sell her mom's home. We sat at her mom's table, cried together, and told each other stories about our moms. There's so much more to real estate, which is a big part of what has kept me in this industry for so long and continues to make it fulfilling: the people. I'm often touched by my clients' stories, life experiences, generosity, kindness, and bravery."

After 32 years in real estate, ReNaye has developed many philosophies that define her career. One is to always act with honesty and integrity, a foundation her grandfather and mother gave her. Both of them, along with ReNaye, received the Code of Ethics award from their REALTOR® association during their careers.

LAUGHTER IS SO IMPORTANT.

I TRY TO INFUSE HUMOR
INTO MY BUSINESS BECAUSE
WHY NOT HAVE FUN DOING
IT? WE CAN DO SERIOUS
WORK AND MAKE IMPORTANT
DECISIONS WHILE BEING
JOYOUS AND HAPPY.

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"This legacy means everything to me and makes me strive to uphold the stellar reputation they both built and lived by," she states. Although she has many other philosophies, including continuing to learn, always bringing value, adapting, and loving what she has done, ReNaye enjoys bringing humor into her business. "Laughter is so important," she smiles. "It's gotten me through tough times and made good times much sweeter. I try to infuse humor into my business because why not have fun doing it? We can do serious work and make important decisions while being joyous and happy."

When she isn't serving her clients, ReNaye enjoys reading, boating, traveling, and listening to podcasts by Tom Ferry and Mel Robbins, whom she describes as incredibly uplifting, relatable, and an excellent source of real-life advice for making the best out of every day. ReNaye also plays volleyball, which satisfies her fiercely competitive nature and holds a special place in her heart. "My husband and I met playing volleyball," she shares. "I've been married to my best friend, Chris Hurst, for 22 years; we've been together for 30. I love competition, including pickleball more recently. Working out and playing sports keep me healthy and counterbalance the time I spend sitting in front of my computer. I also get to spend time with my friends, the most inspirational group of strong women, who motivate me so much."



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LEAH WALKER

on the rise



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SOUTHERN TRADE REALTY

Early in the morning, you might hear a familiar voice on Gloucester's local radio show. Xtra 99.1 WXGM. The show, humorously described as "two old guys and a mom," features Neal Steel, Ralph Motley, and our very own Leah Walker, Associate Broker with Southern Trade Realty. Leah's journey into radio began after she recorded a real estate ad, which led to an invitation to join the show. As a child, she would tape her own songs and run a radio show between them, a passion that has

Her radio show isn't the only thing that has come full circle for Leah. Born and raised in Middlesex, she was immersed in the building trades alongside her father, a custom builder. With a laugh, she recalls, "You don't scare me because I used to hand my dad the wrong tools," a testament to her early exposure to the construction industry. Through

these experiences, Leah gained invaluable insights into how homes are built from the ground up.

In addition to her hands-on education in the trades, Leah was actively involved in 4H during her youth, learning the importance of connecting with new people—a skill that has served her well in her real estate career. Before diving into real estate, Leah dedicated about a decade to being a stay-athome mom, raising her four children.





Leah's real estate journey began in 2018 when she and her husband sold their home. Interestingly, their REALTOR® was new to the profession, and Leah learned the process alongside her. "I felt like I was born to do this," she recalls, reflecting on the moment she realized real estate was her calling. Encouraged by the experience, Leah obtained her license and began working at the same brokerage.

Known affectionately as the "unofficial homeschool REALTOR®," Leah balances her career with homeschooling her children, a challenge she has embraced wholeheartedly. "I love just talking and connecting with peoplewe're all humans; we all need that personal connection in our lives," Leah shares, emphasizing her passion for building relationships. She fondly remembers bringing her youngest child, who was not yet 2, to her first real estate showings. This experience has given her a unique understanding of parents' challenges when moving with children.

Leah's empathy for families shines through in her approach to clients with kids. "I always tell them to go pick out their rooms," she laughs, highlighting her commitment to making the process as smooth as possible for families. This dedication stems from her experience of moving twice with four children, including a newborn.

