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# Contents



**10** Peggy Centrella  
COVER STORY

## PROFILES



**14** Giordano & Gagne



**18** The Dennis Snaveley Team

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 6 Preferred Partners**
- 7 Meet The Team**
- 8 Publisher's Note**
- 10 Cover Story:** Peggy Centrella & The Centrella Group, Patterson Schwartz
- 14 Partner Spotlight:** Giordano & Gagne: A Trusted Partner in Real Estate Law
- 18 Team to Watch:** The Dennis Snaveley Team
- 22 FAQ:** All About *Brandywine Valley Real Producers*

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# RISING TO THE CHALLENGE:

## LEADERSHIP IN A SHIFTING MARKET

BY RYAN ZINN

March is often a time of transition—where winter’s grip begins to loosen, and the promise of spring reminds us of resilience, renewal, and growth. In many ways, this reflects the current state of the real estate industry. Challenges abound, from fluctuating interest rates to evolving client expectations, yet the best in our business continue to adapt, innovate, and thrive.

This month, we are proud to feature three industry powerhouses who exemplify what it means to lead in uncertain times. Peggy Centrella of The Centrella Group (Patterson Schwartz), Dennis Snavelly and The Dennis Snavelly Team (RE/MAX Elite), and our preferred partner Giordano & Gagne, a real estate and estate law firm serving Delaware and Pennsylvania, have earned their reputations through success, strategic adaptability, and unwavering client commitment. Their insights on today’s challenges are a reminder that in real

estate—just as in life—the ability to pivot, to problem-solve, and to keep showing up is what defines true professionals.

At *Brandywine Valley Real Producers*, we’ve always been about more than just transactions; we’re about connections. The relationships we foster, the stories we share, and the knowledge we exchange all strengthen our community. As you turn these pages, I encourage you to reflect on the power of perseverance and the importance of surrounding yourself with the right people—because success in this industry is never a solo endeavor.

Here’s to a season of fresh opportunities and continued excellence.

Warmly,



**RYAN ZINN**  
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# PEGGY & THE CENTRELLA GROUP CENTRELLA OF PATTERSON SCHWARTZ

*A Passion for Real Estate,  
A Commitment to Clients*

BY RYAN ZINN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIRSTIE  
DONOHUE PHOTOGRAPHY

For Peggy Centrella, real estate isn't just a career—it's a lifelong passion. Growing up, she watched her mother navigate the industry with empathy and dedication, setting an example that would later guide her own path. "I've known I wanted to be a real estate agent for as long as I can remember," Peggy shares. "Growing up, my mother was a real estate

agent, and I would sometimes go see her at open houses and go to model homes. I'd spend hours studying different builder floor plans."

Though real estate was always in her heart, Peggy initially pursued a degree in Communications from the University of Delaware and explored a sales career path after college. But the industry eventually called her back, and for the past 13 years, she has built an extraordinary career that reflects her deep commitment to client service, market expertise, and an unrelenting work ethic.

**Building a Team, Building a Legacy**

Peggy started her career at Patterson Schwartz and founded The Centrella Group in 2016, assembling a powerhouse team that has consistently delivered outstanding results. Along with her dedicated team members—Courtney Williams, Erica Bader, and Debbie Pippin—she has achieved remarkable success in the industry.

With a career volume nearing \$450 million, Peggy and The Centrella Group have consistently ranked among the best in the business. Their accolades speak for themselves, including Best of DE, Five Star Professional







(2014-2024), America's Best/Real Trends Small Team, Realty Alliance (2014-2024), and recognition as a Top 500 Brandywine Valley Producer since the platform's inception—a distinction that places them in the top 4% of agents across three counties.

"The power of teamwork is at the heart of everything we do at The Centrella Group," Peggy explains. "As a team of dedicated and successful realtors, our synergy brings individual strengths together to create a dynamic and results-driven environment. Collaboration, trust, and shared accountability drive us to consistently deliver exceptional service to our clients. We thrive on clear communication, innovative problem-solving, and a deep passion for real estate."

#### The Drive Behind Her Success

Peggy credits much of her success to the values instilled in her from an early age. "The people who have influenced me the most are my parents. My mother, because she always prioritized her clients' needs and showed me the importance of empathy and service. My father, because of his practical wisdom and excellent career advice, which helped guide me through important decisions in life."

