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Burrous**

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ON THE RISE
Dane Hensley

FEATURED REALTOR[®]
Emily Schlabs

SPOTLIGHT REALTOR[®]
Nick Simpson

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT
Stephanie Ratty, Lubbock
National Bank

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The Pets of Real Estate

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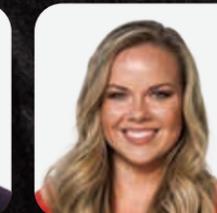
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KIM BURROUS

After years of working alongside her family members in their business, becoming a REALTOR® was a dream Kim Burrous always kept close to her heart. Once her children had grown and left the nest, she knew the time was right to pursue real estate. In 2013, Kim transitioned from being a certified family law mediator and stay-at-home mom to earning her license. She hit the ground running, and with passion, drive, and a deep-rooted work ethic, she quickly made her mark in the industry.

Diving headfirst into the industry, Kim strived to find a brokerage that aligned with her values and would support her growth to become the best REALTOR® she could be. She chose Coldwell Banker, a company with a long-standing reputation for upholding high moral standards. Founded after the San Francisco earthquake in the 1800s, Coldwell Banker was America's first real estate company. Ethical business practices have always been a pillar of the company. "I love this story, and when I met with the leadership at Coldwell Banker, I could feel this sense of integrity," Kim shares. She knew she wanted to practice real estate with a company like that—and she still remains with Coldwell Banker.

What makes real estate worth the time and effort? For Kim, the answer is helping and serving—because everyone deserves a place to call home. "It sounds cliché, but it's not," Kim expresses. Life happens at home—family dinners, relaxing, entertaining, and even decorating Christmas trees—and finding a home for someone and handing over the keys is extremely rewarding. The process is emotional and also an important business deal. Kim describes the experience as a delicate balance that culminates in something beautiful.

Kim believes that strong communication—one of her greatest strengths—is the key to standing out in real estate. "I pride myself on providing a personal touch because no two buyers, sellers, or transactions are ever the same," she shares. With an intuitive ability to connect with people from



all walks of life, Kim takes the time to understand each client's needs and dreams. Her goal? To make every home buying or selling encounter as smooth, enjoyable, and stress-free as possible.

According to Kim, one of the biggest challenges in real estate is aligning buyers and sellers, especially in today's ever-changing market. With high emotions and expectations on both sides, blending patience, experience, and finesse to unite everyone is critical. "That's where strong communication comes in," Kim explains, adding that

essential skills are listening closely, understanding each side's perspective, and finding common ground. Her ability to navigate challenging conversations and keep everything moving forward is a key reason clients trust her to guide them through even the most complex transactions.

Kim's most significant priority is carving out quality time with her family. She and her husband, Dal, who happens to be her teammate in real estate, make a dynamic duo at work and home. "It's never dull working with your spouse,"

“
When past
clients call me
again or send
their friends
and family
my way, it’s
the greatest
compliment.”



Kim laughs, “and I wouldn’t have it any other way.” Together, they’ve built a beautiful life with their two children and three grandchildren. Their daughter, Erin, is a banker in League City, TX, while their son, Jay, works in IT and currently resides in London. Rounding out the family is their beloved fur baby, Lucy, an affectionate English Springer Spaniel who keeps life lively wherever she goes.

A fun fact about Kim: She’s an avid birdwatcher. Her love for spotting feathered friends has even rubbed off on her grandkids, who now excitedly share stories of birds they’ve seen in their backyards. The quiet passion brings Kim joy and mindfulness. She also deeply adores the mountains—her haven. The crisp air and stillness of nature make the mountains a perfect place for finding peace, rest, and a chance to recharge.



A large part of Kim’s business comes from repeat clients and referrals—something she doesn’t take lightly. “When past clients call me again or send their friends and family my way, it’s the greatest compliment,” Kim says with a smile. “It lets me know I’ve done my job well and am living up to my goal of being the best REALTOR® I can be.”

Kim is eternally grateful. She feels humbled that God has blessed her with a wonderful family, friends, and two careers that have allowed her to serve.

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DANE HENSLEY

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When did you start your career in real estate?

I became an agent in 2020 but began building homes with my dad in 2014.

What did you do before you became a REALTOR®?

