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**Ragan
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Rising Star
Jeana Swan

Partner Spotlight
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Central Mississippi Real Producers’ Core Values

TREAT EVERYONE WITH RESPECT

Our team runs the business of *Central Mississippi Real Producers* with a set of Core Values that is a guiding compass that drives each of us. They are the foundation for decision-making, shape the company culture, and guide interactions with our Realtors® and Preferred Partners.

Our Core Values are:

- Treat Everyone with Respect.
- Do the Right Thing, Not the Easy Thing.
- Be Better Tomorrow Than You are Today.
- Be Humble.
- Embrace We, Not Me.
- Add Value... Always.

Over the next few months, I want to touch on why each of these are important to us. First and foremost,

we treat everyone we encounter with **Respect!** At the heart of any thriving community—be it personal or professional—is respect. It’s the simple yet profound understanding that each individual deserves dignity, empathy, and kindness. In a world that is increasingly diverse and interconnected, treating everyone with respect fosters collaboration, encourages open dialogue, and cultivates an atmosphere where ideas can flourish. We believe that respect is not just a courtesy, but a foundation upon which stronger relationships, inclusive spaces, and meaningful connections are built. It is a principle we hold dearly, guiding us in our work and interactions every day.

Treating others with Respect is the foundation of our values!



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- March 2 - Robin Torrence
- March 3 - David Ostrander
- March 11 – Lance Cooper
- March 11 - Shannon Ellis
- March 12 – Jessica Evans
- March 12 – Katie Mitchell
- March 15 - Meaghan Murphy
- March 27 - Tika Ferrell
- March 29 – Alese Jones
- March 30 – Grace Pilgrim

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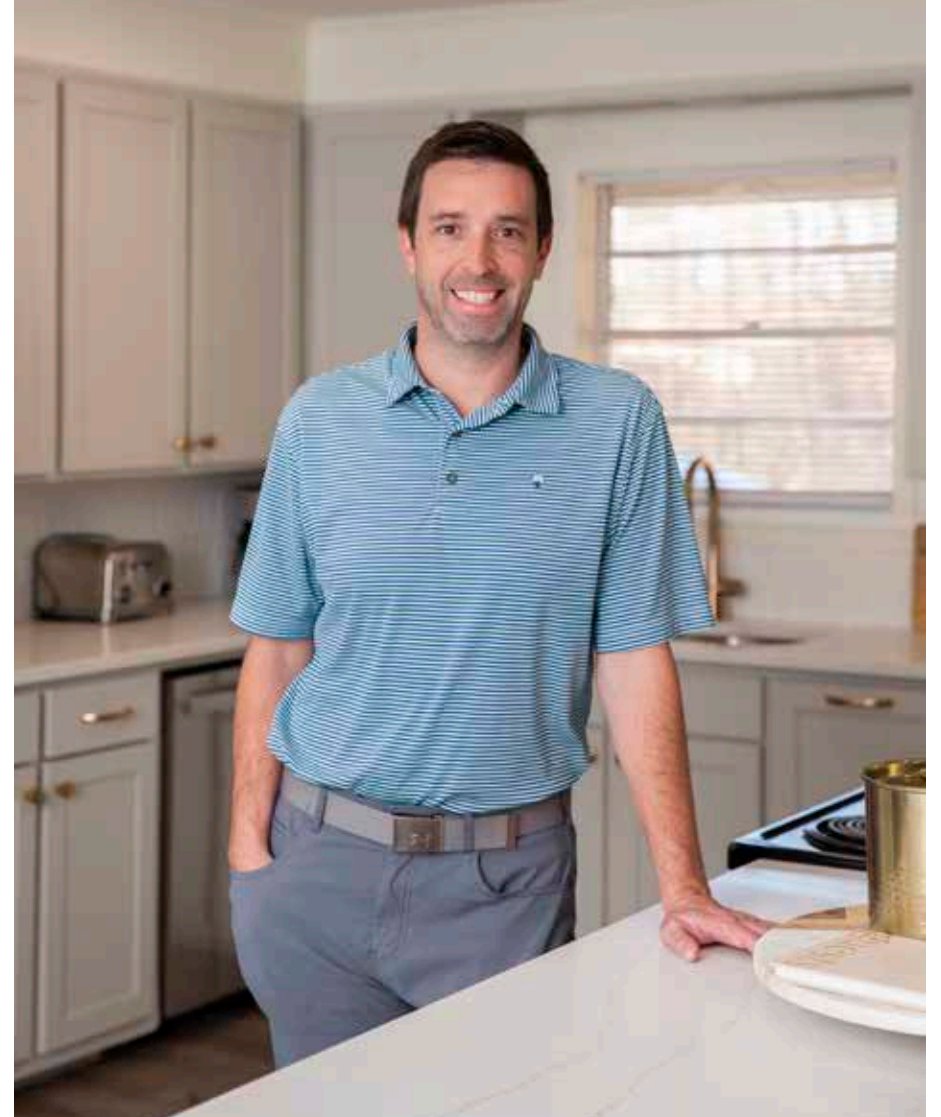
Ragan Denham

