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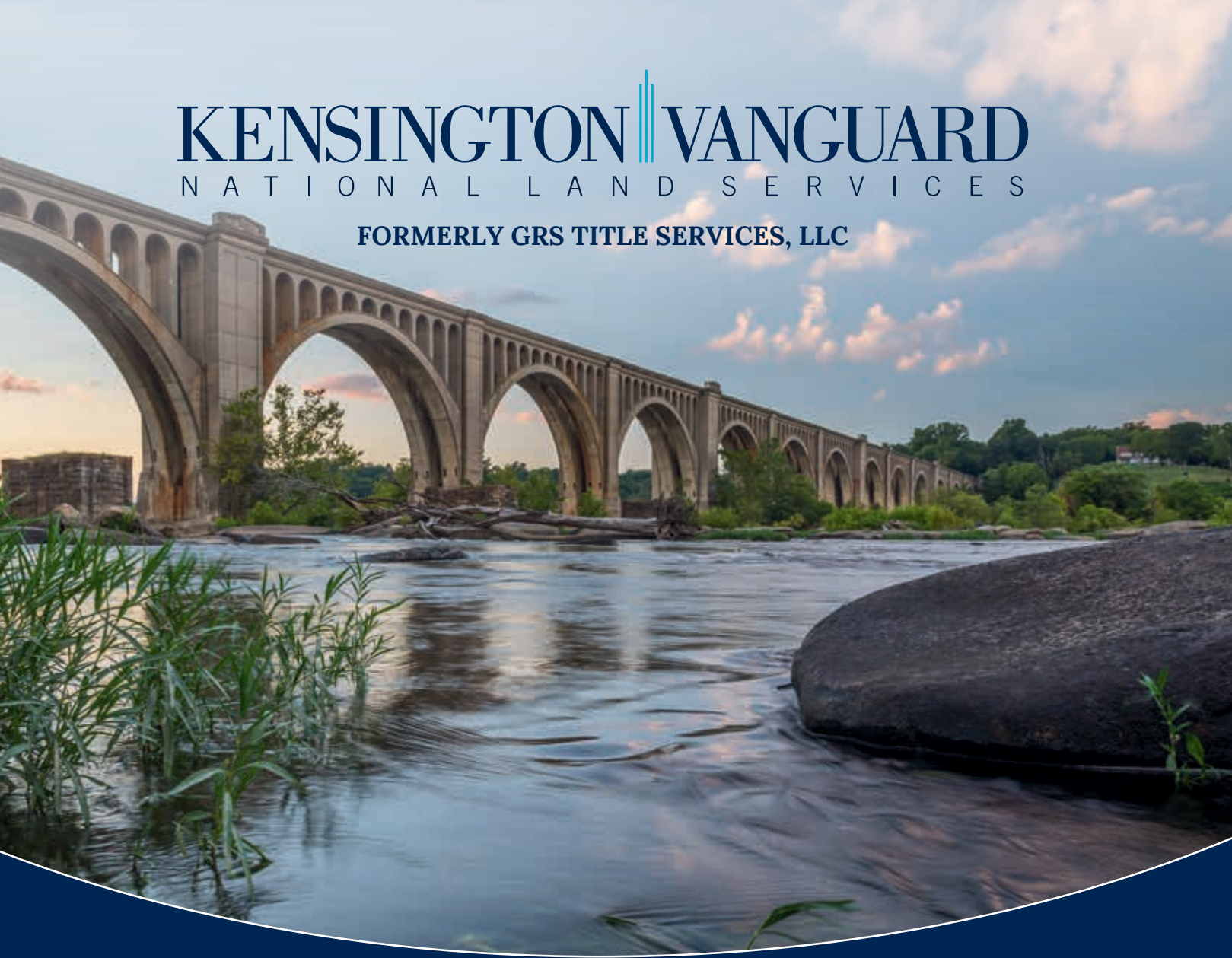


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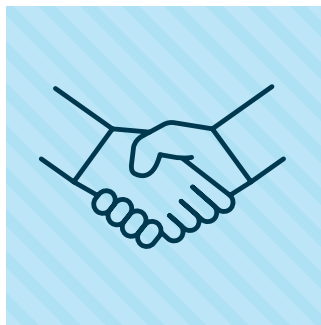
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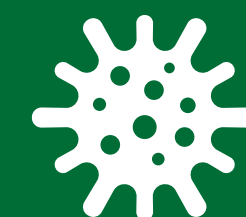
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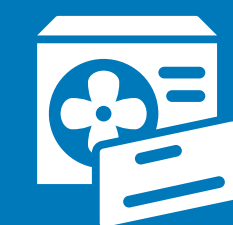
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Publisher's Note

Hello November, the Season of Gratitude!

As we welcome November, there's a crisp chill in the air and a sense of anticipation as the holidays approach. This is the month of gratitude, a time to reflect on all the blessings we've received throughout the year and to express our appreciation for the people and moments that have enriched our lives.

November is also a time for gathering, for cozying up with loved ones, and for savoring the warmth of home and hearth. It's the month of Thanksgiving, a perfect opportunity to come together, share stories, and create new memories.

We're thrilled to announce our 2025 event schedule will be released soon! Stay tuned for more details—there will be fantastic opportunities to connect, learn, and grow together.

A warm welcome to our newest preferred partner, **PMI Presidential, Moldx Inc, and Hairfield Morton PLC Attorneys!** We're delighted to have them join our community and look forward to many fruitful collaborations.

As we move through November, let's keep this quote in mind: "Gratitude turns what we have into enough." Here's to embracing thankfulness and cherishing the abundance in our lives.

Wishing you all a November filled with warmth, gratitude, and joyful gatherings. Happy November, everyone!



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The Daily Life of an Entrepreneur:

10 PRINCIPLES TO HELP YOU THRIVE!

As someone who has navigated the roller coaster of entrepreneurship for over two decades, I want to share insights and advice for those walking the same path. The reality of being a business owner is often far from the glamorous image portrayed. Every day is a mix of hard work, challenges, and moments of triumph that make the grind worthwhile.

Our days are packed with responsibilities. We focus on business planning and product/service development, constantly refining our strategies. Marketing is crucial—building a brand while staying organized and proactive sets a strong foundation for success.

Maintaining a work-life balance can be tough; long hours often lead to burnout and feelings of isolation. Don't underestimate the importance of seeking out

relationships and support during these times. Building a network of like-minded individuals can be invaluable.