I was an ICU nurse for a couple of years and was in nurse practitioner school before deciding to be involved in real estate.

Share the life events that led you to real estate.

Building homes with my dad was the catalyst for me choosing real estate as a career. It instilled a passion for helping others.

What do you find most fulfilling about your work?

Closing and seeing families live in and love these homes we've worked on for months is the most fulfilling aspect of my job.

What do you see for your real estate future?

We are growing our building, land, and real estate companies. We are focused on becoming better, more streamlined, and more productive to ensure a better product at a quicker turnaround.

How and why did you choose your current brokerage?

We started our brokerage in 2023. We wanted to bring ours and my family's properties under one roof.

What drives you to keep going on tough days?

My family and my team. Knowing I have people who rely on us to put forth our best foot and a good product pushes me to strive harder.

Do you have any mentors or people you look up to?

My dad, Ronnie Hensley, and my business partner/co-owner of our brokerage, Austin Martin. Knowing the work they put into making our companies run inspires me to be better every day.

How would others describe you?

Determined and hardworking!

What sets you apart?

Being a REALTOR®, developer, and builder on our properties gives me a unique edge because clients get information straight from the source.

What are you most passionate about in real estate?

I am most passionate about putting out high-quality rural homes.

Share your favorite places to meet with clients.

Evie Mae's or Hillcrest.

Please share a story about a client or agent experience.

The most memorable home I can remember selling is my first of ours as an agent. My whole life, I have been

involved in the building process but never on the sales side of our company. Once I sold our first one and realized I could do it, I was determined to do as much as possible.

What would you do differently if you were starting over in real estate?

Start sooner!

Tell us about your family.

I have an amazing support system. My wife, Jacy Hensley, is a hardworking

mother and teacher at New Deal ISD. Our son, Jack, is 2 1/2, and our daughter, Emma, is 1 month old. We love spending time with our kids—as long as I am with them, that's all I care about. We are huge Texas Tech fans, so if Tech is playing, we are probably watching.

How do you define success?

To me, success is about relationships. You can have all the money, but are you close with your family? Your friends? My version of success is having a great



Photo provided by Dane



home life, providing for my children, and setting them on their path to happiness and success.

What do you want to be remembered for?

I want to be remembered as a hardworking, kind, Christian man and father. Being a father is my greatest achievement and the most important part of my life.

What are you most grateful for?

My family. My dad instilled a work ethic in me at a young age—to go out and make things happen for myself. I am beyond grateful he did that. I'm also thankful for my wife and her support. She understands that there are no days off in real estate.

What is something that not many people know about you?

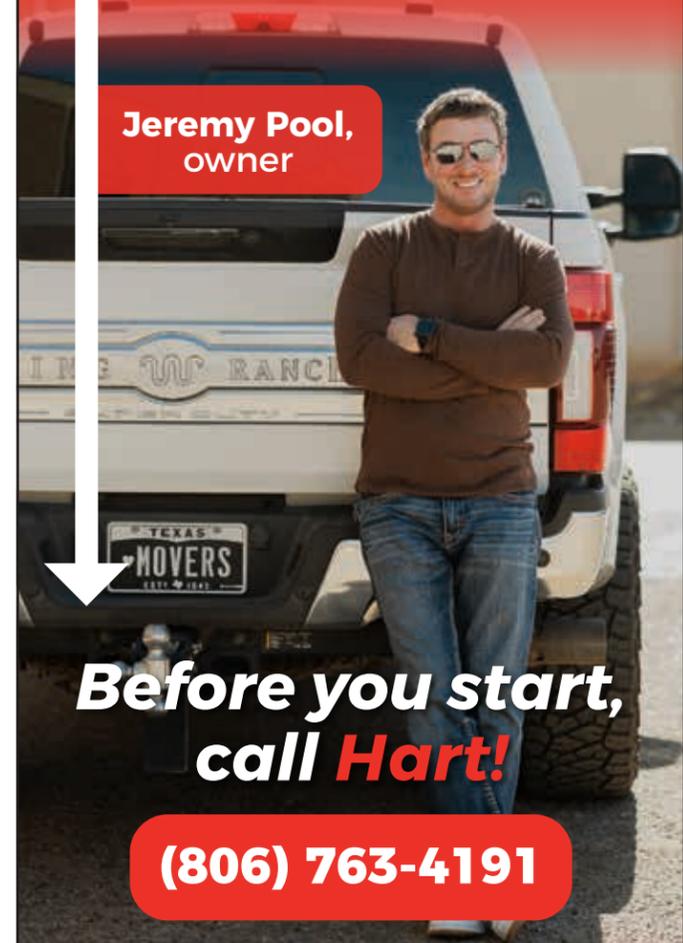
I am an avid European soccer fan. I go at least once a year to catch a couple of games. I am also a big hunter and spend a lot of time hunting in the fall and winter when I should be working!

