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Winter Event
March 4th
1:00-3:00pm



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Partner Spotlight:
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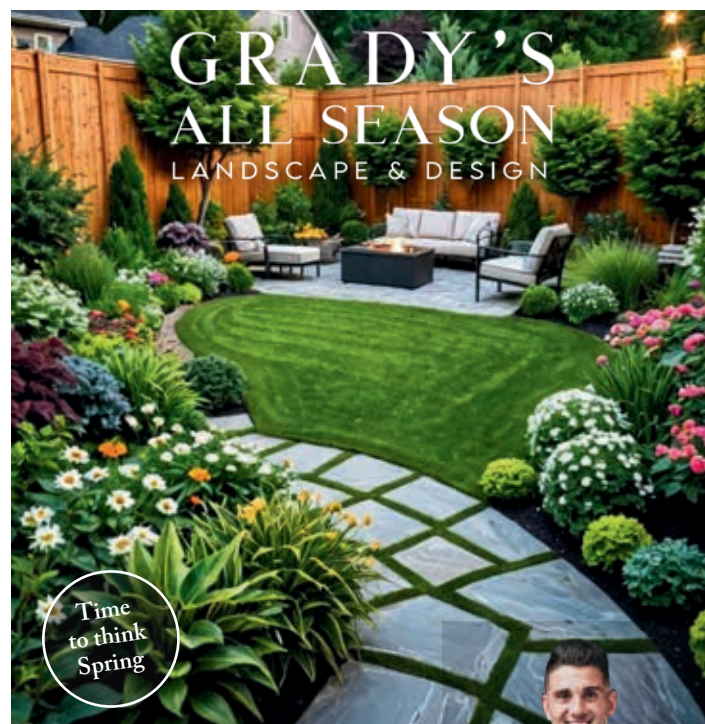


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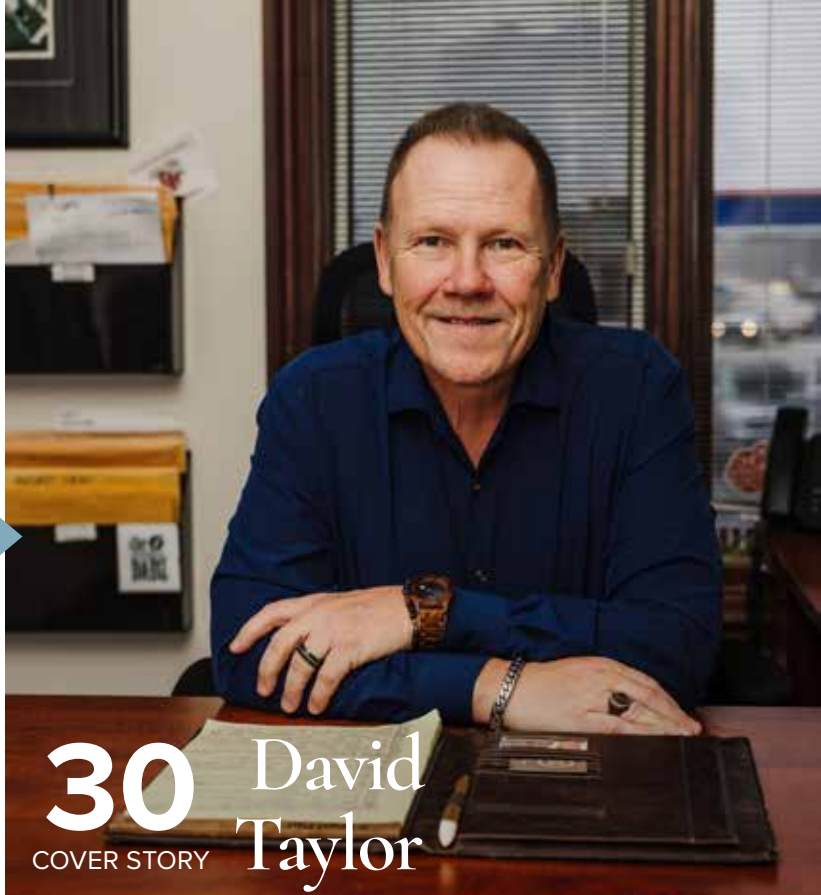
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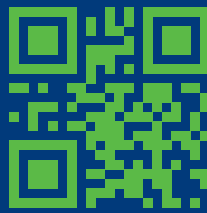


