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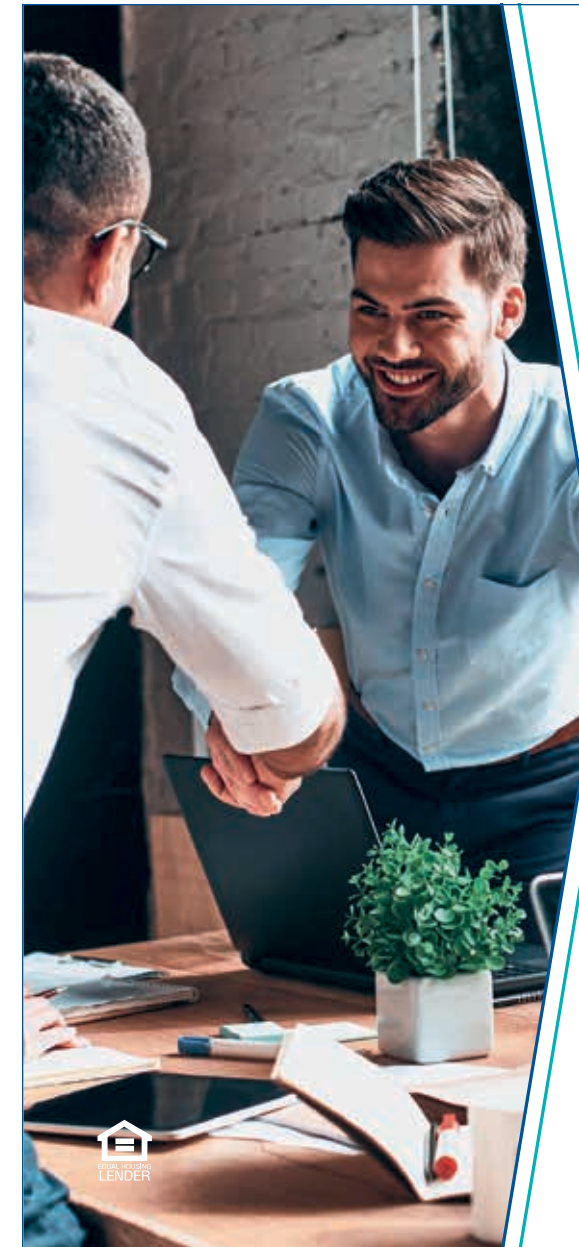
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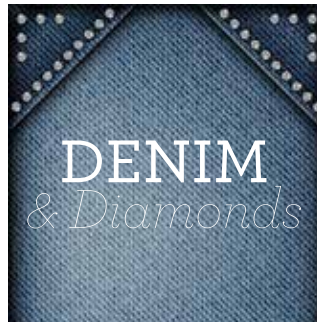
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# MICHELE MILAN

►► top producer

By Robbyn Moore  
Photos by Jay Dunbar of Great  
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A JOURNEY OF REINVENTION

**B**y the time Michele Milan turned 50, her children were grown, and she had accumulated a wealth of experience in marketing and branding, finance, and all aspects of the real estate transaction. Nearly four decades ago, she began her career in corporate America at General Motors. Later, she transitioned to the finance industry as a successful loan officer at Mortgage One. She has worked as a real estate assistant, social media manager, certified home stager, mortgage processor, title processor, notary and contract closer. As a result, she made the bold decision to officially launch her real estate career in 2018. In her first year as an agent, Michele sold an impressive 40 houses. Since then, she has dedicated herself to providing her clients with the utmost care and expertise.

Michele grew up in Warren, Michigan, where business was a way of life in her family. As the eldest of three daughters, Michele was raised by her father, who was a successful business owner, and her mother, who effortlessly juggled the role of his secretary and of a gracious hostess. “From a young age, my sisters and I were exposed to the inner workings of running a company and learned the importance of hard work and of understanding customers’ needs,” Michele shared. “Our parents were committed to instilling values that would last a lifetime. My father’s wise words — ‘the number-one thing you can do in business is show up’ — still ring true in my mind, and to this day, I make it a point to answer every phone call immediately.”

Michele’s journey to where she is today at Canary Realty has been riddled with challenges and obstacles — a path that has built strength, character and an exceptional work ethic. When her husband, Craig, was earning his mechanical engineering degree from Lawrence Tech, Michele continued to balance a full-time job and motherhood. The financial strain made it challenging for both of them, but they persevered. On the day Craig was scheduled to take his final

exam in engineering, Michele gave birth to their first son. “Despite the challenges, we made it work,” Michele recalled.