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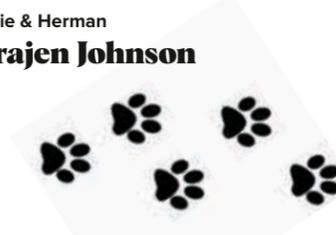


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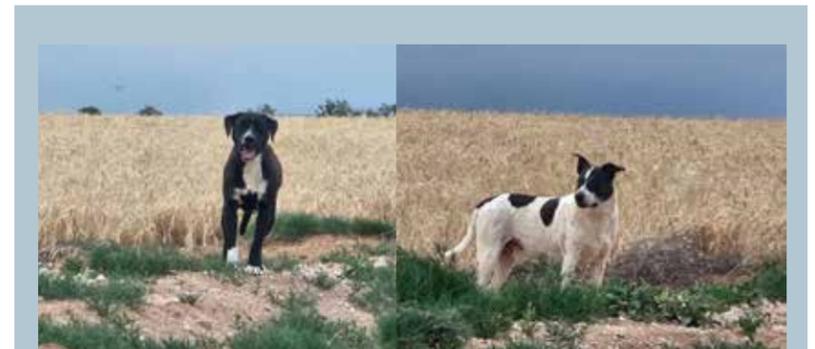
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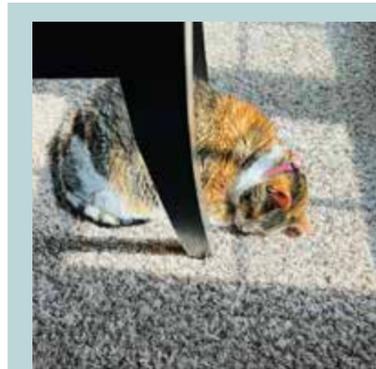
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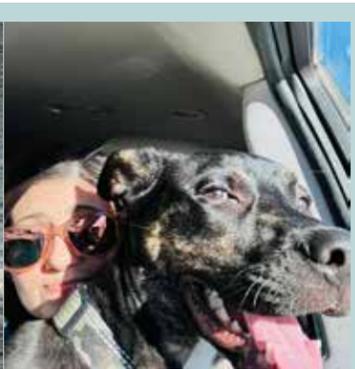


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Michael Boulos

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Lubbock National Bank

STORY BY KAELEA PENA • PHOTOS BY ALICEA MULLINS, ALICEA JARE PHOTOGRAPHY

Lubbock National Bank (LNB) isn't just the largest family-owned bank in the country—it's a legacy of more than 130 years. With roots in the Texas Panhandle, LNB has begun expanding its presence across West and South Texas.

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One of the team's top producers is Stephanie Ratty, a loan officer with 10 years of mortgage experience and a drive that hasn't faded since Day 1. Her passion and LNB's trusted reputation make the home financing process feel less like a transaction and more like a partnership.

When Stephanie stepped into mortgage lending, she knew she had found her calling. She was born in Pampa, TX, and raised in Dimmitt until she was a teenager, finishing school in Plainview. She grew up in a fire station, so when she began her career as a mortgage loan officer, she quickly discovered that the fast-paced, people-focused nature of the job was right up her alley. With a natural ability to connect with clients





and a sharp eye for detail, Stephanie thrives in an environment where every day brings a new opportunity to make a difference. “The best thing about being a mortgage lender is helping people achieve their goals and dreams,” she says. Her passion for guiding others through one of their most significant decisions has made her successful and fulfilled in her work.