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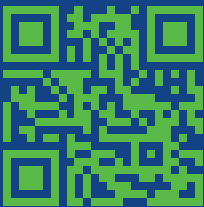


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New Distribution *for* 2025



Every February we create a new distribution list based on the Top 300 agents from the year before. This means for a good number of you, this is the first time you are receiving a Real Producers publication. First off, congratulations! Consider it a badge of honor to receive the publication. Also, congratulations if you have received the magazine from the beginning and find yourself remaining in the Top 300 Realtors in Northwest Indiana for the year 2025, despite all of the craziness that each of you had to navigate over the last year. Since our start, we have brought you stories from the top agents in Northwest Indiana and connected real estate agents with each other as well as our paying partners through the magazine, events, and social media.

We are constantly looking to better our product and services for all who are involved. Never hesitate to reach out for any reason. Here are some of the things we need your help with:

WE NEED NOMINATIONS FOR FEATURES—

Cover Story: a top agent in volume and respected by their peers

Rising Star: has been an agent for a few years or less and is outperforming most

Referrals of Potential Partners—our list of partners has been personally vetted by the Real Producers team and every single one of them came recommended by someone who receives our

magazine. The partners are how we keep this magazine free for agents.

Attend our events—we host awesome events, quarterly, for real estate agents and our partners. The events are designed to increase social connections between top agents and top affiliates so that the best of the best can grow their business together.

Miscellaneous Content—we are primarily focused on telling agents' stories, but we are always open to your ideas of good columns or one-off stories.

Real Producers was created in Indianapolis in 2014 to love on real estate agents. We realize that the agent is at the center of all things residential real estate and a single deal feeds a lot of mouths. Because of our focus on the agent, Real Producers has grown to over 140 locations nationwide. We have also added a National Podcast and are bringing a national event your way this September in Dallas, TX! We could not have experienced this growth without our engaged readership and partners. So again, if this is your first issue, welcome to the club! You earned it. Enjoy receiving your copy of *Northwest Indiana Real Producers*, and keep crushing it so you never miss another issue.



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Q: Do real estate agents have to pay for the magazine?

A: NO! The magazine is 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 agents

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 connections, and better our businesses. We will communicate about events through the magazine, email, and on social media.

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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PILLAR TO POST

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Beyond Inspections: Building Business through Service and Home Ownership

BY GIAVONNI DOWNING • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELINDA NICOLE PHOTOGRAPHY

In February, Tim and Laura James will celebrate 10 years of running their business, Pillar To Post, a home inspection company that has become a trusted name in Northwest Indiana. Their journey has been one of grit, determination, and teamwork. In just a decade, the couple has built a thriving business and expanded their reach with the launch of NWI Radon and Environmental in 2020, a venture that has quickly gained momentum.

Laura recalls the early days of their entrepreneurial journey. "Tim and I were both miserable in our downtown corporate jobs," she explains. "He came to me in January 2015 to start our own business. At first, I wasn't on board, but his pitch—that I could be a stay-at-home mom—sealed the deal." Little did Laura know that she would quickly become very involved in the business, with both of them juggling their growing family along with their new endeavor.

Tim, with a background in finance and accounting, and Laura, with her expertise in sales and marketing, found a way to combine their skills. "We had a make-it-or-break-it moment," Laura says. "Tim quit his job to start the business, and I was laid off shortly after. We poured everything into making it work."

The success of Pillar To Post led Tim to another idea during the early days of the pandemic. "He wanted to start





NWI Radon and Environmental,” Laura shares. “I thought he was crazy at the time—I was homeschooling three kids—but he saw a gap in the market for high-quality mitigation systems.”

