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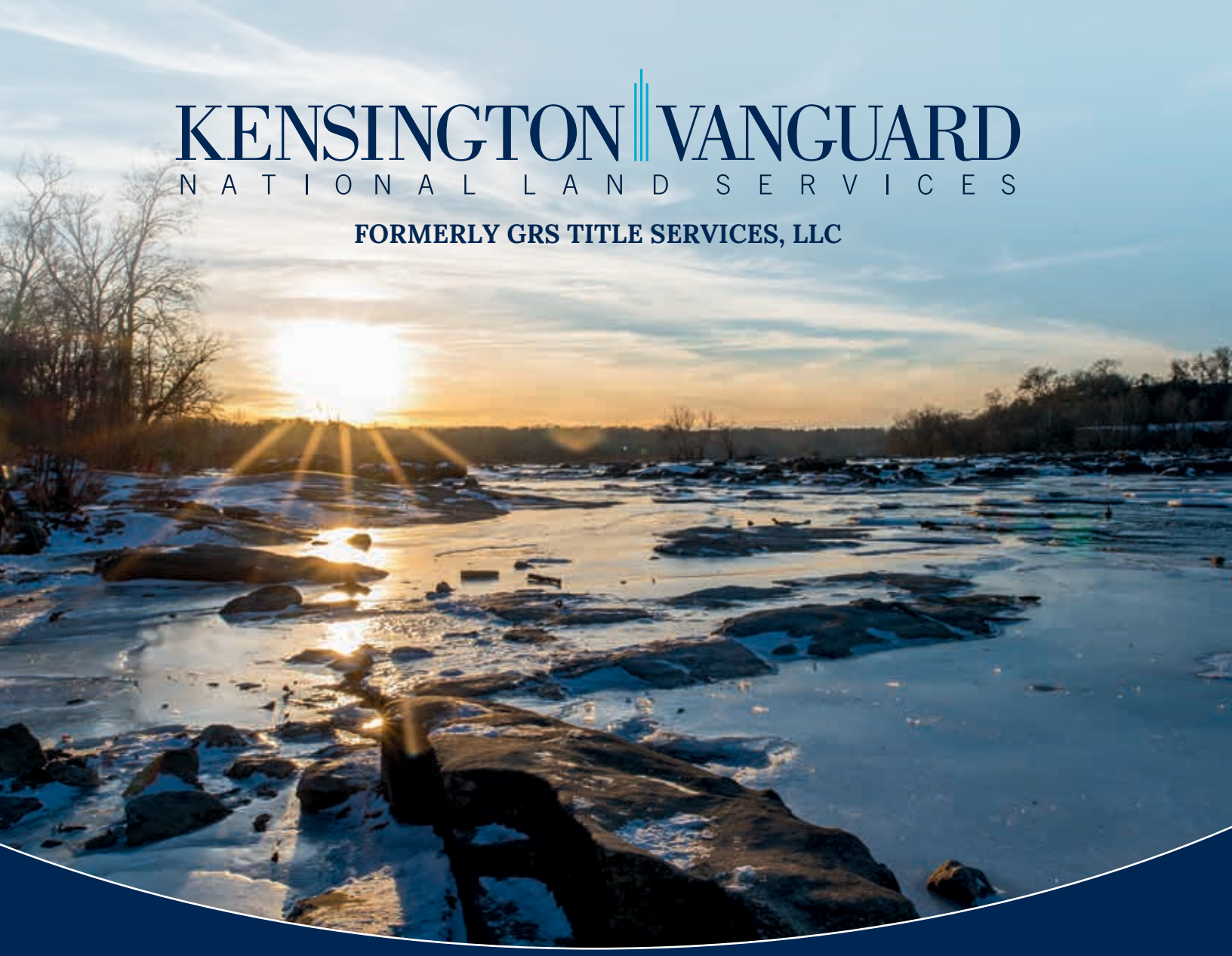


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COVER STORY



Daniel Hicks



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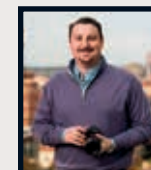
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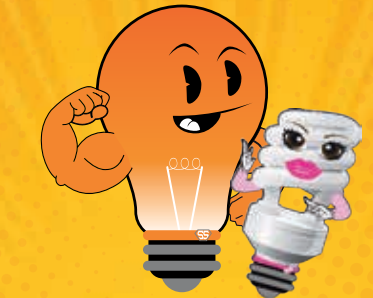
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Hello February, the Season of Connection!