Why bank with LNB? Because it’s not like the rest. If you think all banks are the same, think again. What sets LNB apart is its genuine commitment to staying local and personal. “When we say we’re LOCAL, we mean it,” says Stephanie. “We’re not too big for any customer.” At LNB, the team makes decisions quickly, keeps fees low, and prioritizes customers over profits. This personal, community-driven approach makes LNB a loyal partner.

LNB offers a variety of loan products. If clients don’t qualify for a traditional mortgage, LNB has in-house loan options that have helped many people achieve their dream of homeownership.

Banking should be easy, convenient, and tailored to each person, so LNB continually invests in the latest technology to meet and exceed customer expectations. “The innovation goes far beyond smartphone apps,” Stephanie explains. “From launching new products to exploring better ways to serve communities, we’re always looking ahead. At LNB, settling for the status quo isn’t in our DNA.”

When she’s not helping clients navigate the mortgage process, Stephanie treasures quality time with her family, including her two beautiful daughters. Whether in the kitchen cooking something special or fishing at the lake, she cherishes every moment. Her oldest daughter is wrapping up her final semester at Texas Tech, while her youngest is making her mark as a freshman at Liberty High School—already earning a spot on the varsity softball team.

Stephanie hopes people remember her as someone who always gave her best. Life is a journey filled with highs



and lows, triumphs and setbacks—sometimes, those setbacks paved the way to success. “I want to be remembered as someone who walked her path with a smile, proud of what I’ve accomplished and at peace with the journey,” she shares. That grounded perspective and quiet determination define her.

For Stephanie, success is an ongoing, never-ending journey. Setting her eyes on a goal is just another step along the way. “Success is always moving forward with the mentality that I am better than I was yesterday but not as good as I will be tomorrow,” Stephanie reveals.

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EMILY SCHLABS

Keller Williams

STORY BY KAELEA PENA
PHOTOS BY ALICEA MULLINS, ALICEA JARE
PHOTOGRAPHY (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

In the fashion world, Emily Schlabs had mastered the art of styling—in a space where creativity and confidence came naturally. But something inside her was calling for more. Emily decided to step away from the familiar and leap into the unknown. “I walked away from the world I loved to pursue something that felt equally thrilling but full of uncertainties—it was a risk, but there’s no looking back now,” she shares jokingly. That fearless move wasn’t just about a career change but about growth, passion, and embracing a new chapter with open arms.

Thriving in her role as a sales associate, Emily eventually stepped into a manager and buyer position at Hemline Lubbock, where she shined curating stylish looks for clients. But then, COVID hit. Almost overnight, the world paused. Events were canceled, travel plans vanished, and fashion shifted to one word: loungewear. “I hated it,” Emily admits. The creative spark that once lit up her days had dimmed.

All the while, REALTORS® she had styled over the years kept nudging her—“You’d be amazing in real estate,” they said. At first, she brushed off their remarks. But as the world changed, so did her perspective. With some encouragement (and a stimulus check), Emily made a bold move: She signed up for real estate classes, leaned on her REALTOR® clients for guidance, and started soaking up everything she could. “Thanks to the support of my now-husband and parents, I took the leap, quit my job, and became a full-time REALTOR® in 2020,” she shares.

