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Seth
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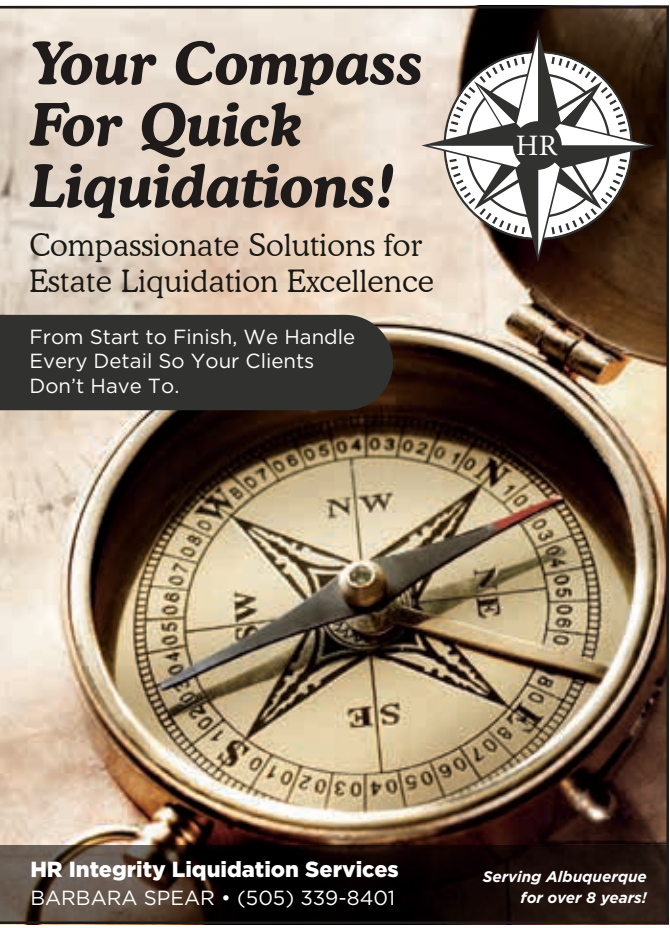


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JACK MEET THOMPSON

BY BETH MCCABE • PHOTOS BY LIZ LOPEZ

Meet a man who has spent over four decades in the mortgage industry. He has weathered market volatility, endured the Great Recession, and navigated the challenges of a global pandemic. Jack Thompson, District Manager of Guild Mortgage, has established himself as a leader in the industry with his unwavering commitment to integrity and excellence.

Growing up in Albuquerque, Jack experienced a fairly normal childhood filled with sports, family, and a strong sense of community. He graduated from the University of New Mexico in 1982 and later earned his MBA in 1990. From an early age, he envisioned himself in the business world, though he never imagined the exact path he would take. “I always thought I would be a businessperson,” Jack shares. “But I didn’t choose the career I’m in today—it chose me.”

Jack’s career began at a time of economic uncertainty. When he graduated college, the U.S. was in a deep recession. Gas shortages were rampant, and interest rates soared to 18%. Despite the tough market, Citibank was hiring,

and Jack secured a position as a loan officer. “I took it because I needed a job,” he recalls. That decision set him on a trajectory of success in the mortgage industry. He thrived at Citibank, advancing through the company before eventually launching his own firm, Legacy Mortgage, in 2006.

DISTRICT MANAGER OF GUILD MORTGAGE

Tackling Challenges

Leading a company came with its share of challenges, but none as formidable as the Great Financial

Recession of 2008-2009. “Navigating my company through that crisis was the biggest challenge of my career,” Jack says. His involvement in the National Association of Mortgage Bankers placed him at the forefront of discussions with the White House and top economic leaders during the banking crisis. “Being on the front lines helped me steer my company through the worst recession since the Great Depression, and we came out stronger.”

Jack attributes much of his success to the team he built at Legacy Mortgage. “I had really good people at my company. They worked tirelessly, did everything the right way, and we got through it together,”





he says. After nearly two decades of leadership, he sold the company to Guild Mortgage and now oversees operations in New Mexico and West Texas.

