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# Welcome to the Party: Celebrating Success Together in 2025

Hello, Real Producers!

This February publication will start our new distribution—the Sarasota & Manatee Real Producers Class of 2025. Our Top 300 will receive the magazine FREE every month at their brokerage address. Please let me know if you prefer to receive your issue at home. We will also invite these top guns to our private events.

Our trusted business partners have joined us in celebrating your success. Recommended by top agents and vetted before joining our team, they will have ads in the publication, allowing everything we do for agents to remain free. Agents cannot pay to be in the publication. All stories come from peers nominating peers. You can nominate by emailing, texting, or calling us directly.

We look forward to meeting the new Top 300, networking with you, and telling your story. We look forward to our REALTOR® and agent appreciation events in 2025, so look for notice of our gatherings in your inbox and follow us on social media for a heads up that we are sending you invites.

Together, we will CONNECT, ELEVATE, and INSPIRE to strengthen relationships and create new ones among the top real estate professionals in the market.

Welcome to the party, 2025 Sarasota & Manatee Real Producers!

Sincerely,



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# Matt & Laura Rode



## Sarasota Gulf Coast Homes Team Keller Williams On The Water Sarasota

STORY BY MADDIE PODISH • PHOTOS BY CORY & MINDY POFF, POFF MEDIA GROUP (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

Laura and Matt Rode, co-founders of The Sarasota Gulf Coast Homes Team with Keller Williams On The Water Sarasota, didn't just dream of a better life—they took action to create it. As first-generation millionaires, the couple's journey from humble beginnings in neighboring Connecticut towns to real estate moguls is an inspiring testament to the power of vision and perseverance.

"We knew we wanted so much more for our lives," Laura shares, reflecting on their early days. After reconnecting on social media, the couple embarked on a whirlwind journey that began with Laura moving to Florida to be with Matt. What

followed was a partnership forged in love, risk-taking, and a shared commitment to building a better future.

Initially, life for Matt and Laura was simple but fulfilling. Matt thrived as a regional manager in water

treatment sales, while Laura worked at Child Protective Services (CPS). However, Laura's career took an abrupt turn when she and Matt determined that Laura would leave her perilous occupation after becoming pregnant with their son, Zander.

After three years as a stay-at-home mom, Laura decided to re-enter the workforce, this time setting her sights on real estate. Several years earlier, Matt had transitioned into car sales, where he excelled as the top salesman at his Cadillac dealership. As Laura's real estate business began to flourish, the couple faced a pivotal decision: keep Matt in a stable job or risk diving into real estate together. The choice was clear. They wanted more for their family, and real estate offered limitless potential.

The gamble paid off in a big way. Within their first few years, Laura and Matt grew their real estate team from two to 24 agents, quickly rising as the top team in Keller Williams' North Florida region in 2021. They are now one of the nation's top 1.5% real estate teams.

Their success, they believe, stems from treating real estate like a business. "We business plan, attend real estate conventions, time-block, and are self-accountable," Laura explains. "Real estate has really shaped our lives. It has taught us how to invest our money and has provided us with a life neither of us knew was possible."

Their strategic approach included hiring paid staff for marketing and transactional needs, which allowed them to scale quickly. But success didn't come without challenges.

Working as both business partners and spouses brought its own set of trials. "It's not easy working with



“

Real estate has really shaped our lives. It has taught us how to invest our money and has provided us with a life neither of us knew was possible.”

your spouse every single day,” Laura admits. “We literally see each other all day long.” The couple divided their responsibilities to make it work: Laura oversees operations, while Matt leads production and sales. This division was key to maintaining harmony both at work and at home. “That was a learning curve we had in the beginning,” Matt adds. “But having different roles was necessary for us to successfully lead our team.”

As leaders, the Rode’s primary focus is on their team’s success. “We want to help them grow,” Laura emphasizes. “It’s not about Matt and me; it’s about them.” They begin by conducting motivational interviews to help agents uncover their “why” and then outline actionable steps to help them achieve

their goals. By fostering a supportive environment, Laura and Matt aim to replicate their success for their agents, enabling them to thrive in a ceiling-less career that supports their families and provides excellent client service.

Beyond their business achievements, the couple prioritizes family and adventure. Whether traveling the country to hike, skiing the Colorado mountains, or playing pickleball and golf at their country club, Matt and

Laura balance work and play with intention.

Their entrepreneurial spirit extends beyond real estate sales, as they’ve invested in Airbnbs nationwide and even purchased a camping resort. “Planning for the future is always at the forefront of everything we do,” Matt explains. In addition, the couple has created ancillary businesses, including a transaction management company and a partnership with a title company.