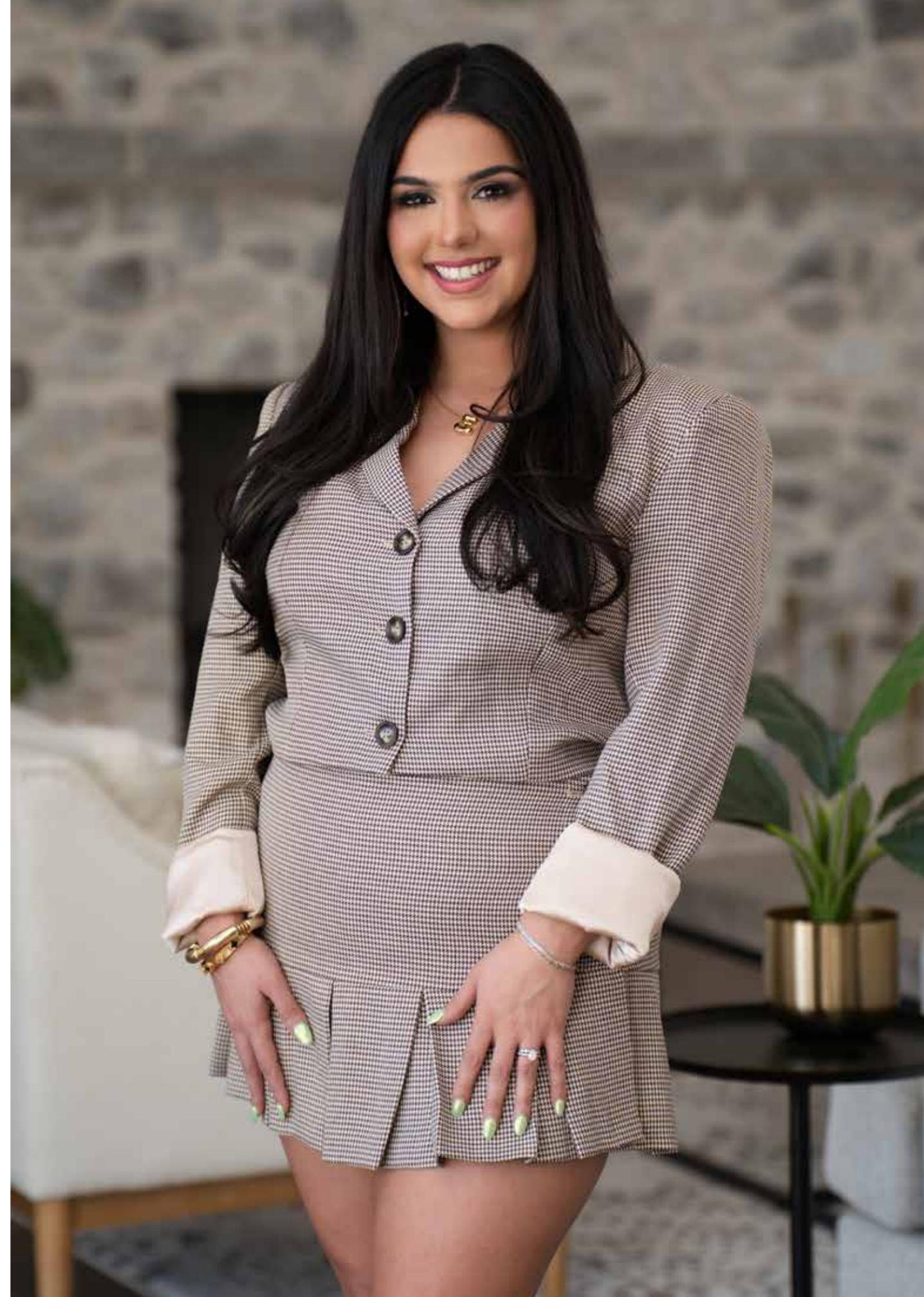




Photo by Pam K. McNutt

“Many of my clients become like family. Knowing they trust me for future needs and refer me to others makes this work truly fulfilling.”

To support her new career, Emily knew she needed more than just a brokerage—she needed a place where people would believe in her potential, align with her values, and guide her growth every step of the way. She chose Keller Williams because its faith-based foundation of putting God first, followed by family and business, immediately gave her peace and comfort. The office environment was welcoming, with an incredible camaraderie and a strong sense of community. Tara Newton and the leadership team genuinely care about each agent’s success; that support made all the difference for Emily. She also loved the office dynamic and the agents. “Now, those agents are some of my closest friends, and we truly do life together,” Emily smiles.



For Emily, real estate is a calling. What fuels her most is helping first-time buyers, especially those who never thought homeownership was within reach. “There’s nothing like seeing someone realize their dream of owning a home,” she emphasizes. “Being a part of that moment is incredibly rewarding.”

But Emily’s passion doesn’t stop there. She’s also a champion for the Lubbock community, proudly highlighting everything the city has to offer—from its vibrant culture to its welcoming neighborhoods. Emily is a trusted guide through one of life’s biggest transitions, and her business relationships often grow into lasting friendships. “Many of my clients become like family,” she says. “Knowing they trust me for future needs and refer me to others makes this work truly fulfilling.”

