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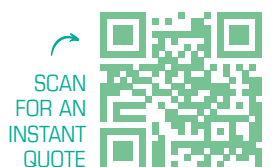
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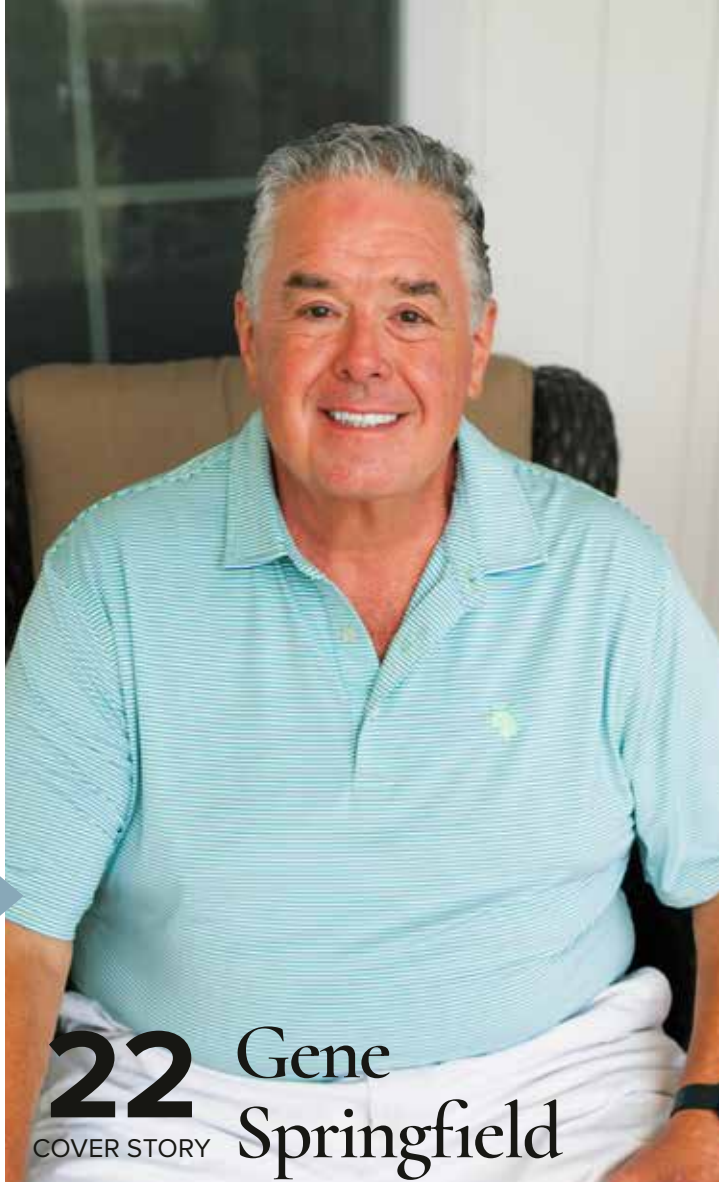
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If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at robert.smith@realproducersmag.com.



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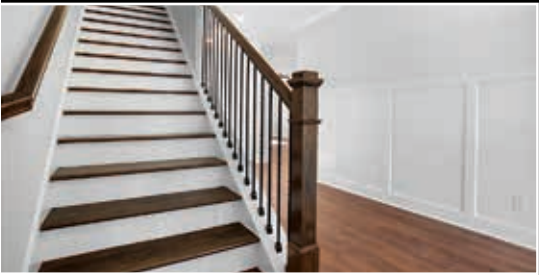
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MERRY CHRISTMAS 2025!

MERRY CHRISTMAS COLUMBIA REAL PRODUCERS:

As we close out another incredible year, I want to take a moment to express just how grateful we are for each and every one of you who continues to read, support, and share *Columbia Real Producers*. This publication exists because of the amazing community of real estate professionals who inspire us month after month with your stories of perseverance, success, and dedication. December is a time of reflection and gratitude, and we couldn't think of a better way to wrap up 2025 than by celebrating the talented individuals and businesses featured in this issue.

Our **Cover Feature** shines the spotlight on **Gene Springfield**, a name synonymous with excellence in Columbia real estate. Gene's journey is one of hard work, passion, and an unwavering commitment to his clients, and we're honored to share his story with you.