In 2008, when the U.S. economy took a drastic downturn, Michele and her husband had to relocate to South Carolina so he could keep his job. “While we tried to embrace the move as a new adventure, it was not the same as being back home in Michigan,” she said. “As soon as the opportunity presented itself, we packed our bags and headed back to Macomb County where we belonged.”

With years of experience in corporate relocation and a deep connection to her elderly parents, nothing ignites Michele’s passion more than helping relocation clients and senior citizens with downsizing. “My empathy for both groups allows me to provide unparalleled care and support throughout the entire real estate process,” Michele explained. “However, lately, I have felt a calling to teach and educate others about real estate. My dedication to the field has led me to study extensively and earn my broker certification, further adding to my skill set.”

Throughout Michele’s professional journey, the most rewarding element has been the opportunity to engage with people beyond her immediate family circle. “Prior to my real estate career, my roles primarily centered on home-based activities,” Michele shared. “However, as my sons embarked on their college journeys and my husband continued his work-related travels, I was compelled to seek more purpose-driven professional pursuits.”

Over the past six years, Michele has discovered her true calling in the realm of real estate. “While ascending to the ranks of a top 100 producer has been a significant achievement, it pales in comparison to the sense of fulfillment I experience when I witness the pride in the eyes of my husband and sons as they acknowledge my success. This marks my midlife metamorphosis, a transformation that I take immense pride in,” she said.





However, Michele does have a discreet support system: her youngest son, Matthew. “My son has astounded me by obtaining his real estate license at just 23 years of age,” Michele said. “In addition to running a successful outdoor lighting company and serving as the food and beverage manager at The Orchards Golf Club, Matthew steps in during the rare instances when I need a day off. I have complete confidence in his ability to treat my clients with the same level of attention and professionalism that I would.”



Michele’s goal is to be a dependable and trustworthy professional colleague, garnering respect from her peers. “My high success rate in closing deals attests to the importance of these professional relationships,” she shared. “Consequently, I concentrate my efforts within my primary area of operation — Macomb County — while also catering to the dynamic Woodward Corridor.”

In the highly competitive world of real estate, Michele believes that fostering robust relationships with fellow real estate professionals is paramount. “The present real estate landscape, characterized by limited inventory, fluctuating loyalties, and escalating prices, is often compared to the unpredictable nature of the Wild West,” she said. “Each day, I am reminded of the 2008 economic downturn, an experience that has significantly contributed to my resilience and fortitude.”



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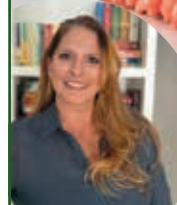
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## *A Journey of Experience, Commitment & Personalization*

With 18 years of experience in the real estate industry, Shannon Vesper-Balsamo has become a trusted and knowledgeable professional. Her journey began in 2005 when she took on the management of her family's commercial buildings. With the encouragement of her father, Shannon obtained her real estate license to expand her services. She ventured into managing commercial properties for other landlords, gaining valuable experiences and a solid reputation. Shannon's expertise grew as she successfully closed several large commercial sales, and in 2009, her determination led her to start her own company, Shannon Vesper Realty, Inc.

During her career, Shannon had the opportunity to work on listings in a development led by her father, who has been a respected builder and developer in Macomb since the 1980s. As Shannon balanced both commercial and residential real estate, she found herself increasingly approached by family and friends who were seeking her assistance in buying or selling their homes.

Growing up in a family of entrepreneurs, Shannon was exposed to various businesses throughout her life, including interior decorating, custom drapery, real estate development and real estate holding companies. "It was a natural progression for me to establish my own company and make a name for myself in the industry," she explained. "My initial focus was on growing my commercial management and leasing company; however, I quickly discovered my aptitude for selling homes."

One of the significant influences in Shannon's life is her father, John Vesper. He emigrated from Sicily and arrived in Detroit with nothing, and built a successful construction company that continues to contribute and improve the community. "His resilience and success have inspired me throughout my life," Shannon shared. "My upbringing in the family business played a vital role in shaping who I am today. I spent many summers sweeping job sites and running errands, and I learned the value of hard work and dedication. Those experiences taught me the foundations of success and instilled in me the drive to excel."