Additionally, Emily has been a proud partner with the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization for the past five years, directly impacting the lives of local

youth. She also leads the Keller Williams volunteer group for St. Benedict’s; her deep commitment to Lubbock goes beyond real estate—she’s dedicated to making the city a better place.

When Emily isn’t helping her clients in real estate, she’s soaking up time with the people who matter most—her family and friends. She and her husband, Darren, met at Texas Tech, and they are at almost every Red Raider sporting event, cheering on their alma mater. They share their lives at home with their fur baby, Zara. They love weekend getaways and hanging out with their nieces and nephews. “We’re also fortunate to have an amazing community of friends and family in Lubbock—whether grabbing drinks or Sunday family dinners, we love doing life with them,” Emily shares.

Looking back on her journey into real estate, Emily wouldn’t change a thing. “I truly believe everything happens for a reason,” she says. She’s passionate about becoming a leader in the industry and helping others

“I truly believe everything happens for a reason.”

succeed just as she did, especially as a solo agent. She also envisions building a family of her own. She is determined to strike that meaningful balance between career and personal life—proving that having both is possible with heart, hustle, and purpose.

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NICK SIMPSON

Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Blū Realty

STORY BY DAN STEELE
PHOTOS BY ALICEA MULLINS, ALICEA
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For Nick Simpson, the most fulfilling part of being a real estate agent is helping people get where they want to be for the next chapter of their story. No matter the challenge's complexity, he never gives up fighting to help them achieve their goals. "People count on me, and I do not take that lightly," he says. "Letting those around me down is not an option. My job is to make sure that my people have a roof over their heads and to bring the best possible solution for them."

Being able to serve others while having the financial freedom to pursue aspirations is what drew Nick into real estate. "I started my real estate career in February of 2020," he recalls. "At the time, I had spent 15 years in law enforcement, and with the highs and lows that come with that job, I started to consider if there could be more. Real estate had intrigued me for a few years, and I had seen enough to know the opportunities for financial freedom, the thrill of the unknown, and being my own business."

Nick brings the same dedication to his clients that he did to the public during his career in law enforcement, and he defines himself by his accessibility to and availability for his clients. "I am there when they need me, and they are my priority for one of the biggest and most expensive decisions they will make in their lifetimes," he declares.



“I KNEW I WANTED SOMEWHERE WITH A SOLID, SUPPORTIVE CULTURE THAT WOULD ALLOW ME TO REACH MY FINANCIAL AND PERSONAL GOALS.”

Having the proper support and tools to serve his customers is why Nick chose to hang his license at Blu Realty. “I knew I wanted somewhere with a solid, supportive culture that would allow me to reach my financial and personal goals,” he explains. “I had been working on my classes and searching for the right fit by talking to different agents about their experiences. I had met several of the Blu crew, including John Darden.” Although Nick was aware of the brokerage’s stellar reputation, he did not join until John boldly invited him to join the Blu Realty team while Nick was working at the brokerage’s annual Cyan Awards banquet. “John was hosting the event and called me out over the mic to ask if I wanted to be a part of Blu—in front of a room full of people,” Nick reflects. “It sounds unnerving, but that day, I decided to join. I have been there ever since, and my business continues to grow and thrive because of that decision.”

When Nick isn’t delivering his clients top-notch service to help them achieve their real estate dreams, meeting with them at such places as LBK Brewery, Nashwell Café, and Brisas, he enjoys listening to podcasts such as *The GaryVee Audio Experience*, *All-In*, and *On the Market*. He also reads, listing *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, *The Laws of Human Nature*, *Start with No*, and *How to Win Friends & Influence Others* among his favorites.