This month's **Top Producer Feature** highlights **Nakia Brown**, whose consistent drive and outstanding results set the bar high in our industry. Nakia's success is a testament to what it means to lead with both skill and heart, and we know you'll be inspired by her accomplishments.

We're also thrilled to introduce **Kathy Cobb** as our **Rising Star Feature**. With determination and fresh perspective, Kathy represents the future of Columbia real estate. Her story reminds us all that this industry is built on innovation, ambition, and the courage to dream big.

Finally, we are proud to highlight one of our valued **Preferred Partners** in this month's Spotlight Feature. Their dedication to supporting our local real estate community and building lasting relationships is an important part of what makes Columbia such a special place to live and work.

As you turn these pages, I hope you feel the same sense of pride and inspiration that we do. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your journey this year. From all of us at *Columbia Real Producers*, we wish you a joyous holiday season and a successful start to 2026!

Warm regards,



Robert Smith
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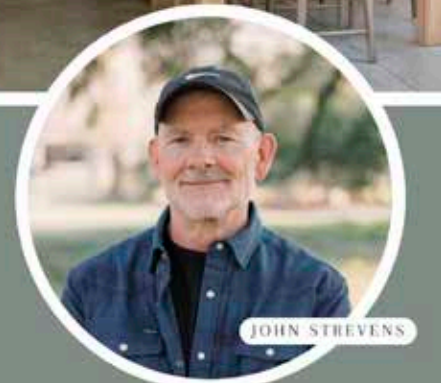
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COLUMBIA REAL PRODUCERS

FALL SOCIAL

Deals on Tap



October 9, 2025 | Smoked, Columbia, SC

The fall season brought the perfect backdrop for another incredible *Columbia Real Producers* event — the **Fall Social: Deals on Tap**, held on **October 9, 2025**, at the ever-popular **Smoked** in downtown Columbia. From 3:00 to 5:00 PM, the atmosphere was electric as the city's **Top 300 REALTORS®** gathered for an exclusive afternoon of connection, collaboration, and celebration.

Hosted by **Columbia Real Producers**, the event was made possible through the generous support of sponsors **The Palmetto Mortgage Group, Brian Prah, New Level Construction, and Smoked**. Their partnership helped create a truly memorable experience for everyone in attendance.

Guests were treated to **craft brews, heavy hors d'oeuvres, and a welcoming environment** that blended sophistication with relaxed charm. The team at Smoked went above and beyond, ensuring every detail — from the service to the presentation — set the stage for an afternoon of effortless networking. Conversations flowed easily as REALTORS® from across the region connected with peers, shared stories, and strengthened relationships that extend far beyond business.

The event's title, Deals on Tap, couldn't have been more fitting. Laughter filled the air as agents swapped success stories, exchanged insights about Columbia's ever-evolving market,

and toasted to a thriving real estate community. It was more than just a networking event — it was a true celebration of collaboration and community spirit among the top professionals in the industry.

Robert Smith, warmly welcomed guests on behalf of the *Columbia Real Producers* team, expressing gratitude for the outstanding turnout and for the continued support of both REALTORS® and preferred partners. Robert's enthusiasm and pride in the Columbia real estate community were evident as he reminded everyone that Real Producers events are built around one mission — to connect, inspire, and celebrate the best in the business.

As the afternoon came to a close, the sentiment was unanimous — **everyone had an amazing time**. The smiles, laughter, and sense of connection were a testament to the value of bringing this elite network together. Attendees left not only with new contacts but with renewed energy and excitement for what lies ahead in Columbia's thriving real estate market.

The **Fall Social: Deals on Tap** was more than an event; it was a reminder of the strength of this community — a group of driven professionals who continually raise the bar and support one another's success.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to our **amazing sponsors** — **The Palmetto Mortgage Group, Brian Prah, New Level Construction, and Smoked** — for their generous support

and continued partnership. Their contributions made this event a true success and helped create an atmosphere where meaningful connections could flourish.

We'd also like to extend a special thank-you to the **Columbia Real Producers** team for their dedication and teamwork in bringing this event to life. **Content Director and Event Photographer Amy Porter**, along with **Greenville Real Estate Productions' Lucas and Keke**, beautifully captured the spirit of the day. A big shoutout also goes to **Sheena Summers, Account Executive**, for her hard work and enthusiasm, and to the **amazing catering team** whose delicious bites elevated the experience from start to finish. Together, this incredible group made sure every detail was exceptional — from the first handshake to the last toast.

