

EMERALD COAST

JANUARY 2025

# REAL PRODUCERS<sup>®</sup>

## Jonathan Howard

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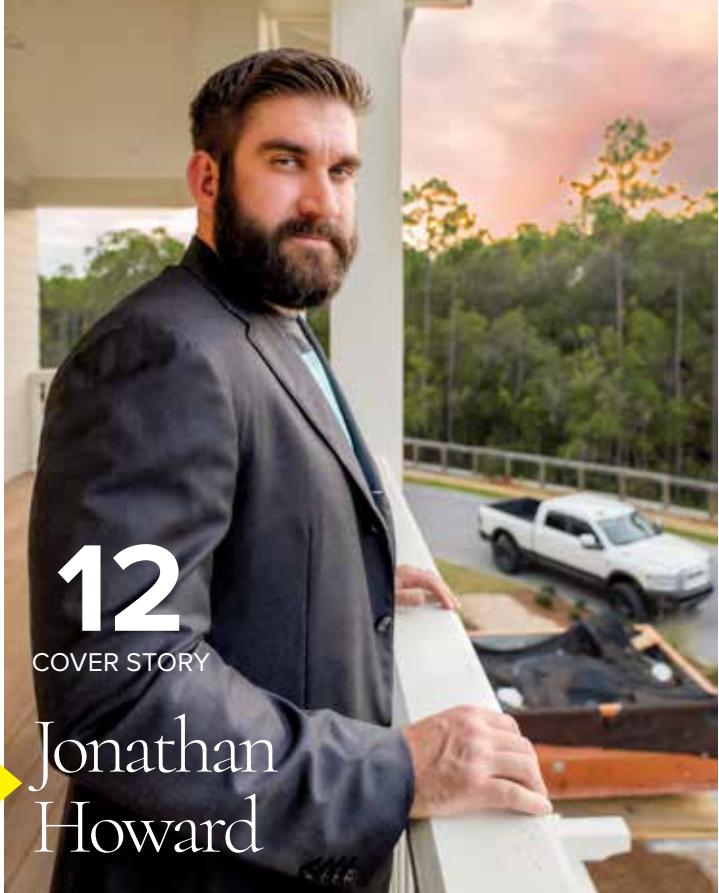
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Jonathan Howard

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# Resolutions or Results?

Every new year, I enthusiastically declare: "This is going to be my best year yet!" And you know what? I genuinely believe it every single time. Yet, I often fall short of my well-intentioned resolutions.

### Sound familiar?

As we stand on the cusp of a new year, I'm guessing many of us feel that same surge of optimism. We boldly claim our future successes and vow to leave the mistakes of the past behind. It's a shared desire—to do better, be better, and achieve more. But here's the real question: do we have a workable plan in place to make it happen?

For *Emerald Coast Real Producers*, stepping into 2025 marks the beginning of our second full year in business. Reflecting on 2024, I can confidently

say it's been a year of both growth and growing pains. I've learned plenty of lessons—some the hard way. I've learned exactly what *NOT* to do, but I've also gained clarity on what works and what's truly worth celebrating.

### And that brings me to you.

Yes, YOU are the heart and soul of what makes this magazine so special. As one of the top 5% of real estate agents along the Emerald Coast, you are part of an exceptional community of professionals in your industry. Through your support—whether by attending events, sharing your stories, or nominating your trusted business partners—you've helped elevate not only this publication but each other as well.

I'm excited to share more of your incredible journeys in 2025! If you'd



like to be featured in a story, let's connect. Or, if you know someone whose story deserves to be told, please nominate them. We're

also eager to continue to highlight the best business affiliates in the area, so your vendor recommendations are always welcome. Visit [www.emeraldcoastrealproducers.com](http://www.emeraldcoastrealproducers.com) for more information.

Here's to turning resolutions into results— together!