While challenges are real, so are the rewards. Enjoy the freedom to shape your schedule and choose the clients you want to help. Overcoming obstacles fosters personal growth, building resilience and problem-solving skills.

The life of an entrepreneur is filled with emotional highs and lows. One moment, you're celebrating a success; the next, you may find yourself scrambling to put out fires. During tough times, reconnecting with your original motivation—reminding yourself of your “why”—can provide clarity and strength.

Ten Essentials for Success as an Entrepreneur

Based on my experiences, here are ten key principles that can help you thrive:

- 1. Never Stop Learning:** Invest in yourself through continuous education. Read regularly and seek new skills to stay ahead in your field.
- 2. Never Stop Trying:** Embrace failures as opportunities for growth. How you respond to setbacks defines your journey—learn from them and keep pushing forward.
- 3. Build a Network:** Surround yourself with achievers who inspire you and support your goals. A strong network provides valuable insights and encouragement.

4. Work Hard: Dedication and perseverance are essential. The effort you put in will often set you apart from the competition.

5. Sacrifice What Doesn't Serve You: Let go of habits and relationships that hold you back. Focus on what truly contributes to your success.

6. Take Risks: Embrace uncertainty as part of the journey. Taking calculated risks can lead to significant rewards.

7. Take Leadership: Lead by serving others. Support and guide those around you, fostering a collaborative environment.

8. Learn to Scale: Understand how to grow your business effectively. Set clear goals and develop a strategic plan to achieve them.

9. Consider Your Purpose: Have a mission that goes beyond financial gain. A strong purpose can sustain you through challenges and keep you motivated.

10. Have Accountability: Find someone to hold you accountable. A written plan tied to implementation is crucial for long-term success.

The path of entrepreneurship is complex but filled with opportunities for growth and fulfillment. By embracing these principles, you can navigate the ups and downs more effectively. Remember, your journey is uniquely yours, and the rewards can be incredibly fulfilling. Here's to thriving together in the “entrepreneurs club”! Good luck!



Drew DeMaree was born and raised in the Midwest and graduated from

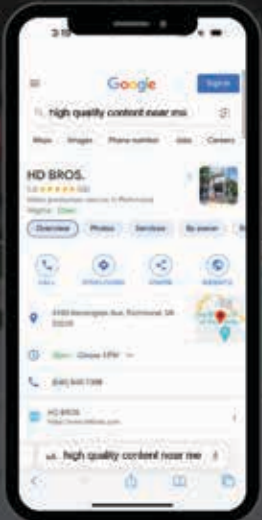
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University. He has been a licensed REALTOR® since 2005 and a business coach since 2015. Drew has been recognized as a Top 20 MAPS coach for Keller Williams Realty offices throughout the country. He has also operated a brokerage that rose to number 1 in closed sales volume in the area for three consecutive years, and founded The Freedom Companies, an independent coaching, training and events business, in 2020.

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By Walter M. Culbertson, Esq.

INVESTING USING THE VIRGINIA LAND TRUST

Many investors in the Richmond area utilize the Virginia Land Trust for most of their real estate transactions. While it may seem like the land trust has only recently gained traction in the greater Richmond area, the land trust has existed for some time. Whether the land trust is the proper vehicle for your real property investments, as opposed to a limited liability company, corporation, or business trust, is really a question for your CPA and local real estate attorney. This article dives into the creation and law surrounding land trusts. This article does not provide legal advice but serves to encourage consultation with a real estate attorney before investing through a land trust.

What is a land trust? Just like taking title to real estate in a limited liability company or a corporation, you can own real property in a land trust. Unlike a limited liability company or corporation that may own many properties, a land trust typically exists to control one property. The reason for this can be found by looking at the creation of a land trust. To form a land trust, you must first create a land trust agreement, and a deed in trust. While there are many provisions that should be included in the land trust, here are a few of the most basic: The land trust agreement specifies the trustee, the beneficiary, the terms, obligations, and responsibilities of those parties. The

trust agreement should name the property being conveyed to the trustee, specify the powers of the beneficiary and trustee, and acknowledge that the beneficiary's interest in this agreement is a personal property interest. The trust agreement is signed by the trustee and the beneficiary of the trust.

After formation of the trust, the owner of the real property conveys to the trustee of the trust. To ensure there are no questions surrounding who holds title in the land trust, the deed should convey the property to the trustee (and not just the trust). If the property is conveyed to the

trust itself, the argument could be made that the beneficiary has an interest in the real property, and not solely a personal interest. This can create many problems for the beneficiary and make conveying the property more difficult. For example, if the beneficiary is determined to have an interest in the real property, judgments against that beneficiary may attach when they would not have otherwise. This also could complicate whether the real property is subject to a bankruptcy estate. Speak with your local real estate attorney on how to avoid these settlement complications.

When the trust agreement and deed are drafted properly, there are many benefits to the Virginia Land Trust. For one, there is an element of anonymity that other entities cannot match. The beneficiary does not need to be named on the deed, and there is no need for a settlement agent to identify the beneficiaries or inquire as to the disposition of proceeds. Further, when formed properly, judgments against the beneficiaries do not attach. This is even detailed specifically in Section 55.1-117 of the Code of Virginia. As mentioned before, when the trust agreement and deed are drafted properly, there are many benefits to the Virginia Land Trust. To ensure success, we encourage consultation with a real estate attorney before investing through a land trust.



Walter Culbertson grew up in a military family, where he lived primarily in Virginia and North Carolina. After graduating from high school in Morehead City, NC, Walter attended Longwood University, where he studied history and political science with a concentration in prelaw. After graduating from Longwood in 2014, Walter worked as a title examiner. He then pursued law school and attended the University of Richmond School of Law, where he graduated cum laude in 2020. Walter passed the Virginia state bar in 2020 and immediately started practicing law with a focus on title and real estate. In his spare time, Walter enjoys golf and is a member of Brandermill Country Club.

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By George Paul Thomas
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OLIVIA CELESTINE

LIGHTHOUSE VISUALS

SHINING A LIGHT ON REAL ESTATE MARKETING

Olivia Celestine, a dedicated photographer at Lighthouse Visuals, stands out as a one-woman powerhouse in Richmond, Virginia's real estate marketing scene. Specializing in delivering top-notch visual content for property listings, Olivia's passion for architecture and her unique creative vision allow her to transform homes into captivating visual stories. With her expertise in HDR photography, drone footage, virtual tours, and more, she's committed to helping real estate agents present their listings in the best possible light.

