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Written by Kendra Woodward
Photography by Gilead Hernandez, Grafobox Media

DAWN FORKENBROCK

DEDICATION, CREATIVITY, AND PASSION

Dawn Forkenbrock, the dynamic force behind The Forkenbrock Group at Real Broker, has crafted a remarkable career for herself in real estate. With her team consisting of herself, six other REALTORS® and her operations/transaction manager, marketing assistant, social media specialist, and an administrative assistant — Dawn has built a business grounded in exceptional customer service, deep relationships, and an unwavering commitment to helping others achieve their dreams of homeownership.



Born in Michigan and raised in Arizona from the age of five, Dawn's journey into real estate was shaped by her early career in banking starting at the age of 16. Her fascination with contracts, mortgage applications, and meeting new clients on a daily basis began during this time, and is ultimately what sparked her interest in real estate.

Through this position she was able to run her business the way she wanted, despite being at a large corporation, however was unable to hold an active real estate license at the same time. After the birth of her first child, Dawn knew she was done with the nine to five grind and was ready for a new venture. While pregnant with baby number two, her husband reminded her of her passion for real estate and she decided it was the right time to dive in.

Entering the real estate industry wasn't without its challenges Dawn admits, "You have to know how to talk to people — other agents and your clients." She adds that the emotional nature of real estate transactions requires agents to be a calming voice for their clients, learning how to handle each situation as it comes. Since the majority of real estate schooling isn't based on real life scenarios and situations, Dawn suggests that real estate agents must learn to adapt, roll with the punches, and understand that it takes commitment to communication and marketing in order to be successful in this industry.

For Dawn, real estate empowers her and fills her with great joy for two reasons: helping clients through the entire process of their home sale and being able to use her creative side. "At the end of the day, when they close and they're so happy, it's a really good feeling." Dawn takes pride in bringing comfort to what can often be a scary experience, calming her buyers and sellers, and guiding them through the process. "Giving people the best experience possible and customer service is so huge." She also finds great satisfaction in utilizing new and creative ways to capture clients' attention, noting, "You have to know how to get people to *want* to read your stuff and *want* to look you up.

Halfway through her decade-long career, five years ago marked a major turning point in Dawn's career when she signed up for coaching with Tom Ferry. She admits her life and business were completely transformed because of him and his coaching program. And when she realized she had unknowingly built a niche for herself as a mom, she noticed that her sphere became more in tune with more family-focused clientele. "I think a lot of people are attracted to me as a REALTOR® because I have four kids, but I still run a business full-time, sell a lot of houses, have a good team, and am able to be a good mom."

A dedicated mother of four, Dawn is passionate about showing other mom-agents how to balance a successful career and family life. Her husband, Matt, has been a significant source of support throughout their 13-year marriage and was a huge factor in her push to become an agent. "I would not be able to do what I do without his support," she admires, emphasizing the importance of having a supportive partner in this industry. Together, with their children — Silas, Audrina, Scotty, and Blakely — the Forkenbrocks enjoy traveling and spending time together. In her free time Dawn reads quite often, with a goal to read 24 books this year. She also frequents the gym, loves coffee, and pampering herself.

Looking ahead, Dawn is eager to mentor other moms in the industry, helping them establish systems and grow their businesses in a way that still finds balance — envisioning her business running like a well-oiled machine, allowing her to focus on mentoring and spending time with her family. Eventually, she also hopes her children will join The Forkenbrock Group when they're older, noting that a couple of the kids have fun helping with open houses and social media.

Dawn Forkenbrock's journey from banking to real estate is a testament to her dedication, creativity, and passion for helping others. With a strong support system and a clear vision for the future, she continues to inspire and mentor others while achieving remarkable success in the real estate industry.





I think a lot of people are attracted to me as a REALTOR® because I have four kids, but I still run a business full-time, sell a lot of houses, have a good team, and am able to be a good mom.



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Trust. Deep industry expertise. Reliability. This is what First American Home Warranty Area Manager Kathryn Lansden brings to the Southeast Valley.

With more than 40 years in real estate, including more than 20 years in home warranty, Kathryn is a go-to resource when top real estate agents in the greater Phoenix area want to educate their clients about home warranties.

“I’ve literally never done anything besides real estate, and I’ve done it across the country,” she said. “I know the agent mind well – I know what they need and I know how the industry works.”

For the past nine years, Kathryn has managed the First American Home Warranty territory in valley cities including Chandler, Tempe, Mesa, Gilbert, Ahwatukee, Queen Creek, and San Tan Valley, as well as other north Pinal County areas.