Here's to another season of growth, collaboration, and, of course, more deals on tap!



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The Story of Gene Springfield



In the world of real estate, success is often measured in numbers, but for Gene Springfield, it's the impact behind the numbers that truly counts. A proud U.S. Army veteran and a deeply rooted man of faith, Gene brings unwavering integrity, compassion, and strategy to every transaction. As a leading agent with the Palmetto Real Estate Group of SC, Gene has built a career not just on helping people buy and sell homes—but on building lasting relationships, mentoring others, and creating a legacy of service.

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AMY PORTER

Gene's path to real estate wasn't a detour—it was a homecoming. The industry runs in his blood, with both his father and grandfather paving the way as realtors. However, Gene's decision to enter the field in 2017 came not from legacy alone, but from a deeply personal calling. After a long and successful career in food service—including 15 years as a contractor at the VC Summer Nuclear Station—his professional world changed overnight when construction on two nuclear reactors came to a halt. Along with 6,000 other workers, Gene was suddenly faced with an

unexpected crossroads. Rather than seeing it as a setback, he saw an opportunity. He dissolved his contract and took a bold leap of faith into real estate—one that has brought purpose, fulfillment, and immense success.

That success is reflected in the numbers: 192 career transactions totaling over \$48 million in volume, including more than \$15 million in just the past year. But behind each figure is a story—and at the center of each story is Gene's unwavering dedication to service. Whether guiding a fellow veteran through the complexities of a VA loan or helping a first-time buyer take a life-changing step toward homeownership, Gene approaches every client with care, clarity, and a sense of mission. One of his most memorable moments came when a woman, often overlooked by others, walked into the office after winning \$300,000 on a scratch-off ticket. With his characteristic respect and attentiveness, Gene helped her navigate the process and purchase her first home—a reminder that listening first can open doors others don't even notice.



Gene's success didn't happen in isolation. He credits much of his growth to starting with Keller Williams, where their strong education platform laid a solid foundation. But it was the alignment of values that led him to his current home at Palmetto Real Estate Group of SC. Broker-in-charge Chad Jordan, one of the instructors, whom Gene met through the Real Estate School for Success, offered a firm grounded in family and Christian principles—ideals that resonated with Gene's own life philosophy. "Faith, family, and helping others," Gene says. "That's what it's always been about for me."

His commitment to veterans is a cornerstone of his business. As someone who has walked in their shoes, Gene offers more than just expertise—he offers understanding. His deep knowledge of VA loans, relocation logistics, and the unique emotional journey veterans face allows him to serve this community with unmatched precision and empathy. But it's not just veterans who benefit from Gene's guidance. Gene is well rounded when it comes to real estate. He can serve all real estate needs and his clients appreciate his

clear communication, market savvy, and a team-oriented approach that includes a stellar inside sales agent, a highly organized transaction coordinator, and reliable partnerships with local lenders, inspectors, and contractors. He also not only works with the investors but he is an investor as well as he purchases homes. Gene has also just formed the **Veterans First Team of Palmetto Real Estate Group of SC**.

Outside of work, Gene is a devoted family man who finds joy in the simple things: boating on the lake, teeing up on the golf course, and spending quality time with his wife of over 35 years, their daughter and two sons, and their growing crew of grandsons—with one more on the way. He's an active member of Union United Methodist Church and a passionate supporter of its outreach program, Sharing God's Love, a cause close to his heart. For Gene, giving back isn't something he does—it's who he is.

As he looks toward the future, Gene is focused on mentorship, leadership, and legacy. He's passionate about building a strong, values-driven team where agents can thrive professionally while staying grounded personally. His advice to new agents and rising top producers is both practical and profound: "Learn the systems, but never forget the people." He believes in showing up with authenticity, leading with heart, and doing what you love with everything you've got.

There's one thing Gene hopes readers remember about him above all else: that he led with service—not for the spotlight, but because it's simply who he is. A man of honor, faith, and purpose, Gene Springfield continues to change lives—not just by finding homes, but by helping people find a place where they truly belong.

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THE JOURNEY OF NAKIA SHANTE' BROWN



NAKIA SHANTE' BROWN is more than a Realtor—she's a woman on a mission to serve, connect, and transform lives through real estate. As a Top Producer with Coldwell Banker Realty Irmo Lake Murray, Nakia has earned her place among Columbia's elite by doing far more than closing deals. Her career is built on purpose, compassion, and a steadfast commitment to walking with her clients through some of the most defining moments of their lives. For Nakia, real estate isn't just a profession—it's a calling that flows from her family's legacy and her own deeply held values.