Her career also began with grit and determination. "I stepped out of my comfort zone early on, starting in sales right after college. It was a time before many of the tools we take for granted today, like laptops, cell phones, GPS, or CRMs. I made sales calls and did telemarketing from payphones between appointments, even cold calling businesses using the Yellow Pages. While challenging, those experiences taught me the value of hard work, grit, and determination. Within just four years, I became one of the youngest sales managers at my company with my team covering all of Delaware and New Jersey."

#### A Commitment to Community

Beyond their professional success, The Centrella Group is deeply committed to giving back to the community. "By working seamlessly together, we navigate the ever-changing market with confidence, always striving to exceed expectations and turn our collective efforts into extraordinary achievements—both in real estate and in the communities we serve."

The team participates in various charitable initiatives, including an annual coat drive, Stockings for Soldiers, preparing meals for the

Ronald McDonald House, and their Faithful Friends customer event. These efforts not only bring them closer as a team but also reinforce their shared values of service, generosity, and community impact.

#### The Challenges and Rewards of the Business

While Peggy's journey has been filled with success, it has not been without challenges. "One of the biggest challenges I faced in my real estate career was the unpredictability of my schedule, especially when my kids were younger and I was balancing family life," she reflects. "It required a lot of effort and time management to find a balance and make it work."

Despite the challenges, the rewards far outweigh them. "The most rewarding part of real estate is being able to do something meaningful and have a positive impact on people's lives. The best moments come when I get to tell a buyer their offer was accepted or present a seller with an offer that brings them joy."

#### Advice for the Next Generation of Agents

For those looking to rise in the industry, Peggy has clear advice: "Stay persistent



“

**If I could change one thing in the industry, it would be to encourage more face-to-face interaction with clients and focus on better educating new buyers about the process.”**

and patient. Don't get discouraged—keep pushing forward. Make sure you do something real estate-related every day, whether it's reaching out to past clients or learning something new, like by listening to a podcast, to improve your business. The rewards may take time, but they will come if you stay committed. Be kind to other agents—it goes a long way!”

She also believes in the importance of personal connection in real estate. "If I could change one thing in the industry, it would be to encourage more face-to-face interaction with clients and focus on better educating new buyers about the process. It's tough when buyers experience remorse because they didn't fully understand the steps involved."

#### A Life Beyond Real Estate

When she's not helping clients, Peggy enjoys spending time at the Delaware beaches with her husband, Lou and their three kids, Jillian, Nick and Maya. Her favorite activities include biking, boating and taking walks on the beach. Summers at the beach have become a cherished family tradition, something that has continued even as her children have grown. "Some of our best memories have been made there," she says.

With a career built on integrity, hard work, and a passion for helping others, Peggy Centrella and The Centrella Group of Patterson Schwartz continue to set the standard for excellence in the Brandywine Valley real estate community.



# Giordano & Gagne

BY RYAN ZINN  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY WHEELER  
HOME CONCEPTS



## A TRUSTED PARTNER IN REAL ESTATE LAW

At Giordano & Gagne, real estate and estate law are more than just transactions—they're about helping people navigate some of life's most significant moments. Partners Joe Giordano

and Jenna Stayton lead a team that specializes in closings, title work, estate planning, and related legal services, ensuring that both real estate agents and their clients receive expert guidance every step of the way. With a combined passion for real estate and a deep commitment to education and service, Joe and Jenna have built a firm known for its

trustworthiness, dedication, and a personal touch that makes all the difference.

### From Courtrooms to Closings: A Journey Into Real Estate Law

Joe's legal career began in the courtroom as a state prosecutor for Delaware's Department of Justice before transitioning to real estate law over two decades ago. "I had connections in real estate before practicing law, and I really enjoy working with individuals, investors, and companies that buy and sell real estate. Transactional law, to me, is much more rewarding than litigation."

Jenna, on the other hand, started her legal career in criminal defense before moving into estate planning, where she saw natural crossover into real estate. "After my first closing, I saw how happy and thankful everyone was. I felt honored to be a part of it and wanted to keep that feeling going. And here I am." She officially joined Giordano & Gagne nine years ago this April, and has been a partner for five years—an achievement she credits to the firm's trust in her abilities.

The firm has expanded over the years and includes David Gagne, a named partner who, along with Achille (Ash) Scache, specializes in family law. In Sussex County, Debi Galonsky leads the firm's real estate practice,

providing local expertise in the coastal market. Additionally, Giordano & Gagne has attorneys who focus on estate planning and civil litigation, making the firm a full-service legal resource for their clients.