Recently, Leah elevated her career by obtaining her broker's license, enabling her to provide the best possible care for her clients. She is passionate about mentoring new agents, encouraging them to be patient, reach out to their networks, and choose a supportive brokerage. "Everyone can be successful," she believes, offering valuable advice to those starting in the field.

Leah's life outside of real estate is just as vibrant. She and her husband, Lee, have been married for 14 years. While Leah focuses on helping clients find their dream homes, Lee works as a heavy civil construction manager, supervising efforts to build safer roadways. Together, they have four children: Kinsey (18), a published author, and Avery (13), Aden (9), and Logan (6). The family enjoys exploring museums, going on field trips, and camping in cabins. Their most memorable adventure was a trip to Disney in January, where they had an unforgettable time. They are planning their next big family trip overseas to Greece, taking the journey to the next level by learning to speak Greek together as a family.

I love just talking and connecting with people— we're all humans; we all need that personal connection in our lives.

From her early days handing tools to her father and recording radio shows to guiding families through home-buying and co-hosting a popular morning show, Leah's passions have seamlessly intertwined into a fulfilling career and life. Her ability to connect with people and dedication to her craft are just the beginning of what she will achieve.



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JUSTIN MILLER

VETERANS UNITED HOME LOANS

After retiring from the Navy, Justin Miller set two goals: (1) continue his involvement with the military community and (2) work in real estate. Like many people in the industry, the book *Rich Dad Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki inspired his endeavors. "Ever since real estate became something, I wanted to pursue it after my time as a SEAL," Justin shares. Becoming a loan officer with Veterans United Home Loans of Hampton Roads allows Justin to continue serving the military community while working in real estate, and he couldn't be happier about his transition.

Veterans United is a full-service lender offering conventional, FHA, and VA loans. It specializes in educating veterans and helping them use their VA loan benefits. "Many companies offer the VA loan, but we deliver it better than any of them," Justin says, "and we're the No. 1 provider in Hampton Roads and the nation for a reason. During my 20 years in the Navy, I received no training on how the VA benefit works. Veterans United leads the field in educating the nation on how to use and reuse this undervalued benefit. I am proud to help as many people as possible maximize their benefits."

Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, Justin has been a Virginia resident since 2009, when he received orders to the Dam Neck base for the Navy. He should be your go-to loan officer for several reasons. "First, we are a local lender," he mentions. "When people first hear Veterans United, they think of our corporate office in Columbia, MO, but because of the military presence in Hampton Roads, we have a local branch to provide the best service for local veterans and service members. Second, my military experience makes me uniquely qualified to be the best VA loan specialist. My family and I lived the military life for 20 years, and I am aligned with the country's leading provider of VA loans. I strive to enhance the client experience for agents looking to build a referral-based business."



Helping veterans buy homes is the most rewarding aspect of Justin's work. "I enjoy simplifying the homebuying process and educating buyers to help them feel comfortable making one of the biggest financial decisions of their lives," he reveals. His clients are grateful for his service: "Justin was incredibly helpful and always thorough in answering my questions," one happy veteran shared. "I appreciated how he took extra time to explain processes and terminology to me, especially once he found out this was my first time buying a home. He was also readily available to answer my questions, which was very helpful. Thanks for everything, Justin!" Justin responds, "Getting a review from a client like the one above is the best part of my job."







Veterans United's service does not stop at the closing table— 90% of the company's employees donate 1% of their income to the Veterans United Foundation, which supports non-profits that help veterans and our local communities. "If you have requests for people in need, please let me know," Justin offers.

Grateful for his real estate partners and clients who trust him with their businesses and major financial decisions, Justin defines success as providing a good life for his family while staying engaged with them. "Remaining connected to my military community while working in real estate brings me happiness," he says.

Justin and his wife have two boys and a golden lab named Luke. The boys enjoy playing baseball and basketball and swimming on the Oceana swim team, while the family enjoys hiking, sailing, fishing, and cooking together. Outside of work, when he is not at his kids' sporting events or on the water with them, Justin is often lifting weights or reading.

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>> spotlight agent

"Ever since I was born, I've had this sense to serve," shares Jamie Shannon.