Shannon's educational background includes a bachelor's degree in business with a major in public relations from Ferris State University, which she earned in 2005. During her time at Ferris, Shannon gained practical experience through various internships, including working with the Detroit Fury and the Detroit Pistons in sports public relations and management. She even hosted a sports TV show called "Between the Lines" and interviewed athletes from the campus. Additionally, Shannon served as the sports editor for the campus newspaper, with

a focus on Division I men's ice hockey. She then continued her pursuit of knowledge and earned a master's degree in education and sports administration from Wayne State University in 2007.

Shannon's determination to grow her business carved a path that has led her to success. She measures her achievements by her own standards and focuses on obtaining her goals each day. "I never compare myself to other agents or their sales; instead, I remain steadfast in pursuing my own objectives," she said. "As a real



Shannon

VESPER-BALSAMO





“

I am dedicated to each buyer and seller, supporting them throughout the entire process, regardless of how long it takes to find the right fit.



estate professional, my primary goal is to assist others with their real estate needs and build lasting relationships. When it comes to commercial management, I emphasize the importance of taking care of tenants as paying customers and firmly believe that delivering on tenants' expectations is crucial for maintaining successful landlord-tenant relationships."

Shannon's incredible passion for building and maintaining relationships with her clients has allowed her to know them on a personal level, understanding their family dynamics, friends, hobbies and even vacations. "This deep level of connection enables me to better serve my clients and provide a personalized experience," she shared. "I am dedicated to each buyer and seller, supporting them throughout the entire process, regardless of how long it takes to find the right fit. It is a significant decision that requires careful consideration, and one that often leads to referrals

from satisfied buyers and their circles of family and friends."

Despite not carrying a prominent name, Shannon utilizes various marketing strategies to attract buyers and sellers. "Being a small business owner presents its challenges," she said. "Unlike larger real estate companies with national recognition, I operate under my own brand, which means I must work harder to secure listings and clients. I wouldn't have it any other way because I am able to showcase my boutique experience and dedication to personalized service. My husband, Matteo, is also a licensed agent and assists me with clients if things get too busy."

Shannon has been married for 13 years to her husband, Matteo Balsamo. Together, they are blessed with four wonderful boys — Giuseppe, 11, Giovanni, 9, Marcello, 7, and Massimo, 5. As a family, they enjoy watching the Red Wings, going

to ice skating sessions, taking trips to the beach, visiting the zoo and exploring new stores. In 2020, Shannon developed a newfound passion for fitness in activities such as running, weight lifting and high-intensity interval training (HIIT). Shannon also finds time to manage a portfolio of 10 commercial buildings, and she continues to be responsible for overseeing the administrative aspects of her family's companies.

Whether she's showcasing a home or preparing to list it, Shannon possesses a keen eye for detail such as identifying potential issues with furnaces, cracks in basement walls, or multiple layers of shingles on a roof. "Attention to detail is paramount in my approach," she said. "I believe in going above and beyond to ensure that my clients are not only satisfied but also genuinely excited about their investment. I am not afraid to get my hands dirty in order to obtain the necessary answers."



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### EDUCATING BUYERS BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

For Aaron Jackson, founder of Comprehensive Property Inspection LLC, every home tells a story. From the creaky floorboards to the hidden nooks, each property has its own tale. Aaron and his company aim to not only inspect homes but also educate others, guiding homeowners through the intricacies of their investment. Aaron's journey from the classroom to the inspection room was born from his desire to combine his background in

education and his passion for real estate, and is marked by dedication, integrity, and a commitment to excellence.

Established in 2019, Comprehensive Property Inspection LLC has become a trusted name in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties in Eastern Michigan. The company offers a range of services, including radon testing, mold inspection, water quality sampling, and sewer scope. However,

what truly sets them apart is their philosophy: "We don't inspect, we educate."

"I was a classroom teacher and an enlisted soldier in the Army. For nearly 15 years, I served my country and my community," Aaron explained. "I decided to take the educational background that I had and apply it to helping homebuyers — particularly first-time homebuyers — navigate their most expensive purchase."



In every aspect of Comprehensive Property Inspection, the ethos of education permeates its operations. From same-day inspection reports to 24/7 appointment booking, Aaron and his team prioritize timely service without compromising on quality. "You need a home inspector who can carefully and tactfully explain the maintenance of a house," Aaron said. "My job is not to frighten people but to help them understand what they are buying."

The team at Comprehensive Property Inspection is committed to providing excellence beyond the inspection itself. For example, clients receive a comprehensive home inspection handbook, equipping them with the knowledge to maintain their property and save money in the process. "I'm a former teacher, and I still hand out textbooks," Aaron said, smiling.