### Passion for Helping Agents & Homebuyers

The real estate world is constantly evolving, and both Joe and Jenna are passionate about educating clients and supporting agents. Joe sees his role as a problem solver,

especially in a challenging market. "It's been a tough few years with lots of twists and turns, but that's nothing new in real estate. The more I can learn, the more I'm motivated to help my clients and referral partners."

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Jenna is particularly focused on helping new agents grow their confidence and knowledge. "There are so many people out there who have no idea how to achieve the goal of homeownership. With guidance, it's a real possibility. I also love working with newer agents. I know what it feels like to be intimidated by how quickly the world of real estate changes. Being an anchor to help others only makes us all better."

### Building Relationships, One Closing at a Time

For Jenna, the most rewarding moment of her job is simple but powerful: "My favorite moment is saying, 'Congratulations, you're officially a homeowner.' Some agents even record me saying it at the end of closings! I absolutely live for the moment when people are trying to hold back tears, knowing that I played a small role in changing their family's future."

Joe finds fulfillment in growing the firm and fostering a strong team. "Finding great employees who share our desire to be the best is always a challenge, but when it works, it's incredibly rewarding. Making sure our customer service is top-notch is one of the reasons our referral partners keep coming back."

### Success, Challenges, and the Brandywine Valley Approach

For both Joe and Jenna, success isn't just about titles or revenue—it's about





balance and impact. “For me, success starts with my family,” Joe shares. “The more grounded I am with my wife and kids, the more successful I feel.”

Jenna’s definition of success is about making a difference. “If you’re not doing everything in your power to make someone’s life better, then I don’t think you’re succeeding. Success comes when you stop worrying about being THE best and focus on being YOUR best.”

One of Jenna’s biggest challenges has been establishing herself in a male-dominated industry.

Despite the challenges, Jenna has found camaraderie in the region’s tight-knit real estate community. “Delaware is special because we all know the importance of working together. They often say, ‘It’s the Delaware way’—and it’s the truth.” That spirit of collaboration extends beyond state lines, making the entire Brandywine Valley a uniquely supportive place to do business.

**Beyond the Office: Family, Traditions & Giving Back**

When they’re not in the office, Joe and Jenna both stay busy with personal passions. Joe is an avid golfer



but I love being scared. October is my favorite time of the year because there’s ALWAYS a scary movie on TV I can unwind with.”

Giving back is also important to both of them. Joe supports Catholic Charities and local REALTOR® associations (NCCBOR & SCAOR), while Jenna is passionate about Child, Inc. and the Office of the Child Advocate, which aligns with the firm’s strong family law practice.

**Advice for Up-and-Coming Agents**

Joe and Jenna have worked with hundreds of real estate agents over the years, and their advice for newer professionals is straightforward.

“Work hard, adapt, stay consistent, and be honest,” Joe emphasizes.

Jenna stresses the importance of communication. “I want to know EVERYTHING. If I have all the pieces to the puzzle,

I can put them together quicker. And don’t be afraid to ask questions! Sometimes getting the wording right on an addendum can save a transaction. Never hesitate to reach out for help.”

**A Trusted Partner in Real Estate**

With decades of combined experience, a dedication to client success, and a team that truly cares, Giordano & Gagne continues to be a go-to legal partner for real estate professionals across Delaware. Whether guiding first-time homebuyers, supporting seasoned agents, or advocating for clients in family law and estate planning, their commitment to excellence remains unwavering.

For agents looking for a trusted legal partner, Joe Giordano, Jenna Stayton, and the entire Giordano & Gagne team are always ready to lend their expertise—because when it comes to real estate, having the right legal partner makes all the difference.

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“I remember walking into closings holding my notary stamp and a giant loan package, and being asked if I was the paralegal—after I had already introduced myself as the attorney. It humbles you, quick. I knew I had to stay two steps ahead of everything, learn every scenario possible, and earn that respect.”

and CrossFit enthusiast who also spends time traveling up and down the East Coast for his kids’ sports. He also hosts a special Christmas Eve Feast of the Seven Fishes, which has become a beloved family tradition.

Jenna, on the other hand, is a horror movie fanatic. “It’s so rare that people do anymore,



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# Dennis SNAVELY

## and The Dennis Snavely Team

“The Land Man”  
with Over  
Three Decades  
of Experience  
and Integrity

BY RYAN ZINN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACOB SNAVELY

For over three decades, Dennis Snavely has built a reputation as a real estate expert with a unique blend of experience, passion, and innovative thinking. With a background in Civil Engineering and Land Planning, Dennis’s journey into real estate was a natural progression, allowing him to merge his technical expertise with his love for development and historic preservation.

