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MORASSO

AGENT  
SPOTLIGHT:  
LORI BROWN

AGENT ON  
THE RISE:  
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Mary Morasso



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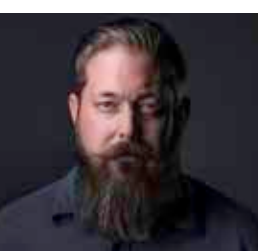
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# Mary Morasso

Navigating Life’s Twists To Thrive

PHOTOS BY JAY DUNBAR OF GREAT LAKES AERIAL VIDEO SERVICES

PHOTOS TAKEN AT LOMBARDO HOMES MODEL AT STILLWATER CROSSING IN MACOMB TOWNSHIP

It’s easy to imagine that Mary Morasso might have stayed in the classroom, grading paper and shaping young minds, but life threw a few curveballs. Today, she is a thriving associate broker at Keller Williams Paint Creek and is transforming lives in a different way — through real estate.

“I got licensed in 2017, and I was doing real estate part time while teaching full time,” Mary said. “I didn’t know if I’d ever do it full-time, but I quickly learned that it was tough to balance it as a side gig.”

By 2020, Mary had transitioned fully into real estate, motivated by personal changes — most notably, her divorce and the birth of her daughter. “Real estate, as a profession, was more accommodating to the life of a single mom than teaching was,” she explained.

Mary’s career has been defined by resilience and adaptability. Her journey from high school teacher to top-producing agent might sound unconventional, but her diverse background gave her a unique perspective. “Before becoming an agent, I was a teacher, wedding coordinator, and house cleaner,” she said.

Other than work experience, family played an important role in shaping Mary as well. “My parents are the biggest influence in my life,” she shared. “They challenged me and my siblings to be contributing members of society. They set examples of generosity daily in big and small ways.”

That family influence, coupled with Mary’s drive to give her daughter the best life possible, propelled Mary forward in her real estate career. “Before having my daughter, my goal was to just get by,” she said. “Becoming a mom gave me purpose and a reason to thrive. I am so incredibly grateful for the responsibility of being a mom; it has defined my path in every sense of the word.”



In a competitive industry, finding the right support system can be the key to unlocking potential, and Mary is grateful to have found that in her team — In Network Real Estate Group. “I remember being unimpressed with the positive atmosphere at first, questioning its legitimacy,” she admitted. Four years later, the team’s influence is clear. “This team has had an impact on more than just my business:

It influenced my attitude and allowed me to get out of my own way to achieve success, independence, personal growth, and peace,” Mary added.

With a team of approximately 30 agents — along with a productivity coach, vice president of sales, and CEO — Mary appreciates the continuous motivation for growth. “What makes our team awesome is the constant push to be better. Someone from our team is always available and directing us to necessary resources and encouraging us to step outside of our comfort zones,” she shared.

Like many other agents, Mary’s rise in the industry hasn’t been without challenges. “The ups and downs of the market have been tough,” she admitted. Mary, however, views these difficulties as





opportunities for growth. “The continual need to grow and change isn’t going anywhere, and that’s something I’m coming to appreciate,” she added.

Mary left the traditional classroom behind, but her passion for education is stronger than ever. “Education is one of the most important parts of my business,” she said. “Education is key. I want to be a lifelong learner, and I’m always open to improving myself.”

**“AS AN AGENT, I WANT TO BE REMEMBERED AS SOMEONE WHO ADVOCATED FOR HER CLIENTS AND PREPARED THEM FOR THEIR NEXT STEPS IN THEIR HOMEOWNERSHIP JOURNEY.”**

These days, Mary is focused on helping young professionals understand their finances, branching off her real estate business to coach people on budgeting and financial literacy. “I’ve heard too many people say, ‘I wish I knew this before I bought.’ It’s our job as agents to guide the homebuying process,” she explained.

Outside of the hustle and bustle of real estate, Mary is happily spending time with her 6-year-old daughter, Daniella. When she’s not homeschooling Daniella, they are often crafting, making jewelry, or tackling the “1,000-hours outside” challenge.

As for philanthropy, Mary’s spirit shines through. She supports several crisis pregnancy centers, which provide outreach to mothers in need. “Being a single mom, I know how hard it is to get food on the table. These organizations resonate with me on a personal level,” she shared.