With immense gratitude,

*Cindy*

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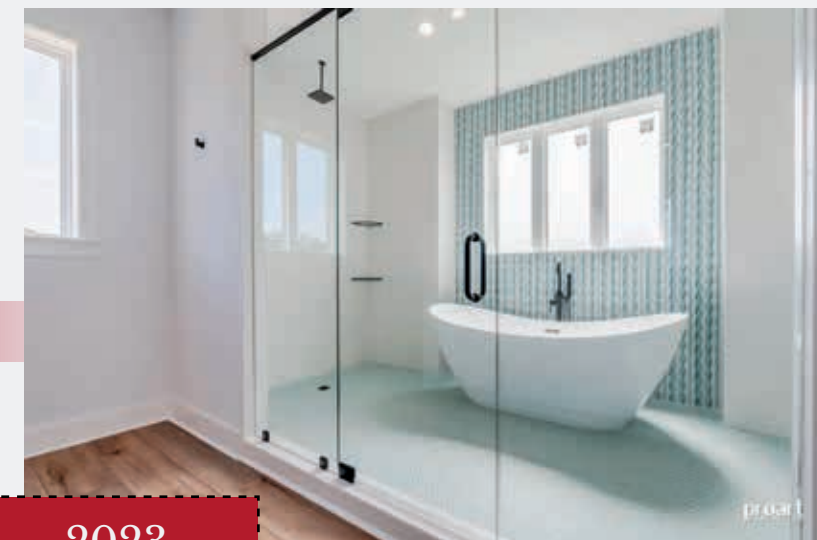
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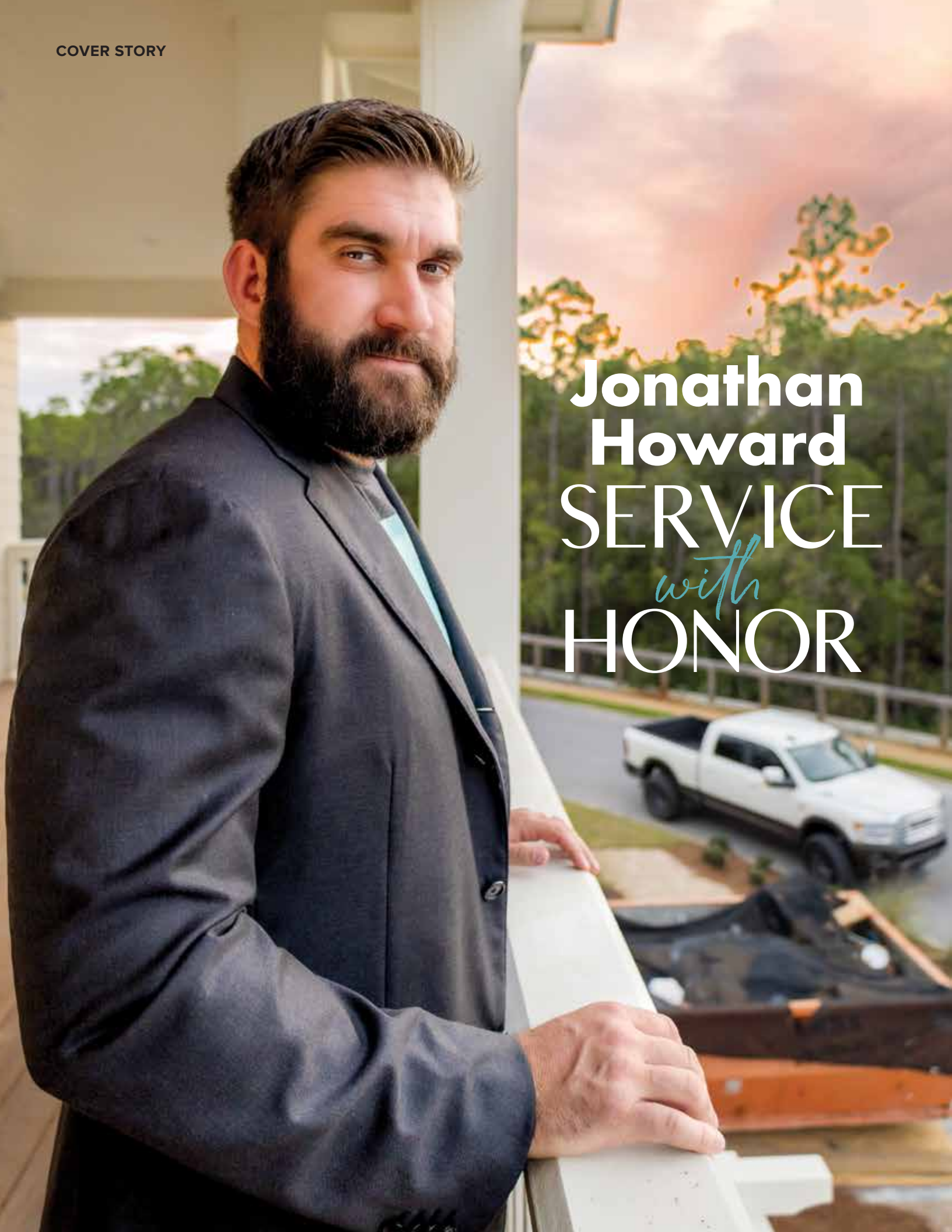
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# Jonathan Howard SERVICE *with* HONOR

BY DAVE DANIELSON  
PHOTOS BY FALTISEK & GLORIA

**J**on Howard's story is one of unlikely beginnings and remarkable evolution—a tale of how dedication, perseverance, and a unique skillset can transform not only one's career but also the lives of others. From his distinguished 12 years as a U.S. Air Force Combat Controller to launching a successful real estate career, Howard has found a way to blend his military experience with his passion for real estate and service to others.

#### An Accidental Start in Real Estate

Howard never intended to be a real estate agent. In fact, his journey into the field was a serendipitous one. It all started in 2015 when he bought a condo in Destin, Florida, and decided to remodel it. What began as a personal project quickly transformed into a business venture when Howard decided

to list the property on Airbnb in 2016. "We were still in the military, but the rental income was more than what we were making in the Air Force," he says. "That got my wheels spinning, and I decided to buy more properties on our military budget. They were in very bad condition. My wife and I would remodel them on the weekends and turn them into rentals."

By 2017, Howard had acquired several short-term rental properties. It wasn't long before people started asking about his success and how he was able to turn these properties into lucrative ventures. "I had no intention of selling real estate to others, but people were asking for my advice," Howard explains. "My wife, Rizzete, did an amazing job with the design of the properties. We made them really nice, and that's what made the difference." This marked the

beginning of his real estate journey. As his business grew, Howard realized he needed to formalize his knowledge and became licensed as a Realtor in June 2017, all while still on active duty.