“We like to call ourselves the ‘White Hat Lender.’ Honesty in all situations is the best way to operate, no matter how difficult it may seem,” he comments. “The truth brings clarity, and more often than not, problems aren’t as bad as they first appear.” That philosophy has guided Jack through decades of success, and it continues to shape the way he leads today.

Reflecting on his career, Jack wishes he had embraced entrepreneurship earlier. “I spent a lot of time working for big companies before finally starting my own business. That was when I was at my best,” he says. Now, he encourages young professionals to take the entrepreneurial leap early. “Becoming an entrepreneur enhances your business skills and allows you to reach your full potential.”

Success = Family

For Jack, success is about more than just professional achievements. “Success

“
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means getting to do what you love every day. For me, that’s running a business,” he says. But just as important is family. “The most important decision you make is the spouse you marry. The strength and support from my wife allowed me to do what I love. Even though I was busy running a company, I always made time for my family—coaching my kids’ sports teams, going on camping trips, and taking vacations together. My career and my family are the two things I’ve always prioritized.”

Outside of work, Jack and his wife are avid travelers, making it a point to go overseas at least once a year. They enjoy RVing, camping, playing golf, and participating in bird hunting. “We both love to shoot shotguns—skeet and trap shooting is something we really enjoy together.”

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Jessica Villa & Rocky Villagomez

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Rocking Real Estate

BY BETH MCCABE • PHOTOS BY PONIC PHOTOGRAPHY

When it comes to making waves in Albuquerque real estate, Jessica Villa and Rocky Villagomez of Realty One New Mexico are the dynamic duo behind Rock'N'Jess. With their unique blend of experience, drive, and family-focused values, they are redefining what it means to be a successful real estate team.

A Family-Driven Business

For Jessica Villa, real estate is not just a career—it's a family affair. Working alongside her husband, Rocky, and their 19-year-old son, Jase, she has found that blending business and family creates a powerful synergy.

"We work well together and help one another," Jessica says. "It has made me stronger because we understand what the job requires and support each other through it."

Rocky, who serves as the qualifying broker, agrees. "We all bring our unique perspectives to the table and a way of looking at things that help us come up with solutions." Multiple perspectives are an asset when it comes to problem-solving. Jessica adds, "It's like a puzzle, trying to

find solutions that work for everyone involved, especially when emotions are running high." However, they are able to move deals to the closing table with ease and efficiency.

Jase, the youngest member of the team, also excels in real estate. This go-getter has been a licensed REALTOR® for a year and a half. At just 19, he is already making a name for himself, earning the Team Rookie of the Year with the Greater Albuquerque Association of REALTORS® (GAAR).

The Path to Real Estate

Rocky's journey to real estate wasn't conventional. Growing up in Alamosa, Colorado, he initially envisioned a future in robotics engineering. However, his talent for problem solving and his analytical mindset led him to a career where he could apply those skills in a meaningful way.

"Real estate allows me to combine my ability to connect with people, analyze situations critically, and strategize for success," he explains. "I love helping people achieve their real estate dreams."



Real estate, when leveraged correctly, can be a powerful tool for building wealth and security."

Jessica's path was equally unexpected. Born in San Diego, she moved frequently as a Navy kid before facing the challenges of the foster system. She ultimately emancipated herself at 16, an experience that taught her resilience and independence.

"Those early challenges shaped who I am today," Jessica says. "I learned to be resourceful and self-reliant, which has been invaluable in my real estate career."

Her first foray into real estate came when she bought her own home at 23. Despite skepticism from her family, she trusted her instincts, and it turned out to be the best decision she ever made.

"That experience ignited my passion for real estate," she recalls. "It showed me the power of investing in yourself and inspired me to help others do the same."

Balancing Business and Life

For the Rock'N'Jess team, success isn't just about closing deals; it's about creating a balanced and fulfilling life. The couple, married since 2013, share a deep appreciation for family and the simple joys of life.