FROM DARKROOM TO DRONE

Originally from Massachusetts, Olivia's love for photography began in high school, where she first learned the art of film photography in the school's darkroom. After starting her higher education at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, she decided to take a more practical approach, enrolling at the New England School of Photography. There, she majored in Creative Digital Imaging and minored in Architectural Photography, laying the groundwork for her future career.

Her career took her from Boston to New Orleans, where she explored various types of photography, from fine art to weddings to editorial work. A brief stint as a real estate agent from 2015 to 2017 led Olivia to discover her true calling—real estate photography. This field allowed her to merge her love for architecture with her creative skills.

When Olivia moved to Richmond, joining Lighthouse Visuals was the perfect



fit. She enjoys getting a front-row seat to the city's rich architectural history, exploring its neighborhoods through her camera lens.

A FULFILLING CAREER OF CREATIVITY AND CONNECTION

For Olivia, the most rewarding part of her work is the constant creativity and variety it offers. "I love the challenge of showcasing each home in the best way possible," she explains, noting how every shoot pushes her to find the best angles and compositions under time constraints. Olivia also

values the relationship-driven nature of real estate photography, where a good impression can lead to long-lasting partnerships with agents.

Her passion for architectural photography shines through as she describes her satisfaction in capturing the soul of a home through perfectly balanced compositions and straight architectural lines. This dedication to her craft has improved her technical skills and helped her become a more confident photographer.



Carolina, and Virginia, with Olivia leading the charge in Richmond.

Although Olivia handles Richmond solo, she's far from working alone. She highlights the strong support system Lighthouse offers, from the leadership of founder and owner Will Preslar, who has built a unique and supportive work culture, to the dedicated team members like Partnership Manager Sara Thompson and a talented production and editing team, as well as the fellow 35+ other LHV photographers covering various regions across NC, VA, and SC. Olivia states, "It's an incredible support system for photographers and agents."

What sets Lighthouse Visuals apart from other real estate marketing companies is its strong emphasis on service-driven relationships. Olivia emphasizes, "We work for agents. If the agents are happy, we're happy." The company is invested in building long-term partnerships with agents, understanding their needs, and delivering consistently high-quality products at competitive rates.

Unlike many companies in the industry, Lighthouse Visuals treats its photographers as valued team members rather than disposable contractors. This culture of mutual respect motivates photographers like Olivia to go



above and beyond for their clients, ensuring the highest standards of service and satisfaction.

A LIFE OF CREATIVITY AND CONNECTION

Outside of her professional life, Olivia shares a creative and vibrant home with her wife, Amber, and their two rescue dogs, Clementine and Queen Fang. Their shared love for gardening, art, and crafts fills their days with creative projects and adventures. Whether tending to their houseplants or exploring Richmond's farmers' markets and riverfront, the couple is dedicated to building a life of intentional joy and community.

Olivia is also an avid reader, traveler, and aspiring swing dancer. "If I'm going to do cardio, it HAS to be fun," she quips, showing her lighthearted approach to life.

LOOKING FORWARD

The real estate photography industry has seen rapid technological advancements in recent years. Olivia is excited about the growing importance of video in real estate marketing, particularly for social media platforms. She has embraced this shift, learning new skills in videography to stay ahead of the curve.



A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR REAL ESTATE MARKETING

Lighthouse Visuals, founded in Greenville, NC, is a full-service real estate marketing company. Offering everything from HDR photography and videography to drone photos, virtual tours, and floor plans, the company is well-equipped to handle every marketing need a real estate agent might have. Olivia explains, "We produce everything you could need to market a listing," making Lighthouse a comprehensive solution for top-producing real estate professionals. The company serves all of North Carolina, parts of South



YOU CAN HAVE ALL THE TECHNOLOGY IN THE WORLD, BUT YOU STILL NEED A GOOD EYE AND PASSION FOR CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING,



Despite the rise of AI and automation, Olivia remains confident in the future of real estate photography. "You can have all the technology in the world, but you still need a good eye and passion for creative problem-solving," she says, highlighting how the human touch will always be essential in this field.

Olivia's future, both personally and professionally, looks bright. She plans to continue her creative endeavors while helping Lighthouse Visuals grow its presence in Richmond. Her focus remains on delivering exceptional marketing content for agents

while staying open to the new opportunities that come with technological advancements in the industry.

For real estate agents looking to elevate their property listings with stunning photography, video, and more, Olivia Celestine and the team at Lighthouse Visuals are ready to help. Visit lighthousevisuals.com for more information, or contact Olivia at olivia@lighthousevisual.com or (504) 451-0002 to book your next shoot.



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LEGENDS IN REAL ESTATE

On the following pages, *Richmond Real Producers* is honored to recognize Legends in Real Estate—icons who have each contributed significantly to the culture and milieu of our Richmond real estate community through their hard work, perseverance, dedication, and mentoring over their over 20 years in the business. Congratulations to these special agents. You are genuine legends to us, and our community is better thanks to your years of service!

DEAN COBB

Lee Conner Realty and Associates, LLC
42 Years in Real Estate

For seasoned real estate professional Dean Cobb, the foundation of his success is simple: treat clients how you would want your family treated. With over 42 years of experience in the industry, Dean has not only witnessed profound changes in real estate but has thrived through every market shift. A single agent with Lee Conner Realty and Associates, Dean's enduring dedication to his clients and community has established him as a legend in his own right.

Dean's journey in real estate was sparked by his grandfather, a broker in the 1960s. His passion grew under the mentorship of Lee F. Conner, who guided him and ultimately entrusted him with his business in 1998. "My grandfather inspired me, and Mr. Conner mentored me. I've carried their legacy forward while building my own," Dean recalls. His deep roots in the industry have afforded him a unique perspective on the ever-evolving nature of real estate, from the rise of the internet to the diminishing face-to-face interaction between agents and clients. Despite these changes, Dean remains focused on personal relationships, something he

believes is crucial to long-term success.

Before his illustrious career in real estate, Dean honed his work ethic early. As a young man, he mowed lawns for older people during the summer and worked in new home construction. Later, he spent a few years at Pleasants Hardware. These experiences helped shape his understanding of hard work and persistence, which continue to serve him well in real estate.

One of Dean's guiding principles comes from advice that Mr. Conner gave him early on: "Treat your clients the way you want your mother to be treated." This philosophy has defined his career, ensuring his clients always feel cared for, respected, and supported. This year, Dean completed one of his most memorable transactions—a full-circle moment in his career—selling the same couple of houses from his first real estate deal.