Tim’s background as an inspector gave him a unique advantage. “He noticed how many systems were poorly installed and wanted to offer something better,” Laura explains. Their second business soon also flourished, adding another layer to their already successful endeavors.

Reflecting on what has kept their businesses thriving, Laura attributes their success to their complementary skill sets and commitment to customer service. “Tim handles internal operations, and I focus on sales and marketing. Our strengths balance each other out,” she says.

Another cornerstone of their business is their dedication to the client experience. “We make sure our inspectors put the customer at the center of everything,” Laura says. “Our goal is to help clients and realtors confidently get to the closing table.”

This customer-centric approach extends to their mitigation business. “There are only a few other businesses in our market,” Laura notes. “What sets us apart is our ability to offer the best warranties and systems, thanks to Tim’s deep understanding of home construction.”

As with any business, challenges are part of the journey. Despite the challenges, the rewards are plentiful. “We’ve helped over 18,000 clients achieve homeownership,” Laura shares. “Knowing we’ve played a small but crucial role in such a significant life decision is incredibly rewarding.”

With three daughters aged 8, 9, and 11, life is busy. “Our kids keep us on our toes with sports, school, and activities,” Laura says. “It’s a lot, but we have a great team supporting us. Everyone has a role, from inspectors to office staff, which allows us to balance work and family.”

Philanthropy has been a priority for Laura and Tim since the beginning. “We’ve sponsored blood drives with the American Red Cross, volunteered with the Boys and Girls Club, and supported events like ‘A Christmas to Remember,’” Laura says.

Their daughter’s cancer diagnosis four years ago inspired additional efforts. “We’ve become heavily involved with Make-A-Wish and the Northwest Indiana Cancer Kids



Our goal is to help clients and realtors confidently get to the closing table.”



Foundation,” she adds. “Giving back to the community that has supported us is important.”

Laura doesn’t sugarcoat the demands of starting a business. “You have to put 150% into everything,” she advises. “There’s no room for slacking off. Get out of your comfort zone and hustle.”

As they approach their 10-year milestone, Laura and Tim are focused on growth. “We want to continue providing employment opportunities and serving more customers and Realtors,” Laura says.

Their businesses also offer unique benefits to Realtors, such as same-day inspection reports, infrared scanning, 360-degree virtual tours, and continuing education opportunities. “Tim is the only licensed CE instructor for radon and inspection topics in our area,” Laura notes. “It’s just another way we add value.” They have solidified their reputation as trusted partners in the home-buying process.

For Laura and Tim, success is about more than profits. “We’re proud of the jobs we’ve created, the clients we’ve helped, and the recognition we’ve earned,” Laura says. Their accolades include Franchisee of the Year and Affiliate of the Year honors.

Most importantly, they’ve built a business that reflects their integrity, hard work, and community values. “Even people who haven’t worked with us recognize our name,” Laura says. “That’s a testament to the impact we’ve made.”

With a decade of success behind them, Laura and Tim are poised to continue making a difference—one home inspection, one radon system, and one act of service at a time.

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Ashley Tezak

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Rooted in Real Estate:

ASHLEY TEZAK HONORS HER FAMILY LEGACY WHILE CREATING HER OWN PATH

BY GIAVONNI DOWNING
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELINDA NICOLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Ashley's path to real estate has been a lifelong journey deeply rooted in her family's legacy. Growing up in a family of realtors, Ashley has been immersed in the business from a young age. Now in her third year as a licensed realtor, she has already achieved impressive milestones, selling over 40 homes with nearly \$20 million in sales volume in the last three years.

"I've been around the business since I was young," Ashley shares. Despite her early exposure to real estate, she initially considered a different career path. "In high school, I thought I would follow in the footsteps of my cousins and sister, who are nurse practitioners. I even did a vocational program for nursing, but I quickly realized it wasn't for me. That's when my parents suggested real estate, and I realized it was the perfect fit for me."