"Success for us isn't just monetary," Rocky says. It's about enjoying life and spending time with their kids, including their daughters Jada (16) and Jemma (11).

This close-knit family shares a love of hobbies that keep them grounded. Jessica dreams of owning a self-sustaining property in the mountains, where

she can expand her garden and perfect her sourdough bread-making skills. Rocky finds joy in woodworking, graphic design and golf. He says, "I love creating things and I do a lot of carpentry." He finds building a new table rewarding as a 300-yard drive on the golf course. As for Jase, he says, "Besides golf, I'm a gym rat. That's been a passion of mine for a long time." An expert powerlifter, he has won three state championships as a team and one by himself.

Looking to the Future

With their sights set on growth, Rocky, Jessica, and Jase plan to continue expanding their real estate team. Rocky recently earned his qualifying broker's license and is

committed to mentoring others in the industry.

"My goal is to empower individuals and guide them toward financial success," Rocky says. "Real estate, when leveraged correctly, can be a powerful tool for building wealth and security." As for Jase, the future looks incredibly bright. At just 19, he has already achieved milestones that many seasoned professionals aspire to. His recognition as Team Rookie of the Year is just the beginning.

With a strong foundation built on family, passion, and perseverance, Rock'N'Jess is making their mark in Albuquerque's real estate market. Jessica concludes,

“We all bring our unique perspectives to the table and a way of looking at things that help us come up with solutions.”

"We're eager to expand our group, mentor other brokers, and share our knowledge and experience. There's nothing more rewarding than helping others achieve their goals." She and her family are excited to see where this journey takes them!





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GERAD GARCIA

RE/MAX EQUIPT

BY BETH MCCABE
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“

**EVERY DAY IS A CLEAN SLATE.
YOU CAN ONLY CONTROL WHAT’S IN FRONT OF YOU.
KEEP MOVING FORWARD, & SUCCESS WILL FOLLOW.”**

“Mindset matters,” says Gerad Garcia. He learned to tackle challenges as a teenager, making him the man of strength and courage he is today.

At just 18, Gerad faced a challenge that would have stopped many in their tracks—kidney stones. Not just one or two but an astonishing 250 over the years. Yet, he never let it define him or dictate his future. “Giving up was never an option,” he asserts. “That’s not who I am, and that’s not how I’m built.”

When others suggested he take it easy or rely on assistance, he made a different choice—to push forward on his own terms. He refused to let his health become his limitation. Instead, he carved a path where resilience led the way. “Real estate gave me the flexibility to work when I felt strong and rest when I needed to,” he shares. Through grit and determination, he turned obstacles into opportunities, proving that no setback is greater than the will to rise above it.



A New Chapter

Gerad recently opened his own RE/MAX franchise, RE/MAX EQUIPT. “It’s been a major transition, and we built it from the ground up,” he says. His path into real estate has been anything but conventional. Before launching his brokerage, he spent 19 years at Berkshire Hathaway, steadily building his career. When RE/MAX corporate took notice of his success, they flew him to Denver to showcase their franchise opportunities. “They had been following us for a while,” he says. “I bought the franchise, and two weeks ago, we officially opened our doors.”

As a qualifying broker, Gerad has achieved remarkable production levels. He outsells many teams. “Individually, I close about \$8-9 million each year. I’m at the top, and I want to stay there.”

His passion for real estate was ignited as a child from his upbringing.

Roots in Real Estate

Gerad grew up in Gallup, New Mexico, in a family deeply rooted in real estate. His parents, Jerry and Dale Garcia, were homebuilders who ran their business from home. His father, an architect, designed and built custom luxury homes.

“I was immersed in the business right away,” Gerad recalls. He saw how his parents worked with customers, and he learned the value of hard work and dedication. At the age of 15, Gerad was helping his father to write contracts. He then excelled in doing marketing for people around town. It set the stage for his future career.

