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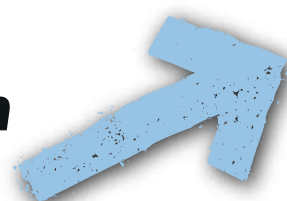
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Contents



Julie Fitts Queen **20** COVER STORY

PROFILES



26 Dondi Hopkins



14 Jason Marsh



30 Cohutta Fishing Company

IN THIS ISSUE

- 6 Preferred Partners**
- 14 Rising Star:** Jason Marsh
- 20 Cover Story:** Julie Fitts Queen
- 26 Dondi Hopkins:**
Real Growth In Real Time
- 30 Partner Spotlight:**
Cohutta Fishing Company



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WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH MCCABE
PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS

“Stop selling. Start helping.” – Zig Ziglar

Jason Marsh has always had a talent for sales and an eye for luxury. From working with one of the world’s most prestigious fashion brands to making a name for himself in luxury real estate, Jason knows how to put people first. With a background in luxury retail, Jason mastered the art of high-end service, tailoring every interaction to meet the unique needs of his clients. Now, as a rising star in real estate, he brings that same dedication, turning first-time buyers into lifelong clients and transforming properties into dream homes.”

A Unique Background

Licensed as a real estate agent just two years ago, Jason is no stranger to the world of buying and selling. “Back in 2006-2008, I was already buying, fixing, and flipping houses,” he shares. “I’ve been in the real estate game for years, just on the buying and selling side.” Before making real estate his full-time career, Jason was deeply immersed in corporate luxury client services. He got his start at Louis Vuitton, working in their Atlanta store. He knows all about cross-body bags, handbags, tote bags, and so much more. A talented salesperson, Jason was promoted and asked to relocate to Dallas to run their first call center in the United States.



“I had never run a call center before and had no idea what I was doing, but someone had faith in me,” he jokes.

That leap of faith paid off. When he arrived in Dallas in 2016, he had a team of 32 employees and four managers. Four years later, that team had grown to 600 employees and 32 managers across three locations. His reputation for building and scaling operations led him to New York, where he was tasked with opening the first U.S. call center for FENDI (the conglomerate that owns Louis Vuitton, Sephora, and other luxury brands). The experience shaped him, giving him an understanding of high-end clientele and how to deliver top-tier service. Little did he know that this experience laid the foundation for his future in real estate.

The Move to Blue Ridge and Real Estate

Despite his corporate success, Jason and his husband, David, always had a dream—living in Blue Ridge, Georgia. “We had owned land here for years. It was always our retirement plan,” Jason explains. “We kept coming back to the same question: why not now?” Realizing there was little luxury retail presence in Blue Ridge, Jason had to reinvent himself. With a lifelong passion for real estate, he reached out to a friend in the industry who encouraged him to make the leap. “She told me, ‘You’d knock it out of the park.’ That gave me the confidence to go for it.”



Initially, Jason split his time between real estate and his corporate role, traveling back and forth. But once he transitioned full-time into real estate, his career took off. “Being able to focus 100% on real estate changed everything,” he says. “Now, I get to see incredible homes and help others find their dream properties every day.”

Lessons from Luxury Sales

Jason’s past experience in luxury sales has given him a unique advantage in real estate. “At Louis Vuitton, I learned that excellent customer service

transcends price points. Whether someone is buying a \$200,000 home or a \$2 million estate, they deserve the same level of care and attention.”

His background also taught him how to connect with high-net-worth individuals. “I didn’t grow up in a wealthy family, so learning how to relate to ultra-wealthy clients was something I had to figure out,” he admits. “What I realized is that it’s all about listening. I may not have my own private jet stories, but I can engage in meaningful conversations by offering insights and asking the right questions.”



That focus on connection and service has become the hallmark of his real estate business. From implementing high-end marketing strategies—such as premium property signage with QR codes—to ensuring every client receives personalized attention, Jason has set himself apart in the Blue Ridge luxury market.

Passion for the Outdoors and Family Life

When he’s not working, Jason embraces everything Blue Ridge has to offer. “I love being outside—hiking, exploring, and just taking in the beauty of the area,” he says. “That’s one of the things I love most about real estate here—I get to be outdoors while helping people find homes in this incredible place.”