Asking Questions and Solving Problems are **KEYS TO SUCCESS** for Ragan Denham

WRITTEN BY SUSAN MARQUEZ
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ABE DRAPER
PHOTOGRAPHY

RAGAN DENHAM didn't immediately get into real estate, even though a sales career has been something he has thought about for a long time. "I shied away from sales early on," he says. "The thought of a commission-only income intimidated me." The Meridian native attended Mississippi State University where he majored in communications and public relations, thinking he may want to go into medical sales. "I believed I'd get a high-paying job right out of college," he laughs.

Ragan began seriously searching for a job and moved into his aunt's home. "That was a huge blessing for me. I didn't pay rent, and I often ate meals at my grandmother's house, which was





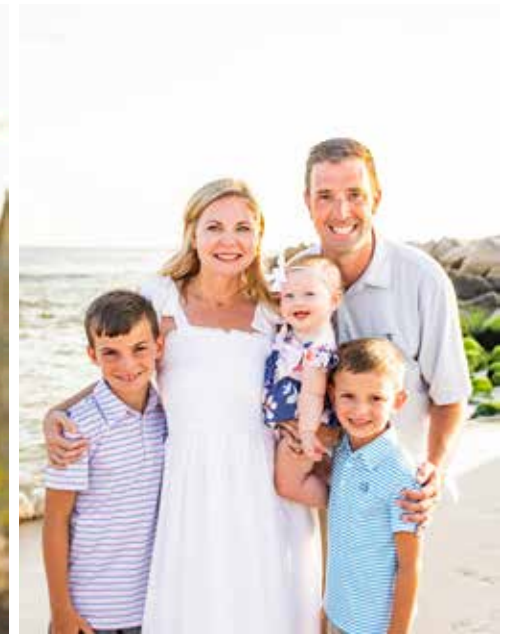
nearby.” A neighbor told him about a veterinarian technician job at Brandon Animal Hospital with Dr. Scott Houston. “I did everything from assisting with surgeries to walking dogs and mopping floors. No two days were the same. Dr. Houston was a great mentor to me during that time.”

After two years at the vet clinic, Ragan took a position in business development with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services where his main goal is to help people with disabilities in the Brandon area find jobs.

When a friend was moving to Brandon, Ragan went with him to look at houses with his Realtor®. “My friend asked a lot of questions and as I listened, I began thinking that I might enjoy doing that.”

Ragan realized that real estate was something that matched his personality perfectly. “I enjoy talking to people and making connections. I can usually find someone we know in common or a shared interest with most people. I ask a lot of questions and like to solve problems. That is at the core of what Realtors® do. My business has grown primarily by word of mouth, friends, past clients, and referrals. When I first started thinking about real estate, I recalled a podcast I listened to with Jerry Seinfeld. He was asked, ‘When did you know you wanted to be a comedian?’ He said he knew when he was twelve years old. Something he said made his friends laugh so hard that they spit out their drinks. He said he wasn’t sure what just happened, but he wanted to do that for the rest of his life. That’s how I feel when a real estate transaction has come to a close, and my client is pleased with the outcome.”

