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Torian Law is led by attorney Benjamin G. Torian, a Lafayette native with over two decades of real estate experience. In addition to his extensive work in real estate, Ben brings a strong background in real estate title litigation, which allows him to navigate complex title issues and ensure a smooth closing. Ben’s title litigation experience gives your clients an extra layer of protection and strategic insight during the closing process. At Torian Law, we are committed to providing personalized service, deep local expertise, and a seamless experience from contract to closing.



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A Note From the Publisher

Providing a platform to celebrate and unite the top real estate professionals across Acadiana!

BY DRAKE ABSHIRE

Hello Acadiana Realtors!

We're cruising through the year and can't help but feel incredibly grateful for this amazing network of professionals who continue to show up, give back, and support one another. Our most recent event, the **Parade of Realtors**, was a huge success, and we can't wait to share all the highlights with you in next month's issue—so stay tuned for that!

In the meantime, we're already gearing up for our next event in **July**, and trust us—you won't want to miss it. Be on the lookout for invites hitting your inbox soon!

We also want to take a moment to give a **huge shoutout and warm welcome to our three newest Preferred Partners**. These businesses are not only amazing at what they do, but they also believe in the power of community and connection—just like we do.

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Please be sure to thank them when you see them at events or in your inbox—they're helping us grow and strengthen this awesome community!



Lastly, we want to address a question we get asked often:

How do I get featured in the magazine?

Our process is **entirely nomination-based**, but we're always keeping our eyes on those who are showing up, lifting others up, and actively participating in the network. If being featured is important to you, we highly encourage a positive, supportive attitude. Cheer on your fellow agents, attend the events, and celebrate the wins—because when you do, your moment in the spotlight may come even sooner than you think.

Thanks again for being part of this amazing journey with us!

With heartfelt thanks,



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TORIAN LAW

Cloud on Titles:
What is it?
How does it get resolved?
Why choose Torian Law to clear it?

A clear title is essential for a smooth real estate transaction. When a title is “clouded,” it means there is an issue, often referred to as a title defect, that could prevent the seller from transferring full legal ownership of the property to the buyer. These title issues can range from minor errors in documentation to major legal complications that could put the entire transaction at risk. As a title attorney with over 28 years of experience in real estate, I’ve seen nearly every kind of title defect imaginable. The good news? Most issues can be resolved, but the time it takes depends on the type and severity of the title defect.

Some of the most frequent causes of clouded titles include unreleased mortgages, ownership disputes, succession issues, liens or judgments, boundary disputes, and clerical errors. For example, if a previous lender or closing attorney didn’t properly release a paid-off mortgage, it still shows up as a lien on the property when we conduct our title research. In succession cases, when a property owner has passed away and heirs haven’t gone through the legal process of a succession, there’s no authority to sell the property. Other times, outstanding taxes or contractor liens are attached to the title, or there are disputes over where the property line is drawn. Even small mistakes, like a missing signature or a misspelled name in a legal document, can be enough to create a cloud on the title.

So, how long does it take to resolve these issues? The answer depends. Minor defects, such as an unreleased mortgage, can sometimes be cleared up in a few days by contacting the previous lender and securing the appropriate documentation. More complex matters, like successions or title litigation (disputes of ownership, encumbrances, or boundaries), can take weeks or even months, especially if court filings, negotiations, or title insurance underwriter approval are needed.

This is where my background becomes an asset to everyone at the closing table. Before launching Torian Law, I spent



years litigating on behalf of title insurance companies in Louisiana. My job was to fix the most complicated title issues, resolving boundary and ownership disputes, curing title defects, and representing insurers when closings were not handled properly. That experience taught me how to identify risks early, navigate legal roadblocks efficiently, and craft solutions that protect buyers, sellers, and lenders alike. Today, I bring that same litigation mindset to every transaction we handle at Torian Law. Whether it’s a first-time homebuyer or a seasoned investor, I know how to get in front of issues before they become deal-breakers.

For realtors and sellers, the best strategy is to start the title research as early as possible, ideally, right after a listing goes live or once a property goes under contract. That gives us time to uncover and resolve any hidden issues long before closing day. Buyers should also work with experienced professionals who can spot red flags and advocate for their clients’ interests if complications or title defects arise.

