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APRIL 2025

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# WHAT IS REAL PRODUCERS?

## Welcome to *East Texas Real Producers!*

*Providing a platform to celebrate and unite the top real estate professionals across East Texas*

BY CHERIKA JOHNSON

It’s my honor to bring this community to our East Texas area and to celebrate everything that makes you all an outstanding part of the East Texas Real Estate Community. I look forward to highlighting your accomplishments, encouraging your dreams, and recognizing you for your continued excellence in serving your clients.

Real Producers started as a simple idea in 2015 in Indianapolis and has spread across the nation like wildfire. The Real Producers community is now available in 130 locations and is changing the way the real estate community interacts across America. As we embark on this journey, I promise to create platforms to connect this community and forums to recognize and celebrate what makes each one of you iconic. In years to come, I hope to interview every one of you so that I can share your success stories in future issues. I also look forward to celebrating you at our events, providing tools and connections to help you grow your business and representing your passion for this industry that we all share.

### Here are some quick facts about Real Producers:

**DISTRIBUTION:** This magazine will arrive in the mailboxes of the TOP 300 agents in East Texas each month. These 300 agents are determined through compiled MLS data from 2024. If you are receiving a hard copy of the publication, it is because you belong to the elite group of the top 10%.

**CONTENT:** This publication is all about YOU, the East Texas real estate community. We will be writing personal and unique stories on members of this community, giving you a platform to inspire greatness in others. As we grow, we will continue to add fresh content focused entirely on the top 10% and our Preferred Partners. We have NOTHING to sell to real estate agents as it is absolutely FREE to be featured in this publication. To be featured, the agents must be nominated by a peer, leader or influencer in the East Texas real estate market. We always encourage nominations and love to hear about agents that are making a huge impact in our market.

**PREFERRED PARTNERS:** Anyone listed as a “Preferred Partner” in the index of this publication will also be a part of this exclusive community. You will see them advertised in every issue, attending our private events and being a part of our online community. We do not cold call businesses off the street to join us, nor do we allow any business that approaches us to be a part. One or many of you have recommended every single one of these Preferred Partners that you see in this publication. Our goal is to give you as many resources as possible to add to your arsenal so that you always remain that trusted referral source to your clients and customers.

**EVENTS:** Along with our monthly publication, we will be hosting various social and educational events throughout the year. Our goal is to

bring the best of the best together while supporting our local communities. And we fully intend to have a good time doing it! We will be communicating information on upcoming events through the publication, monthly emailed newsletter and social media.

**CONTRIBUTION:** If you are interested in contributing, nominating REALTORS for certain features, know of additional top-notch affiliate partners who would be a great fit for our community, or would simply like to learn more, please reach out to me anytime. I look forward to meeting with every one of you in the future. I would also like to give a HUGE THANK YOU to the Preferred Partners who jumped on board with us so that we could bring *East Texas Real Producers* to life. Also, a huge shout-out to my team that pulled this together without much guidance. You all are incredible, and this first issue is dedicated to you!



I appreciate you all and look forward to seeing you all at our networking events soon!

*Cherika Johnson*

**CHERIKA JOHNSON**  
Owner/Publisher  
*East Texas Real Producers*  
Cherika.Johnson@n2co.com  
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# FAQs

## ALL ABOUT EAST TEXAS REAL PRODUCERS

### Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

**A:** The top 300 agents in East Texas based on volume for the previous year and our Preferred Partners. There are thousands of agents in the region and you, in this elite group, are the cream of the crop. Just to be included in this group is an accomplishment that testifies to your hard work, dedication, and proficiency.

### Q: Do Real Estate Agents Have To Pay For Magazines Or Events?

**A:** NO! The magazine and events are FREE to agents and funded by the partners who advertise.

### Q: What Kind Of Content Will Be Featured?

**A:** This is all about you. We’ll do personal and unique stories on members in the community, providing you with a platform to inspire others. As we grow, we’ll add fresh content focused entirely on you. It costs

absolutely nothing for a REALTOR® to be featured. We are not a pay to play model; we write real stories, about Real Producers, and we’re always accepting nominations. We will consider anyone brought to our attention– we don’t know everyone’s story so we need your help to learn about them!