That legacy began with her father, a proud Purdue University graduate who returned home after college to help launch the family's residential and commercial construction business. Though he passed away in 2010, his entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to community left an indelible mark on Nakia's heart. Inspired to carry his vision forward, Nakia entered the real estate world in 2020. What began as a tribute to her father has grown into a thriving career defined by service and impact. In 2024, Nakia earned her broker's license—further expanding her reach and solidifying her role as a trusted leader in the Columbia real estate market.

Nakia specializes in new construction, first-time homebuyers, and investor clients across Columbia and the

surrounding areas. Her work as a Sales Consultant with Great Southern Homes, South Carolina's 2024 Builder of the Year, allows her to be a part of something even greater: providing quality, affordable housing for today's growing families. With every blueprint, walk-through, and key handoff, Nakia honors her father's legacy while building her own—one client, one milestone, one family at a time.

What sets Nakia apart is her deeply intentional and heart-centered approach to the home buying process. She begins by listening—truly listening—to understand her clients' dreams, concerns, and lifestyle needs. From there, she crafts a highly personalized experience that empowers buyers with market knowledge, financing strategies, and advocacy every step of the way. Whether she's helping someone buy their first home or investing in their future, Nakia's mission remains clear: to help clients feel confident, supported, and celebrated.

While she's earned recognition for her growing success, Nakia measures impact not in numbers, but in relationships. "It's not about the transaction," she shares. "It's about showing up fully and making people feel seen, valued, and empowered." She recalls working with buyers who were convinced homeownership was out of reach. With patience, guidance, and strategic planning, she helped them overcome fear and uncertainty—and cross the threshold into homes they never imagined possible. Those moments, she says, are the heartbeat of her work.

As rewarding as her career has been, Nakia is no stranger to challenge. Starting out in 2020, she faced an unpredictable market and the heavy weight of expectation tied to her family's construction legacy. There were moments of doubt—but faith, resilience, and a sense of divine purpose saw her through. "My faith in God has been my anchor," she says. "Even when the path



wasn't clear, I knew I wasn't walking it alone." That spiritual grounding continues to fuel her success and keep her mission rooted in service, not status.

Beyond real estate, Nakia is a woman of diverse passions. She finds joy in gospel and jazz music, theater, travel, and spending time in nature. These experiences refresh her spirit and remind her of the beauty in connection—whether it's sharing a song with loved ones or exploring the unfamiliar with courage and curiosity. A proud member of the Junior League of Columbia, Nakia also gives back to her community through leadership and service, embodying the very values she grew up with.

Family remains a central pillar in her life. Her mother, Angelia Brown, is another source of inspiration—a

successful IT manager and fellow Purdue graduate who models leadership with both strength and grace. Nakia credits her mother's resilience and heart for helping shape her own approach to life and business. Together, they share a love of basketball (especially Purdue Boilermakers), travel, and intentional living.

Nakia describes herself as "service-oriented, passionate, resilient, ambitious, adventurous, and loyal"—a blend that clearly shows up in every client interaction, every milestone celebrated, and every challenge overcome. She's also a thrill seeker at heart. Whether it's skydiving for her 30th birthday or ziplining just for the fun of it, Nakia embraces boldness with a quiet strength. And yet, despite her adventurous spirit, she identifies more as a reflective introvert—someone who recharges in



“Stay grounded in your why.”

peace but shows up with energy and purpose when it matters most.

Looking to the future, Nakia envisions continuing to expand her reach—especially in serving first-time buyers and families seeking new construction. Her ultimate dream? To be remembered not just as a successful Realtor, but as someone who lived with integrity, served with heart, and glorified God in all she did. “I want people to remember that I used my gifts to uplift others,” she says. “That I made people feel seen. That I made a difference.”

To aspiring agents and up-and-coming top producers, Nakia offers this advice: “Stay grounded in your why. Don’t just

chase numbers—lead with empathy, consistency, and authenticity. The impact you make will always outshine the accolades.”

In everything she does, Nakia Shante’ Brown leads with purpose—and that’s what makes her truly worthy of this Top Producer spotlight.