A clouded title doesn’t have to derail a real estate deal. With the right legal expertise and early action, most title defects can be resolved without jeopardizing the closing. Our goal at Torian Law is to protect all parties involved, minimize stress and delays, and help clients move forward with confidence. That’s the power of combining legal knowledge with real estate experience, and it’s why I love doing what I do every day at Torian Law.

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PAT BARNARD

WRITTEN BY JESS WELLAR
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THE CHOICE EACH DAY

“All you have to do is open your eyes each day and you will see ugly in this world. If instead, when you wake up, you seek out the positives in life, and when you find them, you celebrate them and you choose joy — because it’s a choice — you will live a much fuller life.”

Pat Barnard lives by those words. He’s also the type of guy who’s inviting you over to taste his wife’s delicious gumbo after several minutes of conversation. As a charismatic, top-producing solo agent at Keller Williams Realty Acadiana, Pat keeps his priorities straight while starting each day with plenty of heart and gusto.

“I like to get to the office by 5 a.m. if I can help it,” he laughs, explaining the aptly named “Early Riser” award he picked up at his brokerage.

Pat’s people-first approach has made all the difference. In just six years, he’s become the #1 solo agent at his brokerage for 2024 out of 300 agents, closing 57 transactions and nearly \$12 million in sales last year alone. But his road to real estate glory certainly had a few bumps along the way.

Colorful Background

Before he was one of the top agents in Lafayette, Pat spent years in oil field safety training as an instructor for water survival classes making grown men cry.

“We would submerge students in a helicopter simulator, flip them upside down, and then require them to escape the simulator,” he explains. “So kinda like real estate, except nothing like it!”

Pat’s got a degree in biology he’s never used, a scuba certification he got at 18 “for an excuse to go to Destin,” and more stories from his decade in the



service industry than he can count—all combining to make him the relatable force he is today.

“My time in the service industry was like a decade of training for sales,” Pat points out. “Candidly, I had to deal with all sorts of personalities in that industry. Being in real estate now, everyone is sober and no one is in my face ... So it feels like a walk in the park.”

It wasn’t until life pushed him to reevaluate his priorities that he finally found his calling though.

Switching Gears

In 2018, Pat’s world was upended. His oldest son, Camden, was diagnosed with leukemia. At the time, Pat was working a job with zero responsibilities. After growing frustrated with the corporate world, he left to take a similar position with a university, only to have the university eventually partner with his previous large oil company employer.

“I worked under the new arrangement for about eight months and then realized the same issues that caused me to leave that company in the first place were present again, so I asked for a transfer to a different department at the university,” Pat recalls.



I TRULY JUST
WANT TO HELP
PEOPLE IN ANY
WAY THAT
I CAN, EVEN
IF THAT MEANS
TALKING
SOMEONE OUT
OF A DEAL.”

After voicing his concerns, Pat was moved to another department where he did absolutely nothing for the next year and a half. He saw the writing on the wall and made a plan, obtaining his real estate license in May of 2019.

Six months later, while Camden was still in treatment, Pat was let go. But by then, he had already started gaining traction as an agent and decided to go all in.

He credits his rookie season success to his terrific mentor, Cam Luquette.

“I abused that guy!” Pat remembers with a laugh. “I called him all the time. And everything he told me to do, I did it. We’re still good buddies to this day.”

Cajun Pride

A proud Lafayette native and former Opelousas resident, Pat has deep roots in Acadiana.

“Although I only lived in Opelousas for a short period of my life, I truly believe that without that experience I would not be the man that I am today,” he says. “Those were very pivotal years for me.”

That confidence now spills into everything he does, especially how he shows up for his clients.

“As cliché as it sounds, money does not motivate me, at all,” Pat asserts. “I’m just a good ole Cajun boy. I truly





IT'S THE
LEAST
I COULD
DO."

just want to help people in any way that I can, even if that means talking someone out of a deal."

That authenticity carries into his social media presence, too. Each week, he releases a video he calls "Wake Up to A Wealth of Knowledge" Wednesdays, introduced in Cajun French. He's always suited up with a signature wooden hat brim, wooden bowtie, and even a pair of wood cufflinks: "I'm the first to admit I don't shy away from attention," he affirms. "I like to live vibrantly and get noticed."