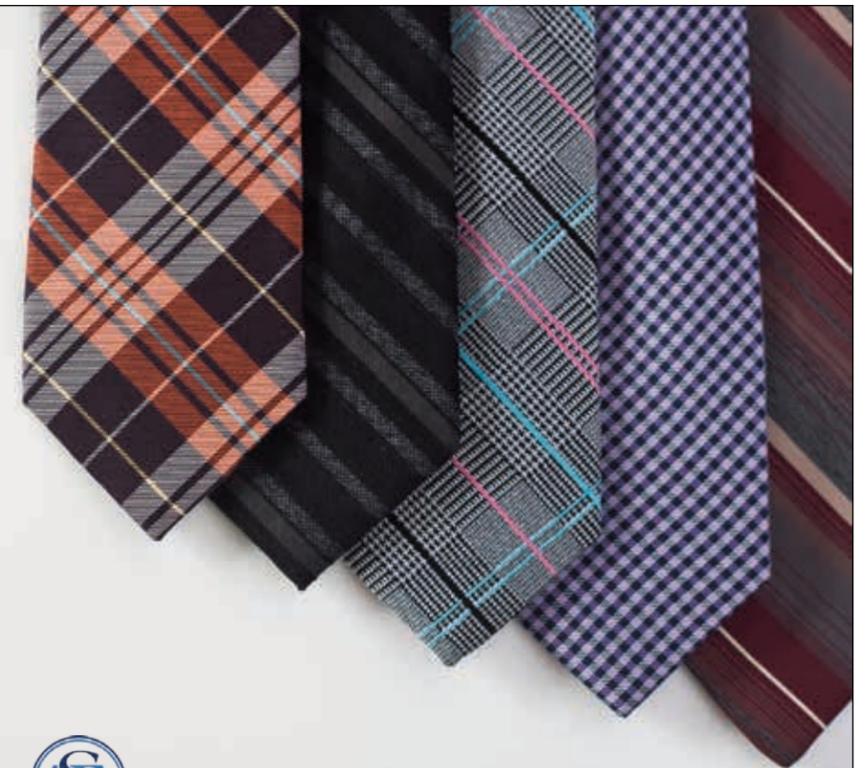


Nick’s absolute favorite activity, aside from helping his clients, is spending time with his wife and two dogs. “My wife, Ginny, and I have been married for nine years, and we have two 4-legged boys—Jack, a British lab, and Benny, a golden retriever,” Nick shares, adding that his wife and family are what he is most grateful for. “Ginny is such an integral part of everything I am able to accomplish despite all that she has on her plate. She is absolutely amazing and makes me a better person.” They enjoy taking their furry boys to the dog park or a brewery, traveling, hanging out with friends, and sharing “driveway drinks” with their neighbors on perfect West Texas evenings.

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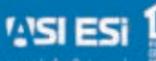


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Your Future's So Bright, You've Gotta Wear Shades



BY 2025 LAR
PRESIDENT ANDREA
STURDIVANT

Welcome SUMMER! This month's title comes from the 1986 one-hit wonder by Timbuk3: "The future's so bright, I gotta wear shades." It's a catchy line from an impactful decade, but it holds real wisdom as we reflect on how far our industry has come—and where it's heading next.

internet platforms, CRMs, AI-driven lead gen, social media strategy—the core of our business is still people, relationships, and local expertise.

We are in another amazingly transformative time in selling real estate with Association and MLS consolidations, evolving marketplaces, compensation diversion, and a stronger emphasis on professionalism and specialization. The most successful REALTORS® will be those who own their niche, invest in their craft, and confidently wield today's technology. At LAR, we're here to help you shine. From continuing education to networking events and tech tools, we're equipping members to stay sharp in a competitive and rapidly changing market. Check out the calendar on the member dashboard this month—you're sure to find something that sparks your growth.

So yes—it's bright out there, not just because the sun is beating down on the South Plains, but also because the future of real estate in Lubbock is full of opportunity. Dig out your shades, roll up your sleeves, and be active in creating what's next.

Let's have some fun. Step back to 1986: REALTORS® were rocking shoulder pads and showing properties without smartphones, the internet, or Google Maps. Listings lived in spiral-bound MLS books, and you had to drive around and pick up keys to show houses. Contracts were typed—yes, typed—on carbon paper, and if you wanted to deliver a counteroffer, you better hope the fax machine didn't jam. Mortgage rates had come DOWN to an eye-watering 16% in 1986, but LAR agents didn't flinch. They got creative, built trust face-to-face, and closed deals with sheer hustle and heart. I wonder if agents in 1986 could imagine what selling real estate would look like in 2025. Some are still practicing in our Association—sit down with one of them, and you'll have an amazing perspective on today's market.

Back then, the Lubbock Association of REALTORS® had 619 members. Today, we're a network of almost 1,700 professionals—and growing. While the tools have changed—



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