Ragan began his real estate journey by seeking advice from a few people he trusted. “Many thought I shouldn’t get into real estate.” But Ragan’s cousin liked the idea. “He told me to talk with Realtor® Jason Harper, so I asked Jason to go to lunch and he was like a breath of fresh air. He encouraged me to move forward and he gave me confidence that I could be successful as a Realtor®. Jason and I have a very good relationship, and



“When I first started thinking about real estate, I recalled a podcast I listened to with Jerry Seinfeld.”





I'm thankful for that conversation that led me to pursue a career in real estate."

When looking at different brokerages, Ragan decided to begin his real estate career with Tena Myers at Three Rivers. "She loves to train new agents and she is good at it. She emphasized the importance of branding and she taught me not to put a house on the market until it is ready. She said to always get professional photos and make sure the home was clean with no clutter." Ragan says that every time he works with a new Realtor® he feels like he is gaining a new friend. "I like the saying that 'iron sharpens iron,' because we learn so much from each other, making each other better Realtors®. I enjoy building those relationships."

Now Ragan is with Local Real Estate. "Edwayne and Layla Hutton are great and they have taught me so much. Their brokerage is very investor-friendly, allowing me to expand my business as an investor." Ragan purchased his first rental property four years ago when a friend needed a quick close. "I bought it and found tenants for the home." He now has several rental properties as

well as an Airbnb. "I also flip houses. It started when a friend asked me to be an investor with him. I did a few more with partners before doing it on my own." He has recently started investing in commercial real estate. "I bought my first commercial building that is rented by a CPA and an insurance agent."

The Airbnb has been fun for Ragan. "People have come from all over the United States and stay for a variety of reasons, from family reunions to baseball tournaments, or to see a show at the Brandon Amphitheater, which is less than one mile away. We booked our own Airbnb for a slumber party for our son's birthday."

Ragan is thankful that God has blessed him with a career in real estate. "It's the place where a job and passion have met for me. I've truly found a career that aligns with my personality and my ability to connect with people. I feel fulfilled and motivated by it and I hope to be a blessing to the people who cross my path."

Ragan met his wife, Whitney, when they were both in college at

"I also flip houses. It started when a friend asked me to be an investor with him. I did a few more with partners before doing it on my own."

Mississippi State. She works as an accountant for EastGroup Properties. The couple has three children, Peyton (10), Brady (7), and Savannah (2). Their boys are very active in sports. When not at the ball fields, the family enjoys exploring the outdoors as a family. "We bought a camper two years ago. It is for us and the kids love it. It's a great way to get away and relax." They also enjoy spending time with their church family at Meadow Grove Baptist Church in Brandon.



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JEANA Swan

Jeana Swan's Entrepreneurial Spirit and Faith Equals Success in Real Estate

WRITTEN BY SUSAN MARQUEZ
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ABE DRAPER PHOTOGRAPHY



A Jackson native, Jeana Swan graduated from Callaway High School before studying cosmetology at Hinds Community College. That led to a 35-year career working in salons, including opening a salon of her own. While she went to the same high school as her “one of a kind” husband, Dedric, they didn’t meet each other until they had been out of high school for three years. “He is also in cosmetology – I run a hair salon, and he runs a barber shop.”

Jeana is a Child of God, the daughter of Jonnie Miles and the late Samuel Emanuel Harris. She lost her father when she was only two years old. “I grew up in a single-parent home with three siblings,” says Jeana. “My late brother, Allen, was the oldest and the only boy. He was taken from us due to gun violence two weeks prior to my twenty-first birthday. That was one of the most devastating experiences for me. Allen was more than a brother to me – he was a mentor, motivator, and my rock. He was my best friend. We went to church together, and we shared ideas and laughed a lot – we enjoyed life together.” Losing her father when she was so young and then losing her brother at a pivotal time in her life was a huge test of her faith. “Thank goodness I gave my life to Christ at

an early age – it helped me have the faith to believe and trust that God makes no mistakes.”