Mary’s future in real estate looks as bright as ever. She’s passionate about continuing to help her clients achieve their dreams — whether that’s achieving homeownership, building generational wealth, or simply securing a better financial future. “I

want to always be in the real estate business, one way or another,” Mary said. “The lessons I’ve learned and the growth I’ve experienced are things I will always crave.”

When it comes to success, Mary’s definition for it is “peace, independence, and freedom to live the life I ought to live. It means being able to put my God first, my daughter second, and my business third.”

As for how she wants to be remembered, Mary keeps it simple: “I want to be remembered as a good mom whose daughter never questions whether or not she is loved. As an agent, I want to be remembered as someone who advocated for her clients and prepared them for their next steps in their homeownership journey.”

With her focus on education and growth, Mary is a shining example of what happens when a person turns their life’s challenges into opportunities. With each closing, Mary is not just selling homes — she’s building a legacy.



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# Lori Brown

A LIFE OF SERVICE, STRENGTH, AND SUCCESS

PHOTOS BY LINDSEY NEVISON

Lori Brown has built a thriving real estate career that spans nearly two decades, but her path to becoming a real estate broker is rooted in a lifelong passion for helping people. Now with Oak & Stone Real Estate, she is excited to continue bringing that same dedication to every client she serves. Her story is one of resilience, personal growth, and a deep love for family that shines through in her work.

Before Lori received her real estate license in 2006, she spent years in the hospitality industry. “I had worked in the restaurant business since I was a teenager,” she explained. “I love working with the public, but as much as I loved the restaurant business, it can be stressful, especially with the long hours.” With her natural ability to connect with people, transitioning into real estate felt like a perfect fit. “Taking care of people was what I loved to do, so now I get to help them with the largest decision and purchase of their lives,” Lori added.

Lori’s career kicked off during one of the most turbulent periods in recent history — the 2007-2008 financial crisis. Despite the tough timing, Lori embraced the challenge head-on. “The foreclosure/short sale market was in full bloom, so why not learn at that time?” she recalled with a laugh. “It was a wild ride, but it made me stronger, and I’ve dedicated my career to continually advancing my education in order to better serve my clients.”

Lori has a bachelor’s degree in business and an associate degree in computer science, so between



her education and professional background, she was provided the tools to succeed in real estate. Throughout her career, she has accumulated numerous accolades, including the Hour Detroit Real Estate All-Star, and was named among the Top 300 in Macomb County. During her time at RE/MAX, she also earned the Hall of Fame and 100% Club awards. Last year alone, she closed over \$7.8 million in total volume, a testament to her expertise and dedication.

Beyond her professional achievements, Lori admits that her family has been deeply influential in shaping who she is today. “My greatest accomplishment would be my daughter, Jessica, and my two grandsons, Jackson and Lincoln,” she said proudly. Her family is at the center of her life, and it’s clear that her bond with them drives her forward, especially now with the exciting news that Jessica is expecting a baby girl.

Lori lights up when she talks about her late husband, John Gusumano, who passed away in 2020 due to COVID-19. “John was the greatest man I’ve ever met,” she said. “We had the best life together, and he always supported my career, even if my ideas made him crazy. He was always so proud of me. Losing him was the hardest thing I’ve ever been through. My grandson, Jackson, doesn’t know it, but he’s the one who saved me.”

As she reflects on her career, Lori acknowledges the unique challenges real estate has presented, especially when she has to deliver bad news. “Ugh, giving bad news is the worst! Sometimes deals don’t go as planned, and it’s always daunting to call the client or the agent with the bad news,” she said. “I’ve learned that if you maintain good communication throughout the transaction, you can build trust and rapport that can help weather those difficult moments.”

Lori’s commitment to educating her clients has become an important





part of her business philosophy. “Each transaction and client is unique! Educating clients is key right now, especially with so much going on in our industry,” she explained. “It’s not just about selling houses: It’s about making sure my clients understand every step of the process.”

“My favorite part is transforming a house into your home,” Lori added. “I love it when my clients send me before and after photos. Knowing I had a hand in helping create their dream home makes me happy.”

Despite working solo — “No team, just me!” — Lori manages to balance a busy real estate career with her personal life, and she wouldn’t have it any other way. “I love being able to juggle my schedule and still make time for family,” she said.