Favorite Quote:

“True leaders don’t create followers; they create more leaders.”
- Myles Munroe
“Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another.”
- Myles Munroe



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SPOTLIGHT ON

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INSURANCE

HURD JOHNSON AGENCY

PHOTOS BY: TRES DABNEY
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WRITTEN BY: AMY PORTER

A Dynamic Duo Committed to Community and Excellence
Goosehead Insurance - Hurd Johnson Agency is more than just an insurance brokerage—it's a powerhouse of dedication, expertise, and community involvement. Co-led by Barrett Hurd and Dr. Jermaine Johnson, the agency offers an extensive range of services including home, auto, rental dwellings, liability, life insurance, and more. Since its establishment in January 2020, the agency has quickly become a trusted name in the region, known for its customer-centric approach and commitment to excellence.

Meet the Partners: Barrett Hurd and Jermaine Johnson

Barrett Hurd's journey to becoming an insurance professional is as diverse as it is inspiring. Originally from Bossier City, Louisiana, Barrett joined the Army in 2009, serving as a wheeled mechanic stationed at Fort Bliss. After serving in the Army as a wheeled mechanic, Barrett explored various fields before discovering his passion for insurance. His journey through different professions—from healthcare to the automotive industry—led him to a career where he could truly make a difference. Barrett's dedication to client education and his relentless work ethic have been instrumental in the agency's success.

With nearly a decade of experience, Barrett's expertise lies in his deep understanding of insurance products and



his commitment to client education. His dedication to hard work, coupled with a passion for making complex insurance topics accessible, has been a driving force behind the agency's success. Barrett credits much of his success to the support of his family, particularly his wife Nicole, a BCBS risk auditing supervisor, and their two sons, Bryant and Bennett.

On the other hand, Dr. Jermaine Johnson brings a unique blend of leadership and experience to the agency. A former professional basketball player and College of Charleston alum, Jermaine has always been a team player. Today, he balances his role as an insurance professional with his responsibilities as a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives, where he represents the people of SC House District 52. Jermaine is also deeply rooted in the Southeast Columbia community, where he resides with his wife, Dr. Evan Patrice Johnson, and their four children. His passion for basketball is still alive, as he enjoys playing the sport in his spare time and working on his cherished 1977 Corvette.

A Commitment to Community

For both Barrett and Jermaine, community involvement is not just an

afterthought; it's at the heart of their business. Goosehead Insurance - Hurd Johnson Agency is heavily involved and actively participates in local initiatives, such as their annual "Back to School" events and "The Rose Shower," which supports local women's shelters and the United Way. This commitment reflects their belief that success is not just about business growth, but about making a meaningful impact on the lives of others.

What Makes Goosehead Insurance - Hurd Johnson Agency Unique?

The agency's affiliation with Goosehead Insurance, the largest brokerage in the country, gives them a distinct advantage. They offer clients access to an unparalleled range of carrier options, ensuring that each policy is tailored to the specific needs of the client. Whether it's providing a new insurance binder for a mortgage closing in minutes or guiding clients through catastrophic events, Barrett and Jermaine's team is dedicated to delivering prompt, reliable service.

Barrett takes pride in the positive feedback from clients, particularly in challenging times when their insurance policies prove invaluable. The relief and gratitude they express, knowing

they were well-covered, reaffirms his dedication to this profession. As Barrett puts it, "We're here to be partners in protecting your income and assets, with the biggest portfolio of carriers to ensure we never leave you hanging." Jermaine, with his background in leadership and public service, adds another layer of trust and integrity to the agency's operations.

A Partnership You Can Trust

Goosehead Insurance - Hurd Johnson Agency is more than just a business; it's a partnership dedicated to protecting what matters most to their clients. Barrett and Jermaine are not just insurance professionals—they are community members, leaders, and trusted advisors. For those in the Columbia area seeking comprehensive insurance solutions, this dynamic duo is the team to turn to.

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FROM Center Stage to Closing Day

PHOTOS BY: KACIE WOODS
(KWOODS PHOTOGRAPHY)
WRITTEN BY: AMY PORTER

When you meet Kathy Cobb, you're immediately struck by her energy, warmth, and the genuine care she extends to everyone she encounters. An "extroverted introvert," Kathy thrives in connection yet treasures quiet moments at home with her beloved cats, Biskit and Muffin. Her optimism and ability to find the good in others aren't just personal traits—they're the foundation of a career that's quickly establishing her as one of Columbia's brightest rising stars in real estate.