### Q: Who Are Our Partners?

**A:** Anyone listed as a “Preferred Partner” in the front of the magazine is funding and fueling this community and is an essential part of it. They are the top professionals in their industry. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine and attend our events. One or many of you have recommended every single Preferred Partner you see in this publication. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for the best REALTORS® in the area, but the best affiliates as well, so we can grow stronger together.

### Q: Does Real Producers Have Events?

**A:** Yes! Along with the magazine, we will host quarterly events exclusive to this community, where you–the best of the best–get together at local venues to socialize, mastermind, deepen our connections, and better our businesses. We will communicate about events through the magazine and on social media. Stay tuned for info on our launch party this Fall!

### Q: How Can I Recommend A Business Or Feature Story?

**A:** If you are interested in contributing, nominating REALTORS® to be featured, know of top-notch affiliate partners who you believe should be a part of our community, or would simply like to network; email or call us. I look forward to hearing from you!  
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# Lighting THE Way

## THE ART AND CRAFT OF ANTLERWORX

BY WRITTEN BY DAWN SIMS

**Sometimes the best opportunities are the ones you never see coming. Sometimes God brings people in and out of your life, and you have no idea who will become an important role in your story. Every time...His plan is better than ours.**

When Shaun Baker graduated from Stephen F. Austin University with a degree in kinesiology, his future seemed set in stone. With aspirations to enter the medical field alongside his wife, Katherine, a nurse, a career in physical therapy seemed like the logical next step. A chance introduction to the world of antler craftsmanship with Jeffrey White sparked a passion Shaun hadn't expected. Encouraged by Robbie Shultz, now a longtime friend, to take a collection of antler chandeliers to market—and just like that, Antlerworx was born in March 2003.

Building a business from the ground up takes determination and good old-fashioned hard work. Shaun Baker poured everything into growing Antlerworx into what it is today: the largest antler lighting and home décor company in the country. Success came in milestones, and Shaun vividly remembers a defining moment: "When we started seeing momentum and broke \$1 million in sales, going above and beyond what I could have ever imagined." Antlerworx soon landed large accounts with Restoration Hardware and Tractor Supply, opening doors to a wider market. But beyond the numbers, Shaun attributes the company's longevity to quality and craftsmanship. "It would have to be the designers and rigorous process and testing providing proven UL listed and approved products. This ensures they are wired correctly. Antlerworx is inspected every month."







Antlerworx serves a unique clientele—high-end retailers, interior designers, and homeowners looking for pieces that bring warmth and character to custom homes, lake houses, and mountain retreats. “Shopping Antlerworx, you can find antler chandeliers, iron lighting, quartz lighting, contemporary lighting, furniture, and home décor, as well as some custom pieces.” Featuring a beautiful showroom in his hometown of White Oak, Texas, customers are welcome to see ceiling-to-floor and wall-to-wall selections. And through the back door is where all of the magic takes place. From tabletop home decor items to chandeliers as tall as Shaun... Antlerworx is busy designing, creating and filling orders to send all over the United States.

For Shaun, success isn’t just about business growth—it’s about faith. “Success is in the eye of the beholder. It depends on the individual in what they value most. First and foremost, for me, my faith trumps any worldly success. If you believe in Jesus and the gospel, I see you as being successful. That is the highest form of success.” That said, he acknowledges the hard-earned satisfaction of building something lasting. The overwhelming feeling of achieving something big after working hard for a very long time is due to creating and building a company that has grown and continues

to do so. At the heart of Antlerworx is family. When he’s not working, Shaun spends time with his wife, Kat, and their three daughters—Madison (25), Lexi (21), and Londyn (16). I asked if any of his daughters had inherited his entrepreneurial drive, and without hesitation, he answered: “Lexi seems to have that potential and could carry on the legacy of building a great business one day.”

Meanwhile, Kat plays an essential role in the company, keeping production schedules, finances, and customer relations running smoothly—all while balancing their family life. “Being a nurse, I was never able to be with my family for holidays, and now I am able to make that a priority.”

Shaun’s passion for mentorship is evident. When asked what advice he’d give to young people inspired by his journey, he didn’t hesitate: “It takes an incredible amount of grit to do this. I highly recommend looking into a service-based industry offering something that people need. Be a problem solver. Choose something you’re passionate about. Be able to delegate your weaknesses.”

Everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and Shaun openly admits where he leans on others. “Organization. Putting systems in place. Paperwork. The



behind-the-scenes.” He understands that pride can be a business’s downfall. “Pride will destroy your business. I know that.” Instead of micromanaging, he trusts his team to move the company forward together.

Anyone who spends time with Shaun quickly notices his energy and determination. When I asked where that drive comes from, his answer was both candid and powerful. “A lot of my drive actually comes from childhood insecurity and fear. I knew from an early age that I wanted a different life for my family than I had.” That mindset fueled his desire to build financial security and generational wealth. But

more than that, he hopes his children find their own paths—without the pressure he once felt. “I do hope my kids don’t feel pressure like I did. I want them to work hard but doing whatever they are passionate about. I support them choosing their own path.”

With Antlerworx continuing to grow, Shaun has big plans for the next 5-10 years. “Antlerworx is currently in a growth phase, and I can see it potentially going overseas and becoming a worldwide business.” Given its trajectory, that vision seems well within reach. As we sit in Shaun’s beautifully designed home, every room has footnotes to his story—each

“Pride will destroy your business. I KNOW THAT.”

space adorned with handcrafted Antlerworx lighting and décor. He shares a fascinating piece of history: “Antler chandeliers are the oldest form of lighting in the world next to the sun. Down the hallways of old castles is where you would see antlers holding candles to provide lighting.” From castle corridors to contemporary homes, the tradition of antler lighting has endured. And thanks to Shaun Baker and Antlerworx, it’s been reimagined for the modern world.

After 25 years of knowing Shaun, sitting down to hear the full timeline of Antlerworx—its growth, its challenges, and the faith that carried it forward—was truly inspiring. As our conversation wrapped up, he left me with this simple but profound truth: “You’re an average of the top five people you hang around.” No doubt, Shaun Baker is someone you’d want in your circle. And with Antlerworx continuing to elevate the art of antler craftsmanship, this story is far from over.





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*Tanya*  
Ketchum  
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## TURNING PASSION INTO PURPOSE IN REAL ESTATE

WRITTEN BY CHERIKA JOHNSON

Some people step into real estate as a career move; for others, it's a calling. For Tanya Ketchum, real estate is more than just buying and selling homes—it's about making an impact, building relationships, and helping people achieve their dreams. With a heart as big as Texas, a background in service, and an unshakable work ethic, Tanya has quickly made a name for herself as a Rising Star in the industry.

### A Journey of Transformation

Tanya's path to real estate wasn't a conventional one. For 28 years, she worked in dentistry, a field that requires patience, precision, and—above all—a passion for helping people. But in November 2021, inspired by her mother-in-law, Tess Thompson, a respected Realtor, Tanya took a leap of faith and embarked on a new career in real estate.

What started as a career shift quickly became a passion. Her natural ability to connect with people, coupled with her dedication to providing excellent service, made real estate a perfect fit. "I take pride in the impact I have on people's lives," Tanya shares. "Helping others thrive while assisting clients in finding their dream home is what truly drives me." Making an Impact, One Home at a Time.

In just a short time, Tanya has already built an impressive track record. In the past year alone, she closed 38 transactions, a testament to her hard work and dedication. She was also recognized as a Top 1% Network Agent and received the prestigious Crystal Star Award of Excellence—honors that reflect her commitment to excellence.







But for Tanya, success isn't just about numbers. It's about the moments—the first-time homebuyer who never thought they'd own a home, the family relocating to a new city, the seller looking for the next chapter. "One of my favorite experiences was helping a first-time homebuyer," she recalls. "Seeing their excitement and knowing I played a role in making that dream a reality was incredibly rewarding."

### A Strong Support System & a Heart for Giving

Tanya credits much of her success to the incredible people around her, including her team at BOLD Real Estate and, of course, her mother-in-law, Tess Thompson, who has been a guiding force in her career. "Tess gives 100% all the time, and that has been such an inspiration to me," she says.