#### A Shift Toward Full-Time Real Estate

After leaving the military in January 2018, Howard's career took an unexpected turn. "I was accepted into law school in Naples FL and had planned on pursuing that path while running our management company in Destin. After completing my first year my wife asked me to return home to help her run the business," he recalls. His decision to stick with real estate proved to be a smart one. He built three real estate management companies and a successful brokerage, he sold Florida Luxury Vacation Rentals in Destin in 2019, sold Florida Charms Vacation





Rentals and Realty in Destin/30A in 2022 that produced over 61 million in revenue and Beach Please Vacation Rentals in Naples in 2024.

Howard's ability to turn real estate into a profitable venture came not only from his experience with short-term rentals but also from his passion for helping others achieve financial success. "I love real estate because every day is different," he says. "I also love making my clients money. A lot of my clients are military or former military, and it's incredibly satisfying to see how my work has helped them generate monthly rental income."

One success story that stands out to Howard is a close friend from the military. "In one year, with his rental income and flipping the home, he made four and a half times his normal pay (900k)," Howard shares. "I love that everyone wins in this business. Seller is making money, buyer is making rental income, management company, and me, it's a fun business when everyone is making money by working together."

#### Jon Howard Realty: A New Chapter

In October 2024, Howard decided to step back from his position as the head broker at a multi billion-dollar company. "It was an incredible honor, but the demands of that role pulled me away from providing the level of leadership, attention, and quality service that my clients and agents deserve. That realization led me to make a difficult but necessary decision to step away and return to what I'm most passionate about: running a small, client-focused brokerage and mentoring my small high-quality team of agents. Quality not quantity"

Howard's approach to leadership is rooted in his military background as a special tactics operator, where teamwork and discipline are paramount. He believes in fostering an environment of growth and learning for everyone on his team. "Leadership is everything," he emphasizes. "It can make or break you as a person or a team. A good leader will put your best interest before theirs and grow you



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video raised \$1.4 million in donations, supplies and awareness for the people of North Carolina.

Howard is a passionate philanthropist and raises money from his wildlife photography. “I healed myself and found my happiness again in nature. I share that happiness through photography,” he explains. Howard also donates all proceeds from his nature photography to military charities and hurricane victims. “I live on the Bay in Santa Rosa Beach, and many of my photos are taken from my boat. I use my art to give back to those who need it most.”

#### Words of Wisdom

Looking back on his journey, Howard has valuable advice for aspiring real estate professionals. “Don’t focus too much on brand recognition,” he advises. “Instead, focus on leadership and how you can grow under the guidance of a strong mentor. Leadership can make all the difference in the success of your career.”

For Howard, the most rewarding part of his work is the impact he can make on others. Whether he’s helping clients achieve financial freedom through real estate or making a life-saving rescue, Howard remains committed to improving the lives of those around him.

into your best version of yourself. My team is a reflection of me, if they fail, it’s because I failed them”

#### Service Beyond Real Estate

Howard’s commitment to service didn’t end when he retired from the military. In fact, it has only deepened. He currently serves as a Master Sergeant in the Florida State Guard Special Missions Unit, where he’s been involved in recovery efforts during hurricanes. “In the last year, we’ve been active during hurricanes Helene and Milton,” he says. “We got

involved in rescue operations, and I find it incredibly rewarding to be able to help people in life-or-death situations.”

One of Howard’s most memorable experiences was during the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. While he was already headed to North Carolina for a nonprofit mission with Aerial Recovery, the Special Missions Unit was activated. “On Day 2, my team Mark Roseman, Zeb Hadley, Charlie Keebaugh and I rescued an 11-day-old premature baby that was blue and barely breathing and flew it to Asheville hospital,” he recalls. “30

mins later, I am flying over a washed-out road by a river, and SOS was carved into the mud. We were able to rescue a woman who only had one day of oxygen left to live. I made a video calling out the lack of government support and misinformation and that went viral, getting over 40 million views. It brought much-needed attention to the life-or-death situation for the people trapped, and the next day, I had about 15 more civilian helicopters and additional support from around the nation. People just didn’t know how bad it was.” That



# Transform Your Space: Cabinet Painting vs. Refacing

BY PHIL CRESCIMANNO, CANDLE CABINETS

Upgrading your kitchen or bathroom cabinets is a fantastic way to refresh your home's look, but the right method depends on your goals. Two popular options are cabinet painting and cabinet refacing. Let's explore the key differences to help you make an informed decision.

## 1. PROCESS

- **Cabinet Painting:** Involves cleaning, sanding, priming, and painting existing cabinet surfaces. This process can rejuvenate the current look.
- **Cabinet Refacing:** Entails replacing cabinet doors, drawer fronts, and veneers while keeping the existing structure intact. Soft-close hardware and handles are also added.