Dean's ability to adapt and thrive through the market's highs and lows is a testament to his resilience. His success isn't just measured by the 125 units he sold last year or the countless families he has helped find their dream homes. It's about surviving over four decades in an unpredictable industry and

LEGENDS IN REAL ESTATE



“ If you are not obsessed with your life, change it. If you find a job that you like, you never have to work a day in your life.

coming out on top. "Being able to survive the ups and downs of the market in the last 42 years has been one of my greatest achievements," Dean reflects.

Dean's advice is simple but invaluable for newer agents: work hard and remain honest. "Make sure you save enough during the good times to get through the bad times. If you don't know the answer, find someone who does. Always follow up on every lead." This tenacity and integrity form the core of his 'secret sauce'—the qualities that have earned him a reputation for being trustworthy and consistent. Dean believes that every person, regardless of appearance or circumstance, has the potential to become a homeowner.

A proud family man, Dean's wife Patricia and their two sons, Cody and Cameron, are central to his life. Together, they enjoy spending time at their river house in Urbanna, where they can unwind by boating and indulging in one of their favorite activities—eating crabs. Family is at the heart of everything Dean does; he brings that same sense of care and commitment to his work.

JANET CARROLL

Integrity Choice Realty, Inc.
30 Years in Real Estate

In a business often defined by competition and sales goals, Janet Carroll stands out for her unwavering focus on people—not just properties. With over 30 years in the industry, Janet’s journey from her early days in Fort Myers, Florida, to becoming the Broker behind Integrity Choice Realty, Inc., reflects a career built on compassion, integrity, and deep-rooted faith.

Janet’s journey in real estate began after she left the Navy, where she worked as an Ocean Technician Analyst tracking submarines. After completing her service, Janet moved to Fort Myers, Florida, where she worked as an admin at a Re/Max office. She fell in love with the real estate world in that fast-paced environment. “I was intrigued by the entire process, the freedom agents had with their schedules, and the unlimited earning potential,” she recalls. Inspired by what she saw, Janet earned her real estate license and began her journey in the industry.

In 2023, despite personal challenges that included divorce and obtaining her Broker’s license, Janet sold 14 units with a sales volume of over \$6.6 million. Reflecting on her career, she notes that the biggest lesson she’s learned is that change is inevitable. “I’ve realized that

when the phone doesn’t ring, it’s up to me to make the calls. The business is in my control.”

One of Janet’s most memorable moments as a Realtor came after she opened Integrity Choice Realty. She represented buyers interested in a For Sale By Owner (FSBO) property. While her buyers didn’t purchase the home, she connected with the owners, who needed to sell because the father had broken his back in a tree stand accident. In a remarkable act of compassion, Janet chose to help the family by selling their home for free. “God blessed their family,” Janet reflects, “today, they’ve referred me business ten times over.” That experience stands out as a powerful reminder of the impact she can have on people’s lives beyond the transaction.

For Janet, the true success of her career lies in her ability to integrate her work into the fabric of her life. Over the years, she has raised her children, fostered five more, and cared for her mother in her final days—all while continuing to help families with one of the biggest decisions of their lives. “Through life’s ups and downs, this business is workable,” she shares. “That flexibility is what I call success.”

Janet’s advice to newer agents is straightforward: either join a team to learn the business inside and out or hire a coach and follow their advice. “This business can be tough on new



“ Honor God. Love others. Live simply.”

agents. Accountability is key, whether from a team or a coach.”

Janet credits two things for her success: her faith and her ex-husband, Ken Carroll, who played a pivotal role in opening their real estate company in 2003. “Ken taught me everything about systems and prospecting. He was driven and passionate, unmatched by anyone I’ve met,” she says. Alongside Ken’s influence, Janet’s strong faith is at the core of her success. “I pray like it all depends on God and work like it depends on me.”

Family is Janet’s greatest joy. Her life is filled with love from her children and grandchildren. Her daughter Hope is married to Kevin, with three children: Scarlett (6), Alice (3), and George (1). Her son Ryan and his wife Ellen have three sons: Lucas (6), Tucker (3), and Hunter (1). Her daughter Faith works as her assistant, while her son Noah is the father to Willow (6 months). Rounding out her family is her youngest daughter, Jayden (8), who brings endless joy to her life. “With a family this big, there’s always something to celebrate,” Janet beams.



STEPHANIE BROWN

REAL Broker
26 Years in Real Estate

With a career spanning over two decades, Stephanie Brown has witnessed the real estate industry transform in ways she could never have imagined when she first started out. From the days of hand-delivering contracts in Manila envelopes to the rapid ease of electronic transactions, Stephanie has adapted and thrived, positioning herself as a leading agent in the field.

The driving force behind SBRG Real Estate, Stephanie’s success stems from her natural ability to connect with people and build lasting relationships. “I’ve always been drawn to connecting with people, and that’s what’s kept me passionate about real estate all these years,” she reflects. Even with a rapidly changing landscape, her foundation has remained rooted in personal relationships, something she emphasizes to new agents.

One key lesson she shares with newcomers is never to underestimate the power of prospecting. “I was trained by a great salesperson early on, and while marketing has become a big part of real estate today, it’s still about sales at its core,” she explains. For Stephanie, success comes from sharpening sales skills and nurturing authentic connections rather than relying solely on social media.

While real estate has been a significant part of her life, Stephanie quickly points out that her most important successes are found off the field. Her family, including her husband Jason and their two children, Koi and Ruby, is the center of her world. Most of their family time is



spent together on sports fields, supporting their kids’ athletic passions, which is a true reflection of her belief in balancing work and life.

For Stephanie, the ultimate reward of her years in the business is the freedom to dictate how she spends her time, allowing her to focus on both personal and professional growth. As she continues to navigate the ever-evolving industry, one thing is clear—Stephanie Brown’s passion for people and relationships will always be at the heart of her real estate success.

JOHN TILLER

F4 Realty, REAL Broker
25 Years in Real Estate

John Tiller, co-owner of the new F4 Realty team at REAL Broker, has spent a quarter of a century redefining success in real estate, with his last team serving over 500 families per year and an impressive \$160 million in sales volume. John's accomplishments speak for themselves. Yet, for John, real estate isn't just about the numbers—it's about making a lasting impact, building relationships, and giving back to his community.

Before real estate, John's journey was filled with unique experiences that shaped his work ethic. As a teenager, he met his future wife while working at Kings Dominion, where he learned early lessons about leadership. Later, during off-seasons, John took on multiple part-time jobs, including his first sales job—selling vacuum cleaners. "It was a shady product and a shady organization, but I learned a lot about sales, including how not to do it," he recalls with a laugh. At just 20 years old, he was married, bought his first home, and landed his first salaried job at a regional bank (now Truist), where he quickly rose from answering credit card balance calls to managing multi-million dollar technology projects.