Just as real estate is in his blood, so is entrepreneurship. His grandmother, Grandma Frances Garcia, operated and owned multiple businesses, including a trading company, liquor stores, and Indian jewelry stores. His family’s

“

GIVING UP WAS NEVER AN OPTION. THAT’S NOT WHO I AM, AND THAT’S NOT HOW I’M BUILT.”

success has inspired him to carve out his own path in the industry.

Prior to emerging on the real estate scene, Gerad earned a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology from the University of Phoenix. “I knew that degree would help me in any industry,” he says. His background in technology has given him a competitive edge in real estate.

Over the years, Gerad has leveraged technology to grow his business. “I’ve always embraced the latest tools,” he says. “From AOL in 1998 to today’s AI advancements, I’ve stayed ahead of the curve. Embracing technology is key to success in real estate.” His brokerage is innovative, using technology to maximize its efficiency.

Life Beyond Real Estate

Outside of work, Gerad enjoys gardening, fishing, camping, and spending time with Christine, the love of his life for 27

years. “She’s been my rock.” He has a heart of gratitude for her. Gerad and Christine have two children, a four-year-old and a one-year-old.

Looking Ahead

Gerad isn’t slowing down anytime soon. He has his sights set on expanding his brokerage and possibly acquiring more franchises. But no matter how big he grows, his core values remain the same: put people first, embrace change, and never stop learning. He also holds a combination of eight real estate certifications and designations.

“Every day is a clean slate,” he reflects. “You can only control what’s in front of you. Keep moving forward, and success will follow.”

From a small-town upbringing to leading a cutting-edge brokerage, Gerad Garcia is proof that with the right mindset, anything is possible. And as he continues to build his legacy, one thing is certain—he’s just getting started.



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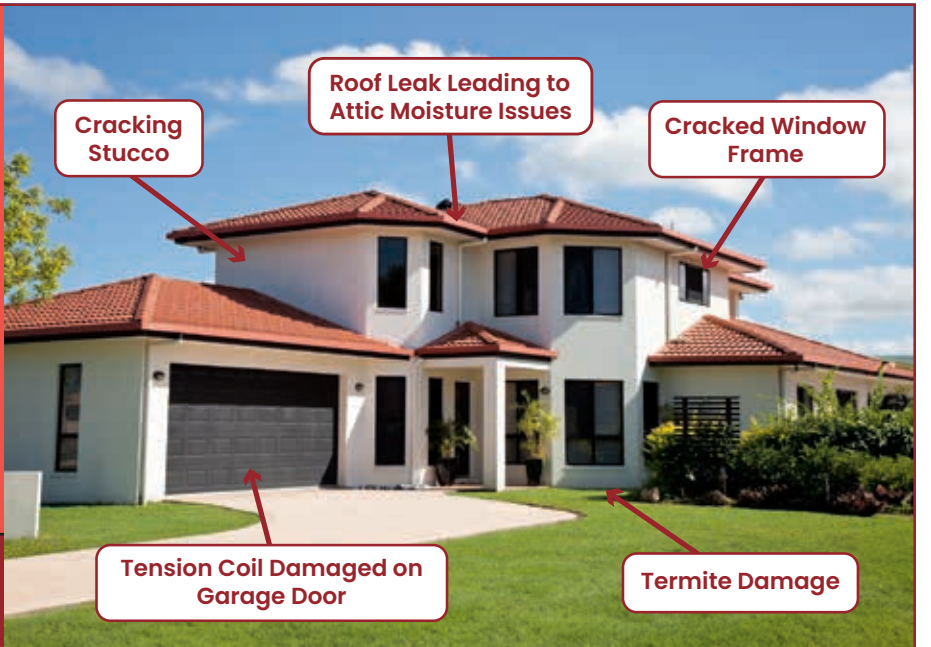
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Seth ROCHEFORT

“I love what I do,” says Seth Rochefort, Associate Broker and the CEO of Selling The Sandias powered by Keller Williams. “Real estate has changed my life,” he adds. Although Seth has only been licensed for five years, he has made a name for himself in local real estate, receiving national recognition.