Trusted and Recommended by Real Estate Pros

Before embarking on a home warranty career, Kathryn specialized in real estate marketing and recruiting. She gained a deep understanding of what it takes to be a successful real estate agent and what home buyers and sellers value.

She’s also adept at working closely with home buyers, who often have different questions about home warranties than real estate professionals.

“Agents trust me to help their clients and provide solid answers. I understand how important an agent’s job is, so I’m always trying to add to that value.”

Given her deep experience, Kathryn has built a broad perspective on the industry.

“I can explain in simple terms how home warranties help protect home buyers and sellers and real estate agents,” she said. “I’ve been at it for 20 years, so I understand what clients want to know about home warranties.”

Knowing the Ins and Outs of Home Warranty

With a passion for contractual details, Kathryn knows the fine points of First American service contracts, of course, but she also reads competitors’ offerings – which is invaluable when educating clients about what level of protection home warranties offer.

A First American home warranty is a renewable service contract that protects a home's systems and appliances from unexpected repair or replacement costs due to a breakdown. When a covered item breaks, First American Home Warranty sends an independent service contractor to the home to diagnose and repair or replace the item.

Home warranties generally cover systems, such as heating, air conditioning and plumbing, and specified appliances, including dishwashers, ovens, clothes washers and dryers, and refrigerators – with upgrades and options available.* In contrast, homeowners insurance does not cover mechanical failures, so a home warranty can help bridge that gap in protection.

“There are standards that guide this industry, and many homeowners aren't aware of that,” Kathryn said. “If I say we don't cover this, it's helpful to be able to explain why that kind of coverage is not typical. My clients know I have unrivaled knowledge of the home warranty protection.”

Growth in the Desert

Kathryn has lived in the Phoenix area for 22 years, moving from New Orleans to be closer to her parents. Her daughter, a former U.S. Navy airplane mechanic, will be joining the rest of the family in Phoenix later this year. Kathryn's family includes the “foster fail” Sadie, a rescued once-feral pit bill Kathryn adores.

Kathryn is an avid gardener, tending her vegetables and bringing butterflies into her desert yard, and enjoys traveling. She is also quite a foodie and loves learning about wine.

Learning is also something she enjoys in her work life, and she continues to stay abreast of industry changes so she can educate real estate agents and home buyers and sellers. Kathryn won First American's Shining Star

award in 2023, which marked her continued growth as an area manager.

In addition to training her fellow warranty representatives on the ins-and-outs of First American's product, she'll soon be certified to teach continuing education classes on home warranties. She enjoys educating agents to help give them the confidence to effectively describe to their clients the value and peace of mind a home warranty provides.

“It's important to educate agents and clients about the budget protection a home warranty affords. When I ask, ‘Do you have an extra thousand dollars lying around when a major appliance or system breaks down?’ people understand. I counsel them on the coverage that will be most appropriate.”

Budget Protection When its Needed

Kathryn knows how important it is for real estate agents and home warranty customers to put their trust in her. For buyers, it's likely their biggest single investment of their lives.

Nearly half of First American Home Warranty customers experience a major home system failure in their first year of coverage. About one-third place a claim in the first three months of coverage.**

“That's critical budget protection,” she said. “That's one of the things that drives me – I know the company wants to do the right thing and we always look for a way to say ‘yes.’ I'm proud that my clients trust me with their home warranty decisions.”

*Home warranty coverage varies by location, plan, and selected options.

**Over 46% of First American Home Warranty customers experienced a major home system breakdown in the first year of coverage. Over 28% of customers nationwide placed a claim in the first 90 days of coverage, based on 2023 first-year real estate contracts.



“That's one of the things that drives me – I know the company wants to do the right thing and we always look for a way to say ‘yes.’ I'm proud that my clients trust me with their home warranty decisions.”

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Braden Johnson

Going After Your Dreams

A seasoned real estate agent and founder of the BJR Group under Limitless Real Estate, Braden Johnson truly embodies the essence of his slogan: “Living the Dream!” With over 17 years of experience in real estate and a passion for helping clients achieve their homeownership goals, Braden’s success is a testament to his dedication and expertise.

Graduating with a degree in Real Estate from Arizona State W. P. Carey School of Business in 2007, Braden entered the real estate world not only with academic knowledge but also with a deep-seated passion for the industry he grew up around, following in his mother’s footsteps. His motto, “Don’t wait to buy real estate, buy real estate and wait,” encapsulates his belief in the long-term benefits of real estate investment.

