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Leah
Dornes with
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Chad & Leah TAYLOR

{ How this **power couple** refused to quit
& became a standout real estate team }

BY JOSEPH
COTTLE
PHOTOS BY
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The term “Rock Star” gets thrown around a lot in this business, but Chad Taylor was actually in a rock band once upon a time. It was a dream and a grind, trying to get traction as a band but also working in food service to make ends meet. “Our schedules were opposite,” says Leah, Chad’s wife and business partner. “He would work almost all weekend, every evening, and holidays. We had just bought our first house together and we realized he needed a new career besides gigging and restaurant work.”

Chad enjoyed the home-buying process, and he thought that real estate looked like an interesting career. With Leah’s encouragement, he jumped into the industry in 2004. He found quick success, and Leah got her license soon after.

But of course, in 2008 the housing bubble popped, “And we knew right then that we needed to get good at what we were doing or get out and find a new business,” Chad remembers. The couple leaned into their work ethic,

refusing to quit. “We built our business every year during the recession,” Chad says. “It grew through referrals and recommendations. We cared about our people, and we saw what they were going through. The recession made us good—I totally credit that to us learning how to get good at our trade.”

The pressure of the great recession formed the diamond that is Chad and Leah, now called The Taylor-Made Team, one of the premier real estate teams in greater Kansas City. “We’re not afraid to work hard,” Leah says, “and we’re not afraid to do stuff that maybe some other people wouldn’t necessarily want to do—we’ve done everything from clean listings to blanket neighborhoods with hundreds of door hangers.”

But the biggest game changer was taking care of people— “We tried to get out of what we call a ‘commission-hungry agent mentality’ as soon as possible,” Chad says. “Obviously, you have to pay your bills, and you have kids to provide for, but as soon as you have reserves in the bank, it’s



“ We tried to get out of what we call a **‘commission-hungry agent mentality’** as soon as possible. ”



clients, the boys are the thing for them alongside traveling together, whether here in the States or abroad. The family bought a lake house at Table Rock, “And this will be our eighth summer there,” Chad says. “I think it’s the best decision we’ve ever made. That’s often our escape—to get out of town, unplug, get the boys off devices, and float in the lake for a while. Table Rock is a little bit more remote, a little bit quieter.”

Leah explains, “We like to get a little bit more off the beaten path during our downtime, with us being around people all of our work lives.”

The Taylors are industry veterans, but Kansas City has yet to see everything this power couple has to offer. “It’s been an adventure of figuring out what we do and don’t want for our business even though the market has changed so many times. As Leah often says, and that hasn’t changed over the years—we’re a small but mighty team of highly motivated agents committed to delivering outstanding service,” Chad says.



“ We like to get a little bit more **off the beaten path** during our downtime, with us being around people all of our work lives. ”



a much more pleasant experience both for you and the clients. At that point, whether the client closes in a month, or a year does not matter because you’re going to sell houses in between. What we want is a client who loves their home and had a great experience.”

Despite their drive and stick-to-it-ness, the couple strikes a remarkable balance between their strong work ethic and the ability to relax.

The Taylors are the parents of two teenage boys, and as much as the couple loves their work and their

Leah Dornes

with Continental Title

The HR Pro Turned Title Industry Powerhouse

PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE CASO WITH CC PHOTOGRAPHY

By all accounts, Leah Dornes has never been one to sit still. From waiting tables in college to leading HR initiatives for a major law firm, she has embraced every opportunity with an open mind and an unstoppable work ethic. Now, as a key player at Continental Title Company (CTC), Dornes is all about growth—both personally and professionally.

“I knew I wanted a job with a lot of variety and people interactions,” Dornes said. “I definitely got both.”

From Small-Town Kansas to Big-City Success

Born in Eldorado, Kansas, and raised in Douglass, Dornes didn’t waste any time carving out her own path. After graduating from Kansas State University in 2004 with a degree in Business Administration, she quickly learned that breaking into Human Resources was easier said than done.