Kathy's path to real estate was anything but conventional.

For more than 20 years, she was a successful dance studio owner and adjunct dance professor, pouring her creativity, discipline, and passion into shaping young dancers. But when the pandemic forced her to close her studio, she embraced a new chapter. She sold her business and moved to South Carolina to be near her daughter, Jessica, who was dancing with the Columbia City Ballet and had recently married. "While I'll always love and appreciate dance," Kathy shares, "I shifted my focus to real estate for new opportunities for growth and accomplishment." Her entrepreneurial spirit,

coupled with skills honed through decades of working with families—empathy, encouragement, and the ability to connect deeply—made the transition seamless. In May 2021, she earned her real estate license, ready to apply her drive and dedication to helping clients navigate one of life's biggest decisions.

Her career began at Keller Williams Palmetto, where she closed her first transaction within two months. Soon after, she was invited to join the highly regarded Candy Limehouse Team. "Working alongside Candy taught me invaluable lessons," Kathy

says. "I'll always be grateful for her mentorship." In October 2022, she stepped out on her own, moving to Keller Williams Realty in Harbison. The decision was a pivotal one. As a solo agent, she found an environment that better supported her vision, allowing her to triple her sales volume within her first year by implementing her own strategies and creating a healthy work-life balance.

Kathy specializes in serving a diverse clientele—first-time homebuyers, investors, military families, and seasoned buyers and sellers across Columbia and its surrounding communities.

Her approach is personal and strategic. She listens closely to her clients' needs, educates them on the process, and uses her deep knowledge of the market to match them with the right home. One of her most memorable success stories involves a single mother who never believed homeownership was possible. Kathy guided her step-by-step, from improving her credit to handing her the keys to her first home. "She cried tears of joy, and so did I," Kathy recalls. "It reminded me why I love what I do—it's more than real estate, it's changing lives."

With a career volume of over \$18.8 million—and \$9.8 million in the past year alone—Kathy's achievements are impressive. But what she values most are the relationships she's built. "It's not just about the transaction," she emphasizes. "It's about the people, the stories, and the impact that lasts long after closing day." She credits her growth to the many agents who have supported and inspired her along the way, including Candy Limehouse, Carl Vollmer, Bethany Way, Liz Gaymon, the late Eric Tucker, Penny Broach, Andrew Morrison, and Lori Carnes. "My career was literally built on agent support," she says. "These were people who believed in me when I had no idea what I was capable of."

Kathy's personal story is one of resilience and determination. As a single mother, she pivoted from performing to full-time motherhood without financial support, creating a dance studio that became both a livelihood and a safe,





“
HOW YOU
SHOW UP
EVERY DAY
MAKES
ALL THE
DIFFERENCE.
”

that resilience, heart, and authenticity are the true keys to success. In Columbia's competitive market, her star is not only rising—it's shining brightly.

Favorite Quote
“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.”
— Albert Schweitzer

joyful space for her daughter to grow up. She taught up to 30 classes a week, balancing work and motherhood with unshakable dedication. Today, that same determination fuels her drive in real estate, where she's focused on reaching her goal of 48 transactions per year, building generational wealth for her family, and helping clients do the same.

Giving back is also at the heart of Kathy's work. With every closing, she donates to KW Cares to support agents in need, contributes to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and participates in local church outreach programs that provide food and housing assistance. “My work is about helping people find homes,” she says, “but it's equally about supporting those still working toward stability.”

Family remains her anchor. Jessica and her husband, Gates, live just minutes away with Kathy's two granddaughters, Elliana and Emerson. Whether they're taking boat rides on Lake Murray, visiting

Riverbanks Zoo, or planning their next vacation, Kathy cherishes every moment with them. She also enjoys exploring new restaurants, quick trips to Charleston or Charlotte, and caring for the family's furry and finned crew—including cats, dogs, chinchillas, and even a beta fish named Goldie.

When it comes to advice for other agents, Kathy is clear: “Build your business on relationships, not transactions. Be consistent, authentic, and care deeply for your clients. Trust yourself—even in tough seasons. How you show up every day makes all the difference.” Her definition of success isn't just about numbers—it's about happiness, fulfillment, and making choices that align with her values. She wants to be remembered as a woman of integrity who led with heart, made others feel valued, and created a legacy of trust and empowerment.

Kathy Cobb is not just selling homes—she's building dreams, strengthening communities, and proving



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