In an unexpected twist, John's career in real estate began with a nudge from a friend at church.

As he was preparing to relocate for work, his real estate agent friend suggested John stay in town and sell homes. Initially, John brushed off the idea, but after getting his license and selling three houses in a month while working part-time, he realized the industry's limitless potential. So, on September 11, 2001—his 28th birthday—John leaped full-time into real estate. It was a day of national tragedy, but John followed his faith, which reassured him that he was on the right path.

By 2004, John had built one of the top-producing teams in Richmond, and for over a decade, he owned his own brokerage, overseeing more than 120 agents. Alongside real estate sales, John has also ventured into development and investing. Most recently, in partnership with his good friend, Clayton Gits, he grew a team that served over 500 families per year, flipped more than 20 investment properties and expanded their property management division.

This year, John launched the MegaTeam Mastermind podcast, where team leaders can learn from the best in the industry about how to make an impact and leave a legacy.

Reflecting on his career, John notes that technology and the average age of Realtors have changed the industry dramatically. However, what remains constant is the importance of



“When the leader gets better, everyone gets better.”

- Craig Groeschel

leadership. "Leadership is everything," John says. "Young, coachable agents can surpass industry veterans if they're willing to work hard and stay humble."

One of John's most valuable lessons came early in his career, during a New Year's Day phone session calling expired listings. A veteran agent stopped by and told John he was going to be one of the best because he was willing to put in the work. "That simple encouragement made all the difference," John reflects. "We should all take time to inspire those around us."

John's dedication to serving others extends beyond real estate. He has been actively involved with the Richmond Association of Realtors' Grievance and Arbitration committees and supports his home church, Passion Community Church (PCC). Recently, he has found fulfillment in serving at weekly services inside

prison and supporting non-profits that assist children with special needs.

Outside of work, John cherishes time with his wife of 30 years, Tricia, and their son, Eli, whom he describes as one of the most special humans on the planet. Whether enjoying day trips to the lake, weekend getaways to the mountains, or attending concerts and races, family is at the heart of John's life.

When asked about his most memorable deal, John recalls an early luxury listing appointment that didn't go as planned. Despite delivering a flawless presentation, the client chose another agent, telling John, "You probably have a better system, but I didn't feel like you cared about me." That moment taught him a critical lesson: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Since then, trust has been the cornerstone of his success.

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CABELL CHILDRESS

Long & Foster Real Estate
23 years in Real Estate

For a real estate professional like Cabell Childress, connecting genuinely with people is key to building trust and maintaining the strong client relationships that drive his success. With over 23 years of experience, Cabell has witnessed Richmond's transformation and played a pivotal role in shaping its future. Leading the Cabell Childress Group under Long & Foster Realtors, he has built a reputation as a top-tier real estate professional, guiding his team to achieve remarkable success.

A powerful entrepreneurial spirit fueled Cabell's journey into real estate. The limitless opportunities to build a company, grow residual income, and create a lasting legacy were irresistible to him. This drive has been a constant force throughout his career, propelling him to the forefront of the industry. His approach to real estate is bold and

decisive, guided by a lesson he learned early on regarding investment properties: sometimes it's best to act rather than overanalyze. "If the numbers aren't perfect but could work, just buy it anyway," he notes.

One of Cabell's most memorable achievements is the sale of a \$3.55 million house in Mooreland Farms—a personal record and a milestone that underscores his expertise in handling high-stakes transactions. Last year, this team reached an impressive \$142 million in sales, closing 301 transactions—a clear testament to Cabell's deep understanding of Richmond's unique market. But beyond the deals and the numbers, Cabell's true secret to success lies in his ability to build and nurture relationships. Over the years, he has cultivated a loyal client base, many of whom have grown alongside him. "The older I get, the more successful my clients get, which is why repeat business and fostering relationships is SO important," he reflects.



Cabell is a successful realtor and deeply committed to his community. His family actively supports multiple Christian-focused organizations, embodying a spirit of giving that extends beyond his professional life. This dedication to service is mirrored in the accolades his team has received, consistently ranking among the top both locally and nationally.

Outside of his professional life, Cabell is a devoted family man. His wife, Molly, and their three children—Lawson, Lilly, and Luke—are at the heart of his world. Together, they enjoy traveling, participating in sports, being involved at church, and finding joy and balance in these shared experiences.

As Cabell looks to the future, he focuses on leaving a lasting legacy. He wants to be remembered for his positive influence on people's lives, both by helping clients achieve their real estate goals and mentoring new realtors. "I want to help teach new, capable realtors how to build a great life to support their families and gain freedom and flexibility," he says. His story is one of passion, perseverance, and the power of relationships—a true legend in the making.

MELISSA OEFELEIN

Keller Williams
Richmond West
22 Years in Real Estate

For Melissa Oefelein, real estate is more than just a career—it's a deeply fulfilling journey marked by strong relationships, community impact, and unwavering determination. With over two decades of experience, Melissa has weathered market shifts, embraced new regulations, and consistently helped buyers and sellers find their dream homes. Her success story is not just about the numbers but about the lives she's touched and the legacy she continues to build.

Melissa's first taste of real estate came at just 20 years old while working at a luxury condominium community in Roanoke, VA. Her natural ability to connect with clients who trusted her expertise quickly became apparent. By age 22, she had obtained her real estate license and, as she proudly puts it, "never looked back." From her first deal—helping a fellow waitress achieve homeownership on a \$75,000 budget—to the hundreds of clients she's served since, Melissa's dedication to her clients remains the cornerstone of her success.

Her time in the industry has spanned over 22 years. Last year alone, she closed an impressive \$9.37 million in sales across 21 transactions. She has already exceeded last year's numbers by staying focused and sharpening her skills/tools. However, for Melissa, the work is not just

about sales volumes. One of the most notable changes in real estate she's witnessed is the recent NAR laws, which she navigates with the help of excellent training and the professionalism of her colleagues.

Melissa's career began in Roanoke, where she thrived from 2002 until 2012 before relocating to Richmond. After a brief hiatus to focus on her family and renovate her home on Grove Ave., she returned to real estate in 2015 with even greater passion. Now a solo agent and Associate Broker with Keller Williams Richmond West, she serves buyers and sellers equally, crediting her success to the relationships she has built over the years. "The continued relationship over the years has been endearing, and I am truly grateful," she reflects.