“Every HR job required experience,” she recalled. “By some fate, I submitted my resume to SouthLaw and landed the job.”

Her work ethic and ability to juggle responsibilities soon led her to a seat at the shareholder’s table, where she navigated the challenge of working with eight attorneys—all with different opinions and personalities.

“Finding common ground between them took immense creativity and patience,” she said.





A Natural Leader in the Title Industry

Dornes spent a decade at SouthLaw before making the move to CTC in 2016, a transition that felt like the right next step.

“I felt as though I had done all I could to make SouthLaw better, and it was time to move on,” she explained. “I had heard great things about CTC’s leadership and the way the business was operated.”

Now, she’s been with the company for over eight years, working alongside a dynamic team that includes Sarah Perry, Kayla Harrelson, and Laura McBride.

“We make a great team,” she said. “We’re always bouncing ideas off each other and motivating one another.”

The Passion Behind the Work

Dornes doesn’t take her work for granted. She finds immense satisfaction in the relationships she builds and the impact she has.

“Selling CTC and growing the business is what excites me right now,” she said. “We have an amazing team with some incredible tools for secure and efficient real estate closing. We just need one contract or refinance file to prove it.”

But her motivation extends beyond business goals.

“It’s a privilege to work with anyone who is building their own business or book of clients in real estate,” she said. “It’s very respectable, and we want to do all we can to be a great partner to these professionals.”

Influences and Inspirations

Dornes credits much of her leadership philosophy to key mentors in her life, including her grandfather, Keith Lonberger.

“He was the hardest-working, self-made man I know,” she said. “Getting to work with him and seeing how he treated employees was an incredible experience that taught me how I wanted to be as a leader.”

She also looks up to Elizabeth Daniel, the President of CTC, whose steady demeanor and commitment to employees have left a lasting impression.

“She’s a firm believer in treating employees how you want to be treated and leads by setting the example,” Dornes said.

Life Beyond the Office

When she’s not working, Dornes and her husband, Kevin—a police sergeant for the City of Olathe—spend as much time outdoors as possible.

“We love to go to the beach, hang out at the lake, or our favorite—floating down the river,” she said.

At home, she finds relaxation in making things look nice, whether it’s through yard work, cleaning her truck, or painting. She also has a passion for fitness and natural health.

“I wouldn’t say that I love to work out, but I love the benefits of it,” she said. “Most recently, I’ve started learning about what’s in the food we consume and the products we put on our skin. It’s shocking to discover how small choices can make a huge difference.”

Defining Success

For Dornes, success is simple: “Being happy is success to me,” she said. “As long as you are happy with your home life and happy with your work, you’re doing something right.”





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12. Lender – Market insights and mortgage hacks.
13. Home Warranty Rep – The good, the bad, and the “Oops, I wish I had known.”
14. Top Listing Agent from Another Market – Fresh strategies, no competition.
15. Top Buyer Agent from Another Market – Buyer consults that convert.
16. Your Coach/Your Rainmaker's Coach – Because everyone needs a coach.
17. Safety Expert (Police, FBI, Self-Defense) – Stay safe out there.
18. Title/Settlement Company Rep – Closings don't have to be chaos.
19. Builder – New construction insights & trends.
20. Your Broker – Policies, trends, and leadership wisdom.
21. Tech Tip Expert – AI, automation, and systems to save your sanity.
22. Travel Planner – Work-life balance, anyone?
23. High School/College Coach – Leadership, mindset, and goal setting.
24. Founder of a Local Charity – Give back, build community.
25. Insurance Agent – Home, health, life, car – your clients need this!