Outside of work, Lori loves spending time at her condo in Naples, Florida, boating on Lake St. Clair, crafting with her mom, and, most importantly, enjoying time with her grandsons. “Now that I don’t have John, my focus is on Jessica and my grandsons. Jackson always talks about his ‘papa,’ and even though he was so young when John passed, he remembers their time together, especially fishing and Florida,” she shared.

Lori is excited about what’s to come. “Real estate is ever-changing, and adapting with the times keeps me on my toes,” she shared. “My career has allowed me to meet my dreams and goals as a mom and grandma (aka ‘mimi’), and many of my clients are now my friends. I love watching them grow in their new homes.”

Lori’s advice for up-and-coming agents is to treat people with respect. “Treat them the way you would want to be treated. Bottom line,” she said. This philosophy has guided her through her career and life. “Success, to me, is happiness in your own life. You must find that happiness within yourself first in order to be productive and successful in business,” she added.

“  
Success, to me,  
is happiness in  
your own life.  
You must find  
that happiness  
within yourself  
first in order to  
be productive  
and successful  
in business.”

Whether Lori is navigating life’s personal challenges or the ups and downs of real estate, her spirit remains strong and compassionate, and she’s committed to making every moment count — which is what makes her a true standout, both in life and in business.




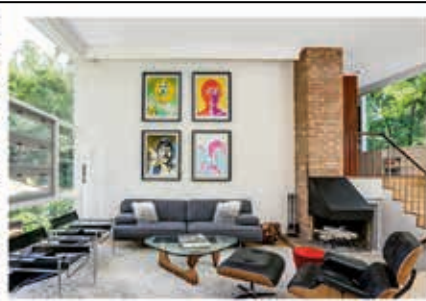



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From Politics to Properties

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**Not every real estate journey begins with open houses and MLS searches. For Gino Tozzi Jr., an associate broker with Real Estate One, it started with a Ph.D. in political science, a stint as a professor, and a consulting career that didn't quite feel like home. Seven years later, he has made a name for himself in Metro Detroit real estate. With a career volume exceeding \$32 million, Gino has earned numerous accolades and now serves as a leader in the industry.**

“When I started in June of 2017, I wasn't entirely sure about jumping into a 100%-commission business,” Gino recalled. “I'd been in well-paying positions with benefits — and the uncertainty was intimidating — but once I committed, I never looked back.”

For Gino, the transition to real estate wasn't entirely out of left field. Growing up in Macomb County, he worked for his family's building company and apartment complex during high school and college. “I was familiar with many aspects of real estate sales early on, but it wasn't until later that I saw it as my path forward,” he said.

Since embarking on his real estate career, Gino has amassed an impressive list of accomplishments. He's a member of the Million Dollar Roundtable and has earned Real Estate One's Gold Award, Diamond Award, and President's Council of Excellence. The Grosse Pointe Board of REALTORS® (GPBR) recognized him with its Outstanding Service Award, and he was named one of Expertise.com's “19 of the Best Agents in Metro Detroit.”



Photo submitted by Gino Tozzi Jr.

Gino's dedication to his clients is mirrored by his commitment to the real estate community. As vice president of the GPBR, a former president, and 2025 chair of the GPBR's Fair Housing Committee, he plays an active role in shaping the industry. Gino also serves as treasurer for Realcomp MLS and is a major investor in the REALTORS® Political Action Committee (RPAC).

Another one of Gino's passions is education. A graduate of the Michigan REALTORS® Leadership Academy, Gino has earned 12 designations and certifications, including Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR®), Graduate REALTOR® Institute (GRI), and Senior Real Estate Specialist (SRES®). “I thrive on educating people about our business,” he said. “Consultations with prospective clients are where I feel most at home — figuring out if we're the right fit and setting them up for success.”



Gino's journey is rooted in his upbringing and the lessons he learned from his family. He was raised by his father and grandparents after losing his mother at a young age, and he credits them for instilling values of compassion and determination.

“My dad and grandfather were significant influences in my life. My dad’s support and my grandfather’s success inspired me to aim high,” Gino said. “My grandmother’s care and compassion gave me a heart for customer service.”

Today, Gino and his wife, Courtney — whom he met in college — are raising two children — Dalton, 13, and Sydney, 11. Family time often includes attending church at Rockpointe Community Church, having movie nights, going on skiing trips, and cheering on Dalton’s football games or admiring Sydney’s artistic creations.