Outside of real estate, family is everything to Tanya. She and her husband, Todd, have been married for 25 years, and together, they have two children—Jett, 23, and Cloey, 18. When she's not working, you'll likely find her at a rodeo, cheering on her daughter, or spending time with the horses she loves so much.

Her caring spirit and nurturing heart extend beyond her clients and family—

she has even donated a horse to a church for disabled children to ride, a gesture that speaks volumes about who she is as a person. "Acts of kindness, family, and health—those are the things I'm most grateful for," she shares.

### Balancing Life, Work, and Passion

Finding balance in a demanding career isn't always easy, but Tanya makes it work thanks to a wonderful husband and a clear focus on what truly matters. Her advice for new agents? "Take your time. Make a schedule." She understands that real estate is a marathon, not a



sprint, and staying organized is key to long-term success. Her favorite quote, "Success is stumbling from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm," perfectly captures her mindset. Every challenge is an opportunity to learn and grow, and she approaches each day with kindness, cheerfulness, and trustworthiness—the three words that best describe her.

### Looking Ahead: A Legacy of Leadership

Tanya's journey is just beginning, but she already knows the kind of legacy she wants to leave behind. "I want to be remembered as a leader who helps others," she says. Whether it's guiding a client through the home-buying process, mentoring new agents, or giving back to her community, Tanya is making a lasting impact.

For those looking to follow in her footsteps, she offers this advice: "Be patient, stay consistent, and never stop learning." It's wisdom that has served her well and will continue to shape her path forward.

From Colorado to Texas, from dentistry to real estate, from helping patients to helping homebuyers—Tanya Ketchum's story is one of growth, passion, and purpose. And if her journey so far is any indication, the best is yet to come.

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# BRAD BURRIS

A Heart for  
Hometown Real Estate

BY WRITTEN BY DAWN SIMS

As you pull up to Century 21 A Select Group in Marshall, Texas, it feels like arriving at an old friend's home. Stepping in the front door you feel like you're back in time with modern touches scattered throughout. It truly welcomes you with a homey feel the moment you step inside. The warm, inviting atmosphere is a direct reflection of the man at its helm—Brad Burris, a broker whose career and heart are deeply rooted in the town he's always called home.

Brad's real estate story began in an unexpected way. After graduating from Marshall High School and earning his business administration degree from East Texas Baptist University in 2001, he worked at a family-owned furniture store. But fate had other plans. A dinner arranged by his brother-in-law introduced him to the previous owners of Century 21 A Select Group, Ken and Melissa Richards.

With a young family—two toddlers and another on the way—Brad and his wife, Nicki, prayed over the decision to leap into real estate. It was a bold move, but one that proved to be life-changing. Today, after nearly two decades in the industry, including 18 years as a broker, Brad has not only built a thriving business but has also helped shape the real estate landscape in Marshall.

When asked what has shaped him the most, Brad doesn't hesitate. "My hometown," he says with a smile. For him, Marshall isn't just a place to live and work—it's a community that has given him so much. He's committed to serving it in return, both professionally and personally.

At home, his wife Nicki is the backbone of both their family and business. She keeps Century 21 A Select Group running smoothly while managing their bustling household. Kids are Brent, age 23; Beau, age 22 married to Kelsyn since July 2024; Bailor is his daughter, age 19; son, Hayden, age 10. With 3 graduates of ETBU and little Hayden in 3rd grade at Marshall, the family seems to be following dad's work ethic and hometown love for Marshall.

Brent is an online entrepreneur. Beau is following his uncle's lead in financial advising. Bailor just got her real estate license while continuing her degree at ETBU. Hayden is busy being a typical Burris boy, involved in sports. Brad continues to be hands-on, coaching all his kids' sports teams. Today, he still finds time to coach Hayden, ensuring that family remains his number one priority.