Melissa is deeply involved in the real estate community and advocates collaboration over competition. She serves on the Associate Leadership Council for Keller Williams Richmond West and has chaired multiple committees. As a panelist at the Keller Williams Family Reunion in 2024, Melissa shared her insights on thriving as a solo agent, a testament to her leadership and the respect she commands within the industry. She also stays active in charity work, organizing volunteer days with organizations like the Ronald McDonald House and Feedmore, all while balancing her role as a mother and community leader.



“ Money can only do good for the good that money can do.

Her secret to success? It's all about the follow-up. "Most of my clients become friends if not family," she says. Melissa's hands-on approach to client relationships, finely tuned systems, and frequent client appreciation events have resulted in millions in repeat and referral business. But more than anything, Melissa believes in the power of mindset. She firmly believes in affirmations, goal-setting, and attracting like-minded clients who share her values. "Attracting clients we love to work with, like-minded people—I promise it's a thing!" she exclaims enthusiastically.

One of Melissa's most cherished personal achievements is her family. She is a devoted mother to two sons, Andrew and Camden. She enjoys life with her partner, Jason, their beloved Australian Labradoodle, Lily, and

their calico cat, Elkie. Travel is a big part of their family life—recent trips to Rome, Paris, and Jamaica have created memories they cherish. You can often find them cooking together, playing basketball, or enjoying device-free family dinners at home, with Taco Tuesday being a favorite tradition.

Looking to the future, Melissa envisions leaving a legacy built on kindness, leadership, and service. "I want to be remembered as someone kind, loving, and a strong leader," she says. "Someone who gives back and pours into others, and as a loving mother who encouraged and supported her kids, grandchildren, and partners toward achieving their dreams." As she continues to grow her business, Melissa's ultimate goal is to help thousands more people find their homes while inspiring the next generation of real estate professionals.

VIRGINIA LEABOUGH

Keller Williams Richmond West
20+ Years in Real Estate

Virginia Leabough didn't just choose real estate—it chose her. With over two decades of experience, Virginia has built a reputation as a dedicated and passionate Realtor who thrives on helping others achieve their dreams. Her passion for real estate is driven by a simple yet powerful principle: a love for people and an innate desire to serve. As a solo agent at Keller Williams Richmond West, Virginia, her career has been marked by her ability to form deep, meaningful connections with her clients, many of whom she now considers friends.

Before real estate, Virginia spent 18 years as a licensed Optician and worked as a full-time Ophthalmologist Assistant, demonstrating her lifelong commitment to helping others. When she discovered real estate, the transition felt natural—combining her customer service background with her love for sales. “I’ve always worked in sales, and I love helping people,” she reflects. “Real estate was the perfect fit for me.”

With 30 units sold and a sales volume of over \$8.5 million last year, Virginia continues to excel in an industry that has undergone significant changes, such as the recent introduction of the BBA form. While this shift has been challenging, Virginia

has embraced it through continuous training and dedication to staying informed, always striving to offer the best service to her clients.

Throughout her career, patience has been one of Virginia's greatest virtues. She learned early on that mastering this skill and knowledge is essential to success in real estate. “Patience and knowledge are everything,” she says. “It’s important to stay calm, understand the market, and confidently guide your clients.”

One of Virginia's most cherished memories in real estate is helping her daughter buy her first home at the age of 22. “It’s one thing to help clients, but helping my daughter achieve homeownership has been the highlight of my career,” she shares. This moment is a testament to the personal and professional joy she derives from helping others realize their dreams.

Virginia attributes her success to her gift of patience, empathy, and dedication to her clients. Her philosophy is simple: treat people like family. Many of her clients become lifelong friends, and she is often invited to housewarmings, birthdays, and other family celebrations—a reflection of the deep connections she builds.

Family is at the center of Virginia's world. She and her husband, Edward, who have been married for 23 years, are



LEGENDS IN REAL ESTATE

“ It is what it is.

proud parents to a blended family of five children—Nikki, Brittney, EJ, Kamden, and Devin—and doting grandparents to 13 grandchildren. Virginia and Edward are also honored to have his parents living with them now; “it’s a great feeling to be able to give back,” states Virginia. Family gatherings are a cherished tradition, and while their annual Christmas trip to the Outer Banks has been paused temporarily, they still meet regularly for meals, games, and quality time. “Our house is always full,” she smiles. “It’s the way we like it.”

Virginia's advice to new agents reflects her years of experience: “Get as much training as possible, and invest in yourself. It’s okay to say no—you don’t have to work with everyone. Be selective about who you surround yourself with.” She also encourages new agents to build their portfolios and create residual income for long-term success.

As for her legacy, Virginia hopes to be remembered for her humble heart and her passion for helping others. “I make a great living, but the smiles and tears of joy from my clients mean the most to me.” Her favorite motto, “It is what it is,” speaks to her grounded outlook on life, while the Serenity Prayer on her desk serves as a daily reminder to focus on what truly matters.

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MELANIE HERRING

Shaheen, Ruth, Martin, & Fonville Real Estate
20 years in Real Estate

Known for her fearless approach and innovative mindset, Melanie Herring is defined by her determination to show others that life's greatest rewards often lie off the beaten path. Melanie has been a force of nature for over two decades, breaking norms and paving her own path.

At the age of 34, she found herself in a position where she was managing multiple complex roles—from handling imports and exports to managing sales accounts—at a job that paid a mere \$27,000. But it wasn't until her family sold and purchased a home that Melanie's eyes were opened to the world of real estate. Despite the naysayers, she saw nothing but potential and decided to dive headfirst into the industry. She says, "Even though everyone discouraged me, I felt I had nothing to lose and everything to gain."

Before real estate, Melanie's life was a diverse experience. From serving as a USMC Airfield Firefighter to working as a fitness instructor and even a TastyTake delivery driver, Melanie enthusiastically embraced every role. Each experience added a unique thread to the fabric of her career.

During one of the most challenging markets in history, Melanie didn't shy away from adversity. Her tenacity and ability to adapt were tested, and she emerged as a successful new construction seller. Melanie faced additional challenges as a woman of color, but these obstacles only fueled her drive to succeed and break barriers in an industry where diversity was lacking. Reflecting on her early career, she says, "There is opportunity in every market no matter what is happening."

Over the last 20 years, Melanie has witnessed monumental shifts in the real estate industry. From the introduction of the internet and to the rise of AI, quantum computing, and social media, she has navigated each change with curiosity and enthusiasm.