As we move through the heart of winter, February reminds us of the importance of relationships and the warmth they bring to our lives. It's a time to nurture bonds, celebrate love in all its forms, and find strength in the connections that unite us.

This month is also a chance to spark creativity and prepare for the exciting journey ahead. Let's take this opportunity to celebrate each other and build on the successes of the new year.

Get ready for a slam dunk of a time on March 21st! Join us for our March Madness event and show off your team spirit—wear your favorite jersey! It'll be a fun-filled day of networking, friendly competition, and celebrating all things

real estate. Stay tuned for more details—you won't want to miss it!

As we journey through February, let's reflect on this thought: "Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much." Here's to a February filled with collaboration, joy, and meaningful moments.



Kristin Brindley
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FAQ



Since launching *Richmond Real Producers* three years ago, I've received many of the same questions. To save time, I'm sharing the answers here. Remember, this publication is your voice, and my door is always open to discuss anything about our community!

Q: Who receives this magazine?

A: The top 500 agents in the Greater Richmond area. We pull the MLS numbers each year (by volume) for agents licensed in our service area, which includes Hanover, New Kent, Henrico, Charles City, Chesterfield, Powhatan, Goochland, King William Counties. We cut off the list at number 500, and the next year's distribution is born. We did this again in January, based on the new top 500 agents in sales volume for 2024.

Q: What is the goal of this magazine?

A: Real Producers is about building a stronger, more connected real estate community. We believe that when we surround ourselves with successful, like-minded individuals, we can grow to new heights. This magazine is a platform designed to bring together the top 500 real estate agents and our trusted preferred partners, fostering an exclusive and collaborative network. Each month, we share inspiring stories, celebrate successes, and promote events that connect, inform, and inspire. Our mission is to build relationships and empower growth within the real estate industry.

Q: Does Real Producers have events?

A: Yes! We will have specific networking events throughout the year.

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

A: Being featured is simple and starts with a nomination. REALTORS®, affiliates, brokers, office leaders, and even self-nominations are welcome! If you know someone with an inspiring story, exceptional leadership, top-tier customer



service, or a remarkable commitment to giving back, we'd love to hear about them.

To nominate, send an email to wendy@kristinbrindley.com and share why you believe they should be featured. Your insights help us uncover stories we may not know about. Once a nomination is submitted, we'll reach out for an interview to ensure the feature is a great fit. If selected, our team will take it from there, coordinating an article write-up and scheduling a professional photo shoot.

Q: What does it cost a Realtor/team to be featured?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing, my friends, so nominate away! The only small fee you may incur would be for professional lifestyle photos for the article.

Q: Who are the Preferred Partners?

A: Anyone listed as a "preferred partner" in the front of the magazine is part of this community. They will have an ad in every magazine issue, attend our events, and be part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have personally referred every single preferred partner you see in this publication. Our partners hold a special piece to this puzzle since their partnership helps support our monthly publication. Without them, we wouldn't be able to feature our top agents or host our social events.

Q: How can I refer a Preferred Partner?

A: If you know and want to recommend a local business that works with top Realtors, let us know!

RICHMOND
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2025

BY THE NUMBERS

WHAT RICHMOND'S TOP 500 AGENTS SOLD

14,862



TOTAL TRANSACTIONS

\$7.5B



TOTAL SALES VOLUME



LISTING SIDE TRANSACTIONS

8,853



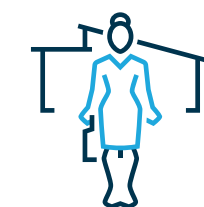
BUYING SIDE TRANSACTIONS

6,009



AVERAGE SALES VOLUME PER AGENT

\$15M



AVERAGE TRANSACTIONS PER AGENT

29.72

REKINDLING Your LOVE for REAL ESTATE

BY DREW DEMAREE



February is often called the “month of love,” making it the perfect time to reflect on the love we have for our real estate careers. Whether you’re just starting out or you’ve been active in the industry for decades, real estate isn’t for the faint of heart (see what I did there?). Staying passionate about what you do is essential for long-term success and happiness—not just in real estate but in any career.