Raised by a “Teflon mother” who taught her to be independent, work hard, and stand up for what she believes in, Jeana’s mother also taught her to give Christ all the glory. “She gave me the determination and my passion led me to my destination.” Jeana was always fascinated with entrepreneurship, starting her first company as a teenager selling snacks to

neighborhood kids. She soon started styling hair for her friends and family, including her brother’s friend-girls. After studying business and cosmetology, Jeana opened her first beauty salon just two years after finishing school. She owned Salon Etc., HairCare 101, and House of Barber while simultaneously venturing into real estate, where her passion evolved.

“I became an investor, buying our first property in 1995 while working in the beauty industry. I knew early on the power of ownership, so I took advantage of buying properties and land to build my portfolio.”

One day while standing behind a chair in her salon, Jeana began wondering how long she would do hair. “Since I had already been investing, I decided to go into real estate.” She took classes at the Mississippi Realtors® Institute in Flowood and got her license in 2019. “I went ahead and got my broker’s license in 2021.”

While she still has her salon, Jeana says she sells real estate full-time and continues to do hair part-time. “I think that’s one reason I’ve succeeded in real estate. I have a huge client base at my salon, which helps broaden my sphere of influence.”

When she first began selling real estate, she made a common mistake. “I thought I’d get some clients, and it would be easy going from there – go find them a house and close the sale.” Jeana got into the business just before COVID-19, and she learned a valuable lesson. “You must find just the right property. But in the end, it’s super rewarding for me to know I have

made a difference in my clients’ lives. It’s the same feeling I get working in the beauty salon.”

Jeana is an agent at Coldwell Banker and says she keeps up with her clients long after closing. “I send them the *Good to Be Home* magazine and I try to keep up with their lives.” Seeing her success as well as the satisfaction Jeana gets from selling real estate, Dedric decided to get his license and join her. “Now our daughter, Dedra, has joined us,” says Jeana. “This has become a real family affair!”

Not only is Jeana licensed in Mississippi, but she is also licensed in Alabama and Georgia. “I work locally with Coldwell Banker Graham & Associates in Madison as an associate broker.” A Rising Star, she has been recognized by Coldwell Banker on the state and national level as a top producer. “I decided to get my license in Alabama and Georgia because I was having to refer clients to other agents. I was on a cruise with a classmate’s daughter, and she was looking for a home in Georgia. I also have family in Georgia, so it was only natural for me to get licensed there and in Alabama.”

Jeana’s formula for success is strong. “Put God first, believe in yourself, and accomplish the goals that are most meaningful to you. I believe in building relationships. You need a team to make dreams come true. It’s very important to have good

lenders, home inspectors, attorneys, and title companies to bring your client’s dreams to fruition. I don’t want to sell you a property. I want to become your Realtor®. Everyone should have a Realtor® to call their own!”

With real estate laws changing in Mississippi, people as young as 18 can buy a home. “This is a fantastic opportunity, and I would love to see more younger adults get involved and take advantage of that opportunity.”

“Since I had already been investing, I decided to go into real estate.”

Having a good work-life balance is important for any successful person. When she isn’t working, Jeana enjoys being with her six-year-old grandson, Blake. She also enjoys playing tennis and is a member of USTA and JLTA where she plays singles, mixed, and doubles. She also enjoys ballroom dancing. “That has been a passion I’ve enjoyed over the years, with bachata and salsa being my favorites.”

In 2024, Jeana was recognized by Coldwell Banker as a Multi-Million Dollar Producer and in the International Diamond Society for ranking among the top sales professionals in the network.



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**JASON SYKES
HELPS MAKE HOME
OWNERSHIP A
REALITY**

WRITTEN BY SUSAN MARQUEZ
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ABE
DRAPER PHOTOGRAPHY

JASON SYKES describes his career as “ever evolving.” A vice president and mortgage originator at Trustmark in Brandon, Jason has years of experience in helping people achieve their dreams of home ownership. He has attained many achievements in the financial world and is well respected by his peers in the industry. So how did a musical prodigy become a mortgage banker?

Born in Memphis, Jason spent his early years mostly in North Mississippi before his family moved to Jackson when he was in the fourth grade. He began playing music at age five and had his first paid music gig in junior high. “I play the trumpet, saxophone, piano, and a few other instruments,” says Jason. “My dream was to be the tenor sax player for *Saturday Night Live*.” Jason

was serious about pursuing a music career. After graduating from Forest Hill in Jackson, he attended Hinds in Raymond for a year and a half before transferring to Southern Miss to major in music.