Ashley credits her parents, Mike and Pam Tezak, owners of Realty Executives in Valparaiso, Crown Point, and Schererville, for inspiring her career choice and instilling a strong work ethic in her. "They made sure nothing was ever handed to me. I had to work ten times harder in the office because they didn't want people to think I was given opportunities just because of who my parents were. Starting at 16, I worked the front desk, learning the ins and outs of the business. My mom, who

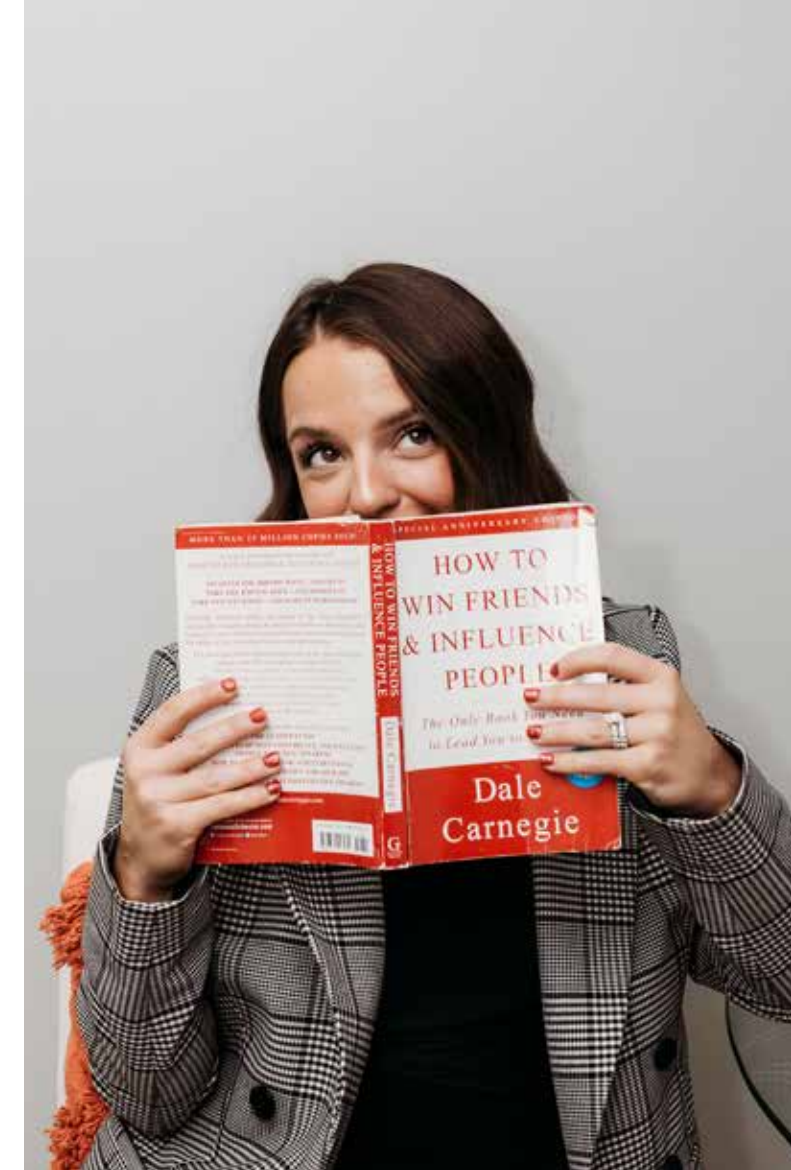
handles HR and operations, made sure I earned respect. It was never, 'This is the owner's daughter, so respect her.' I had to prove myself."

Ashley's early experience in real estate gave her a head start, but her success today is a result of her hard work and commitment. She has learned that being a successful realtor requires more than knowledge—it requires a deep commitment to clients.

"I didn't realize how much of a 24/7 job this would be," she says. "I used to wonder why my dad couldn't just put his phone away. Now I get it. Real estate isn't just about opening doors or signing contracts; it's about being available for your clients at all times and truly showing up for them." Her dedication to her clients sets her apart. "I know my contracts line by line and make sure my clients feel special. I over communicate so there are no surprises at the closing table. Many of my clients are first-time

homebuyers, so I take the time to explain everything in detail. I want them to know that I'm not just helping them buy or sell a house—I'm helping them with the next big chapter of their lives."