## 2. COST

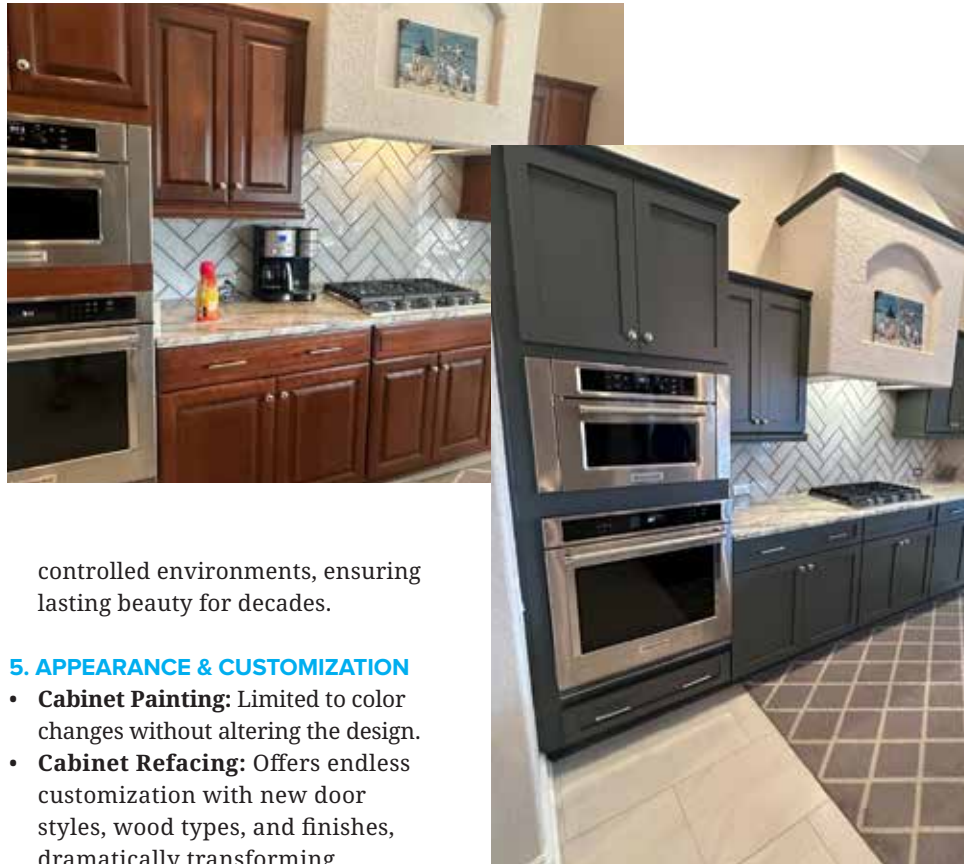
- **Cabinet Painting:** Typically more affordable, as it focuses only on surface updates.
- **Cabinet Refacing:** Slightly higher upfront costs due to new materials, but surprisingly comparable! Use the **cost comparison calculator** at [www.candlecabinets.com](http://www.candlecabinets.com) to see for yourself.

## 3. TIME

- **Cabinet Painting:** Can take over a week, especially as doors are taken off-site for refinishing. Painting onsite risks a poor finish and long-term durability issues.
- **Cabinet Refacing:** Much quicker, usually completed in three days.

## 4. DURABILITY

- **Cabinet Painting:** Requires regular touch-ups and is prone to wear from moisture or cleaning.
- **Cabinet Refacing:** Features highly durable finishes applied in



controlled environments, ensuring lasting beauty for decades.

## 5. APPEARANCE & CUSTOMIZATION

- **Cabinet Painting:** Limited to color changes without altering the design.
- **Cabinet Refacing:** Offers endless customization with new door styles, wood types, and finishes, dramatically transforming your space.

## 6. SUITABILITY

- **Cabinet Painting:** Ideal for minor cosmetic updates.
- **Cabinet Refacing:** Perfect for achieving a "like-new" appearance and boosting your home's value.

While cabinet painting is an economical choice, cabinet refacing offers a

longer-lasting, customizable, and impactful upgrade. The slightly higher investment pays off with enhanced durability and style that adds equity to your home.

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# Shawn Dunne

From Fine Wine to Fine Homes:  
The Journey of Shawn Dunne



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**S**hawn Dunne’s story is one of passion, perseverance, and reinvention. Born and raised in Fowl River, Alabama, Shawn’s early life was shaped by weekends spent traveling with his father, a scuba diving instructor, to the emerald beaches of Destin and Panama City Beach. These trips not only instilled in him a love for the Gulf Coast but also a fascination with the beauty of different places—a curiosity that would later guide his career choices.

### A Toast to the Wine Industry

In 1998, Shawn entered the wine industry, managing a sales team in Mobile, Alabama, for a local distributor. His natural charisma and dedication to service quickly set him apart. By 2009, he transitioned to Republic National Distributing Company as a territory manager in Panama City Beach, where

his talent for understanding customer needs flourished.

Three years later, Shawn’s expertise landed him a fine wine position with Southern Wine and Spirits, the largest wine and spirit distributor in the U.S. In this role, he worked with fine dining establishments along the Gulf Coast, curating wine lists that perfectly complemented their menus. His passion for wine deepened as he earned certifications as a Level 1 and Level 2 sommelier in 2013.

A sommelier is a wine expert who understands the nuances of varietals, vintages, and pairings. For Shawn, it was more than a title; it was a calling. He relished learning about the diverse regions where wine was grown, from the rolling hills of Napa Valley and Sonoma to the cool climates of Oregon and the timeless vineyards of Tuscany. These travels not only enhanced his expertise but also introduced him to

the architectural beauty, history, and lifestyles of these places—sparking an interest that would eventually lead him to real estate.