Real estate agents in particular have come to rely on the stellar reputation and superior service of Comprehensive Property Inspection. With a five-star rating on Google, the company prides itself on meeting deadlines and offering an all-in-one experience. "We can make timely deadlines when they need information fast," Aaron explained. "We are also a one-stop shop, offering sewer scope and other services at the time of the inspection, so they don't have to make multiple trips to properties."

Beyond the professional achievements, Aaron is driven by his personal fulfillment. "It's the reassurance that the buyer is moving into a safe and functional house," he said. "After all, a house is supposed to be a blessing, not a curse."

Whether inspecting a modest home or a luxury condo, Comprehensive Property Inspection ensures that every client receives top-tier service. "The quality of service is the biggest difference. Customers expect five-star treatment," he said.

Outside of work, Aaron cherishes time with his family, including his two daughters — aged 12 and 6. Family skate nights at the Mount Clemens Ice Arena are a favorite pastime where they foster bonds and create memories.

When he's not inspecting homes or spending time with loved ones, Aaron finds solace around the fire pit while engaging in face-to-face conversations with friends and family. "There is nothing like a face-to-face conversation," he shared. "I feel this is something that has gotten away from society at large."

For Aaron, success is not just measured in financial terms but in the ability to make a positive impact on others. "Success is earning enough

to pay the expenses — with a surplus that you can help others. Being wildly successful allows you to be wildly generous," he said.

Aaron hopes to be remembered for the mark he leaves on people's lives — whether it's as a teacher, a soldier or a father. "Did I make my mark on society and leave it a little better? That is the question that I hope is answered with a resounding 'yes,'" he said.

Amidst the countless inspections and memorable encounters, there's one experience that stands out — a peculiar incident during an inspection in Marine City. Despite experiencing unexplainable phenomena, Aaron's passion for his work remains undeterred. "This was the strangest thing I've encountered during an inspection," he explained. "I still love looking at old houses, and the client still went through with the house."



With a blend of expertise and unwavering dedication, Comprehensive Property Inspection LLC is rewriting the script on home inspections, one educational experience at a time. For those in search of more than just a thorough inspection, Aaron and his team offer peace of mind and a wealth of knowledge, ensuring that every homebuyer embarks on their journey with confidence and clarity.

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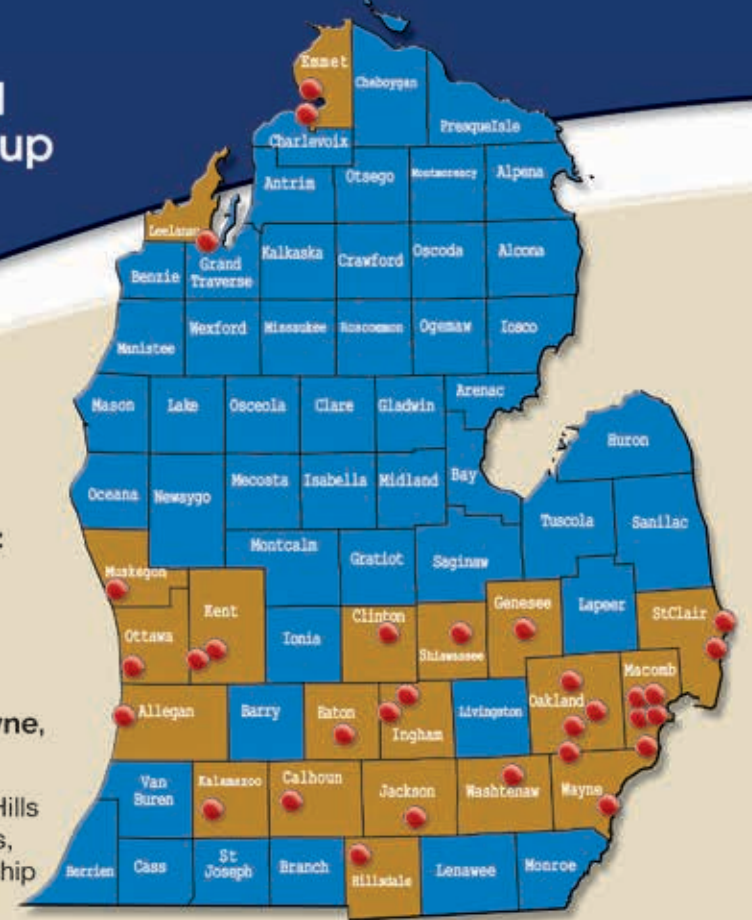


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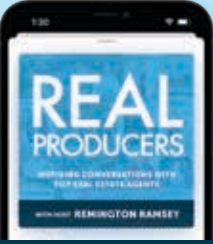

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# RANDI BRANDT



▶▶ agent on the rise

Photos by Melissa Douglas Co.