Jason and his husband, David, along with their Great Dane, Max, and their lively 20-year-old cat, Jos, enjoy the simple pleasures of small-town living. “We drive into Blue Ridge every morning, grab coffee from a local shop,



and enjoy the community. Interacting with locals and potential clients in an organic way is something I truly love.” David, a project manager for Microsoft, is also a self-published author with two books under his belt and a third on the way. Together, they enjoy spending evenings on their back deck, soaking in the natural beauty of their surroundings. It’s a great way to relax and recharge.

Looking Ahead

As Jason’s real estate career continues to grow, his passion remains the same: delivering an unmatched level of service. “At the core of my business is customer service—it’s always been my focus. Whether in fashion or real estate, it’s about making sure people feel valued and taken care of.”

Bringing a touch of luxury to the Blue Ridge Mountains, Jason Marsh is redefining the local real estate market, one exceptional client experience at a time.

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Julie Fitts Queen

BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY
ALLIE SANTOS

The Queen Of Building Dreams

Julie Fitts Queen recently built her 19th home — and she plans to stay there. A milestone that truly signifies her remarkable career in real estate, her upbringing in the development world, and her love for creativity and design, real estate has been a part of Julie's daily life ever since she can remember.

"This business is in my blood; I feel like I am right where I need to be," Julie begins. "Seeing my children be inspired and take interest in the business, and a strong work ethic inspired by my own parents keeps me motivated to be the best I can be every day." With over two decades of industry experience, a solid reputation as one of Re/Max's top agents worldwide, and a loyal client base that stretches far beyond Fannin County, Julie's success is as authentic as her Southern charm.

Born Into The Business
Raised in a family that was deeply involved in building, development, and design,

Julie's knowledge of the industry was second nature.

"I realized I loved everything about real estate ... the market I live in, meeting new people, and using everything I learned to further my knowledge and interest in the area, local builders, resources, planning, development, and staging."

Before pursuing her real estate license in 2001, Julie helped her mother with staging her grandparents' furniture store and also worked alongside her dad in his building and development company. She drew house plans, took CAD classes, and worked closely with builders on everything from new construction to commercial projects.

When her brother purchased a Century 21 brokerage and encouraged her to get licensed, Julie took the leap with two small children at home and never

looked back. Since then, she's become a force in the industry, earning recognition as the #1 Re/Max Realtor in Georgia for four consecutive years (2019-2022), placing in the Top 100 Re/Max agents in the United States, and finishing among the Top 100 Re/Max agents worldwide last year.

"I've been at it about as long as anyone in my market," she chuckles. "I've seen the boom, the recession, and the next rise in the market, and I know how to weather the changes to help my clients navigate both the good and the bad."

Built on Loyalty
While Julie works as a solo agent, she is quick to praise the phenomenal staff behind her impressive results at her Re/Max Town & Country branch in Blue Ridge.

Carrie Holloway has worked alongside Julie for 17 years



as her closing coordinator, providing wonderful support for her clients; and Julie's youngest daughter, Carley, joined the business about a year and a half ago and assists her mother with marketing efforts while also pursuing her builder's license.

"Both of them are phenomenal help and a huge asset to my business," Julie acknowledges. "I couldn't do this without them."

Julie also credits her consistent track record to her deep community ties and relationships with local vendors, developers, and contractors.



"From land development to environmental health, surveyors, and vendors — those relationships are crucial in helping my clients make informed decisions," she emphasizes.

Proud Southern Roots

Julie's clients know she's a trusted local expert. A lifelong Blue Ridge resident, her extensive knowledge of the area is unmatched.

"I'm southern to the core," she laughs. "I have the southern twang to prove it the minute I start talking, but I've learned

to relish that over the years. I'm proud of where I came from and I love sharing my hometown with others."

This local pride has played a huge role in her ability to genuinely connect with clients, whether they're looking to buy a multi-million-dollar vacation home or their very first house. "I don't associate myself with only luxury properties," Julie explains. "Sure, I enjoy those transactions, but I also take pride in helping the less-extravagant folks who are buying their first

home or land. Those clients are the foundation of my business, and I'll never forget that."

Her emphasis on treating every client with respect — no matter their price point — is a core value she learned from her father.

"As my Papaw always said, 'We all put our pants on the same way, and all want to be treated like our business is as important as the next person's.' That stuck with me," she adds.

Overcoming Challenges

While Julie's career may have seemed pre-determined, it hasn't always been smooth sailing. Breaking into a male-dominated industry by earning respect — especially in a rural area where new construction and development required specialized knowledge — came with its own set of barriers.

"Starting in the business young, with three small children often in tow, wasn't easy either," Julie recalls.