### The Transition to Real Estate

In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered 90% of the restaurants Shawn serviced, he faced a career crossroads. With his position as a wine specialist eliminated, Shawn turned to his core strengths: customer service, hard work, and storytelling.

“I realized that selling fine wine and selling luxury real estate weren’t all that different,” Shawn reflects. “Both require passion, the ability to tell a compelling story, and a dedication to connecting people with something they truly love.”

Shawn joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices PenFed Realty, immersing himself in the world of high-end real estate. Drawing parallels to his wine career, he likened each luxury home to

**“WHETHER IT’S A BOTTLE OF WINE OR A MILLION-DOLLAR HOME, IT’S ABOUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE CLIENT VALUES AND TELLING A STORY THAT RESONATES.”**

a fine vintage—unique, full of character, and capable of telling its own story.

#### **From Open Houses to Top Honors**

Shawn’s early days in real estate were spent sitting at open houses for hours, meeting potential buyers and absorbing everything he could about the industry. This hands-on approach paid off. By his second year, he transitioned to working independently, helping over 40 families annually find their dream homes.

His dedication and exceptional customer service have earned him significant recognition in the real estate industry. Shawn is a regular recipient of the prestigious Chairman’s Gold Club Award, placing him in the top 2% of all Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices agents nationwide. Most recently, he was named the #3 agent in the State of Florida for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices in the number of transactions—a testament to his unmatched work ethic and ability to connect with clients.

“I do a lot of transactions every year and don’t use a transaction coordinator,” Shawn says proudly. “That means I’m hands-on with every single client, every step of the way—from scheduling inspections and surveys to coordinating directly with lenders and title companies. My clients know I’m there for them 100%.”

#### **A Legacy of Passion and Dedication**

Today, Shawn combines his love of architecture, history, and customer service to excel in the luxury real estate market. He credits his years in the wine industry with teaching him the value of connecting with people on a personal level, a skill that translates seamlessly into his current work.



“Whether it’s a bottle of wine or a million-dollar home, it’s about understanding what the client values and telling a story that resonates,” he says.

#### **Family and Beyond**

Outside of work, Shawn enjoys life with his wife, Rachel, whom he married in 2020, and their three daughters, Olivia, Grace, and Millie. Active in his church and an avid golfer, he finds balance and fulfillment in his family and community.

From fine wine to fine homes, Shawn Dunne’s journey is a testament to the power of passion, adaptability, and unwavering commitment to excellence. For him, the story is always about finding beauty, whether in a glass of wine, a breathtaking property, or the lives he helps transform.

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## Hero Nation Coaching

The 3 Biggest Regrets of Real Estate Agents—and How to Ensure They're Never Yours

**P**icture this: A real estate agent at the top of their game, admired by their peers, seemingly unstoppable. And yet, behind the scenes, they're battling a silent crisis—no deals, no clients, no financial safety net. Despite years in the business, they're panicked about paying the bills, let alone achieving their goals.

This isn't just a story; it's a cautionary tale.

Success in real estate isn't about working harder—it's about working smarter. After coaching thousands of agents, I've seen three common regrets that derail even the most promising careers. The good news? These regrets are entirely avoidable if you take the right steps today.

Here's what every agent should know to future-proof their career.

### 1. "I Wish I'd Built My Database Sooner."

Let me ask you something: If your social media accounts vanished tomorrow, how would you reach your clients? For too many agents, the answer is a sobering one—they wouldn't. They've spent years chasing one-off transactions instead of cultivating long-term relationships.

Your database isn't just a contact list—it's the engine of your business. Agents who consistently nurture their database generate \$150,000 or more annually in repeat and referral opportunities.

#### What to Do Right Now:

- **Organize Your Contacts:** Gather all past clients, leads, and your sphere of influence in one place.
- **Segment and Prioritize:** Categorize contacts into groups (A, B, C clients) based on the strength of your relationship.
- **Systematize Your Outreach:** Commit to a regular schedule of touchpoints—whether through monthly newsletters, personal calls, or social media messages.
- **Pro Tip:** Consistency beats complexity. Even a simple plan executed well will yield better results than an elaborate system you never use.

**Resource:** Need help getting started? Download my free Database Planner by texting me "DB Planner." @ 469-500-3642

And check out *Rethink Everything You Know About CRM* by Tommy Clifford for a fresh take on database management.

### 2. "I Wish I'd Taken Control of My Finances."

Real estate agents often enter the industry to create financial freedom—but too many find themselves trapped by inconsistent income, mounting debt, and lack of savings. Even successful agents can find themselves living paycheck to paycheck, with no plan for future wealth.

Here's the truth: If you don't tell your money where to go, it will disappear. You don't need to earn more—you need a better system.

#### What to Do Right Now:

- **Adopt the Profit First Method:** Allocate every dollar you earn into specific accounts: profit, taxes, operating expenses, and personal pay.
- **Build Reserves:** Aim for three to six months of operating expenses to safeguard against market shifts.
- **Invest for the Future:** Funnel your profits into wealth-building assets like rental properties or retirement accounts.
- **Pro Tip:** Wealth isn't about making more—it's about keeping more.

**Resource:** Read *Profit First* by Mike Michalowicz, a game-changing guide to managing your finances like a business owner.

### 3. "I Wish I'd Asked for Help Sooner."

Real estate isn't a solo sport. Trying to do it all yourself—marketing, admin, lead generation—leads to burnout and missed opportunities. The agents who grow their businesses sustainably are the ones who build the right team and seek the right support.