Seth’s achievements stem from his deep understanding of people. “I don’t see dollar signs in real estate. I genuinely put the client first,” he explains.

In addition to serving clients in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, he oversees new construction developments in collaboration with a custom home builder. He’s soaring in real estate like never before.

From Atlanta to Albuquerque
Seth’s story begins in Atlanta, Georgia, where he grew up as the youngest of three siblings. A lover of the arts, he was heavily involved in acting, dancing, and playing musical instruments, including the viola and cello. In high school, he ran cross country, worked as a volleyball scorekeeper, participated in yearbook production, and became known for his school spirit. “I have always been a very

social, outgoing, extroverted person,” he says.

Always eager to help others, Seth actually envisioned a career a world apart from real estate. “I always wanted to be a veterinarian,” he comments. An animal lover, he has a soft spot for furry friends. “I love helping the less fortunate and animals need us.” He grew up with cats, dogs, and birds.

However, his path took a different turn when the 2008 market crash forced him to work in the restaurant industry. “I worked in Las Vegas,” he comments. That’s where he studied event planning and worked as a VIP host in nightclubs. He also worked on a cruise ship in Hawaii, an experience that allowed him to explore all the islands. Eventually, he returned to Las Vegas before making the life-changing decision to move to

Albuquerque at the end of 2017. All of these experiences made him the dynamic go-getter he is today, honing his people skills and ensuring a solid customer experience to the closing table.

A Leap of Faith
After graduating with a business degree and a 4.0 GPA, Seth took a leap of faith and pursued a career in real estate. He started classes in January 2020, passed his licensing exam in March—just as the world shut down due to COVID-19—and jumped into the industry.

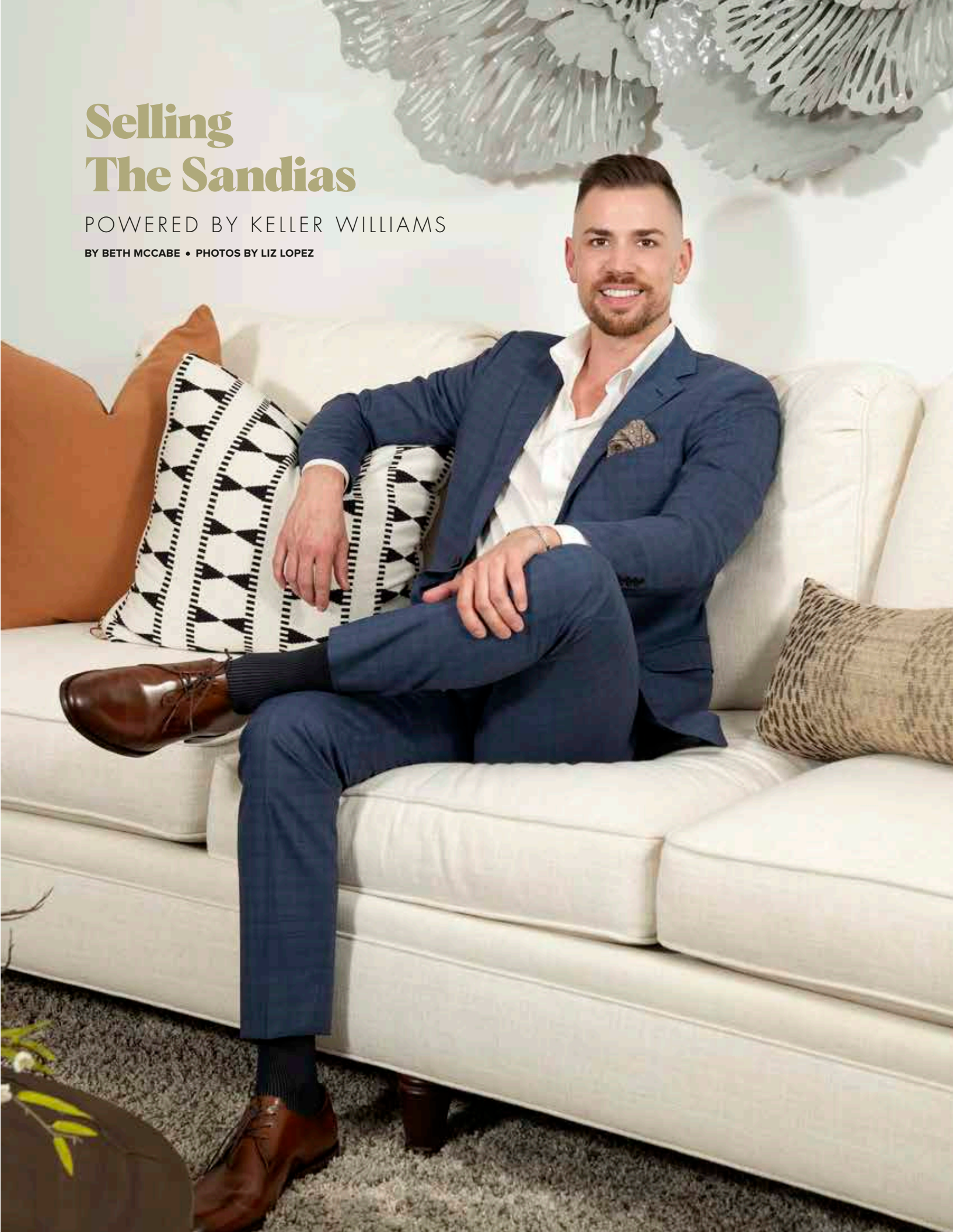
Determined to immerse himself in the Albuquerque market, he became involved with various real estate organizations, including the Young Professionals Network (YPN) and the Greater Albuquerque Association of REALTORS®. He also served as the marketing director for the Women’s Council of the National Association of REALTORS®.