Another cornerstone of Gino’s life is philanthropy. He supports charities such as Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs, Life Remodeled, and Habitat for Humanity, and volunteers at his children’s school. “I believe we all have a responsibility to give back — whether it’s time, talent, or resources,” he said.

Gino’s ambitions don’t stop at real estate sales, though: He invests in properties and owns a vacation home in Florida, with plans to grow his portfolio into a robust passive income stream. “My ultimate goal is to have a portfolio of properties that generate more revenue than what I make selling homes,” he explained.

Gino’s advice to aspiring real estate agents reflects the focus and discipline that have defined his career: “Time is your

most finite commodity. Use it wisely. Work hard, but make sure your efforts are productive.”

Whether it’s navigating the complexities of a real estate transaction, mentoring new agents, or skiing with his family, Gino is always relentlessly pursuing excellence. “I never look back except to build a new future,” he said. Gino is a shining example of what it means to turn life’s challenges into opportunities — and inspire others to do the same.

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# DAVE THOMAS

**DAD LIFE AND DEALS:**  
HOW ONE AGENT TURNED REAL ESTATE INTO A LEGACY OF IMPACT

PHOTOS BY  
JAY DUNBAR  
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Dave Thomas remembers the exact day he traded his corporate badge for something far more fulfilling: freedom. On September 1, 2019, he bolted out of his office job and into a full-time real estate career — determined never to return to the “beige cubicle and pizza-party incentives” of his former life.

Today, Dave is not just living a life by design — he’s helping others do the same. As an expansion partner for the second office of Best Life & Co. - eXp Realty, he has 20 agents under his leadership in Downtown Romeo. With more than \$100 million in personal career sales and a growing number of rental properties and commercial ventures, Dave has proven that success in real estate doesn’t have to come at the cost of family time or personal fulfillment.

Dave’s journey into real estate began as a side hustle while working full time as a district sales manager for Chrysler. His initial motivation was to buy a few investment properties on the side to supplement his income, but what started as a strategic financial move quickly evolved into a true passion.

“I originally got licensed to bird-dog investment properties, but I quickly realized how much I enjoyed helping buyers, sellers, and first-time investors navigate the market,” Dave explained.

By 2019, Dave made the leap to full-time real estate, a decision fueled by his desire to work for himself and be more present for his growing family. “Being able to go to gymnastics at 2:30 p.m. on a Tuesday or be home for dinner at 5:15 p.m. — that’s winning. Real estate gave me that,” he said.

Early on, Dave leaned on industry veterans such as





Mark Z and Ken Hirschmann. “Mark was the first person to take the time to answer all of my questions — from how to run an open house to how to write a good offer. He was my first call for everything,” Dave said. Mark later introduced Dave to Ken, who had just founded Best Life & Co. and was moving their office to Royal Oak. “Ken has helped me tremendously since going full-time,” Dave added. “He helped me understand the business side of real estate — how to work on my business and improve my processes — which helped me evolve into the sales coach and leader that I am today.”

Best Life & Co. currently has 55 agents across their three offices in Royal Oak, Grand Rapids and Romeo. The Romeo office — which opened in 2023 — has grown to 20 agents and ended 2024 with over \$94 million in total sales, with the average agent closing 23 homes a year. Dave attributes their accomplishments to daily team calls, bi-weekly coaching sessions, and a no-excuses attitude. His favorite quote sums up Best Life’s production-focused culture: “Everyone likes sausage, but no one likes to see how it’s made.”

More than a business, real estate is a lifestyle that Dave shares with his wife, Erica — a fellow Oakland University track athlete — and their four children: Everleigh, 7, Daphne, 5, Asher, 3, and Noah, 7 months ... and their 10-year-old Yorkshire terrier, Pearl. Dave is determined to show that entrepreneurship and fatherhood are not mutually exclusive.

“You can grow a big business and still be an attentive dad and husband. You don’t have to sacrifice one for the other,” Dave shared. “You just have to be humble, coachable, and willing to take massive action. I want to exemplify this day in and day out for my family.”