But here's the catch: hiring without a plan can be worse than not hiring at all. That's why your first investment should be in a coach—someone who can guide your decisions, help you avoid costly mistakes, and accelerate your growth.

#### What to Do Right Now:

- **Identify Your Gaps:** Are you overwhelmed? Struggling to scale? Losing clarity?
- **Hire a Coach:** A coach can help you create a strategic roadmap and collapse years of trial and error into months of progress.
- **Plan Your First Hire:** Whether it's an assistant, buyer's agent, or marketer, a coach can help you pinpoint the right person for your needs.
- **Pro Tip:** The right hire will double your capacity. The wrong hire will double your headaches.

**Resource:** Ready to hire strategically? Book a free Laser Coaching Call with me, and let's map out your next move. [www.HNStrategySession.com](http://www.HNStrategySession.com).



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#### WAYNE SALMANS

WORLD-CLASS COACH, AUTHOR, AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
HERO NATION COACHING  
*In the past decade, I've coached and trained over 7,000 entrepreneurs. Let's make you the next success story.*



Success in real estate isn't about working harder—it's about working smarter."

### The Hidden Regret: Resistance and Resentment

One regret agents rarely talk about is the wasted energy spent resisting change or resenting challenges. Whether it's a shifting market, new technology, or unexpected obstacles, the agents who thrive focus on three questions:

1. What can I control?
2. What do I have right now?
3. What's my next best step?

Adaptability isn't just a survival skill—it's a competitive advantage.

**Resource:** My book, *The Art of Getting Back Up*, is a practical guide to resilience and reinvention.

#### Your Quick-Start Action Plan

1. Database: Download the Database Planner and commit to reaching out to 10 past clients this week.
2. Finances: Open a "Profit" account and allocate 1% of your next commission check.
3. Support: Schedule a free coaching session to identify your next strategic move.

#### Why This Matters

Every successful agent you admire has faced the same challenges. The difference is, they acted before regret set in. You don't have to wait for a crisis to start building the business—and life—you deserve.

The time to future-proof your career is now.

#### Call to Action

If you're ready to take control of your business, build sustainable systems, and eliminate regret, I'm here to help. At Hero Nation Coaching, we specialize in helping agents achieve faster success with fewer bruises.



“EMBRACE THE GRIND—IT’S WHAT MAKES SUCCESS SO REWARDING.”

## Gulfshore Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc.

Excellence Rooted in Integrity and Community

BY CINDY BELL  
PHOTOS BY FALTISEK & GLORIA

Since its establishment in 1995 by Steve Reynolds, Gulfshore Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc. has been a cornerstone of comfort for residents along Florida’s Emerald Coast. For nearly three decades, this company has been synonymous with quality, reliability, and unwavering dedication to its customers. What makes Gulfshore stand out isn’t just its technical expertise—it’s the heart behind its mission.

### A Legacy of Passion and Dedication

For over 13 years, Krista Landen, Gulfshore’s Marketing and IT Manager, has been at the helm of operational innovation and customer experience. Her journey to Gulfshore began as an unexpected twist in her career path. After earning dual degrees from Saint Leo University, she initially sought a short-term position to bridge her goals of attending the Culinary Institute of America. However, her time at Gulfshore quickly evolved into a lifelong passion.

“I joined Gulfshore as an Administrative Assistant, thinking it would just be a stepping stone. Little did I know that I’d find a home here,” Krista shares. “The more I learned about the



industry, the more fascinated I became. Every day presents an opportunity to grow, solve problems, and make a real impact on people’s lives.”

Drawing inspiration from her family—her powerhouse mother, whose resilience she admires, and her husband, who instilled a love for IT—Krista has risen to become an invaluable leader at Gulfshore. Her contributions span from spearheading marketing strategies to managing IT operations and helping shape the company’s future alongside Steve Reynolds.

### A Mission Rooted in Values

At Gulfshore Air, the guiding principles are clear: integrity, honesty, competency, accuracy, consistency, respect, and compassion. These values are woven into every aspect of the company’s operations, ensuring that every client interaction is met with transparency and care.

“Our mission is simple yet powerful,” she explains. “We promise to serve with integrity and treat each client as we would want to be treated. Delivering peace of mind and satisfaction every single time is at the core of what we do.”

This philosophy extends to the team’s approach to customer service. Gulfshore

Air doesn’t merely aim to fix heating and cooling systems—it strives to create lasting relationships built on trust and exceptional service.

### Standing Out in a Competitive Industry

In an industry often characterized by fierce competition, Gulfshore takes a different approach. Instead of focusing on competitors, the company pours its energy into self-improvement and community engagement. This inward focus has cultivated a reputation for reliability and trustworthiness that few can match.

“We believe our biggest competitor is ourselves,” Krista notes. “By consistently investing in our team, our operations, and our community, we create a cycle of mutual support. Our clients recognize the value we bring and continue to choose us time and again.”

This commitment to community recently earned Gulfshore Air the prestigious Prometheus Flame Keeper Award from ServiceTitan. The award celebrates the company’s philanthropic efforts, which often go unnoticed but are deeply impactful. From assisting families during emergencies to ensuring homes remain livable during Florida’s





intense weather conditions, Gulfshore Air's dedication to its community goes far beyond the bottom line.