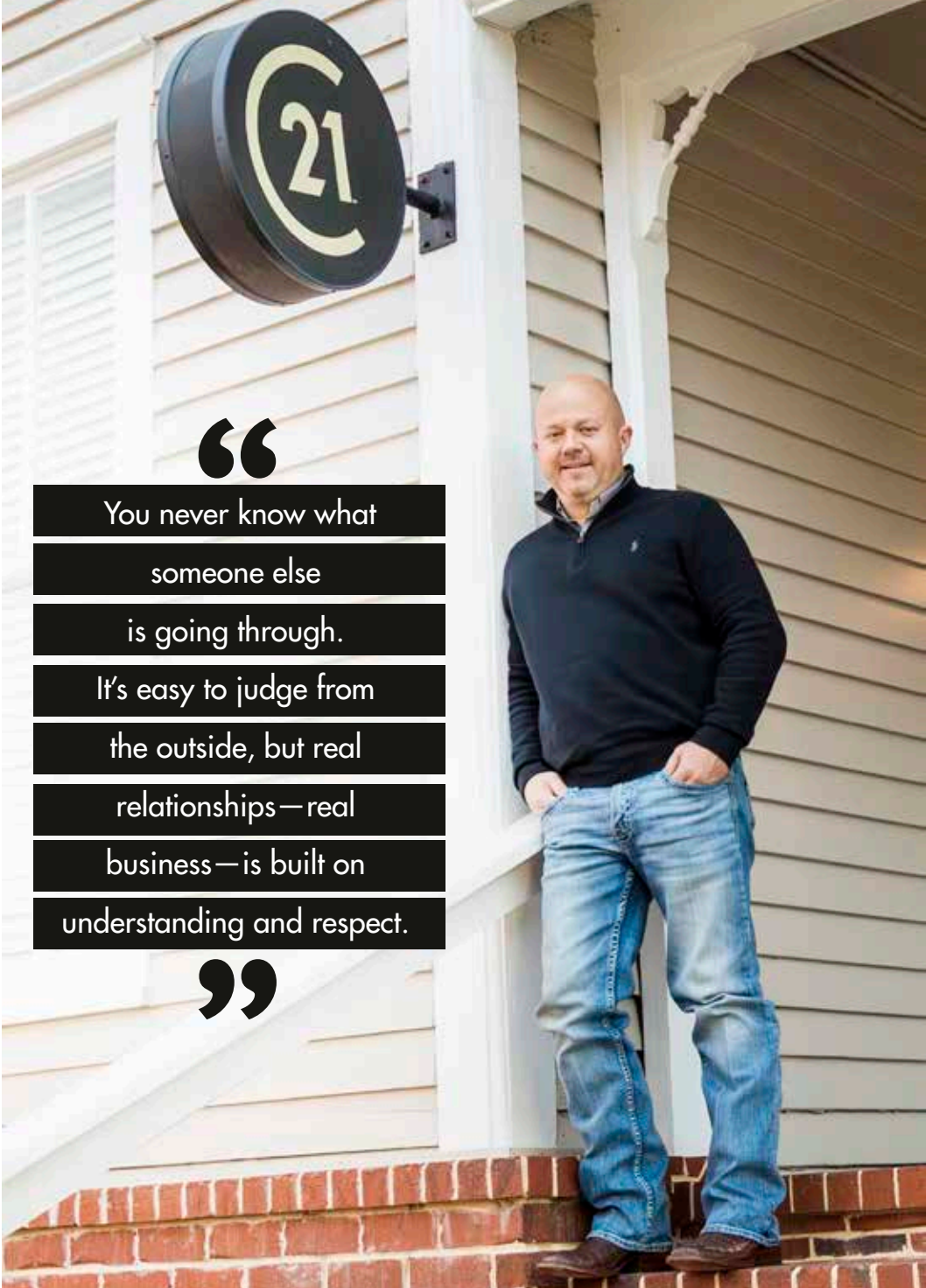


When it comes to mentorship, Brad is quick to credit his parents. As the son of a pastor, he learned values that have guided him through life and business. His brother-in-law, Kerry Knox, has been an invaluable source of business wisdom. The late George Fitz, a well-respected oil and gas investor became an unexpected but influential mentor early in Brad’s brokerage career.

Their guidance gave him the courage to take on not one, but three Century 21 A Select Group offices in Hallsville, Marshall, and Jefferson. Over time, he chose to focus his efforts solely on the Marshall location, where he continues to center his energy and expertise in the place he knows best... home. Brenda Sparks, long-time office manager was definitely the bonus with the purchase of the brokerage. Brenda has been a constant, as her longevity with the company dates even before Brad. He gazes past the doorway where Brenda sits and with a trusted grin says, “She is the gatekeeper.” Besides knowing everything there is to know about how to run the office, one of her greatest strengths is being good at matching clients with the right agent. “He’s like a second son to me,” says Brenda, with a warm smile. “This is my extended family here.”