Despite those obstacles, Julie thrived by staying true to her values of professionalism, paying attention to the details,

and relationship-building while staying ahead of the curve.

"I've learned the importance of respect," she continues. "Respect for clients, fellow Realtors, lenders, and closing attorneys — it all matters. I've also learned how to read and communicate with lots of personalities depending on clients' expectations and personal needs, and how presentations with clients and other Realtors alike, often can make or break a deal."

Family Fun And Future Aspirations

When she's not in her Blue Ridge office, Julie is usually on the go with her growing brood. Family is everything to Julie, and her pride in her children is evident. Her oldest daughter, Courtney, a forensic accountant, lives in Boston with Julie's two-year-old grandson, Shepard. Julie's son, Collin, is not only involved in real estate but also owns a home maintenance business that caters to second-home owners in the area. And she enjoys working alongside her youngest, Carley, who is a proud new mom to her four-month-old grandson, Greyson.

Julie enjoys staying active, whether she's hiking, gardening, traveling, or spending time with her grandkids. She and her significant other, Jeff, love taking Jeep rides and relaxing at home with their spoiled fur babies.

Over the years, she's also made it a priority to give back to her beloved area in meaningful ways. Julie actively supports Snack in a Backpack, a local program that provides after-school snacks for children in need. She's also involved with the Parade of Homes, which funds scholarships for local high school students pursuing careers in trades or building-related industries.

"I've learned the importance of respect. Respect for clients, fellow Realtors, lenders, and closing attorneys — it all matters."

In addition to these efforts, Julie frequently donates to small business association events, local recreation programs, and school sports teams. She's even volunteered her time to assist with community festivals and has served on panels dedicated to improving and preserving the charm of the Blue Ridge area.

Looking ahead, Julie certainly has no plans of slowing down but she's also embracing new

opportunities. With her children becoming more involved in the business, Julie has her sights set on exploring her creative side.

"I'll keep building, designing, and staging — it's part of who I am," she concludes. "But down the road, I'd love to transition into something that blends my passion for creativity with serving the real estate industry. I'll leave that up to fate — I know things will unfold exactly as they're meant to."





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REAL Growth In Real Time

BY JESS WELLAR

“I want to leave my mark on this world helping as many people as I can by sharing everything I have learned from the past 29 years.”

That’s the mission behind *Getting Real with Real Estate and Life: Transform Your Career and Life One Honest Conversation at a Time*, the first book in a powerful new trilogy from seasoned Realtor, life coach, and now published author, Dondi Hopkins.