26. Estate Planning Attorney – Protect your assets (and your clients').
27. Mold Remediator – Because mold is sneaky (and expensive).
28. Radon Expert – The invisible danger lurking in homes.
29. Home Organizer – Cluttered space, cluttered mind.
30. Photographer/Videographer – Branding, marketing, and listing photos that sell.
31. Appraiser – What REALLY determines home values?
32. Tax Strategist – Keep more of what you earn.
33. HR/Recruiting Expert – Building and retaining a top team.
34. Energy Healer or Chiropractor – Keep your body aligned and your energy high.
35. Public Speaking Coach – Communicate like a pro.
36. Brand Strategist – Build a brand that attracts clients.
37. Customer Experience Expert – How to turn clients into raving fans.
38. Interior Designer/Stager – Make listings irresistible.
39. Investor Specialist – How to work with investors and build your own portfolio.
40. Motivational Speaker – Inspire, energize, and level up.

Boss Tip: Think Outside the Real Estate Box

At our Ops Boss® Leader Retreat, we often feature a keynote speaker OUTSIDE of real estate. Past speakers included:

- A Down Syndrome advocate
- An ATF agent who helped take down the DC Sniper
- A RAMMY Award-winning restaurateur
- A 10-year-old TEDx speaker who created his own nonprofit

The takeaway? Business, leadership, and success principles are universal. Learning from different industries brings fresh insights that stick.

Where do you find folks like this?

Look through your list of past clients and sphere of influence. Talk to business owners, teachers, neighbors, newscasters and people within your community. My experience with most people has been that they were flattered to be invited.

Pro Tips for Booking Speakers

- Clarify the goal. Are they there to teach, inspire, or reinforce values? Prep them ahead of time about your team's MVVBP so they can align.
- Make it a win-win. What's in it for them?
- Decide on format. Presentation or interview style? Mix it up! (Panels are fun too.
- Get materials ahead of time. No last-minute surprises.
- Leverage your own team. Script-off contests, “Fail Forward Fridays,” and objection-handling battles can be gold!



Ops Boss® Coaching was founded by Christy Belt Grossman, former COO of one of the nation's first \$1 Billion sales teams. Ops Boss® Coaching is the premier provider of education, coaching, and community for real estate operations professionals (we call them Ops Bosses®!) Learn more at www.OpsBossCoaching.com.

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DAVID G.



Prompt, helpful, and knowledgeable. Pretty reasonable price. I asked them for same-day help, and they rearranged their schedule from another project to give me a hand.



ROBERT M.



They have been fantastic to deal with. Very communicative and easy to work with and came in much less than the other quotes we had. We can use water in our house now!!!



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TOP 200 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed from Jan. 1, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2025

#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
1	Rob Ellerman	Team	Reecenichols - Lees Summit
2	Koehler Bortnick	Team	Reecenichols - Leawood
3	Eric Craig	Team	Keller Williams Kc North
4	Dan	Lynch	Lynch Real Estate
5	Steve	Cutshaw	Keller Williams Realty Partner
6	The Collective	Team	Compass Realty Group
7	Bryan	Huff	Keller Williams Realty Partner
8	Kim	Nofsinger	Keller Williams Realty Partner
9	Aaron	Donner	Keller Williams Realty Partner
10	Shelly	Balthazor	Reecenichols- Leawood Town Center
11	Ripley Assoc	Team	Engel & Volkers Kansas City
12	Ray Homes Kc	Team	Compass Realty Group
13	Jason	Meier	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
14	Alex	Thome	Reecenichols - Leawood
15	Spradling	Group	Exp Realty LLC
16	David	Van Noy Jr.	Van Noy Real Estate
17	Moore Homes	Team	Compass Realty Group

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Teams and Individuals Closed from Jan. 1, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2025

#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
51	Billie Bauer	Network	Keller Williams Realty Partners
52	Jan	Bleakley	Parkway Real Estate LLC
53	Trenton	Johnson	Crown Realty
54	Jan	Aylward	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
55	Meredith	Vertreese	Coldwell Banker Uplife Realty
56	Kitt	Halterman	KW Kansas City Metro
57	Macoubrie	Zimmerman	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
58	Aravind	Pentapati	Platinum Realty LLC
59	Thrive Real Estate K	Team	KW Kansas City Metro
60	Adam	Massey	Greater Kansas City Realty
61	Brent	Sledd	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
62	Jenny	Burkhead	Keller Williams Kc North
63	Brett	Roberts	Midwest Land Group
64	Courtney	Filing	Reecenichols - Leawood
65	Shannon	Brimacombe	Compass Realty Group
66	Ashley	Kendrick	Chartwell Realty LLC
67	Jake	Zillner	Modern Realty Advisors