The Fight That Shaped Him

Pat's son Camden, now 15, beat cancer not once — but twice.

"Ultimately, he got a bone marrow transplant from a donor that saved his life in August of 2021. The next month my wife and I's first child, James Patrick, was born," Pat recalls. That whirlwind season saw Pat juggling two kids in two different hospitals across two cities — all while closing \$8 million in real estate that year.

Any day now, Pat and his wife Christy are expecting their second child together, a baby girl named Marjorie Anne. Their goldendoodle, Mais La, understands Pat's commands in Cajun French and completes their lively home.

In honor of Camden's incredible story, Pat helped colleague Daphne Gaspard host the first annual Brunch & Bowl fundraiser benefiting the National Marrow Donor Program this year.

"That organization is extremely near and dear to my heart for obvious reasons," Pat affirms. KW Cares, a nonprofit branch of his brokerage, also stepped in during Camden's second cancer battle to cover rent and living expenses. Today, Pat serves as a regional representative for KW Cares, helping other agents through times of hardship.



He's also gone on "Good Morning America" to share his son's journey, in addition to other TV outlets and podcasts.

"I tell people all the time, that was the best thing that ever happened to me because it changed my perspective on how I looked at the world; and it now gives me an opportunity to educate people about the process of being a bone marrow donor and the vitally important role that NMDP plays in supporting those who choose to sign up to be donors," he adds.

He's also got big plans for the future: He's building a rental portfolio, eyeing the possibility of starting a team, dreaming about travel, and hopes to continue speaking publicly about his son's ordeal.

"Choose Joy" is tattooed on one of his wrists in Camden's handwriting, and the names of Camden's donor and his wife are tattooed on the other.

"It's the least I could do," Pat concludes.



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➤ **R.J. FONSECA, JR.
& SADIE SHAMSIE**



WRITTEN BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WESLEY SUN CHEE FORE

Setting Higher Standards Together

At Standard Title, co-owners R. J. Fonseca, Jr., and Sadie Shamsie aren't just closing deals, they're closing dreams — that never gets old.

“When the deal closes, we declare the transaction final, in a sense,” R.J. explains. “And we get to participate in the realization of people’s dream of home ownership over and over again.”

For nearly a quarter-century, this Lafayette-based powerhouse duo has built a business grounded in integrity, tenacity, and a reputation for solving problems most firms avoid with plenty of creativity and an entrepreneurial mindset.

Humble Launch

When R.J. and Sadie first opened Standard Title in 2001, they didn't have much — except drive.

“Our first office was 900 square feet, and we purchased used office furniture,” Sadie recalls. “It was just the two of us and we built this company from the ground up. I am so proud of our accomplishments because we did it our way.”

R.J., who grew up in New Orleans and went on to earn degrees from UC Davis and Tulane Law, had a deep family legacy in law.

“My grandfather was a judge, my uncle was a judge, and this generation I'm the lawyer,” he explains. “I knew when I didn't cut it in pre-med the first semester of college biology that I was going to be a lawyer.”

But it was R.J.'s innate entrepreneurial spirit that really lit the fire.

“I wanted to combine my legal skills with my love for solving problems, in real estate, business, litigation, start-up counsel,” he reflects. “I've always believed that land, property, and business ownership are deeply tied to freedom, and I wanted to be in the business of helping people build that kind of security.”

That same entrepreneurial drive that led R.J. to partner with Sadie, a Lafayette local, and to open Standard Title, also led him to develop a 90-lot subdivision and operate Fonseca Builders with his father, manage Standard Law, as well as once purchase a pizza shop, CrossFit gyms in NOLA, and now, Drone Institute.ai.

“The entrepreneurial attraction? It's fun — it doesn't ever feel like work,” he smiles. “I always have these other sorts of projects going on to keep an edge. I love a full plate.”