Laura is candid when speaking about the secret to success: There isn’t one,” she declares. “It was hard. We made a lot of sacrifices and put our heads to the pavement to get here. Knowing our ‘why’ was important because when the days were hard and long, going back to that kept us pushing through. Our son was diagnosed with autism at a young age, and everything we have built we have done to ensure his needs would always be met.”

The Rodes credit their journey to surrounding themselves with like-minded individuals, asking for help when needed, and being intentional in everything they do. Their story proves that with determination, a clear vision, and the willingness to take risks, success is not just a possibility—it’s inevitable.

Photo by Jola Bremer of Evoke Headshots





“

It was hard. We made a lot of sacrifices and put our heads to the pavement to get here. Knowing our 'why' was important because when the days were hard and long, going back to that kept us pushing through.”

Photo by Michael  
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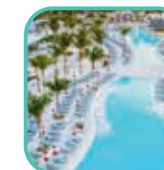
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# Brett Keyser

**RE/MAX Alliance Group**

STORY BY MADDIE PODISH

PHOTOS BY ALLIE SERRANO, ALLIE SERRANO PORTRAITS

Brett Keyser, a REALTOR® with RE/MAX Alliance Group, has built a thriving 17-year career in real estate through hard work, focus, and a relentless drive for excellence. Whether challenging himself to run 500 miles in a year or navigating the complexities of a fluctuating market, Brett exemplifies the discipline and adaptability required to succeed in an ever-evolving industry.

A Sarasota native, Brett’s career began in New York City, where he landed a position with the prestigious investment firm Lehman Brothers. “Working at such a well-respected company was an incredible opportunity,” Brett recalls. However, he faced an uncertain future when the firm filed for bankruptcy during the 2008 financial crisis.

Rather than succumbing to the economic turmoil, he used the setback to reevaluate his goals and aspirations. Determined to forge a new path, he pursued an MBA at the University of Florida and obtained his real estate license. This shift set the stage for his successful real estate career and allowed him to leverage his financial expertise in a new industry.

During the housing market crash, Brett began his real estate journey by partnering with a friend to help banks efficiently manage and sell foreclosed properties. This experience provided valuable insight into navigating challenging market conditions and solidified his interest in real estate. As the market stabilized, Brett transitioned to working in the retail side of real estate, discovering a passion for helping people achieve their real estate goals.

Throughout his career, Brett has experienced two dramatically different real estate climates: the slow recovery following the Great Recession and the explosive growth during the COVID-19 pandemic. “The market is always changing, and adapting is crucial,” he explains. Despite the influx of new agents during the pandemic, Brett remained focused on his business strategy, emphasizing the importance of consistency and preparation. “Real estate is like a sport,” he says. “It’s not just about talent; it’s about putting in the work, day in and day out.”

Brett offers invaluable advice for those entering the field: join a team and seek mentorship. He credits much of his success to learning from experienced







professionals early in his career and emphasizes the importance of coaching. “As REALTORS®, we’re our own bosses, but having someone to guide and hold us accountable makes all the difference,” he remarks. This belief has driven Brett to mentor newer agents, sharing his knowledge to help them navigate the industry’s challenges.

Brett’s commitment to excellence extends beyond his professional life. He resides in The Meadows community, a vibrant Sarasota neighborhood that offers ample opportunities for outdoor activities. Whether playing mixed doubles tennis with his wife of nine years, Kristen; running the trails near his home; or golfing on one of the three courses in The Meadows, Brett prioritizes staying active and

**“REAL ESTATE IS LIKE  
A SPORT. IT’S NOT  
JUST ABOUT TALENT;  
IT’S ABOUT PUTTING  
IN THE WORK, DAY  
IN AND DAY OUT.”**

maintaining a healthy work-life balance. His family, including sons Cameron, 6, and Ace, 8 weeks, is central to his life. “Family is everything,” Brett asserts, noting that his wife and children inspire him to strive for success every day.

Giving back to the community is another cornerstone of Brett’s life. He strongly supports charitable organizations,

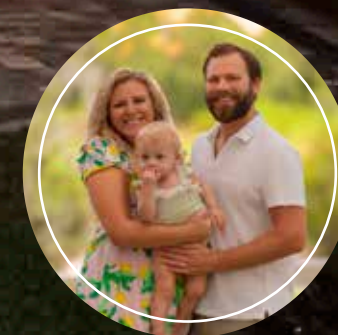
including Young Life, Compassion International, and the Children’s Miracle Network Foundation. Through Compassion International, Brett has sponsored a child in the Dominican Republic for nearly a decade, a commitment that reflects his belief in creating opportunities for those in need.