Among the many transactions in Melanie's career, one stands out—a Spanish Mediterranean property in 2006. The deal was fraught with challenges, from outsmarting



“Wanna bet? It's not over until you are dead. Energy never dies. It just transforms.”

a con man to dealing with a first-time buyer's representative who overlooked a critical inspection. The situation escalated to a legal battle, with Melanie playing a pivotal role in ensuring the deal closed.

Melanie is also actively involved in several real estate boards and charities, including Habitat for Humanity and VFW. She also serves on various committees, sharing her knowledge and experience to uplift others in the field. Her recognition with awards like the RAR Circle of Excellence and the MAME Silver Award for Volume 2023 underscores her impact on the industry.

Away from the hustle of real estate, Melanie's life is centered around her family. Married to Rick, a fellow USMC veteran, Melanie enjoys simple pleasures like reading, yoga, gardening, and spending time with their Yorkie, Bella. They cherish moments with their blended family of four adult children and three grandchildren.

Melanie's wisdom for newcomers to the industry is clear: "No one can motivate you. Motivation comes from within."

HEATHER VALENTINE

Valentine Properties
20 years in Real Estate

When it comes to steadfast business practices and unwavering dedication, Heather Valentine, Owner and Principal Broker of Valentine Properties, truly stands out. Known for her personalized approach, Heather excels in helping clients envision a property's full potential, setting her apart in an incredibly competitive market. With two decades of experience, Heather's reputation is rooted in hard work, integrity, and an unshakable commitment to her clients.

Heather's journey into real estate wasn't part of her original plan. Early on, her work experience was confined to restaurant jobs during high school and college. Real estate wasn't on her radar until, at just 19, she began searching for her first home. Frustrated by the lack of design vision in the properties she viewed, Heather had an epiphany. "I remember feeling completely lost in the process and thinking, 'If he can do this, I can do it better,'" she recalls. This realization spurred her to get her real estate license, and by the age of 21, she was already selling homes, marking the beginning of a remarkably successful career.

Throughout her career, Heather has navigated the ever-changing real estate industry with grace and adaptability. From the evolution of property staging to the rise of professional photography in listings, she has consistently embraced new strategies that enhance her unique talents. Her

focus on maximizing the potential of every property has helped her clients achieve top-dollar sales time and time again.

In some years, Heather sold over 100 houses personally, but she has since found her "sweet spot" selling around 60 homes a year. This balance allows her to maintain an extremely successful sales business while being an involved and available broker for her agents and a dedicated wife and mother to her family. "Over time, I've realized that my kids have grown too quickly, and I don't want to miss out on their lives," she reflects. With her oldest child now 16 and her youngest just 2, Heather has gained invaluable experience in balancing work and motherhood. "To show up best for my clients, I need to show up for my family," she says, emphasizing her commitment to her career and personal life.

Heather's first sale, back in 2004, remains a special memory. It wasn't just the competitive market that made it memorable, but the creativity she employed to close the deal. She sent a personal letter and included pictures of her client's cats, sealing the sale. "That first client has since become one of my closest friends," Heather says, emphasizing the deep, lasting relationships she builds with those she serves.

However, Heather's personal life is where her resilience truly shines. After enduring a deeply painful and abusive marriage, Heather made the brave decision to leave, not just for herself but for her



“Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it. – A constant reminder from Heather's husband, Taylor Phillips.”

daughters. "One of my greatest successes isn't just surviving that experience—it's thriving after it," she shares. Through immense strength and focus, Heather protected her business, family, and herself during a difficult time. She emerged from that chapter stronger and more determined than ever while maintaining her integrity and focus on her clients. Today, Heather is fortunate to be in a happy and loving relationship with her husband, Taylor Phillips, a custom home builder with whom she shares a beautiful and fulfilling life. They prioritize family, cherishing their time with their four children, even amidst their busy careers.

As Heather reflects on her 20 years in real estate and looks to the future, her passion for the industry remains undiminished. She embraces change while staying true to her core principles. Her spirited and hardworking nature continues to be the driving force behind her success in this dynamic field.

For those starting out in real estate, Heather offers invaluable advice: follow the Buffini systems to build your business, find a coach who pushes you to grow, and work with a broker committed to teaching and mentoring. She also stresses the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance, saving money, and paying taxes on time. Most importantly, Heather encourages new agents to invest in and genuinely love real estate. "This isn't a business for the faint-hearted," she says. "Your passion for real estate will fuel your success and help you overcome the inevitable challenges."

BETH BALDWIN

Virginia Capital Realty
20 years in Real Estate

With over 20 years in the real estate industry, Beth Baldwin of Virginia Capital Realty has built a distinguished career grounded in hard work, dedication, and adaptability. Her journey from a career in human resources to becoming a top real estate agent showcases her resilience and commitment to her clients.

Beth's entrance into real estate was serendipitous. After leaving a role in human resources, she was at a crossroads while raising her young children. "Real estate found me at the pool one summer talking with an acquaintance," she recalls. The flexibility of the real estate career allowed her to balance family life while discovering a newfound passion. She quickly adapted, selling her first home three weeks after obtaining her license.

Reflecting on her career, Beth notes significant changes in the industry. "I remember the 3-ply contracts and fax machines, signing clients on the hoods of cars, and the shift from one-picture advertising to high-quality staging and photography," she says. These advancements have transformed the industry, allowing agents to present properties in a way that captivates potential buyers more effectively.

Beth's achievements are impressive. She has received the 5-Star Professional award for 11 years, a distinction earned by less than 1% of Realtors in the Richmond area. Additionally, she has been honored with the Virginia Living Real Estate All-Stars award for both 2023 and 2024. As the top-producing agent at Virginia Capital Realty for the past seven years, Beth has consistently demonstrated her prowess in the field.

Among her most memorable experiences is a deal involving her clients' dream homes. After securing a foreclosure property, Beth faced a setback when a legal issue threatened the deal. "The asset manager canceled the deal due to a lis pendens," she explains. Despite the disappointment, Beth continued to support her clients. A year later, the same house reappeared on the market, and her clients were able to secure it once again. This successful outcome was a testament to Beth's perseverance and dedication.



“ But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” - Isaiah 40:31

Beth's success extends beyond her professional accomplishments. She values personal growth and the development of confidence in her abilities. "My biggest success is my AMAZING family," she shares. Married to Clyde for 31 years, Beth has two children, Sarah and Cole, who are building their own families. The Baldwins cherish family time, whether enjoying annual vacations or supporting each other's endeavors.