Braden finds the most fulfillment in helping clients achieve their dream of owning real estate, whether they are first-time home buyers or seeking to upgrade to a multi-million dollar property. “Guiding clients through understanding the market, interest rates, credit scores, and the qualification process is incredibly rewarding,” he shares. “With my strong negotiating skills, persistence, and unique background in mortgages, new home construction, and years of experience, I ensure every client gets the best deal possible. I don’t take no for an answer and leave no stone unturned. My skill set truly sets me apart from other agents.”

For Braden every transaction takes him back to his college baseball days... “It’s the bottom of the 9th, bases are loaded and I’m up to bat. I don’t fold under pressure; instead, I keep my composure, and knock it out of the park”. The discipline and toughness he developed on the field have been instrumental in shaping his approach to real estate. His competitive nature, honed through countless hours of practice and games, drives him to beat out the competition and excel in every transaction. Braden doesn’t give up easily, and his commitment to delivering for his clients is unwavering. His background as an athlete has molded him

into a real estate professional who consistently rises to the occasion, ensuring his clients always come out on top.

As a former loan officer, Braden provides valuable insights and creative solutions for his clients. “I always think outside the box and come up with several options in order to make things work,” he proudly states.

Inspired by the mentors who shaped his career, Braden has embarked on building his own team, the BJR Group, with future plans to open his own brokerage. “I would love to help other agents become the best they can by guiding and teaching them how to be successful,” he shares. His

“

I don’t take no for an answer and leave no stone unturned. My skill set truly sets me apart from other agents.

desire to mentor others is deeply rooted in his own experiences and the pivotal moments that have shaped his career, such as leaving his corporate office job to pursue real estate full-time. “It was both the scariest and the best decision of my life,” Braden recalls.

Beyond his vibrant professional career, Braden’s personal life shines just as bright. Alongside his amazing wife Drea, they have two children, Gia and Jet. When he’s not working, Braden

enjoys spending time with his family, teaching his kids sports like baseball and golf, and looks forward to taking family trips boating on the lake, reminiscent of his own childhood memories.

An avid golfer and self-proclaimed grill master, Braden enjoys cooking, especially steaks. “When I’m not closing deals or mentoring my team, you’ll find me perfecting my swing on the golf course or grilling up a feast for my family and friends,” he shares, showcasing the balance he maintains between his professional and personal life.

Through the BJR Group, Braden continues to help others realize their real estate aspirations, proving every day that with dedication and the right mindset, one can truly live their dreams. “I am always available to help and genuinely like seeing other people succeed and accomplish their dreams too,” he concludes.



“

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Kendra Niehuis

*Faith & Family
in Real Estate*

With a heart devoted to her faith, family, and real estate, Kendra Niehuis stands as a beacon of compassion and expertise in the industry. Licensed in 2017 and affiliated with ProSmart Realty, Kendra's journey into real estate was a calling to change the financial trajectory of her client's lives.

Born and raised in Chandler, Arizona, Kendra's upbringing instilled in her a deep appreciation for community and a strong work ethic. After studying Childhood Education at ASU and student teaching at the ASU Polytechnic campus, with aspirations of becoming a teacher, Kendra's path took an unexpected turn when she discovered her passion for real estate.

Initially drawn into the world of real estate when she purchased her first house at the age of 21, despite modest earnings as a pediatric dental assistant, the transformative experience ignited Kendra's belief in the power of homeownership. She had a lender-friend at the time who suggested she buy a house instead of renewing her lease, but thought she was crazy for purchasing a foreclosed home. However, that house allowed her family to put a down payment on their next house through its equity.

"That's kind of how I live my life, if I want to do something I go do it. I don't think about it too much," she quips. So, when a family-friend needed someone to help them list and buy houses, Kendra jumped on the opportunity. Not realizing that real estate was a sales job, she obtained her license with zero sales experience or research into the industry, passing her tests with flying colors. When her investor-friend stopped flipping houses and real estate began to take on a life of its own, Kendra saw it becoming her full-time gig.



Driven by her desire to help others navigate life's milestones, Kendra approaches her work with unwavering dedication and empathy. She views each transaction not just as a business deal, but as an opportunity to guide her clients toward a brighter financial future. "The heart of this business is helping somebody buy or sell, build wealth," Kendra prides. "I don't feel like a salesperson, I feel like a helper — I help people."