Looking back on his journey, Brett remains humble and introspective. “I don’t see myself as a seasoned veteran, but I’ve learned a lot along the way,” he notes. His ability to adapt, grow, and remain steadfast in the face of challenges has shaped his career and inspired others. “Real estate will always have its ups and downs,” Brett reflects. “But with focus, consistency, and the right mindset, you can achieve anything you set your mind to.”



# Poff

## MEDIA GROUP



**Cory & Mindy Poff**

STORY BY JACKI DONALDSON  
PHOTOS BY CORY & MINDY POFF, POFF MEDIA GROUP





**M**indy and Cory Poff have established a unique niche in the world of photography that transcends the ordinary. As a husband-and-wife team, they have combined their diverse experiences to create Poff Media Group, a business dedicated to capturing breathtaking images while narrating the captivating stories of homes and their inhabitants. “We photograph both faces and spaces,” they proudly state.

Cory, originally from Montgomery, AL, has a robust background in photography, having spent 14 years honing his craft. After earning his MBA, he opened his own business, Poff Photography, specializing in portraits and weddings, before discovering the appealing realm of real estate photography

while still living in Alabama. His journey took a turn when he relocated to Illinois, where he met Mindy, a Dixon native. Mindy spent nearly a decade working at the state and federal level advocating for government transparency and crafting public policy for some of the most pressing issues at the time.

When they married in June 2020, Mindy decided to embrace a new path, moving from the public policy field into real estate photography. Cory trained Mindy in the intricacies of their business, and what began as a leap into unknown territory turned into a newfound passion for her. “I married into it, but I’ve discovered that I love being a business owner, and I love the craft of showcasing properties,” Mindy shares. Together, they

combine their strengths—Cory’s artistic eye and technical prowess with Mindy’s strategic thinking and people skills—to create a powerful team that clients love.

What sets the Poffs apart is their unique approach to photography. While a majority of real estate photographers rely on HDR (High Dynamic Range) imaging, the Poffs use a technique known as “flambient.” This method involves bringing their own light to each shoot, producing bright, airy images that stand out in a crowded market. “HDR is not bad but can often yield dark and overprocessed results,” Cory explains. Mindy adds, “HDR is very quick. You push a button, and the camera does all the work in about 15 seconds. Flambient takes longer, typically three to four minutes per photo to set



up. However, Cory, developed a proprietary method to drastically speed up the process on-site. The time is comparable to HDR, but the outcome is unparalleled.”

Their dedication is evident in their swift turnaround times; they deliver photos the next day and videos within one to two days. They also offer a full suite of services, including 360-degree tours, drone photography, and floor plans, ensuring every property shines. “For many people, their home is their biggest asset,” Mindy says. “My reward is helping homeowners work with their real estate agents to present their properties in the best light, leading to more showings and more offers.”

In December 2020, the Poffs moved to Florida, lured by the

warm climate and outdoor lifestyle. They wanted to escape the harsh winters and found a welcoming community in Sarasota. The area quickly became home, and they now service clients from Tampa to Punta Gorda, with most of their work concentrated from Parrish to Venice.

Alongside their professional endeavors, Mindy and Cory cherish their family life. They welcomed their daughter, Dianna Rose Poff, on June 2, 2023, and are proud parents who love spending time outdoors. Their husky, River, has gained a following of his own on social media (@mr.stealyourwolf), with more than 30,000 followers who adore his antics. Mindy even dabbles in social media management, leveraging her skills to help River gain popularity.

As they look ahead, the Poffs remain committed to building lasting relationships with their clients, many of whom return again and again. “Once someone uses us, they love the results and always call again,” Mindy notes. Their competitive pricing—averaging around \$300 for photo packages and \$500 for combined photo and video services—ensures that high-quality imagery is accessible to all.

Don’t settle for ordinary when you can have extraordinary. Contact Mindy and Cory today to discuss how their stunning services can highlight your property’s unique features and charm.



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# LIKE IT OR NOT

## You Are in Business, So You Are in Politics

BY TIM WEISHEYER, 2025 PRESIDENT OF FLORIDA REALTORS®

As the Florida REALTORS® Leadership Team engages with members across the state, we sometimes speak with members who are unaware of how much legislation is filed each year that could directly—and dramatically—impact their businesses, livelihoods, and ability to succeed as entrepreneurs.

Whether defeating sales taxes levied against your real estate commissions, fighting rent control measures, protecting licensing laws, addressing insurance fraud, tackling the negative impacts of assignment of benefits, or having real estate services deemed an essential service during the global pandemic so we could continue to do our important work as REALTORS®, our association has stood as a sentry for our well-being and success as real estate professionals.