If you’ve been feeling stuck, overwhelmed, or uninspired, don’t worry. You’re not alone, and you’re not out of options. Here are four actionable ways to rekindle your love for your career and keep the spark alive:

1. Gratitude: The Ultimate Game-Changer

Gratitude might sound simple, but in real estate, it takes intentionality. It’s easy to feel grateful for the wins—the referrals, repeat clients, and closed transactions. But gratitude isn’t selective. True gratitude shows up when life isn’t going as planned—when deals fall through, the market shifts, or clients ghost you.

Take a moment to embrace gratitude for the lessons hidden in setbacks. For instance, a deal falling apart could teach you how to better qualify clients or navigate tricky negotiations. Shifting to a gratitude-first mindset can transform how you approach challenges in your career. Ask yourself: What’s one tough situation I faced recently, and what did I learn from it?

Gratitude isn’t just a mindset; it’s a practice. Consider starting a daily gratitude journal and write down three things you’re thankful for—both in your personal life and in your career. Over time, this simple habit can help you focus on the positives and maintain perspective.

2. Breathe New Life into Your Daily Grind

The reality of a real estate professional’s day-to-day life doesn’t always match the glamour portrayed on TV. Instead of gliding through luxury listings and high-stakes negotiations, most of your time revolves around systems, paperwork, and routines. While routines are crucial for success, they can also grow stale over time.

To refresh your routine, start with a time audit. Track everything you do in a 24-hour period to identify habits that no longer serve you. Then ask yourself: *What tasks could I streamline? What can I delegate or eliminate?*

Once you’ve identified areas for improvement, experiment with small changes. For example, if you’re stuck in a productivity rut, try time-blocking or scheduling a creative break during the day. Even rearranging your workspace or adding a motivational playlist to your morning can infuse new energy into your routine.

3. Find Your Zone of Genius

One of the greatest gifts of a real estate career is the freedom of choice. You have the ability to shape your business around your unique strengths. But too often, we focus on areas where we struggle instead of leaning into what makes us shine.

Take time to reflect: *What aspects of real estate light you up?* Is it helping first-time buyers, marketing luxury properties, or running client appreciation events? Pinpoint what combines your skills, talents, and the needs of your clients.

Once you’ve identified your strengths, go all in. Shift your energy away from shortcomings and toward activities that showcase your expertise. Not only will this make your work more enjoyable, but it will also help you stand out in the market and attract clients who align with your values.

4. Feed Your Mind, Fuel Your Passion

The real estate industry is filled with wisdom and lessons waiting to be discovered. Continuing education is a powerful way to stay inspired and ahead of the curve. Whether it’s diving into a new book, tuning into a podcast, or attending training sessions, learning sparks fresh ideas and provides new strategies to implement in your business.

Ask yourself: *What books do I need to read this year?* Create a reading list tailored to your professional and personal development. Some top recommendations for real estate professionals include *The Millionaire Real Estate Agent* by Gary Keller and *Atomic Habits* by James Clear.

In addition to self-study, carve out specific time blocks each week for learning and skill-building. This could be as simple as watching a 30-minute webinar or meeting with a mentor. Expanding your knowledge not only sharpens your expertise but also reignites your passion for growth.

Reignite Your Love with Coaching

If you’re looking to elevate your career and stay inspired, consider working with a real estate coach. Coaching offers personalized strategies, accountability, and support to help you achieve your goals and rediscover your love for the business.

Whether you want to close more deals, build stronger client relationships, or find balance in your busy schedule, coaching can provide the tools you need to succeed.

Contact me today to learn more about how coaching can transform your real estate career. Let’s keep the spark alive together!



Drew DeMaree was born and raised in the Midwest and graduated from Johnson & Wales University. He has been a licensed REALTOR® since 2005 and a business coach since 2015. Drew has been recognized as a Top 20 MAPS coach for Keller Williams Realty offices throughout the country. He has also operated a brokerage that rose to number 1 in closed sales volume in the area for three consecutive years, and founded The Freedom Companies, an independent coaching, training and events business, in 2020.