As a leader, Brad believes in a hands-off yet supportive approach for his agents. “We consider ourselves ‘a select group’ with a home-like atmosphere,” he explains. He’s not interested in micromanaging but instead helps his agents grow into their own success. One quote he stands by in his leadership philosophy is “If you take care of your people, they will take care of your business.” This belief is why he prioritizes guidance, trust, and independence within his brokerage.

When I asked Brad what quotes he loves to live and work by, he smiled big and pointed to a piece of paper taped to his wall right beside him with several quotes. “I’m a big quote guy!” he laughed, trying to narrow his selection to share. Besides being a lover of all kinds of music, he has a special adoration for Elvis Presley—not just for his music, but for the way he left a mark



“  
You never know what  
someone else  
is going through.  
It’s easy to judge from  
the outside, but real  
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business—is built on  
understanding and respect.”  
”

in the world. “He made a difference and had a charisma that people loved.”

One of the quotes on his wall comes from Elvis himself: “Don’t criticize what you don’t understand, son. You’ve never walked in that man’s shoes.” Brad takes this to heart, both in business and in life. “You never know what someone else is going through. It’s easy to judge from the outside, but real relationships—real business—are built on understanding and respect.”

Another favorite is from Warren Buffett: “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and only five minutes to ruin it.” Brad nods as he talks about the weight of this statement. “Your name and reputation are all you have. Once those are damaged, it’s hard to get them back. That’s why I believe in always doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.”

As someone who prioritizes relationships over sales, he also lives by Ricky Carruth’s words:

“Be relational. Not transactional.” For Brad, real estate is not just about closing deals—it’s about helping people make one of the biggest decisions of their lives. “If you only focus on the transaction, you miss the bigger picture. The goal is to build relationships that last, not just sell houses.”

If he had to define success in one word, it would be ambition. “I wake up every day wanting to be the best Brad I can be,” he says. It’s this relentless drive that has propelled him to close over 1,000 transactions, ranging from \$5,000 to over \$5 million. But the deal size doesn’t matter to him. “Whether I’m selling a property for five thousand dollars or five million, I treat them the same.”

His advice to aspiring real estate professionals is simple yet impactful: Back up what you say. Be truthful. Do what you promise. Be available. The strength of relationships, he insists, is the backbone of real estate. “The connections you make and the way you nurture them will determine your success,” he explains.

Beyond real estate, Brad’s influence extends into the community. He serves as the president of the Marshall ISD school board and has even ventured into the NIL (Name, Image, Likeness) program, where businesses sponsor college athletes. His brokerage recently selected ETBU’s star quarterback, Kaden Brown, as their athlete, a partnership he’s eager to continue.



When asked about his biggest accomplishments, Brad hesitates. “I don’t love talking about it,” he admits. But he’s proud of what he and his team have built—the #1 brokerage in and around Marshall for over 10 years. In an industry in East Texas where you will find agents walking through many revolving doors, I found it quite impressive to learn that since taking over Century 21 A Select Group, Brad has grown the office from seven to nearly 20 agents. And that is definitely something to write home about.

Brad attributes much of his success to faith. “My biggest contributor in business and life is God. Putting my trust in Him at an early age was the best decision I ever made. He’s never failed me.” His father’s words still guide him: “Life WITH Jesus is hard, but life WITHOUT Jesus is impossible.”

His favorite scripture, Jeremiah 29:11, reminds him daily that his path is divinely led: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

While Brad stays up-to-date by following real estate podcasts and industry trends, he knows that one thing will never change—the importance of relationships. “Building trust with clients and maintaining a reputation of integrity is what keeps a real estate business thriving.”

Through it all, Brad remains dedicated to his hometown, family, and faith—the cornerstones of his success. His journey from a small-town kid to a leading real estate broker in East Texas is a testament to hard work, ambition, and a heart for people. As he continues to grow, one thing remains clear—Marshall is home, and there’s no place he’d rather be.





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