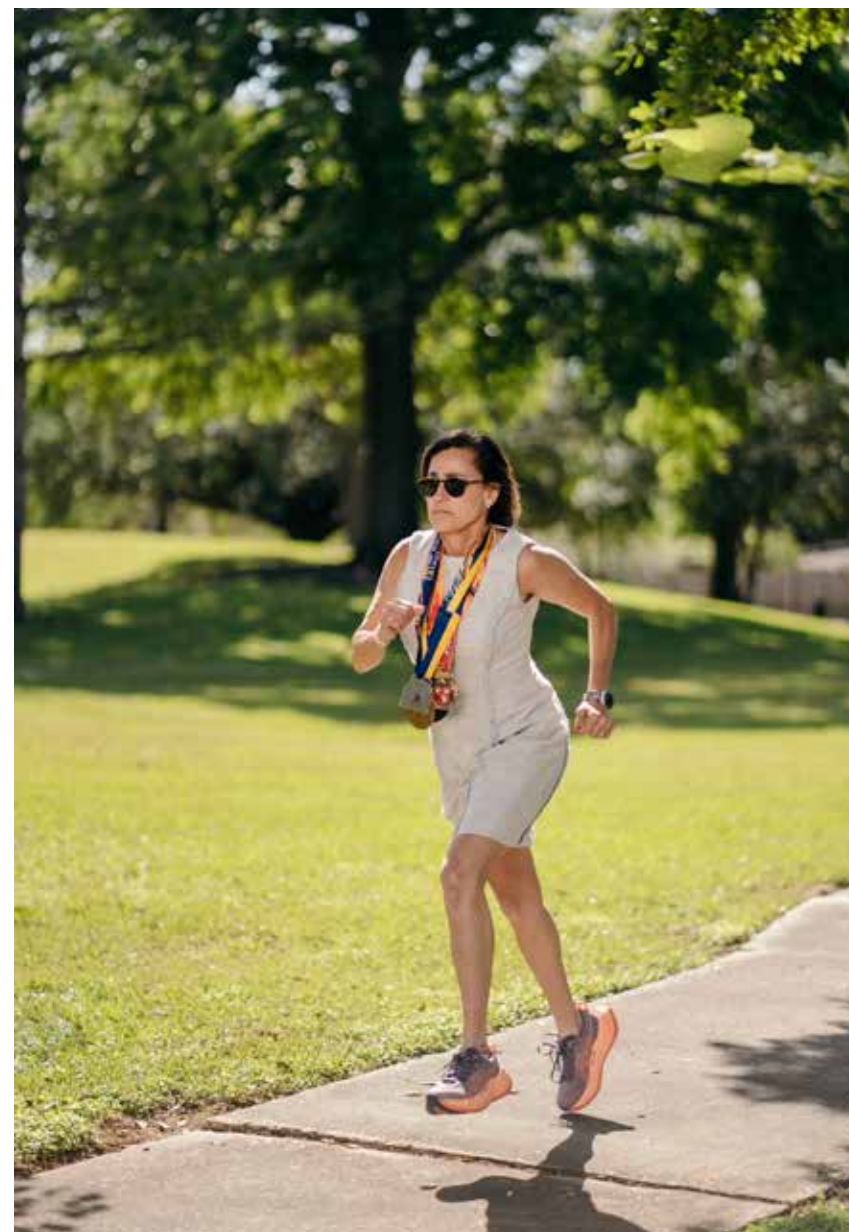
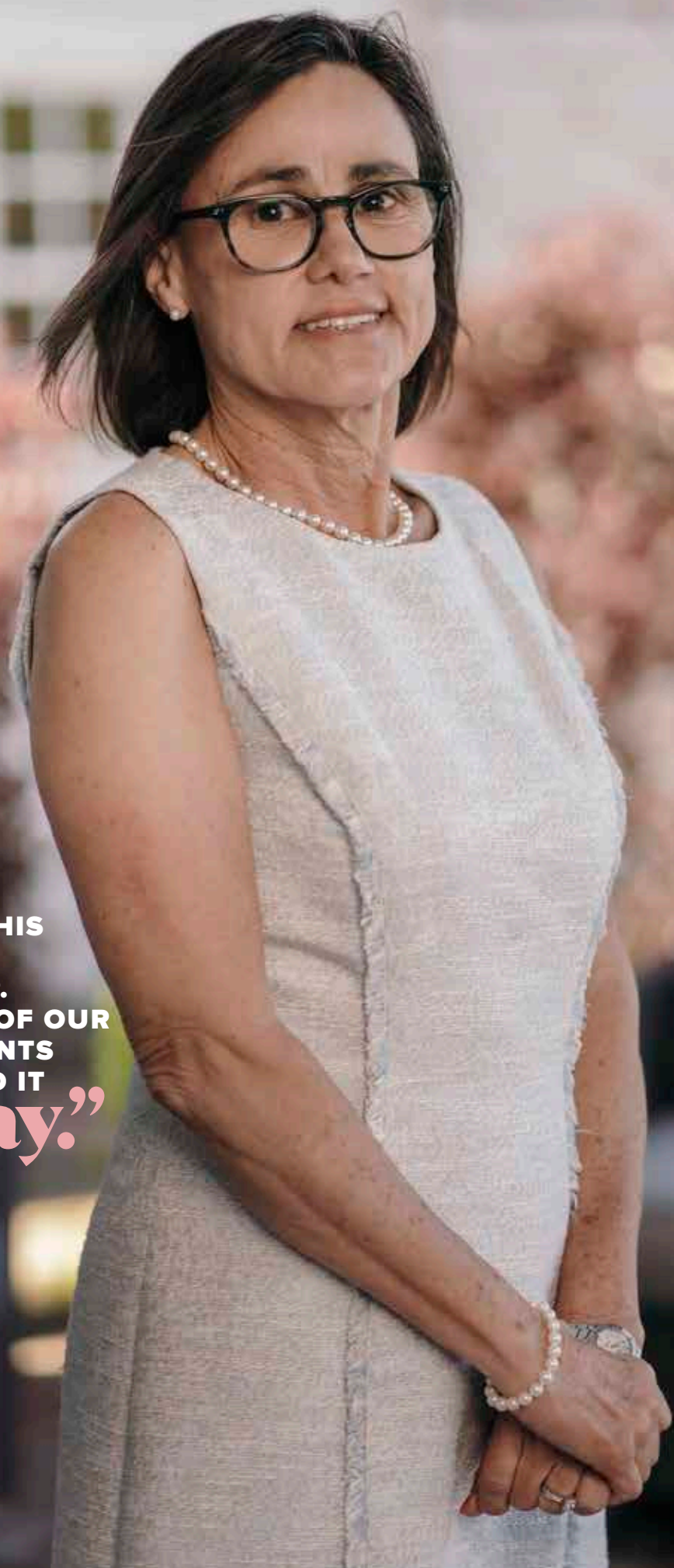
Before launching Standard Title, Sadie's world revolved around politics.