As a top producer, you know better than anyone just how much is at stake and how hard you have worked to create your success and your version of the American dream. What you may not know is how much your state association, Florida REALTORS®, values your involvement in protecting your business, our profession, and the economic success of our great state.

As a business owner, you bring an incredibly important voice and perspective to our work in city hall, commission and school board chambers, and certainly in Tallahassee. Even more so, our unified voice—The Voice for Real Estate in Florida—is the strength that protects you, me, and the countless buyers and sellers we have the honor of serving.

It has been said people often do not get involved simply because they have not been asked or invited. So, this is my personal and sincere invitation for you to join us in this important work. I welcome you to join me, the Florida REALTORS® Leadership Team and REALTOR® members from across Florida as we gather in Tallahassee for Great American REALTOR® Days on March 4-6, 2025. This gathering of some of the smartest and most successful real estate professionals at our state capital is where we bring your voice to lawmakers and regulators on issues important to you and your business.

Florida has a 60-day legislative session that moves fast, but this session is already gearing up to be impactful. As bills are being drafted and filed, we already know we will address issues from insurance and condominium reforms to taxes on commercial leases, private property rights, and so much more.

I hope you will join us as we do the important work to protect our businesses, our economy, and our way of life in the Sunshine State. Scan the QR codes below to learn more about:

### 2025 Legislative Priorities



### Great American REALTOR® Days



#### TIM WEISHEYER

By the age of 24, Tim was a multi-million dollar producer and had become known for delivering excellence in every real estate transaction he was a part of. He quickly became a trusted resource for buyers and sellers throughout Central Florida and a sought-after thought leader and speaker on real estate matters across the United States.

Tim has many awards and appointments to attest to his success as a leader, businessman, and real estate professional. Additionally, Tim has been inducted into the National Association of REALTORS® Hall of Fame. He is the youngest member ever inducted from his association and part of an elite group of REALTORS® from across the United States to earn such an honor, placing him in the top 1% of all REALTORS® nationwide.



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# Nominate Your Favorite Top Producers

Our nomination system is the backbone of selecting features for this publication. Top real estate agents and the preferred partners who invest in this publication through advertising and sponsoring our events decide who we feature through their nominations. Additionally, we host multiple events throughout the year where top agents with outstanding production numbers gather and nominate one another.



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### The Nomination Process

From the pool of nominees, our team engages with each individual. We collect interesting facts about the agents and gather additional nominations for other top agents and businesses to consider for our vetted preferred partner list.

### Selection Criteria

Our selection team follows the “5 C” criteria to guide our nominations. An agent must meet the first three criteria, while the fourth and fifth are optional:

- **Collaboration:** High nomination counts often indicate respect among peers and an ability to work well with other agents and preferred partners.
- **Competition Production Numbers:** Given that our publication name is Real Producers, nominees must be top producers in the industry.
- **Character:** We prioritize featuring agents and businesses that folks recommend for their integrity. We will not highlight anyone whose peers don’t respect them.
- **Contribution:** We love to showcase inspiring stories about agents who give back to their local or global communities.
- **Compelling Story/Conquering a Life Challenge:** We appreciate success stories that resonate with our audience, especially those that involve overcoming adversity.

We actively engage with agents in our private Facebook group for top REALTORS® and partners. Membership is limited to agents, brokers, and preferred business partners; please send me a private message if you’d like an invitation.

### Geographic and Firm Diversity

We avoid featuring agents from the same brokerage or firm in the same issue, ensuring we cover different territories proportionately. With so many excellent nominations, making monthly selections can be challenging, so we encourage you to ensure we know who you are.

### A Free Opportunity

Real estate agents and brokers do not incur any costs for feature stories; our services are completely free to them. Unlike other programs that may operate on a pay-to-play model, our selection process is based solely on merit. We select feature articles six to 12 months in advance and choose some cover agents years ahead. We notify individuals one to two months before their feature.

### Your Feedback Matters

We welcome your feedback on our process and how we can enhance collaboration, elevate standards, and inspire one another within the industry. Please contact me directly with any suggestions or feedback via email, text, or private message.



**JONI GIORDANO-BOWLING**  
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# Real Producers FAQs

Real Producers magazine, started in Indianapolis in 2015, is now in more than 130 markets nationwide and continues to spread rapidly.

**Q: WHO RECEIVES REAL PRODUCERS MAGAZINES?**

A: The Top 500+ real estate agents in Sarasota and Manatee Counties.

**Q: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS MAGAZINE?**

A: We believe that we are better together. We grow to new heights when we surround ourselves with other successful, like-minded people, and the Real Producers platform brings together the most elite real estate professionals in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. We take the Top 500 real estate agents



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