But sometimes when you least expect it, a chance encounter can change the course of your life. That’s exactly what happened to Jason Sykes while working at a mall in Hattiesburg. “I sold a pager to a retired sergeant major who worked in financial services. My father had served in the Marines, so we bonded over that, and he recruited me to work for a division of Citigroup. He taught me so much. I worked for Mike Landrum, who had retired from the NFL and had a Primerica franchise in Hattiesburg.”

Jason was still in school and changed his major from music to finance. While Jason learned about many different financial products, mortgage lending became his niche. In 2002 he was recruited to work for a national company and his career catapulted. By 2003, he was in his first branch manager position and was transferred to Memphis, back to the place of his birth. From there, JP Morgan Chase recruited him, and he made a move back to Jackson.

Now Jason is settled in at Trustmark. “I’ve landed in a great place. The turnover here is very low because people love working at Trustmark.” Jason joined Trustmark in June of last year and he hasn’t looked back. “I have been working with many Realtors® in the market for 20 years or longer. I get references from Realtors® all the time, and because our business is a two-way street, I strive to refer my clients to Realtors® as well. I think I have maintained long-term relationships in the industry because Realtors® know I will take on challenges others may not want to accept. I have a good work ethic, and I align myself with like-minded folks. It’s hard to touch everyone you know every week, but I try to stay in touch with my business partners. They know that I will work hard to provide a good product with good service, and I’ll work to make sure they can close on time.”



Jason
SYKES
TRUSTMARK MORTGAGE



Throughout his career, Jason has weathered many economic turns. He has learned to stay the course and ride it out. "Even in lean times, people were closing loans. There was a period in 2020 when a shock hit the banking system, and I spent a lot of time talking my co-workers down."

Jason has been married to his wife, Olivia, for 21 years. The couple has three children, Ethan, a senior at Brandon High School; Mallory, who is a junior at Brandon High; and William, who is in the eighth grade. Because of Ethan's interest in blacksmithing, Jason joined Ethan to take classes with Lyle Wynn. They got involved with the Mississippi Forge Council and Jason began to realize there was a lack of opportunities for kids to learn trades while making friendships. "I decided to create a place where kids could learn more about things they are interested in, such as



web design." He has established a non-profit, Cultivate Vision, which was one of the hardest things he's ever attempted. "I didn't know much about starting an organization, but I've learned through trial and error." Currently, there is a small office in Flowood where kids can learn web design, photography, and editing. There are plans to expand the offerings, and Jason is prepared for it. "I have a building on Highway 80 we are working on, and I also have a shop on my property."

Looking back on his childhood, Jason says he was greatly impacted by his mother's parents. "My mom had a big family all over Louisiana, and my grandparents owned a seafood restaurant for 37 years. I learned how to cook and how to farm. Learning to do things with my hands has been a great life lesson. We live on a big piece of property, and my biggest stress relievers are when I'm on my bulldozer or excavator." Jason also writes and he is currently writing a novel based on his life experiences.

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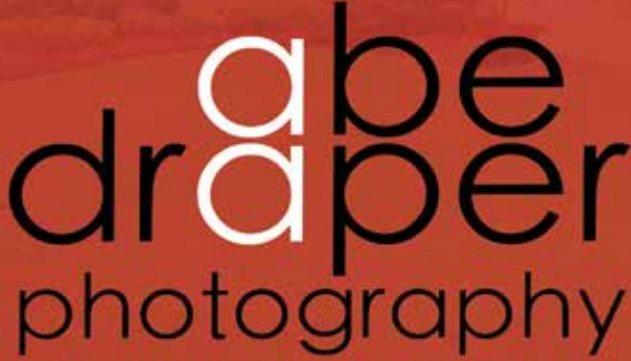
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ASHLEY BURKE

Ashley Burke was featured as a Rising Star in August, 2020. We recently caught up with Ashley and talked about the changes that have occurred in her personal and professional life in the past 5 years.



What changes have occurred in your career since you were featured?