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TINA CARNEAL & MADDIE PODISH

ACHOSA HOME WARRANTY

Innovating Home Protection Through Compassionate Service

BY AMELIA ROSEWOOD • PHOTO BY PHILIP ANDREWS & SUSAN FOWLER, FOWLER STUDIOS

In an industry often characterized by traditional practices, Tina Carneal and her daughter, Maddie Podish, shine as innovators at Achosa Home Warranty. As a Diamond Elite Senior Sales Executive and an Emerald Senior Sales Executive, their complementary personalities—Tina’s organized, driven, and adventurous nature alongside Maddie’s creative, confident, and empathetic spirit—have established

them as formidable leaders in the home warranty sector. Together, they are committed to transforming how clients view and utilize home warranties.

Tina Carneal: A Legacy of Leadership
Tina, hailing from Newport News, VA, brings over 12 years of experience to Achosa Home Warranty. Her professional journey began as an event planner and director of professional

development at a local REALTORS® association, where she developed a unique skill set in relationship building and customer service. This foundation paved the way for her successful tenure at Achosa, where she has become an indispensable leader.

Known for her organized and adventurous approach, Tina excels at navigating the complexities of the home warranty industry. Her strategic mindset

“I’ve never seen myself as a salesperson. **I THRIVE ON CONNECTING WITH OTHERS** and **TRULY UNDERSTANDING POTENTIAL CONCERNS** in their new homes.”

and dedication to client satisfaction have molded her into one of the most well-known home warranty reps in the state of Virginia. After working at a traditional home warranty company for 8 ½ years, it was a breath of fresh air to join Achosa, where they focus on what truly matters—the clients.

Maddie Podish: From Heartbreak to Hope

A native of Williamsburg, VA, Maddie’s personal and professional life took an unexpected turn after she and her husband’s son, Kane Wolfe, unexpectedly passed away at just six weeks old. Initially spending five years in the medical field while working toward her RN license, she realized after losing her son the hospital wasn’t where her heart was. “Though my ‘family’ at the hospital was beyond supportive, I realized my heart couldn’t be there for my patients as I needed to be,” she reflects.

In the wake of her loss, Maddie felt embraced by the real estate community, which offered unwavering support during what still remains the hardest change of her life. Inspired by Tina’s success at Achosa, Maddie seized an opportunity to join the team as a second representative for Virginia. She took a nontraditional approach to applying for the position, crafting a PowerPoint presentation that showcased her vision and qualifications—setting the stage for her new career path.

Maddie has been with Achosa for almost two years, focusing on building and nurturing relationships with top

producers while providing exceptional customer service. “I’ve never seen myself as a salesperson,” she shares. “I thrive on connecting with others and truly understanding potential concerns in their new homes.”

A Unique Approach to Home Warranties

At Achosa, both Tina and Maddie prioritize educating clients about the critical importance of home warranties, regardless of market fluctuations. Their commitment to client satisfaction is evident in their tagline, “The Power to Choose.” This approach allows clients to select any contractor they prefer, removing network limitations and enhancing the service experience. This innovative model enhances the service experience and supports the local economy by paying contractors their retail rates over the phone with a credit card before leaving the client’s home.

“We protect Realtors’ personal brands while providing post-sale risk management,” Maddie explains. As the fastest-growing home warranty company, clients love being able to choose their contractors because they can work with someone they know, like, and trust, ultimately getting their homes back up and running as quickly as possible.

The Personal Side of Success

Beyond their professional achievements, Tina and her daughter, Maddie, share a vibrant family life. Tina proudly has two grown children—Maddie and her son, Triston, who is currently serving in the United States Air Force in North Dakota.



“**I WANT TO HELP THEM** grow their business and join me as a **Diamond Elite Producer.**”

Maddie is happily married to her high school sweetheart, Thomas. Their love story is charming and nostalgic, beginning with a simple walk down Fenton Mill in Williamsburg, where they enjoyed Slurpees together as juniors. This memorable street also holds a special place in their hearts as the location where they found Maddie's

childhood chocolate lab. They often joke that if you want a dog or a husband, you only have to walk down Fenton Mill!

Maddie is also an avid reader and a budding writer, working on her first two books. She loves immersing herself in different worlds through her writing and hopes to share stories that can positively impact others. When not



spending time with her husband, Maddie frequently joins Tina on spontaneous trips, including looking at visiting Cancun next spring.