“I had been doing political consulting work in Lafayette for over a dozen years and was ready for a change when R.J. presented me with the opportunity to start a real estate title company,” Sadie explains. “Today, I handle most of our closings, serve as our notary and issue the title insurance, as an agent.”

Through R.J. and Sadie's vision and leadership,



“IT WAS JUST
THE TWO OF US
AND WE BUILT THIS
COMPANY FROM
THE GROUND UP.
I AM SO PROUD OF OUR
ACCOMPLISHMENTS
BECAUSE WE DID IT
our way.”



Standard Title expanded to Lake Charles, Jennings, Lafayette, New Iberia, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans.

“We employed close to 30 team members and transacted up to 160 closings per month,” R.J. recounts. “Then the market shifted.”

Today, the team of 12 operates primarily in Acadiana, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Jennings, and as R.J. notes, they’re running leaner, focused, and more effective than ever.

Creative Problem Solvers

According to R.J., Standard Title isn’t afraid to touch deals other firms avoid. R. J. and Sadie bring both experience and boldness to the table.

“We developed an expertise in efficiency, resolving complex title matters, defending title claims to trial, and Standard Law provides effective representation in numerous practice areas,” he states. “It’s a good combination, like our partnership.

“Real estate is law in motion,” he continues. “And that’s how we treat it — with legal precision and entrepreneurial agility. My mantra is: ‘Protect the deal, protect the people.’”

That commitment has earned the firm glowing praise from the local community. Standard Title was voted “Best of Acadiana” for real estate law and title services three years running, from 2021 to 2023.