As she honed her skills and started to bring focus to the type of clientele she wanted to service, Kendra discovered her niche in acreage, farms, ranches, and horse properties. Having grown up on four acres, and currently living on 2, acreage is something she knows all too well. Coupled with her family's involvement in the rodeo scene, Kendra has surrounded herself with knowledge and firsthand experience that provides her with invaluable insights into the unique needs of those looking for larger parcels of land.

Outside of real estate, Kendra's passion for service extends to her involvement in charitable organizations, including her church's youth group and the Junior Rodeo Association. Watching children find their direction and spreading her faith brings her immense joy and is very important in her life. "We have a God who loves us even when we mess up" is a message she shares with all. As PTA President at her kids' school, she is dedicated to nurturing the next generation and fostering a sense of community spirit, but Kendra also supports her friend's endeavors like a girl friend of hers who was looking to start an animal therapy property.

At the heart of Kendra's life however is family — her husband, Mark, and their two children, Brooke and Lake. Together, they all share a love for rodeo, animals, and the outdoors, finding joy in the simple moments of togetherness and the bonds of faith that unite them. Their home is full of energy as they take care of horses,

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cows, a goat, chickens, dogs, and a cat, many serving in the circle of life surrounding their involvement in rodeo — for instance, their goat participates in rodeo practice and training, while the chickens live out on the pasture and help as fly control for the horses.

Kendra’s dream is to eventually retire her family to Oklahoma where they have

a second property and she holds dual licenses. To help her on that journey, Kendra recently brought on her first team member, Monica Miller. Licensed in 2022 and originally from South Carolina, Kendra found that the two had a lot in common - the sweet southern-minded temperament that Monica has boasts a lot of similar values and principles to Kendra’s faith and beliefs. Monica is

extremely respectful and organized, and Kendra describes her as a go-getter.

With an unwavering commitment to her clients, her community, and her family, Kendra is looking forward to slow and steady, sustainable growth with Monica by her side. For Kendra, real estate gives her purpose and provides endless opportunities for her family and their future.

SURVIVING UNCERTAINTY



» weserv quarterly update

Written By: Roger Nelson, CEO of the West and SouthEast REALTORS® of the Valley Inc

As I travel around WeSERV’s jurisdiction, I find it interesting to see the different reactions to what is occurring in the real estate business. I get many emotions, from the positive to the negative, sometimes from the same people. How can people faced with the same issues and situations react so differently?

Some of this is human nature, based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. It starts with the basic needs essential for survival, such as food and shelter. Nothing else matters if these needs are unmet, and that is when fear and uncertainty can take root.

Maslow’s hierarchy rises to the highest level, focusing on seeking meaning and purpose in life. People at this level often have a more positive view of the future as they understand the need to grow and progress and actively take steps to achieve that growth.

Life is, by its nature, uncertain. Our reaction to that uncertainty tells us a lot about ourselves and how our views, both positive and negative, can affect our life experience.

Several things can help us overcome this feeling of uncertainty, including focusing on what we can control, being grateful for the blessings we have to help keep our perspective and understanding uncertainty as part of the game of life.

Focusing on what you can control is the first item I would like to discuss. Much of life is entirely out of our control. Every time you climb in your car and head out for the day, you have no idea what those around you may say or do. The only thing you can control is how you react to it. I am reminded of the serenity prayer. *God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.* Three words in that prayer stick out: accept, courage, and wisdom. To survive uncertainty, it takes all three.

Second, begin to be grateful for the blessings we have to help keep our perspective. As you look around, you can always find someone worse off than you who would do anything to change places with you. It might be your health, your mind, or the time that you can devote to something important to you that others wish they had the time to do as well. I know it sounds cliché, but just by living in the United States of America, particularly Arizona, you are already way ahead of most of the rest of the world. Sometimes, it just takes a moment to remind yourself.

I want to remind you of something that you already know. Life is uncertain, even for the leaders of our county, as each of you has learned in the last couple of months. We have a President who decided not to run for a second term, a Past President who survived an assignation attempt, and another leader who was thrust into a role she thought would be in the future. Uncertainty is the only certainty.

Finally, as a member of WeSERV, we have a program that can help when things beyond your control strike. It is called WeCARE and it is for members who have had catastrophic events beyond their control. While I hope you never have to use it, know it was created for you and the agents and affiliate members you know. Just go to weserv.realtor/we-care-services.html for more information.

From the bottom of my heart, I wish you all the very best!

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