Tina enjoys the flexibility of traveling to new and visited places, including spending time in Cancun for the Crash My Playa concert every January. When not traveling, you can find her cruising around her neighborhood on her golf cart or rendezvous for lunch with friends.

Looking Ahead

Both women are forward-thinking and have their sights set on personal and professional growth. Tina aspires to mentor new representatives and help them succeed in their careers. “I want to help them grow their business and join me as a Diamond Elite Producer,” she says with enthusiasm.

Their shared philosophy on life and business centers around compassion and understanding. “You won't get along with everyone, but you can be nice to everyone,” Maddie emphasizes. They recognize that everyone faces their own battles, and leading with grace can significantly impact every interaction.

CONTACT US!



For more information about Achosha Home Warranty, contact Tina at 757-291-4398 or Maddie at 757-634-8998. You can also email them at tina-maddie@achosahw.com or visit their website at www.achosahw.com. Discover how Achosha can empower you with the peace of mind you deserve.

SAM MARKS

Crafting Meaningful Experiences

BY GEORGE PAUL THOMAS
PHOTO BY PHILIP ANDREWS



Sam Marks approaches real estate with a straightforward goal: always being there for his clients. As a young rising star, Sam uses his flexibility to give each client the attention they deserve. Without the heavy personal commitments that can limit others, he can offer quick responses and dedicated support throughout the process. This makes working with Sam feel less rushed and more personal, giving his clients confidence that they have his full focus.

Venturing Forth

Born in Scottsdale, Arizona, Sam moved to Virginia with his family at the age of three, driven by his parent's desire to be closer to family in New Jersey and the attractive in-state college options Virginia had to offer. Ironically, the educational aspirations that initially brought them east took an unexpected turn for Sam. "Their son dropped out of community college and became a real estate agent," he says with a smile, reflecting on his journey.

A pivotal moment came when Sam, just thirteen years old, helped his parents search for a new home during their downsizing process, unknowingly sparking his future career during the selling and buying transactions. Sam initially developed connections with agents Brad Ruckart and Tommy Waterworth. "I told Tommy when I was thirteen that I wanted to come work for him one day," he recalls. And Tommy, impressed with the young man that he saw, promised Sam an internship when he got older.

Before stepping into real estate, Sam's work experience was as straightforward as it gets—delivering pizzas and dishwashing for Belmont Pizzeria. But by his junior year in high school, Tommy's promise and Sam's goal came true as he began working for Ruckart Real Estate, where he handled tasks like running signs, shuttling lock boxes, and delivering commission checks. "The only job I had before was being a pizza

delivery driver," Sam recalls. This early exposure to the real estate business began shaping his future and planted the seeds for a career path Sam didn't yet realize would become his passion.

While balancing his courier role with college classes at John Tyler Community College (now Brightpoint), Sam initially planned to pursue a degree in Political Science. However, with his growing interest in real estate and with having Tommy and Brad as his mentors, Sam transitioned into an inside sales role and sharpened his skills with cold calling, door-knocking, and lead generation strategies—experiences that would serve as the foundation for his real estate career.

Being locked down during the pandemic led Sam to study for and obtain his real estate license, putting his formal education on hold. "It felt natural that I would end up doing this one day," he says, having spent much of his teenage years immersed in the real estate world.

Today, real estate offers Sam the flexibility and financial insight he values, but the victories he secures for his clients bring him the most

satisfaction. "The most fulfilling part for me is getting a big win for a client, whether negotiating a tough deal or finding them the perfect house," he says.

For Sam Marks, curiosity has evolved into a full-fledged career driven by passion and purpose. Since becoming licensed in 2020, Sam has quickly established himself in Richmond's real estate market. As part of the Ruckart Real Estate team under Keller Williams Richmond West, Sam works with a close-knit group of very skilled professionals. "We focus on work-life balance, but we also put up big numbers," Sam says.

With around sixty transactions and over \$20 million in career sales, Sam closed over \$7 million in volume across fifteen deals last year and expects to exceed that in sales this year. Recognized for his achievements, Sam has earned the Keller Williams Capper Award every year from 2021 to 2024.