Real estate is not easy, and Ashley has learned to navigate the unpredictable nature of the industry. "No deal is ever the same. Everything could go smoothly until seven days before closing, and then everything could change. But I've learned to stay calm and find solutions. There's always a way to figure it out," she explains.



"I NEVER SHOW MY CLIENTS IF I'M STRESSED."

I tell them, 'We'll make it to the closing table, and I'll do everything I can to get us there.'"



“Every day is a gift, &
I WANT TO LIVE
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Her ability to remain composed under pressure has been a cornerstone of her success. “I never show my clients if I’m stressed. I tell them, ‘We’ll make it to the closing table, and I’ll do everything I can to get us there.’ It’s my job to ensure they feel confident and supported throughout the process.”

A lifelong resident of Valparaiso, she attended high school at Washington Township and graduated from Valparaiso University. She actively supports the Valpo Chamber of Commerce, Make-A-Wish Foundation, and the local police department, where her husband is an officer.

Fitness is another passion of Ashley’s, and she participates in fundraisers and events through Orange Theory Fitness and Sweat 219. “I love being active and giving back to the community whenever I can,” she says.

Despite her busy schedule, Ashley prioritizes balance in her life. “I just got married in September, and we had a dream wedding in Greece, followed by a Mediterranean honeymoon. Leading up to that, I set a goal to hit 70% of my sales target before we

left. I ended up reaching 100% and could fully enjoy the trip.”

For those entering the real estate industry, Ashley offers advice. “Choose a managing broker who values you as more than just a number and provides proper training. Also, don’t give up. Study the market, even if you don’t understand it initially. And make yourself known on social media—it’s a powerful tool to build your brand.”

As Ashley grows her career, she reflects on her definition of success. “Success, to me, is finding the balance between your personal life and your business. I want to wake up every day loving what I do and showing up as the best daughter, wife, and friend I can be. Every day is a gift, and I want to live it fully.”





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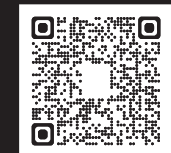
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DAVID TAYLOR

OF
CENTURY 21
CIRCLE

DRIVEN BY PASSION, POWERED BY PERSEVERANCE

BY GIAVONNI DOWNING • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELINDA NICOLE PHOTOGRAPHY



For David Taylor, real estate is more than a profession—it’s a purpose-driven journey fueled by passion, perseverance, and people. Over the past thirty years, David has built a career centered on helping others achieve their dreams while navigating the ups and downs of the market with resilience and enthusiasm.

“I never looked back,” David says of his transition from his family’s moving business to real estate. “It was truly a leap of faith. I loved the concept of being my own boss and building something from the ground up. That growth potential was what drew me in.”

David left a secure salary for a full commission, determined to succeed. “I saw the potential,” he recalls. “I knew I could leverage my sales experience and will to win.”

His mentor, Bruce Swift Jr., was pivotal in guiding him early in his career. “Bruce

showed me the opportunities and pushed me to get my real estate license,” David explains. “It was a risk, but I knew I could succeed.”

The risk paid off. Today, David and his team average an impressive 100 transactions annually, 80% in residential real estate and 20% in commercial.

His passion and commitment to real estate have not wavered, even in the face of personal challenges. In 2016, David faced throat cancer but continued working despite the grueling treatments. His resilience earned him the Founders Award in 2017, a recognition that remains close to his heart. “I kept going because I had to,” David shares. “The support from my family, colleagues, and clients was overwhelming. It reminded me that perseverance is everything.”

David’s career began in a vastly different real estate landscape. “When I started, there were



THE CONSTANT CHANGE IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE, BUT IT ALSO MAKES THIS BUSINESS EXCITING. YOU HAVE TO STAY AHEAD, LEARN, AND ADAPT.

no photos of listings—just descriptions. Clients would call saying, ‘We need a three-bedroom home,’ and we’d go from there,” he recalls.