“I have a background in Civil Engineering and land planning and just love everything about real estate—from land development to creating communities and developments that preserve land and protect our historic properties,” Dennis shares.

His career, spanning 33 years, has seen him excel in residential, historical, and commercial real estate, working with buyers, sellers, and investors alike. As the leader of The Dennis Snavely Team, he has consistently been

recognized as a top-producing RE/MAX team, year after year, culminating in the prestigious RE/MAX Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024.

### **A Rare Expertise in Land and Development**

When sellers need to find the right lot for their dream home and land is scarce (as it always is here in Brandywine Valley), you have to find the right agent to guide you through the process. There are only a handful of agents in the entire state who can be called upon to handle the purchase, development, planning, engineering, and zoning of a new home from top to bottom. Dennis has exemplified just such expertise as a real estate agent over the last 30 years within our community.

Even when other agents need guidance on zoning and lot restrictions, Dennis is their go-to expert. His wealth of knowledge and willingness





to share advice—whether formally consulted or not—has made him a trusted resource in the community.

**A Passion for Vision Building**

Dennis’s passion lies in helping his clients turn their dreams into reality. He approaches each transaction with a vision-building mindset, ensuring that his clients’ goals and aspirations are met with strategic and well-planned solutions.

“Vision building to fit clients’ dreams is what I’m most passionate about right now in my business,” he explains.



His ability to anticipate potential challenges and find creative solutions has set him apart in the industry. Whether it’s leveraging cutting-edge technology like 3D high-definition home tours or drawing from his deep knowledge of land acquisition, Dennis is always looking for ways to improve the experience for his clients.

**A Lifelong Resource for Clients**

The relationship between The Dennis Snavelly Team and their clients never truly ends. Dennis can frequently be found fielding calls after settlement about repairs, maintenance, market speculation, and navigating homeownership. Adapting to any seller’s unique situation is also a specialty for Dennis—whether it be coming up with financial workarounds to help maximize cash flow, coordinating a home cleanout, or organizing contractors for repairs.

**Overcoming Challenges and Staying Ahead**

Like any seasoned professional, Dennis has faced his share of challenges. One of the biggest he sees in the industry today is the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence.

“The current challenge we are facing is AI. It’s moving fast, and we need to stay ahead of the game,” he says.

Despite the challenges, Dennis remains committed to adapting and learning. His philosophy on success is rooted in perseverance and a genuine desire to help others.

“Failure in business gives you the drive to be a successful person in life. Helping people gives me the drive to make sure our customers and clients are happy at the end of the day.”

**A Life Rooted in Family and Community**

Outside of real estate, Dennis enjoys a well-rounded life filled with hobbies and meaningful connections. An avid gardener, he takes pride in cultivating his own mini farm, complete with chickens and honeybees. He also enjoys golf, eating healthy, and traveling to small towns, always drawn to the charm of historic communities.

“The most rewarding day of my life was when my daughter was married this year. It makes it all worth it—with the ups and downs in life, the end game is that your kids are okay in life.”

Dennis is also a dedicated supporter of organizations that align with his passion for history and preservation, including Longwood Gardens and various historic preservation efforts.

**Words of Wisdom for Aspiring Agents**

For those looking to make their mark in real estate, Dennis offers sage advice: “Learn different areas in real estate so that your knowledge is well-rounded and you can share your knowledge with your clients. I have been selling real estate for 33 years, and I learn something new every day.”



Through his experiences, Dennis has learned the value of selecting business partners carefully, recognizing that the right partnerships are key to long-term success.

“Every business journey comes with its lessons. Choosing the right partners can make all the difference.”

**Looking Ahead**

Dennis began his career working in the civil engineering field, setting the foundation for a breadth of knowledge related to homebuilding that was further fueled by his co-founding of a building company. With a career defined by integrity, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to his clients, Dennis Snavelly continues to set the standard in the industry. His ability to merge historical preservation with modern real estate strategies makes him a true asset to the Brandywine Valley real estate community.

If you are looking to learn more from a knowledgeable and dedicated agent who goes above and beyond, Dennis Snavelly is certainly one to watch.

Dennis’s success is a testament to dedication, expertise, and leadership in real estate. Connect with him to exchange insights, collaborate, or get inspired by his journey. Email: [dennisremax1@gmail.com](mailto:dennisremax1@gmail.com), Phone: 302-547-1909







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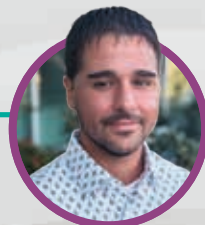
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