“We make everyone’s life easier. We anticipate problems before they happen and communicate to close the deal,” R.J. points out. “We do not leave clients confused or stressed ever!”

He adds, “If you refer clients to Standard Title, they will be treated with respect, transparency, and professional care. They will thank you for referring them to us!”

Beyond The Business

For both co-owners, success isn’t just measured in transactions, it’s about the life they’re building around the business.

“I’m a father of four,” R.J. shares. “My children are my priority, and everything else in between.” His children are: John Dielmann “Dilly” Fonseca, Eleanor Taylor (too many nicknames to list!), Ramon John, III (“Mon”), and Charles Bernard (“Charlie”).

“We love spending time together and doing life intentionally,” he adds. “We travel, ride four-wheelers, cook, swim, and just play. Being present is the gold.”

Sadie and her husband, Dan Vollmer, have been happily married for 27 years.

“My husband and I enjoy our local festivals and love supporting UL Ragin’ Cajuns Athletics,” she offers.

When it comes to passions outside of work, both owners prefer to stay active: RJ is getting back into CrossFit while diving deep into nonfiction books, writing, and spiritual and personal growth. And Sadie is a marathoner with global goals.

“I have completed four of the six World Marathon Majors, and I am running the London Marathon at the end of April,” she elaborates.

Outside the office, they’re also deeply embedded in the Acadiana community. R.J. has served on the Habitat for Humanity board for five years and is currently Chairman.

“I do a lot of adjudicated (blighted) properties that have been abandoned, and we come in and acquire the properties from the city and build houses on them,” he states. “I want my life to be about more than closings — I want it to matter. And if you’re the kind of Realtor who thinks the same way, we’re probably going to work really well together.”

Moreover, Sadie has served on the board of the



Acadiana Center for the Arts and is a longtime Festival International Rain Angel.

Looking Ahead

There’s no denying the title industry is evolving. R.J. is ready to embrace the change while keeping customer service at the forefront of Standard Title’s mission.

“Technology has transformed the industry — digital closings, remote notaries, AI in underwriting — but it’s also made personal service more rare,” R.J. notes. “The title business used to be local, relational, and accountable. I think we’re going to see a return to those roots though. Clients want professionals who care, who answer the phone, and who know what they’re doing.”

And despite the challenges of the past few years, R.J. is hopeful.

“We have weathered storms and this one was the most significant,” he concludes. “We had 15 years of record growth, so the past two years have been tough — but we’re marching along fine now, the worst is behind us.”

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➤ **“My mantra is: ‘PROTECT THE DEAL, PROTECT THE PEOPLE.’”**



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**REAL ESTATE JOURNEY
AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

What inspired you to take the leap into real estate, and what was that first year like for you?

Putting full trust in God and being intentional in my prayers about letting Christ take full control of my life. I have a son to take care of. At the time, I was a single mom. What I had chosen to do was so unfulfilling. It was no longer Sydney's plan, it was his. My first year in real estate was actually kind of good. I definitely still struggled, but it was the pivot/experience that I needed.

What's one transaction or client experience that had a lasting impact on you?

This is a hard one. All of my transactions are uniquely impactful, but it was a first-time home buyer. She did not at all think she would be able to get approved, let alone purchase. Not only did she get approved, but the full transaction up until closing was seamless and fun. We still keep in touch.

If you could go back and give your rookie self one piece of advice, what would it be?

Don't take things so personal in business. The worst things happen when you're in business for yourself and you just have to allow yourself a few moments(and I really mean just a few) and MOVE ON!

What's a personal milestone or achievement in your career that you're most proud of?

I am most proud of capping every year since I have been with EXP, along with making my organization "Agent of the Year" in 2024. I've exceeded my own expectations. With that said, it's allowed me to experience and touch so many lives.

What's the best piece of advice a mentor or colleague has ever given you?

"Don't worry about the outcome. It's the process that matters." This spoke to me because I really am a people pleaser. I want everybody to be happy at all times. I want the outcome of whatever I do to be great. That's not the case all of the time. Things are going to fall apart, people are going to disappoint, and you're not going to be everyone's cup of tea. Keep being yourself and operating in love. You will win.