Today, technology has revolutionized the industry with tools like virtual staging, drone videos, and online platforms. “The constant change is the biggest challenge, but it also makes this business exciting. You have to stay ahead, learn, and adapt,” David says.

While David works in both residential and commercial real estate, his heart lies in helping families find their dream homes.

“There’s more emotion in residential real estate,” David explains. “Helping a family

get into a home they didn’t think they could afford—seeing their excitement and knowing I had a part in that—is incredibly fulfilling. That’s the warm and fuzzy side of this business.”

He reflects on one couple who returned to the market after a long hiatus. “They started in 2022, gave up, and recently came back. Seeing the hope in their eyes that it might happen this time is a feeling like no other,” he shares.

David’s journey from independent realtor to team leader has been a natural progression. “It started with mentoring an administrative assistant, and before I knew it, people were coming to me, wanting to join my team,” he says.

He likens leadership to coaching, a skill he honed during his years as a soccer coach at Gavit High School. “Coaching and mentoring are about guiding people to find success. It’s rewarding to see team members grow and thrive.”

David’s life outside of work is equally rich and fulfilling. He enjoys snowboarding, hiking, cycling, and playing the drums—a hobby he’s nurtured since second grade.

“When I’m drumming, I’m fully present. It’s my escape,” David explains. He’s played in various bands over the years, including a blues band called Grateful Dadz. “Music is a huge part of my life and a great way to disconnect from the intensity of real estate.”

David’s love for the outdoors is matched by his devotion to family. Married to his high school sweetheart, Lori, for over 40 years, David cherishes time with their two children, Dylan and Morgan, and their grandson, Oscar.

“Spending time with my family, especially now that my wife is retired, has been incredible. We go to the gym together, travel, and just enjoy life,” he says.

David’s connection to Northwest Indiana runs deep. “There’s so much to love here,” he says. “The natural beauty, the vibrant culture, and the people make it a special place. It’s home, and I can’t imagine being anywhere else.”

His office reflects his passions, with photos of his family and Chicago Bears memorabilia.



Creating memories, one note at a time. From left to right: Jeff White, Nick Brown, Dave Taylor, Stephen Martin, Allen Taylor



**“TONY ROBBINS’
CONCEPT
OF CANI —
CONSTANT AND
NEVER-ENDING
IMPROVEMENT —
REALLY
RESONATES
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ABOUT ALWAYS
STRIVING TO
BE BETTER.”**

One treasured picture shows his wife Lori sitting next to Bears legend Dick Butkus, encapsulating their shared love for the team.

David also supports his community through organizations like the Lions Club, No Child Goes Hungry, Shriners Society and multiple Crown Point Community School Corporation Booster clubs; Bulldog football, Music Boosters and Inklings newspaper. “Giving back is important to me,” he says.

David’s advice for those entering the real estate industry is clear: “Find a mentor. Learn from someone who’s succeeding and follow their lead. And don’t rush—build your foundation first.”

He also emphasizes the importance of mindset. “Success in real estate starts with success in life. Develop a successful mindset, and everything else will follow.”

David credits books like Unlimited Power by Tony Robbins and Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill for shaping his perspective.

“Tony Robbins’ concept of CANI—constant and never-ending improvement—really resonates with me. It’s about always striving to be better,” he says.

Over the years, David has earned numerous accolades, including the prestigious Double Centurion Award and recognition as the number one Century 21 agent in Chicagoland. But for him, the true reward lies in the relationships he’s built and the impact he’s made.

“The most fulfilling part of my job is helping people find homes where they’ll build their lives. That ripple effect is powerful—it’s about more than just a transaction,” David says.

As he looks toward the future, David remains committed to his work community and family. “I love what I do,” he says. “Real estate is about helping people, and that’s a purpose I’m proud to fulfill.”

After 30 years, his passion remains as strong as ever, proving that real estate is not just a job—it’s a calling.

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