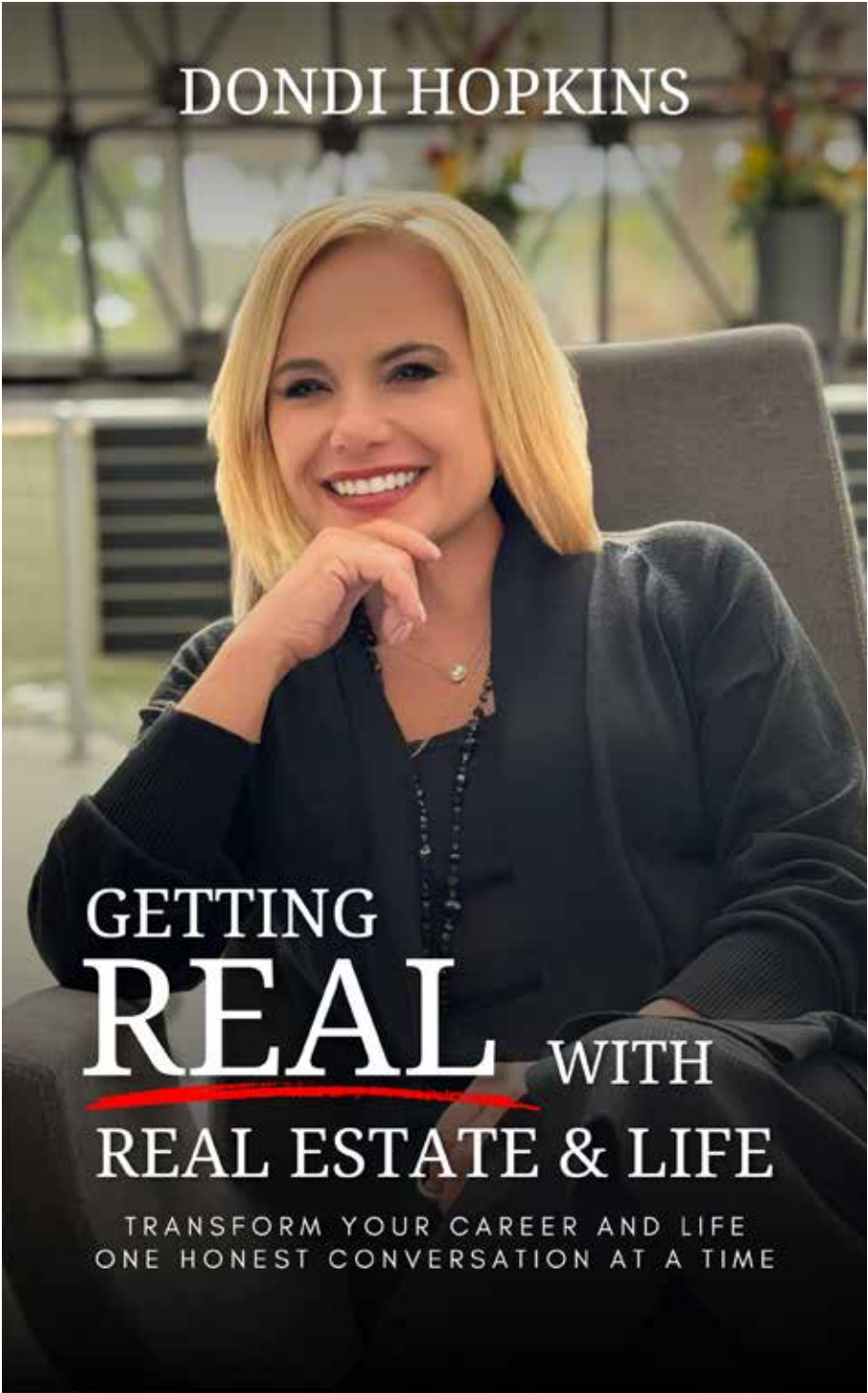
The Power Of Perception Dondi’s road to coaching has been fueled by passion and experience. Now the Director of Agent Development for ReMax Town & Country in Georgia and ReMax Prestige in South Florida, Dondi leads two coaching classes a week while building her one-on-one life and business coaching practice.

“My dream has always been helping others and writing,” she shares. “My tagline says it all: ‘Let me help any agent Rebrand, Reboot, and Remotivate to success!’”

Her new book, released in March, is a bold first step toward a bigger goal. “*Getting Real with Real Estate and Life* is written for agents, business owners, and anyone feeling stuck,” Dondi offers. “I want people to understand how our mindset dictates our success.

She shares plenty of personal anecdotes throughout those pages — including what life was like starting real estate as a single mom with two children and no money.

“My parents laughed when I said I wanted to make \$35,000 a year in real estate,” she recalls.



“I just was not able to focus any longer. It took a great coach and a lot of vision to realize that life goes on despite the bumps in the road,” she reflects.

Today, she and her youngest son, Tristan, are writing their next chapter together in Fannin County while 25% of the book proceeds will go to Alzheimer’s research.

Thus far, Dondi’s debut book has been well-received and the offers to join well-known coaches across the globe are already pouring in. Her second book will be released this summer with a deeper focus on team-building, wealth strategy, and business growth; and the

final installment in the trilogy — due out in December — is still in development with her own coach.

She’s also busy ramping up speaking engagements and looks forward to coaching on a national stage.

“They said I could make whatever I wanted if I put in the work; I made over \$100,000 in my first six months and never looked back.”

Building Her Legacy
For top producers in the business, Dondi is no stranger. She started in real estate in 1996 working for her family in South Florida and quickly made a name for herself, snagging Rookie of the Year.

From there, Dondi consistently ranked in the top 1% of Coldwell Banker agents for 25 years, then led a 37-person team

at Compass ranked in the top 0.5% in the country while partnering with her mother, Diane, who is still actively leading a 10-person team at age 78.

After moving to the mountains of Georgia last August for personal reasons, Dondi shifted her focus from selling to allow for more coaching and writing, though she still refers out plenty of leads.

Bigger Than Business
Dondi’s story hasn’t been without loss. Her move to Blue Ridge came after her spouse was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s.

“Melanie Robbins is at the top of my vision board,” she shares with a smile. “My aim is to be a life coach as great as her someday.” Her hard-earned coaching advice to agents? “Real estate is a marathon, not a sprint!” she points out. “Build genuine relationships and remember that attitude changes everything — your mindset matters.”