CHALLENGES AND GROWTH

How do you handle difficult clients or challenging personalities in negotiations?

Buying or selling a home are two of the biggest things someone can ever do. This brings out every emotion in someone. I often see all sides of my clients during these processes. It is my job to make sure they are comfortable even in the



toughest situations. I also pride myself on explaining things as many times as I need to for clear understanding. I do not let my clients go to bed confused. When emotions are high, I give a few “cut up for free” cards(laugh out loud), but I am definitely sure to set healthy client/ realtor relationship boundaries. We’re all human, and in the end, we are all smiles.

How do you stay resilient when deals fall apart or the market shifts unexpectedly?

Life in general is filled with seasons. How much fun would it really be if everything always worked out? BORINNNNNNG! Bring it on boo! I’ll fix me a drink and may shed a few tears, but keep it pushing.

What’s a challenge you’re still working on overcoming in your career today?

Although I mentioned it in another answer, I am a huge people pleaser. I often put my clients before myself. I am still working on shutting my phone/ brain off at a certain time.

How do you manage stress when juggling multiple deals at once?

As weird as this may sound, I operate best in chaos. My life growing up was never “organized” or “militant,” so I’ve learned to thrive in a chaotic environment. I love it.

What’s a misconception people have about being a realtor that you wish more people understood?

If I hear one more person say, “All realtors do is go to lunch, ride around, and get paid,” I may scream. We wear so many hats(PROUDLY). Just to name a few: Therapist, negotiator, auntie, friend, confidant...the list goes on. We spend hours, days, and sometimes months before we get one red cent. If we got paid by the hour, we’d be making waaayyyyy more.

PERSONAL INSIGHT

What’s a personal or business slogan that keeps you motivated every day?

Romans 11:36; For from him and through him and to him are all things!



“Keep being yourself and operating in love. You will win.”

To him be glory forever.” No matter what day I’ve had, what I’ve received or did not receive, it’s all Jesus’ plan. I truly believe the life he’s given me is far better than what I would have done without him. I am blessed and my family is blessed.

Where do you see yourself in five years, both personally and professionally?

In five years, I plan to still be as happy and blessed as I am today. I have to be transparent, I am not goal-oriented or driven. I take things day by day and situation by situation. I can’t tell you where I “plan” to be, but wherever it is I know I’ll be having a blast, smiling, and bringing light and love.

How do you balance the hustle of real estate with your personal life and self-care?

If there’s one thing I’ll do, it’s self-care. I will definitely be working simultaneously, but you will see me having a drink, walking into the nail or hair salon, and in a boutique, yapping my lips off.

What’s one non-negotiable daily habit that helps you stay focused and successful?

I have to start my day off with praise and worship. My son knows on the way to school that he cannot listen to his favorite music until we get our praise and worship and prayers in.

What’s one thing your clients would be surprised to learn about you?

They would be very surprised to know that I love to sleep. I almost always answer or text back right away, no matter the time. Sometimes I answer in the middle of a nap and sound fully energized. I guess I’d make a good actor, too? If you’re a current or past client reading this, SURPRISE!



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Parish Proud Day

GIVING BACK WITH PURPOSE

On a beautiful day in the heart of Acadiana, members of our real estate community came together for a special event that combined service, community spirit, and a whole lot of heart—**Parish Proud Day**. Organized in partnership with **Parish Proud**, a nonprofit dedicated to litter mitigation, beautification, and revitalization efforts across our region, the day was a meaningful opportunity to roll up our sleeves and give back.

Our project for the day took place at the **Greenhouse Senior Center**, where volunteers joined forces to paint the facility’s fence and help brighten up the space for the seniors who call it home. The weather couldn’t have been more perfect, and the smiles on everyone’s faces told the story of a day well spent.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our **Preferred Partner and Event Sponsor, Nexa Mortgage**, for helping make this day possible. Your support allowed us to create a memorable and impactful experience for everyone involved.

To **Parish Proud**—thank you for your ongoing dedication to Acadiana. Your efforts to uplift and care for our community do not go unnoticed, and we are honored to stand alongside you. We’re already looking forward to the next Parish Proud Day and the continued opportunity to make a positive difference—together.



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