Since being featured, my career has seen significant growth, particularly in the form of an increase in clientele. I’ve been fortunate to build a strong foundation of repeat and referral business, which has been incredibly rewarding. I’ve also continued to prioritize professional development, earning a few new designations to enhance my expertise and better serve my clients. Additionally, I’ve had the opportunity to meet and build deeper relationships with fellow agents in our area, which has been invaluable for collaboration and mutual growth. Recently, I was thrilled to learn that I ranked as the #8 agent in the state for Coldwell Banker—a milestone that was both unexpected and deeply gratifying. These accomplishments have motivated me to keep striving for excellence in my real estate career.

What changes have occurred in your personal life since you were featured?

Since 2020, I’ve celebrated a few more birthdays and added a dog to our family, but the most significant change has been watching my children grow up. I’m now a mom to high schoolers—my oldest is a senior this year, and my youngest will graduate next year. My husband and I are realizing that an empty nest is on the horizon sooner than we expected. We’ve started dreaming and planning for what our lives will look like in this new season. It’s a bittersweet feeling, but we’re incredibly excited to see how our boys will navigate their next steps in the ‘real world.’

What do you think has changed the most in the industry in the past 5 years?

Wow, what a loaded question! Over the past five years, the real estate industry has experienced dramatic shifts. We’ve gone from a booming market where homes sold almost instantly to a more balanced, yet unpredictable, environment. Setting clear expectations for clients has become more important than ever. Sellers, who once only needed to put a sign in the yard, now often need to address every item on a home inspection to stay competitive. Buyers,

on the other hand, have had to adjust their price points significantly due to the volatility of interest rates, which has impacted affordability. Additionally, as realtors, we’ve had to adapt to major changes, including the recent NAR settlement, which has brought new documentation and procedural adjustments. It’s been a rollercoaster, to say the least, but it’s also reinforced the importance of adaptability and clear communication in our industry.

What are your real estate goals for the future?

My real estate goals for the future are rooted in maintaining a balance between my professional and personal life. While I don’t have aspirations to become a broker or open my own firm, my primary focus is to continue delivering exceptional service to my clients. I want to ensure they feel supported, informed, and confident throughout their real estate journey. At the same time, I’m committed to preserving time for my family and friends, as they are a vital part of my life. For me, success means excelling in my career while nurturing the relationships that matter most.

What would you say is your secret in your continued success?

I believe my secret is simple: I genuinely love helping people. Real estate is more than just transactions to me—it’s about building relationships, understanding my clients’ needs, and guiding them through one of the most significant decisions of their lives. Additionally, having strong systems in place and practicing good time management have been key to my success. These tools allow me to ensure that every client receives the same high level of service and attention, no matter how many people I’m helping at once.

What advice would you give to new or aspiring realtors®?

My advice to new or aspiring Realtors® is to start by interviewing multiple brokers—you do have a choice! Take the time to find a broker who is the best fit for you and one who can complement your strengths while helping you grow in your weaker areas. Once you’re established, focus on getting systems in

place immediately. Staying organized is critical because things can easily slip through the cracks at the worst possible time. Additionally, seek out resources like podcasts and books that align with your values and vision for how real estate should be practiced. Remember, there’s no one-size-fits-all approach to being a great agent. Success can come in many forms, so stay true to your unique style and strengths.

What do you like best about the real estate industry and why?

What I love most about the real estate industry is the creativity it allows me to express. With sellers, I enjoy taking their home and staging it in the best possible light for photos and showings—it’s rewarding to help them showcase their space at its full potential. With buyers, I love touring homes and helping them envision their lives in each one, whether that’s solving layout challenges, brainstorming remodels, or simply finding the perfect fit. Recently, I’ve also had the opportunity to work with a builder, and I’ve discovered how much fun it is to help select finishes and design elements for new homes. Every day brings something new, and I thrive on the problem-solving and creative aspects.

What do you like least about the real estate industry today and why?

What I like least about the real estate industry today is the expectation of being available via text message at all hours. While I understand it’s a popular and convenient way to communicate, it can be challenging to balance work and family time when messages come in late at night or during personal moments.