Beth's advice for new agents is rooted in her own experiences. "Real estate is HARD work! You have to create structure and be willing to do the activities required for success," she advises. She emphasizes the importance of building a client database, seeking mentorship, and managing finances wisely.

Looking ahead, Beth hopes to be remembered for her work ethic, kindness, and dedication. "I want to be remembered for my work ethic, how I treated people with respect, and my giving spirit."

CATINA JONES

ICON Realty Group
20 Years in Real Estate

With over two decades of experience, Catina Jones has been a key player in the Richmond real estate market. She navigated the industry's highs and lows with a unique blend of resilience, faith, and dedication to her clients and community. Her journey from the banking world to a thriving real estate career proves her relentless work ethic and passion for building relationships that stand the test of time.

Reflecting on her 20+ years in the business, Catina notes how the rise of technology—from social media to electronic contract delivery—has changed the game. "Technology has made marketing and branding more efficient," she shares, "but too many agents rely solely on these platforms, forgetting that relationship-building is the key to lasting success." Despite the convenience of digital tools, Catina believes nothing replaces the value of face-to-face interactions and fundamental business practices, especially in an industry that thrives on referrals and repeat clients.

A personal experience spurred Catina's entry into real estate. When an agent failed to show up for a scheduled home viewing, she stepped in, took charge, and ultimately sold her home for over the asking price—that moment sparked her passion for real estate. Her background as a relationship manager in the banking sector provided a solid foundation for her

new career, enabling her to thrive in a field where trust and personal connections are essential.

Her early banking career, particularly as an Outside Sales Manager at Wells Fargo, taught her the art of networking and delivering presentations to high-level clients. She carried those skills into her real estate career, which have been invaluable in securing deals and building lasting professional relationships.

In addition to her success in real estate, Catina's influence extends far beyond property sales. Appointed by Governor Northam to serve on the Virginia Real Estate Board, she has been a tireless advocate for raising the industry's standards of practice. She also serves on boards for the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, The Metropolitan Business League, and The Doorways, embodying her commitment to giving back to the community. She is a Co-Author of an Amazon best selling book, *Lipstick and Legacies*. She also serves as a business development coach and public speaker.

Catina's advice to new agents is rooted in hard-earned wisdom. "You must be all in," she says. "This is not a part-time effort. It requires a full-time commitment and a refusal to compromise your integrity." Her belief in building a solid reputation, much like her father (a successful entrepreneur) taught her, has been the cornerstone of her success. She is a firm advocate for professionalism,



“ You weren't created to be average.

reminding newer agents to stay focused on their path rather than getting distracted by the curated achievements of others on social media.

On the home front, Catina's family is her greatest pride. She and her husband, Robert Jones, share five children—Ashanti, Asha, Amari, Isaiah, and Breyauna—and recently welcomed their first grandchild, affectionately called Prince Andrew. As a family, they cherish time spent together through family dinners and game nights, balancing their busy professional lives with the joys of family and travel.

Though numerous, Catina's most memorable deals always return to her love for helping others succeed. Whether it's guiding a family through the largest purchase of their lives or mentoring a new agent, her passion lies in creating meaningful, lasting impacts.

As for the future, Catina continues to expand her business with a new real estate office in Florida and a growing team under the Icon Realty Group banner. Despite her success, her heart remains with affordable housing and nonprofit work, ensuring that her legacy is of service, integrity, and unwavering dedication to helping others thrive.

MIKE HOGAN

The Hogan Group Real Estate
20 Years in Real Estate

Mike Hogan, founder of The Hogan Group Real Estate, is no stranger to success. With over two decades in real estate, he has built one of the most respected teams in the industry. Known for his relentless work ethic, innovative mindset, and deep commitment to clients and team members, Mike has overseen an impressive sales volume of \$363,278,215 across 1,012 units in the past year alone. But for Mike, real estate is about much more than numbers—it's about people, relationships, and making a lasting impact.

Mike didn't always plan to enter real estate. His journey began in the corporate world, where he worked in operations at major companies like Capital One, Wachovia Bank, and GE Financial, where he earned his Six Sigma Black Belt. These roles honed his process-driven mindset, a skill that would later become the cornerstone of his success in real estate. After completing his MBA at VCU in 2000, he co-founded a marketing startup, gaining invaluable entrepreneurial experience. In 2005, he leaped real estate, motivated by the lackluster service he had experienced as an investor. "I figured if I just answered my phone, I would be better than 99% of agents out there," he recalls.

From the start, Mike was determined to raise the bar.

His corporate background in process management allowed him to design systems that ensured every client would feel satisfied. "I built this company with one goal in mind: to provide a level of service that I rarely experienced as a client," he explains. His innovative approach and commitment to client satisfaction have set The Hogan Group apart in a highly competitive industry.

Over the past 20 years, Mike has witnessed significant changes in the real estate landscape. "When I first started, everything was traditional—paper contracts, face-to-face negotiations," he reflects. "Now, technology has completely transformed the market. Virtual tours, electronic contracts, and instant access to information have made everything faster-paced and more competitive." This shift has pushed Mike to adapt continuously, staying ahead of trends to serve his clients better.

Despite his many achievements, Mike's proudest moment in real estate is deeply personal. "Helping my daughter buy her first home was the highlight of my career," he shares. The transaction, which took place on his birthday, remains a cherished memory. "There's nothing like seeing your child take that significant step. It was the best birthday present ever."

Mike attributes much of his success to his strong sense of



“ Don't be average; be legendary.

self-awareness. Early in his career, he learned to focus on his strengths and delegate tasks where he didn't excel. "Once I realized I suck at more things than I'm good at, my business took off," he admits with a laugh. This mindset has allowed him to scale his team and focus on what truly matters: building relationships and delivering results.

Those local and national relationships have been vital to Mike's success. "My connections with agents have gotten more deals done than my negotiating has," he says. His advice to newer agents reflects this philosophy: "Build relationships with other agents. Always return phone calls and give feedback. Those old-school values are still incredibly important in today's market."

Mike cherishes time with his family outside of work—his wife Christine, daughter Kellie, and son Kyle. Family is at the center of Mike's life, whether they're relaxing at their river home in Heathsville, traveling, or bonding over bourbon and cigars.

When asked how he wants to be remembered, Mike's answer is simple: "I want to be known as someone who provided opportunities for people willing to work hard to build amazing lives for their families."



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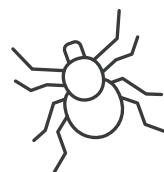
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