### Exceptional Service: The Gulfshore Guarantee

At Gulfshore Air, customer satisfaction isn't just a goal—it's a promise. The company offers a Workmanship Guarantee, reflecting its confidence in the quality of its craftsmanship. Whether it's a new installation or a routine repair, Gulfshore ensures that every system functions as designed.

"Customer service is the backbone of our business," Krista says. "It's not just about solving problems; it's about creating a "WOW" experience for our clients. From the moment they call us to the completion of the job, we want them to feel valued and cared for."

Krista's background in the service industry has played a pivotal role in shaping this customer-first philosophy. "Working at Red Lobster taught me

the importance of going the extra mile. A chipper attitude, anticipating needs, and delivering an exceptional experience—those small efforts add up to big results."

### Navigating Challenges with Resilience

The road to success hasn't been without its challenges. Over the years, Gulfshore Air has faced industry fluctuations and economic shifts. Yet, the team's resilience and adaptability have allowed the company to thrive.

"This year has been a 'repair vs. replacement' year," she admits. "But despite the challenges, we're on track to achieve our projected goals, with 5% growth compared to the industry average of 1%. Failure isn't an option—it's a motivation to push harder and do better."

This determination is fueled by a deep understanding of the industry and a willingness to pivot when necessary. From implementing flat-rate pricing to

launching new educational initiatives, Gulfshore continuously evolves to meet the needs of its clients and the community.

### Innovating for the Future

One of the company's most exciting current projects is the launch of its YouTube channel, aimed at educating clients about HVAC systems. This platform will provide valuable resources to help homeowners make informed decisions, even if they choose a different contractor.

"We know we can't win them all," Krista says. "But we want every client to feel empowered and educated. At the end of the day, it's about helping people, whether they hire us or not."

### Advice for Businesses Looking to Grow

For businesses seeking to expand their reach and form meaningful partnerships, Gulfshore Air offers a simple yet profound piece of advice: "Never stop making connections. The relationships you build today can shape your business for years to come. And remember, nothing worth having comes easy. Embrace the grind—it's what makes success so rewarding."

### A Bright Future Ahead

As Gulfshore continues to grow, its commitment to excellence, integrity, and community remains steadfast. With a team that embodies passion and professionalism, the company is poised to lead the HVAC industry on the Emerald Coast for years to come.

From its humble beginnings in 1995 to its current status as an industry leader, Gulfshore Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc. is more than just a business—it's a testament to the power of hard work, resilience, and unwavering dedication to serving others.

### CONTACT US!

To contact Krista and her team at Gulfshore:  
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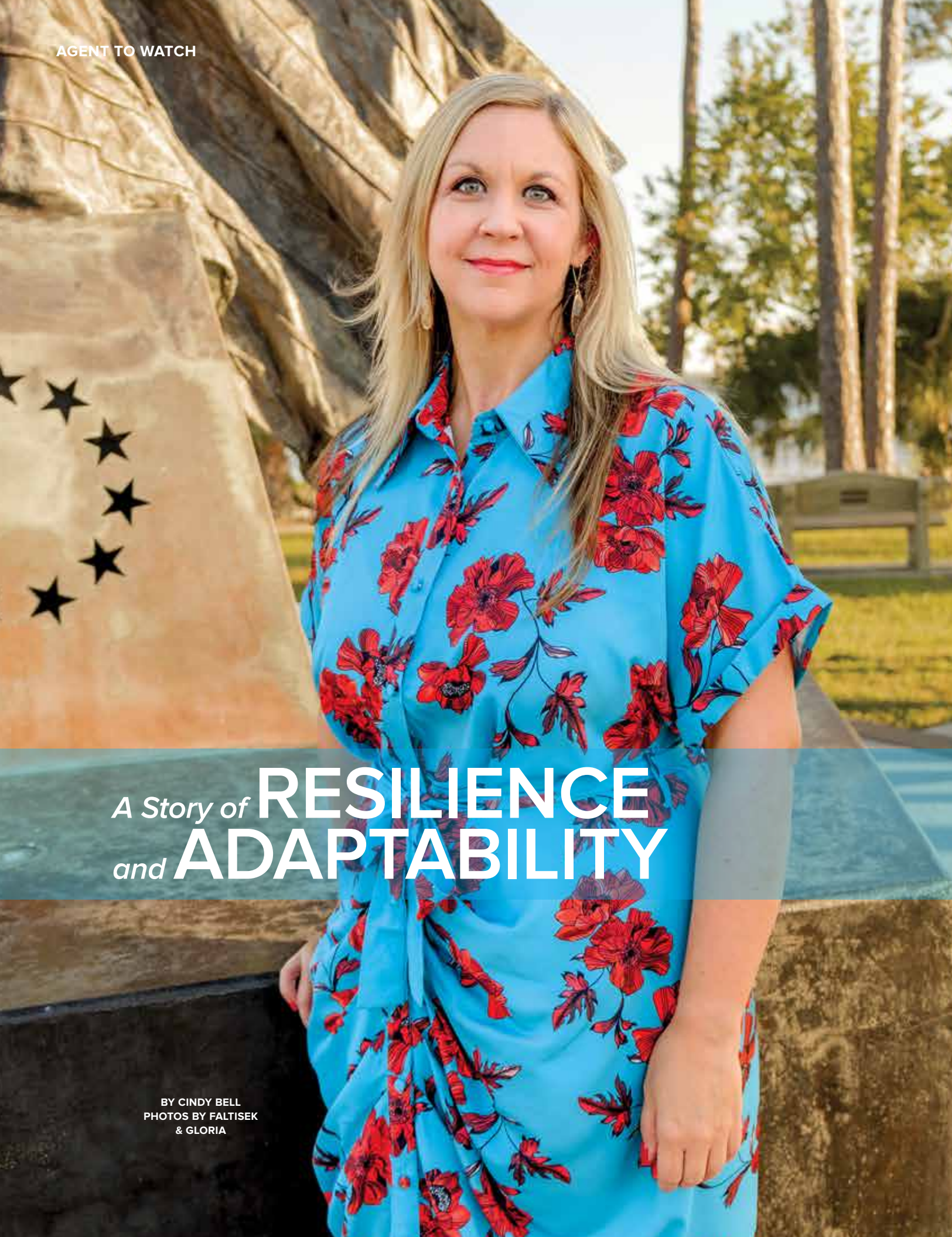
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# A Story of RESILIENCE and ADAPTABILITY