Born and raised in the heart of East Texas, Jamie grew up on a farm where hard work and community values were instilled in her from an early age. Her upbringing was steeped in entrepreneurship, with family members who ran their own businesses planting the seeds of independence and drive that would later shape her career. Real estate captured Jamie's attention when she was young during the summers she spent at her grandmother's house. "We would spend the evenings watching real estate shows together," Jamie recalls fondly.

Her journey in the field began in 2006 while she was pregnant with her first son. Seeking flexibility and a way to contribute financially, Jamie earned her real estate license in Texas. Little did she know that this initial step would be the beginning of a thriving career. Not long after, Jamie joined her husband, David, and enlisted in the Army. Though her path briefly shifted, real estate remained a constant thread. While serving in the military, Jamie kept her license active and even helped fellow service members with property management

issues. "I've somehow always been drawn to real estate, no matter where I'm at," she chuckles, reflecting on how her passion followed her across different chapters of life.

In 2011, after being medically retired due to an injury while serving in Korea, Jamie and her family moved to Williamsburg, VA. They had previously fallen in love with the area during her Army training and appreciated its military-friendly environment, slower pace of life, and proximity to family. Williamsburg's strong sense of community reminded her of the farm life she had known in Texas. With her Texas real estate background in tow, Jamie pursued her real estate license in Virginia, completing the process in just six weeks, thanks to the foundational knowledge she had gained in Texas.

Jamie has since formed The Shannon Team LLC with a clear set of values: faith, family, and service. These principles guide every aspect of her business. "As REALTORS", we can make a great difference in people's lives because the process is scary and not something people do all the time," she states, reflecting on the complex nature of buying and selling homes. Even for

those who have purchased homes before, real estate is ever-changing, and Jamie's goal is to be a guiding light for her clients through each step of the process.

Making a difference remains Jamie's priority, and she has ventured into property investing and providing affordable housing. Working with local nonprofits and government programs, her goal is to help individuals in need transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency. She believes affordable housing is a crucial aspect of community building and is committed to positively impacting this area.

The Shannon Team has grown organically, and Jamie's close partnership with fellow REALTOR® Kristin Starcher has become a cornerstone of its success. After meeting two years ago, they quickly realized they shared the same values and vision.

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"We balance and support each other," Jamie says, highlighting their collaborative and client-focused approach. From offering snacks and activities for children during home showings to organizing client appreciation events that give back to charities, the team's commitment to service is always front and center. "Everything we do ties back to our values," Jamie emphasizes.

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"Working alongside Jamie Shannon has been a truly inspiring experience. Her unwavering commitment to faith, family, and service shines through in everything she does. She not only excels in real estate, but also uplifts those around her, making every day a joy to collaborate. I'm grateful to have her as a colleague and friend!"

> -Kristin Starcher, REALTOR®, The Shannon Team

In addition to running a successful real estate team, Jamie is also a certified mentor with eXp Realty, where she enjoys sharing her knowledge and helping new agents navigate the industry. She believes having a solid "why" is essential for success in real estate, especially during challenging times. "I don't think

I would be as successful if my why were not as solid as it is," Jamie reflects. For her, that "why" is her family. She and her together for 17 years, and she names him as her biggest supporter. Together, they have three children— Joel, Connor, and Kierney—and a talkative labradoodle who

As Jamie looks

ahead, her goals remain grounded in the values shaping her journey. She aims to expand her team organically, letting relationships and opportunities grow in line with her core beliefs. Focused on serving others and driven by her commitment to family, Jamie is building more than a business—she's fostering a culture of faith, family, and service.

husband, David, have been is the family's baby.

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HOW WE DECIDE WHO TO FEATURE **EACH MONTH**

By Publisher Joni Giordano-Bowling

Our nomination system drives how we select who we feature in Real Producers. The agents who invest in this publication through advertising and sponsorships are vital in nominating their peers. Additionally, we host multiple events throughout the year, where top agents with outstanding production numbers gather and nominate one another.

Our team engages with each nominee. We collect interesting facts about the agents and gather additional nominations for other top agents and businesses to consider for our vetted preferred partners' list.