I do my best to set clear expectations upfront with clients and fellow agents about my availability, but the constant connectivity can still be demanding. I’ve learned that even though I’m not technically ‘on call,’ my phone seems to think I’m running a 24/7 hotline! It’s a reminder of how important it is to establish boundaries while still providing excellent service—and maybe invest in a good ‘Do Not Disturb’ setting.

How do you achieve a work/life balance?

Achieving work/life balance in real estate starts with setting clear

expectations and boundaries upfront with clients. I communicate my availability and let them know when I'll be responsive. If a message comes in after hours, I ask myself: Is this an emergency, or can it wait until business hours? While this approach doesn't always work perfectly, it helps me maintain a healthier balance between work and personal time. Of course, in this profession, true work/life balance might be the most elusive listing I've ever tried to close—but I do my best to keep showing up for both my clients and my family with a smile (and maybe a little caffeine).

If you were not in the real estate industry, what would be your chosen career and why?

If I weren't in the real estate industry, I'd likely return to the classroom because of my love for working with kids. Teaching allowed me to make a meaningful impact, and I've always enjoyed the energy and creativity that comes with educating young minds. That said, my passion for providing exceptional customer service could also lead me to the retail world. I thrive on connecting with people and helping them find exactly what they need, whether it's a dream home, a lesson plan, or the perfect pair of shoes! Both paths align with my strengths and values, but real estate has been the perfect blend of my love for people and problem-solving."

Do you have any new hobbies?

I still love my tried-and-true hobbies like reading, enjoying a good glass of

wine, and traveling, but I've recently stepped out of my comfort zone and tried pickleball this past year. It's been such a fun and active way to spend time with friends, and I love that it's something the whole family can enjoy together.

What is the best vacation you have been on in the past 5 years?

The best vacation I've been on in the past five years was a family trip to Norway. Our family has a tradition of prioritizing experiences over gifts for Christmas, and this trip was truly unforgettable. My boys have fallen in love with skiing, and Norway offered the perfect backdrop for it—stunning landscapes and a chance to truly unplug and enjoy each other's company. We also took a day trip to the fjords, which was absolutely breathtaking.

If you could help any celebrity buy a home, who would it be and why?

If I could help any celebrity buy a home, it wouldn't necessarily be the celebrity themselves but the character they portray. My dream client would be Moira Rose from *Schitt's Creek*. Her larger-than-life personality, impeccable style, and love for the dramatic would make the home-buying process an absolute delight. I can only imagine the fun we'd have touring extravagant properties and discussing her unique vision for a home that's as bold and unforgettable as she is. Plus, her one-liners alone would make every meeting unforgettable!



“

I still love my tried-and-true hobbies like reading, enjoying a good glass of wine, and traveling, but I've recently stepped out of my comfort zone and tried pickleball this past year.”



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CMR’S NEW PERKS KEEP MEMBERS AHEAD!

Change is in the air at Central Mississippi REALTORS® (CMR), and it’s the kind of momentum that signals a new era of opportunity for its members. With a renewed focus on strengthening community partnerships, CMR is forging ahead with initiatives designed to enhance the professional and personal lives of REALTORS®.

Two new strategic alliances—with Hederman Brothers and 5-Minute Express Car Wash—mark the beginning of a transformative shift, offering practical benefits to make a real impact.

“We’re entering an exciting chapter at CMR,” said Yolanda Parris, 2025 President of Central Mississippi REALTORS®. “Our focus is on forging partnerships that truly benefit our members, helping them grow their business, maintain a strong professional presence, and streamline their day-to-day operations.”



Central Mississippi REALTORS® Partner with Hederman Brothers

As part of the commitment to strengthening community partnerships, CMR has teamed up with Hederman Brothers—leaders in high-quality printing—to provide its members with exclusive access to custom real estate signage and stationery through a dedicated online ordering portal.

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About Central Mississippi REALTORS®

Central Mississippi REALTORS® (CMR) is a 501c6 non-profit trade association dedicated to serving over 2,100 REALTOR® members across ten counties in Central Mississippi. Founded in 1924, CMR is committed to advocacy, education, and community engagement to support real estate professionals. Learn more at www.cmr.realtor.



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