BY CINDY BELL  
PHOTOS BY FALTISEK  
& GLORIA

“

I believe reframing the industry mindset from competition to collaboration creates a more rewarding experience for everyone.”



Shelby Baker



### Shelby Baker: Shaping the Future of Real Estate

In the competitive world of real estate, few professionals embody resilience, expertise, and passion quite like Shelby Baker. With a career shaped by unique experiences and unwavering determination, Shelby has rapidly risen as a leader and role model within the Emerald Coast real estate community.

### A Journey Rooted in Experience

Shelby's path to real estate was anything but conventional. She

began her professional journey as the Architectural Supervisor for Holley by the Sea, the second-largest HOA in the state. In this role, she developed an intricate understanding of residential construction and property regulations, working closely with homeowners, builders, and contractors to maintain community standards and protect property values.

Her dedication to helping others navigate complex architectural processes laid the foundation for her real estate career. After

a hiatus during her high-risk pregnancy, an unexpected opportunity arose. The Vice President of Whitworth Builders, recognizing Shelby's expertise, invited her to become the listing agent for their Holley Hills subdivision in Navarre. The transition felt natural, allowing Shelby to combine her construction knowledge with her passion for guiding people toward their dream homes.

“Sometimes the best career paths aren't the ones we initially plan,” Shelby reflects. “They're the ones that evolve

from our experiences and the relationships we build along the way.”

### Overcoming Challenges with Grace

Real estate tested Shelby's resilience early on. As a single mother rebuilding her life, she navigated the demanding timelines of new construction sales while ensuring stability for her children. Extended periods between groundbreaking and closing presented financial challenges, but Shelby's perseverance never wavered.



Her experiences taught her the value of persistence, strategic planning, and the power of a strong support system. Today, those challenges have shaped her into a more empathetic and determined Realtor, dedicated to helping others achieve their real estate goals.

**A Commitment to Growth and Community**

For Shelby, success in real estate is about more than transactions—it's about collaboration and community impact. Her active involvement with the Emerald Coast Association of Realtors (ECAR)

in 2024 reflects this philosophy. As incoming 2025 Vice Chair for the Professional Development and MLS Navarre Tour committees and a member of the Fair Housing and Community and Military Outreach groups, Shelby is committed to elevating the profession and giving back to the community.

"I believe reframing the industry mindset from competition to collaboration creates a more rewarding experience for everyone," Shelby shares. "When real estate professionals support one another, we're better equipped



**Some days aren't picture-perfect, but they're real and authentic. That's what matters most."**

to serve our clients and community."

**A Moment of Recognition**

Among her many accomplishments, one stands out as particularly meaningful: being named the Navarre Chapter Realtor® of the Year by ECAR in 2022. The announcement came during a whirlwind day filled with professional and family responsibilities. While sitting in a drive-through, her phone lit up with congratulatory messages.

"I was exhausted, disheveled, and missing the awards ceremony, but in that moment, I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude and joy," Shelby recalls. "It was a reminder of why I love this work—because even in the chaos, there's so much fulfillment."

**Mentorship: A Cornerstone of Success**

Shelby credits much of her success to the guidance of exceptional mentors throughout her career. Equally fulfilling has been her role as a mentor, especially within the niche of new construction. From coaching model sitters to guiding agents through the complexities of land development and construction, Shelby's dedication to knowledge-sharing

strengthens the entire professional community.

"Real estate is complex, and sharing my expertise helps others grow and serve their clients better. It's incredibly rewarding to know I'm contributing to their success."

**Balancing Career and Family**

As a single working mother, Shelby embraces the imperfections of work-life balance. Her daughters have grown up alongside her career, learning the values of hard work and adaptability. Shelby's secret to balance lies in time blocking, planning ahead, and staying present in each moment—whether it's closing a deal or attending a school event.

"Some days aren't picture-perfect, but they're real and authentic," Shelby says. "That's what matters most."

**Looking Ahead**

Shelby Baker's journey is a testament to the power of resilience, collaboration, and a genuine passion for helping others. As a rising star in real estate, she continues to inspire her peers and community, proving that success isn't just about achievements—it's about making a meaningful impact along the way.

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