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TIM UNDERWOOD
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TOP 200 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed from Jan. 1, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2025

#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
68	Jayne	Fincher	Reecenichols - Leawood
69	Concierge Real Estat	Group	Worth Clark Realty
70	Greg	Bemboom	Sage Sotheby's International Realty
71	Drew	Yarkosky	Midwest Land Group
72	Dan	Quinn	Quinn Real Estate Co
73	Christine	Dunn	Keller Williams Realty Partner
74	Conrad	Mays	RE/MAX Advantage
75	Lauren	Anderson	Reecenichols -The Village
76	Ken Hoover	Group	Keller Williams Kc North
77	Danna	Brown	Realty Executives
78	Simmonssales	Team	RE/MAX Area Real Estate
79	Derek	Payne	Midwest Land Group
80	Darren	Merlin	Reecenichols - Lees Summit
81	Stacy	Curtis	Compass Realty Group
82	Amanda	Moses	Platinum Realty LLC
83	Linda	Clemons	RE/MAX Innovations
84	Patrick	Pearce	Compass Realty Group
85	Wade	Fitzmaurice	Fitz Osborn Real Estate LLC
86	Leann	Hiatt	Huck Homes
87	Brian	Freeman	Homesmart Legacy
88	Jackie	Perez	Inspired Realty Of Kc, LLC
89	Debbie	Coe	Compass Realty Group
90	Alex	Olson	Legendary Apartment Brokers
91	Christina	Auch	Chartwell Realty LLC
92	David	Slawson	Reecenichols - Country Club Plaza
93	Renee	Priemer	RE/MAX Heritage
94	Kathleen	Bishop	Reecenichols - Lees Summit
95	Brett	Budke	Reecenichols -Johnson County West
96	Maribeth	Samenus	Platinum Realty LLC
97	Dennis	Prussman	Real Broker, LLC-Mo
98	Brad	Korn	Jason Mitchell Real Estate Mis
99	Carla	Jones Le La Cheur	American Homes Realty
100	Barnett Sells Homes	Team	Chartwell Realty LLC

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TOP 200 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed from Jan. 1, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2025

#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
101	Teresa	Brenner	John Moffitt & Associates
102	Paige	Jenson	KW Kansas City Metro
103	Kim	Taylor	RE/MAX Innovations
104	Chuck	Davis	RE/MAX Professionals
105	Locate	Team	Compass Realty Group
106	George	Medina	Reecenichols - Country Club Plaza
107	Charles	Moretina	Bhg Kansas City Homes
108	Kim	Brown	Lynch Real Estate
109	Nancy	Ward	Compass Realty Group
110	Lonnie	Branson	Keller Williams Southland
111	John	Ward	Compass Realty Group
112	Katherine	Gregg	Compass Realty Group
113	Sbd	Team	Sbd Housing Solutions LLC
114	David	Barraza	Real Broker, LLC
115	Jeff	Manning	Reecenichols - Country Club Plaza
116	Dawn	Riggins	Offerpad Brokerage LLC
117	Melissa	Irish	Reecenichols -Johnson County West

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TOP 200 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed from Jan. 1, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2025