Dave’s personal real estate portfolio now includes nine doors, spanning from single-family homes, multi-family units, a mid-term rental, a short-term Airbnb in Florida, and even a historic 1857-built commercial building in Downtown Romeo that he developed into Best Life’s second location. According to Dave, he’s just getting started.

“I bought my first two rentals before I was ‘ready,’” Dave said. “That leap changed everything. Real estate is the engine that drives opportunity — not just for your career, but for generational wealth-building.”

That entrepreneurial spirit recently led Dave to an exciting new chapter: developing a restaurant on the first floor of his Romeo office, creating a new space where community and commerce intersect.

“This space will be a staple in Romeo for years to come,” Dave said. “None of it would have been possible if I hadn’t taken that first leap into real estate sales and investing.”



“  
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YOU HAVE,  
AND THE MORE  
DOORS OPEN  
FOR YOU —  
LITERALLY AND  
FIGURATIVELY.  
”



Dave is passionate about coaching and mentorship. Whether he’s helping a new agent navigate their first listing or empowering seasoned professionals to scale with systems, his leadership style is direct and rooted in experience.

“If you’re a new agent, join a team. Learn to convert at a high level. Learn to manage your pipeline,” Dave said. “You don’t have to do it alone.”

As Dave reflects on his journey from his small hometown of Almont — “not the end of the world, but you can see it from there” — to becoming a top-producing agent and investor, he credits his success to one thing: taking action before he felt ready.

“People wait for the perfect time, but failing is okay. Everything is a learning experience,”

Dave explained. “The more houses you sell, the more people you help, the more impact you have, and the more doors open for you — literally and figuratively.”

When he looks to the future, Dave has clear goals: continue expanding Best Life & Co.’s reach, grow his investment portfolio, and serve as a pillar in the Romeo community for decades to come. He wants to be remembered not only for his production numbers but also for the lives he has impacted — clients, agents, and family alike.

“I want to be known for helping people grow their business, for showing them tools and strategies they didn’t think they could use, and for encouraging them to take the leap,” Dave said. “No risk it, no biscuit.”



# FAQ



All about Macomb County Real Producers



Real Producers magazine started in Indianapolis in 2015 and is now in more than 130 markets across the nation.



More info at [www.macombcountyrealproducers.com](http://www.macombcountyrealproducers.com)

## Q: WHO RECEIVES THE MAGAZINE?

A: The top 300 real estate agents in Macomb County. We update our mailing list annually to ensure Real Producers reaches our area's top-producing agents.

## Q: WHAT IS REAL PRODUCERS ALL ABOUT?

A: Real Producers is a platform that brings together the most elite individuals and affiliates in Macomb County real estate. Every month we share stories of some of the area's most recognizable names in real estate, as well as the rising stars in the industry and the preferred partners that are highly recommended by top agents. Beyond the magazine, we host exclusive events that bring titans of real estate together.

## Q: HOW DO YOU GET FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: You have to be on the top 500 list to be a featured agent. We welcome nominations for other real estate agents, businesses, brokers, owners, or yourself. Office leaders can also nominate real estate agents. Though we can't guarantee a feature, we strongly encourage you to meet our team and attend our private events so we can get to know your story.

## Q: HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO BE FEATURED AGENT?

A: Absolutely nothing! Real Producers is not a pay-to-play model. We share real stories of Real Producers – no price tag attached.

## Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS SHOWN IN THE MAGAZINE AND AT EVENTS?

A: The businesses that sponsor the magazine and attend our events are some of the best vendors in Macomb County in their category. Find them listed in our index. We partner with businesses that top agents have recommended to us, so every single business you see in this publication has earned its "stamp of approval." Our team also vets every business to make sure they are a good fit and bring value to our powerhouse network.

## Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A BUSINESS?

A: If you've enjoyed working with a local business that isn't part of our preferred partner network, please email us their information at [terra.csotty@n2co.com](mailto:terra.csotty@n2co.com).

## Q: CAN I SUBMIT AN ARTICLE OR IDEA FOR REAL PRODUCERS?

A: Yes, we would love to hear from you! Email your ideas to [terra.csotty@n2co.com](mailto:terra.csotty@n2co.com).

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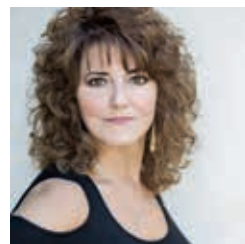
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