Life Beyond Real Estate

Although Sam doesn't yet have a spouse or children, he's deeply connected to his family. "I'm lucky to have my mom, dad, and stepmom close by," he shares,



describing the unique ways he connects with each of them. With his mother, Melanie, their time together often revolves around good food and laughter, whether enjoying a home-cooked meal or exploring a new restaurant. Time with his father, Steve, usually includes working on home improvement projects or watching Pittsburgh Steelers games, while with his stepmother, Louise, Sam enjoys activities tied to her British heritage. Traveling with his parents and delving into his family history are experiences Sam deeply values. He also cherishes visiting extended family, spread across the country in places like South Jersey, Manhattan, Chicago, Scottsdale, and even overseas in England.

Outside of family, Sam leads an active social life. You'll find him out with friends, playing soccer, golfing, or hunting for vintage band t-shirts and mid-century modern furniture when he's not working. "I love spending time with friends or traveling whenever possible," Sam says. While not widely known, he also has a creative side: "I'm a

halfway decent photographer and artist," he admits, enjoying drawing, shooting photos, and visiting art museums whenever the opportunity arises.

Sam and his team at Ruckart Real Estate are also dedicated to giving back to the community. They volunteer with the Boys and Girls Club and are actively involved with charities like VCU's Local Legends initiative.

Success and Future Aspirations

For Sam Marks, the mantra that drives his work is simple yet powerful: "Impactful service, exceptional results—every time, is something we say as a team quite frequently." This commitment to ensuring clients feel cared for throughout their real estate journey reflects his broader definition of success. "Success can be measured in many ways, but overcoming the odds and achieving what once didn't feel possible resonates with me," Sam explains. Ultimately, he strives to avoid regrets by giving 110% in all his endeavors.

As he looks to the future, Sam is optimistic about his personal and professional growth. "It's hard to say exactly what the future looks like for me," he admits, but he's focused on pushing his boundaries. In the short term, he aims to increase his transaction volume while significantly impacting the clients he serves. In the long term, Sam envisions a life filled with diverse experiences, including travel and deeper connections, all while advancing his career.

A crucial aspect of his business philosophy is the emphasis on client relationships. "I want to ensure I'm always available to my clients, going above and beyond to give them a great experience," he says.

Sam has one key advice for aspiring top producers: "Serve people at a high level, and they'll serve you in the future. You can spend thousands on internet leads, but you'll have an unsustainable business model if you don't pour into your sphere."



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DANIEL HICKS

The Creative Powerhouse

BY GEORGE PAUL THOMAS
PHOTOS BY PHILIP ANDREWS



In the world of real estate, it's easy to spot a leader who's not just about numbers but about creating unforgettable client experiences—and Daniel Hicks is that standout. As a REALTOR® with Real Broker, Daniel brings more than just skill to the table; he's an energetic mix of creativity, persistence, and heart. His career is a masterclass in combining talent with grit, fueled by his unyielding drive to help others achieve their dreams.

A Foundation in Creativity and Connection

Daniel's story begins in Virginia Beach, where he first learned the value of hard work and creative thinking. After earning his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Education from Virginia Commonwealth University, he began teaching art, a role that honed his ability to communicate and solve problems.

"I used to joke that my degree was in finger painting," Daniel laughs. "Teaching art was amazing, but when I won Teacher of the Year, I knew I'd reached the end of that chapter. It felt like it was time to turn the page and do something different."

What came next was a leap of faith, but for Daniel, change has always been an opportunity. Armed with the skills he'd developed in the classroom—



“REAL ESTATE IS CREATIVE WORK—JUST LIKE ART,
YOU HAVE TO MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE.”



empathy, creativity, and problem-solving—he dove headfirst into real estate.

Since becoming licensed in 2006, Daniel has built a thriving career by approaching real estate with a blend of imagination and determination. From growing up in a family construction business to flipping his first house, his love for housing and architecture was always in his blood. But it wasn't just the bricks and mortar that drew him in—it was the chance to bring dreams to life.

“I've always loved houses,” Daniel explains. “I entertained being an architect when I was young, but the long hours sitting at a desk were not for me. I enjoy being out in the field and engaging with people. When I sold my first flipped house, it was a stressful experience. The timing was a huge factor. My Realtor was not focused on the timing impact and showed little empathy for the stress I was under to sell. From that experience, I realized I could help

people avoid the frustration of working with a bad realtor. I was hooked.”