Rapid Growth and National Recognition
“I grew my business by helping first-time homeowners,” says Seth. “That’s what I specialize in and focus on.” By 2023, his team had expanded significantly, growing from three members to 10, including a director of

Selling The Sandias

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**“I don’t
see dollar
signs in
real estate.**

I GENUINELY
PUT THE
CLIENT FIRST.”

operations and a transaction coordinator. His achievements include placing in the top 50 out of 4,300 brokers in sales in Albuquerque.

This Zillow Premier Agent has also been featured on the national TV show American Dream for Albuquerque. Not to mention being featured in Yahoo Finance and Apple News. Seth has even become one of the listing brokers for a 1,300-home development in Elephant Butte, New Mexico.

The Mindset Behind the Success

Seth attributes his success to personal development. “I’ve done a lot of self-work over the last five years,” he says. Through therapy, he has honed his ability to understand people, resolve conflicts, and lead with compassion. “I genuinely love helping people and learning,” he adds.

His commitment to clients goes beyond the transaction. “I purchase home warranties for all my buyers and sellers as a gift,” ensuring they feel supported even after the sale. He values kindness and professionalism above all else. “Understanding people’s needs and not being pushy is key,” he says. “I believe in helping people in the long run.”

Life Outside of Real Estate

When he’s not closing deals, Seth enjoys fitness, cooking, fashion, and traveling. He is passionate about holistic wellness and exploring reiki, hypnotherapy, and IV therapies. He also gives back to the community by volunteering at homeless shelters and animal rescues.

A devoted pet lover, Seth has two Pomeranians, Piper and Penelope. “They are the sweetest dogs ever,” he says, describing their playful and affectionate personalities.

A Bright Future

Taking risks has been a defining theme in Seth’s journey. “Jumping into real estate was the biggest risk I ever took,” he reflects. “I took that leap of faith, and it served me well.” With his unwavering drive and dedication, Seth is transforming Albuquerque real estate, one client at a time.

**“Jumping into real estate was the
biggest risk I ever took.**

I TOOK THAT LEAP OF FAITH,
AND IT SERVED ME WELL.”



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