You can find Dondi Hopkins’ new book at Amazon, Walmart, Target, Books-A-Million, and local bookstores. To connect with her directly for a coaching consultation, reach out today at 706-851-5559.

“My dream has always been helping others and writing. My tagline says it all: ‘Let me help any agent Rebrand, Reboot, and Remotivate to success!’”

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Making the World a
Happier Place, One
Bite at a Time!

WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH MCCABE
PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS

In today’s hustle and bustle of life, taking time to relax and recharge is never overrated. Enter Cohutta Fishing Company. As Blue Ridge’s premier fly fishing fly shop, they offer guide services for seasoned fishermen and those who have never baited their own hook before. Regardless of your skill level, you can learn to fish like a pro!

Picture yourself in waders, silhouetted against the setting sun, a perfect s-curve of line arcing overhead. Seconds later, a glistening trout is in your hands. Now all you need is the know-how to make that dream come true. That’s where the seasoned professionals at Cohutta Fishing Company come in.

Expect an Experience

At Cohutta Fishing Company, it’s more than just a cast and catch—it’s an experience. Located in Blue Ridge, a trout-

fishing paradise, Cohutta is your go-to destination for expert-guided fly fishing trips, premium gear, local insight, and unforgettable memories on the water.

Whether you’re an avid angler or have never held a fly rod, Cohutta Fishing Company meets you where

you are—river, stream, or lake—and brings you into the world of fly fishing with patience, passion, and professionalism.

“It gets you outdoors,” shares Drew Friedrich, who has been guiding at Cohutta for 11 years and is now the face of the

company. “There’s always something to learn. Whether it’s changing up your cast or trying a new streamer or nymph, fly fishing is all about discovery.”

From Hobby to
Way of Life

Cohutta Fishing Company was founded in 2008 by



Andy Bowen in Cartersville, Georgia. In March 2023, Drew’s father, Steve Friedrich, purchased the company, bringing a renewed energy to the brand while keeping the soul of the shop intact. Steve handles things behind the scenes while Drew leads operations on the ground—both in the shop and on the water.

And this isn’t your average tackle shop. It’s a full-service fly shop offering gear, apparel, guided trips, and educational classes like Fly Fishing 101 and fly-tying clinics. Whether you stop by the store in person or shop online, everything Cohutta offers has been field-tested and guide-approved.

Local Waters.
Global Adventures.

Cohutta’s home base may be in Blue Ridge, but their reach goes far beyond. From float trips on the Toccoa River to wade trips on private trout waters, their guides know the sweet spots like the backs of their weather-worn hands.

Looking for something wilder? Join them on destination trips to Belize,



the Bahamas, Baja Mexico, and Wyoming. “I caught a 50-pound fish in Baja,” Drew says with a grin. “It’s the kind of moment you’ll never forget. Fly fishing gives me an escape.” Now he gets to share that same passion with others. Pick up a new hobby by learning how to fish.

And whether you’re chasing stripers, redfish, bass, or trout, the thrill is always catch-and-release. It’s all about the fight, the moment, and the memory. Drew says,

“Stripers are my favorite—they fight hard and give you a real run for your money.”

Why Choose Cohutta?

It starts with customer service, says Drew. “That’s our number one priority. But what really sets us apart are our guides—the most experienced in the area.” These aren’t just anglers; they’re teachers. With patience and expertise, they make first-timers feel confident and seasoned fishers feel challenged.

Whether it’s a half-day, three-quarter day, or full-day trip, all gear is included, and no prior fishing experience is required—in fact, 75% of their clients have never fished before. Their goal is to make sure everyone has a great time—whether it’s your first fish or your fiftieth.

Cohutta is more than just a fishing company. It’s a community hub, a place where people come to connect with nature, disconnect from stress, and create moments that matter. Drew sees it firsthand: clients who fall in love with the lifestyle so much, it even influences where they buy their next home—as long as it’s near a good stream.

And the best part? Fishing is available year-round. While trout fishing slows in August and September, there’s always something biting—from bass in local lakes to redfish not far from the coast.

So whether you’re a seasoned fly fisher or a curious first-timer with a dream, let Cohutta Fishing Company show you the ropes. Book a guided trip, sign up for a class, or join an adventure abroad.

Visit. Fish. Repeat.

Stop by their shop in Blue Ridge, browse online, or reach out to plan your next great escape. Kick back, relax, and get hooked—Cohutta Fishing Company is here to make your fishing fantasy a reality.



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