Daniel's knack for storytelling plays a huge role in his success. Whether creating a listing video from the perspective of a neighborhood dog or using creative problem-solving to help buyers on tight budgets, he treats every transaction like a unique project. “It's all about finding solutions,” he says. “Real estate is creative work—just like art, you have to meet people where they are.”

A Business Built on Community

As a team leader at Real Broker, Daniel has cultivated a business model that's refreshingly different from the status quo. His approach focuses on collaboration, trust, and putting people first. His team structure reflects his belief that every client deserves exceptional care.

“My team works with my database rather than managing their clients separately,” he explains. “Christian

handles the in-person details for buyers, and Cass keeps everything running smoothly behind the scenes. This way, I can focus on what matters most—helping people solve problems and reach their goals.”

But Daniel's dedication doesn't stop at closing a sale. His quarterly client check-ins, curated vendor referrals, and personalized support have turned his clients into lifelong connections. “It's not just about asking, ‘Are you ready to sell your house?’” Daniel says. “It's more like, ‘How's life? How can I help?’”

His commitment to community shines in how he uses his vast network to assist clients, even outside of real estate. From connecting them with reliable plumbers to helping one client land a job, Daniel's ethos is straightforward: take care of your people, and they'll take care of you.

When he's not closing deals, Daniel is growing his knowledge base—and sharing it with the world. His podcast, *The Not So Secret Agent Podcast*, has





“THERE’S NOTHING LIKE HANDING THE KEYS TO A FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER WHO NEVER THOUGHT THEY’D OWN A HOME. THAT’S WHAT IT’S ALL ABOUT.”

become a platform for industry leaders to share their insights, giving him and his listeners a front-row seat to the best strategies in the business.

“The podcast started as a way to learn from top agents around the country,” Daniel shares. “It’s been an amazing way to grow professionally and personally.”

That commitment to growth is evident in his numbers. In 2023, Daniel and his team closed more than \$15 million in sales volume. And while awards like the ICON designation and the potential Real Elite Agent title are on the horizon, they’re not what drives him.

“What gets me up in the morning is helping people,” he says. “There’s nothing like handing the keys to a first-time homebuyer who never thought they’d own a home. That’s what it’s all about.”

Family, Food, and Life Beyond Real Estate

When you meet Daniel, it doesn’t take long to realize his energy and humor aren’t just reserved for the office. Married to his best friend Megan since

2005, Daniel credits their partnership for much of his success.

“Megan’s the tough one,” he says with a grin. “She’s five feet tall, but her stare could stop a tank. We balance each other out perfectly—she loves horror movies, and I’m all about romantic comedies. Let’s just say movie nights require some serious negotiations.”

The couple shares a passion for food and travel, which they’ve channeled into a personal restaurant directory for their clients. Whether boating on the Chickahominy River or cooking at home with their dog, Zoe, the Hicks family makes time to savor the simple joys in life.

Designing the Future

Looking ahead, Daniel is focused on scaling his business while staying true to his values. He dreams of creating unique, thoughtfully designed homes, blending his artistic eye with functionality.

“I want to build homes that aren’t just profitable but also cool and creative,” he says. “It’s about finding ways to make every project meaningful.”

And for those just starting out in real estate, Daniel’s advice is as straightforward as his approach: “Start with your relationships—the people who already know, like, and trust you. Then, stay persistent. If everything’s a priority, nothing is. Focus, and the rest will follow.”

Daniel isn’t your average Realtor. He’s a creative visionary, a community builder, and a problem-solver with a heart for helping others. Whether he’s handing over the keys to a new homeowner, hosting a podcast, or connecting clients with trusted vendors, Daniel brings his whole self to everything he does.



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Disclaimer: Information based on MLS closed data as of Jan 6, 2025, for residential sales from January 1, 2025, to January 31, 2025 in Greater Richmond, Virginia, by agents licensed in our service area, which includes Hanover, New Kent, Henrico, Charles City, Chesterfield, Powhatan, Goochland, King William Counties. Numbers not reported to the MLS by the date the information is retrieved are not included. MLS is not responsible for submitting this data. Some teams may report each agent individually.



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