## FROM EVENT PLANNER TO SUCCESSFUL AGENT

Randi Brandt, a seasoned agent with Keller Williams Realty Lakeside, has seamlessly transitioned from her previous role as a top wedding and event planner to become a leading figure in the real estate industry. With a career spanning over six years, Randi is dedicated to her clients and has a passion for community engagement, which have propelled her to achieve remarkable success. Her career volume has even landed her in the top 5 of nearly 400 agents at her brokerage.

Randi's journey into real estate was marked by a transformative shift. "Real estate investing was my way to retire eventually," she said. "In early 2016, I was approached and ended up selling my book of business in the event industry. I received my salesperson license in December of 2016 and was a full-time agent instantly." Armed with a hospitality business degree from Michigan State University and her experience in the corporate world, she found her niche in the real estate landscape.

Randi stands apart from others within the industry not just because of her impressive sales figures but also because of her extensive involvement in the field. "I am an active member of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) and sit on the NAR Young Professionals Network Advisory Board and the Commitment to Excellence committee," she said. Beyond her professional accolades, Randi's dedication to enriching the lives of others is evident in her role as a Brokerage Cultural Ambassador and Volunteer of the Year 2020.

Randi's path to success, however, wasn't without trials. In February of 2018, she faced a life-altering health crisis that left her battling liver and kidney failure, along with other complications. "I was 32 years old ... I laid in my hospital bed, refusing to speak to anyone and remember a very unfriendly conversation with my Maker," she recalled. It was during this dark time that she made a promise to dedicate herself to enriching the lives of others if given the chance. This commitment spurred her recovery and a deepened sense of purpose. "I embarked on fulfilling my pledge, setting out on the journey to become a licensed foster parent. Since then, my home has embraced three children — a testament to the promise I made amidst the darkest moments of my life," she added.



Randi's resilience and commitment extend beyond her personal journey and into her vision for the real estate industry. For instance, she actively works to increase homeownership opportunities, particularly in rental-heavy areas. "Educating the public as well as other agents on how to help their communities has been very fulfilling," she said. As a solo agent, Randi collaborates with her marketing director, Marisa Haigh, to make a significant impact both locally and nationally.

One of the highlights of Randi's career is her annual Client Appreciation Day at Comerica Park. She hosts past clients and their families for a memorable day at the ballpark, underlining her emphasis on family and community. "Seeing my families — because my clients are my family — enjoying a fun day out ... fills my heart every year," she said.

Randi also graciously shared insights into the charitable endeavors that resonate with her values. Notably, she lends her support to Project Sanctuary, an organization dedicated to providing comprehensive assistance to military families through therapeutic retreats and support programs. In addition, the Ted Lindsay





“REMEMBER TO FOCUS ON THE CLIENT, NOT THE PAYCHECK. THE MOMENT IT BECOMES ABOUT THE MONEY AND NOT THE CLIENT, YOU’VE ALREADY LOST.”

Foundation — renowned for its efforts in combating autism and enhancing the lives of affected individuals — holds a special place in her roster of supported causes. When asked about the driving force behind her philanthropy, Randi expressed a genuine empathy for the beneficiaries of these organizations. Her motivation stems from a heartfelt desire to effect positive change in the lives of military families and those touched by autism, underscoring a resolute commitment to these commendable missions.

For aspiring agents, Randi emphasized the importance of perseverance and client-centric service. “Push through and fight the difficulties of the first 12 to 18 months,” she said. “Remember to focus on the client, not the paycheck. The moment it becomes about the money and not the client, you’ve already lost.”

Randi’s sincere dedication to her clients and to her industry, along with her remarkable journey of personal and professional growth, makes her a shining example for both up-and-coming agents and seasoned professionals alike. As she continues to build bridges and advocate for the rights of homeowners, her legacy is bound to be remembered for years to come.

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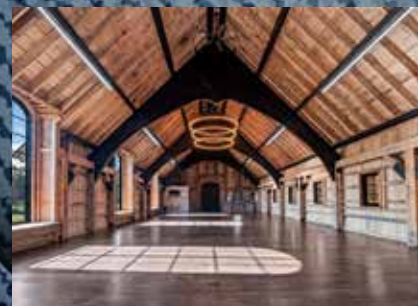
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