#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
118	Sheri	Long	Keller Williams Realty Partner
119	Nadia	Fray	RE/MAX Central
120	Travis	Heman	Whitetail Properties Real Esta
121	Kathryn	Thomas	Reecenichols - Leawood
122	Sanctuary	Team	Bhg Kansas City Homes
123	Alan	Williams	Bhg Kansas City Homes
124	James	Mclay	Keller Williams Southland
125	Johnny	Youssef	Platinum Realty LLC
126	Bill	Gerue	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
127	J.J.	Curtis	Curtis & Sons Realty
128	Shane	Tyler	Kc Local Homes
129	Sharp Homes	Team	Epique Realty
130	Nick	Gadwood	Nexthome Gadwood Group
131	Hilary	Baldwin	Platinum Realty LLC
132	Rob	Lacy	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
133	Ashley	Dwyer	Reecenichols - Lees Summit
134	Andrea	Sullivan	Rodrock & Associates Realtors
135	Andrew	Bash	Sage Sotheby's International Realty
136	Dana	Allen	Reecenichols- Leawood Town Center
137	Laura	Miller	Reecenichols - Leawood
138	Amanda	Crossley	Sage Sotheby's International Realty
139	Lisa	Nelson	Reecenichols - Leawood
140	Lora	Anstine	Anstine Realty
141	Chris	Rowe	Cedar Creek Realty LLC
142	Lindsay	Sierens Schulze	Reecenichols - Leawood
143	Eddie	Davis	Orenda Real Estate Services
144	Jeannine	Webb	Platinum Realty LLC
145	Susan	Palmer	Reecenichols - Country Club Plaza
146	Curtis	Schultz	Chartwell Realty LLC
147	Steve	Larue	Mcgrew Real Estate Inc
148	Stacey	Saladin	Keller Williams Realty Partner
149	The Clark	Team	KW Kansas City Metro
150	Amy	Schuler	Keller Williams Realty Partner

#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
151	Tracy	Jackson	Reecenichols - Country Club Plaza
152	Suzanne	Wessel	KW Kansas City Metro
153	Rodney	Boxley	Platinum Realty LLC
154	The Rucker	Group	RE/MAX Revolution
155	Ramseier	Group	Keller Williams Kc North
156	Brandon	Gregersen	Chartwell Realty LLC
157	Sireнна	Beyer	Reecenichols - Country Club Plaza
158	Telina	Shepperd	Reecenichols - Lees Summit
159	Sarah	Boston	Boss Realty
160	Kristi	Soligo Fleshman	RE/MAX Revolution Liberty
161	Austin Home	Team	KW Kansas City Metro
162	Randi	Platko	Prime Development Land Co LLC
163	Matt	Rumans	Reecenichols-Kcn
164	Therese	Hinds	Reecenichols- Leawood Town Center
165	Cassidy	Wheeler	Reecenichols - Leawood
166	Cheryl	Minor	Platinum Realty LLC
167	Suzy	Goldstein	Bhg Kansas City Homes

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TOP 200 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed from Jan. 1, 2025 - Feb. 28, 2025

#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
168	Holly	Bond	Keller Williams Realty Partner
169	Clare	Bowen	Rival Real Estate
170	Mike	O Dell	Real Broker, LLC
171	Sanctuary Real Estat	Team	KW Kansas City Metro
172	Lauren	Roush	Reecenichols - Lees Summit
173	Scott	Cox	Berkshire Hathaway Homeservices All-Pro
174	Sherry	Fuller	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
175	Jonell	Cvetkovic	Rodrock & Associates Realtors
176	The Fisher Hiles	Team	Reecenichols - Country Club Plaza
177	Sandy	Mccray	Reecenichols - Leawood
178	Ginger	Doerflinger	Reecenicholswarrensbgrwhiteman
179	Holly	Renfro	Platinum Realty LLC
180	Shannon	Rixson	Sage Sotheby's International Realty
181	Ashlee	Whittington-Duncan	Curtis & Sons Realty
182	Ivy	Home	KW Kansas City Metro
183	John	Barth	RE/MAX Innovations
184	Travis	Sitzman	KW Kansas City Metro
185	Dan Long	Real Estate Team	Keller Williams Platinum Prtnr
186	Mendy	Jarman	Keller Williams Realty Partner
187	Veronica	Morris	Keller Williams Realty Partner
188	Debi	Weaver	Reecenichols - Overland Park
189	Murray	Davis	Bhg Kansas City Homes
190	Chris	Matthews	Reecenichols - Leawood
191	Alison	Zimmerlin	Reecenichols - Leawood
192	Cambridge	Cates	Cates Auction & Realty Co Inc
193	Rothermel	Group	Keller Williams Kc North
194	Moving	To KC	KW Kansas City Metro
195	Kathy	Stevens	RE/MAX State Line
196	Brenda	Youness	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
197	Dave	Campbell	Keller Williams Kc North
198	Bryan	Parrish	Keller Williams Realty Partner
199	Bob	Winney	Keller Williams Realty Partner
200	Benjamin	Carter	Keller Williams Kc North