Our selection team utilizes the "5 C" criteria as a guiding framework. An agent must meet the first three criteria, while the fourth and fifth are optional:

- 1. Collaboration: High nomination counts often indicate respect among peers and a strong ability to work well with other agents and preferred partners.
- 2. Competition Production Numbers: Given that our publication is named Real Producers, nominees need to be top producers in the industry.
- 3. Character: We prioritize featuring agents and businesses recommended for their integrity. We will not highlight anyone lacking respect from their peers.
- **4. Contribution:** We love to showcase inspiring stories about agents who give back to their local or global communities.

5. Compelling Story/Conquering

a Life Challenge: We appreciate against-the-odds success stories that resonate with our audience.

Additionally, we actively engage with agents in our private Facebook group for top REALTORS® and partners. Membership is limited to agents, brokers, and current preferred business partners; please send me a private message if you'd like an invitation.

Geographic and Firm Diversity

We aim to avoid featuring agents from the same brokerage or firm in the same issue and strive to cover different territories proportionately. With so many excellent nominations, making a monthly decision can be challenging, so we encourage you to ensure we know who you are.

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Real estate agents and brokers do not pay anything for feature stories; our services are completely free to them. Unlike other programs that may follow a pay-to-play model, our selection process is based solely on merit. Most articles are selected six to 12months in advance (with some cover agents selected years ahead), and we notify individuals one to two months before their feature.

Your Feedback Matters

We welcome your feedback on our process and how we can better help everyone in the industry collaborate, elevate, and inspire one another. Please contact me directly with any suggestions or feedback via email, text, or private message.

Joni Giordano-Bowling | 757-348-7809 | joni@realproducersmag.com





WELCOME TO Real Producers!

We're excited to have you as part of our community! Here, we address some of the most frequently asked questions about our program. Remember, my door is always open for discussions regarding this community—this publication is designed to be your voice.

Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The magazine is distributed to the top 300 agents on the Peninsula in Hampton Roads, VA. This area extends from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel in Hampton to the greater Williamsburg area and everything in between. We compiled the MLS numbers (by volume) from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. The cutoff for our list was at #300, with production levels ranging from just below \$5 million to \$50 million in 2023. This list will reset at the end of 2024 and will be updated annually.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING **FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?**

A: The process is straightforward. Every feature you see has been nominated first. You can nominate REALTORS®, agents, affiliates, brokers, owners, or yourself. Office leaders are also encouraged to nominate real estate agents. We value your input, as we

don't know everyone's story and need your help to learn more. You can find a link to our nomination form on our Facebook page at facebook.com/peninsularealproducers.

Q: WHAT IS THE COST TO FEATURE A REALTOR®, AGENT, OR TEAM?

A: Absolutely nothing! That's right—zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. Featuring an agent costs nothing, so feel free to nominate away. We operate on a merit-based model, sharing real stories of Real Producers based on achievements and nominations, not payments.

Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

A: Preferred partners are local businesses featured at the front of the magazine. These businesses have ads in every issue, attend our quarterly events, and participate in our online community. Each preferred partner has been recommended by one or more of you, ensuring they are trusted within our network. We only work with businesses vetted and approved by our community, aiming to create a powerhouse network for REALTORS® and agents, alongside the best affiliates to strengthen our collective growth.

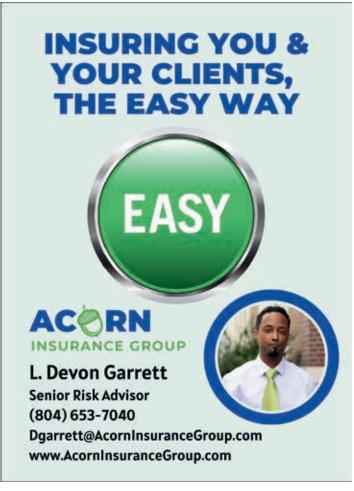
Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A PREFERRED PARTNER?

A: If you want to recommend a local business that works with top real estate agents, please reach out! You can send an email or text to joni@realproducersmag.com or 757-348-7809.

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