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FAQ about Kansas City Real Producers

Ever since we launched *Kansas City Real Producers* in July 2017, I have heard some of the same questions from many of you. I figured it would be most efficient to publish the answers here in case more of you had the same questions. Remember, my door is *always* open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100% designed to be *your* voice!

Q: Who receives this magazine?

A: The top 500 agents of Kansas City. We pulled MLS numbers (by closed volume) in the Kansas City market. We cut off the list at number 500. The list will reset in early 2025 based on 2024 totals and continues to update annually.

Q: Why am I not listed on the top 200 standings/ why are my numbers showing differently?

A: There are a number of reasons why that could be the case. First, be sure to read the disclaimer in its entirety. We pull the data on the exact date listed, so if the closed transaction is not submitted by that date, it will not be included. User error or BRIGHT error is always a possibility. The most common reason is that for any deal with an alternate agent listed, the production gets divided in half between the lead agent and the alternate. There are a few other factors at play, so if you have a question about the Standings, please contact me, and we can take a look: reece.hale@realproducersmag.com.

Q: What is the process for being featured in this magazine?

A: It's really simple — one or multiple peers have first nominated every featured agent you see. You can nominate or be nominated by other agents, affiliates, brokers, owners, and office leaders. A nomination currently looks like this: you email us at reece.hale@realproducersmag.com with the subject "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)." Please explain WHY you are nominating them to be featured. It could be that they have an amazing story that needs to be told, perhaps they overcame extreme obstacles, they are an exceptional leader, have the best customer service, or they give back to the community in a big way, etc. Once the timing is right, the next step is an interview with us to ensure it's a good fit. If all works out, then we put the wheels in motion.

Q: What does it cost to be featured?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing, my friends, so nominate away!

This is NOT a pay-to-play model whatsoever.

Q: How can I write an article to be printed?

A: If you are interested in writing an article to contribute your ideas, experience, knowledge, expertise, or stories to the *Kansas City Real Producers* community, please email me at reece.hale@realproducersmag.com. Even if you don't consider yourself a prolific writer, let's talk!

Q: Who are the Preferred Partners?

A: Anyone listed as a "Preferred Partner" in the index at the front of the magazine is an integral part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our events, and be part of our Facebook group. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many agents have personally referred every single Preferred Partner you see. We won't even take a meeting with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and is "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network not only of the best agents in the area but the best affiliates, as well, so we can all grow stronger together.

Q: How can I refer a local business to join KCRP as a Preferred Partner?

A: If you know and want to recommend a local business that would like to work with more top real estate agents, please email me at reece.hale@realproducersmag.com and introduce us! This is the only way we can grow and strengthen this community, through your referrals. It's much appreciated!

Q: How might I get more involved in this community?

A: Two primary ways: First of all, if you have not already, be sure to join our private Facebook group specifically for the top 500 real estate agents and our preferred partners. To request to join, simply search on Facebook the keywords "Kansas City's Top 500 Real Producers Community," and it will pop right up. Request to join, and we will promptly accept you into the group. This online community is a space for further connection, contribution, and curiosity to be shared among our members. Secondly, be sure to attend our events. We currently plan to host events throughout the year, a couple of golf outings, and some VIP social events throughout 2025. We promote these events via email and Facebook, so if you haven't been receiving invites, please email me immediately at reece.hale@realproducersmag.com.



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