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Sources: 1. National Association of REALTORS® Confidence Index Survey (July 2024) 2. National Association of Expert Advisors (NAEA) (2014)
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COVER STORY



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Holly D'Arcy

BY CINDY BELL
PHOTOS BY
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A Passion for Real Estate and Community

Holly D'Arcy's journey into real estate was anything but conventional. Born in California and raised in South Florida, she developed a deep appreciation for the Sunshine State's diverse communities. After earning her

undergraduate degree from the University of South Florida, she embarked on a career path that, while varied, always centered around helping others. From teaching elementary school to launching a fitness and nutrition consulting business in her early 20s, Holly has always been driven by a passion for service and entrepreneurship.

A defining moment in her journey came when she and her husband, an Air Force serviceman nearing retirement, became accidental landlords. Instead of selling their home during a military relocation, they opted to rent it out. One rental turned into another, and before they knew it, real estate investment had become a significant part of their lives. Through these experiences, Holly discovered firsthand the power of real estate in building a stable future, not only for her own family but for others as well.

Her father, who worked in the mortgage industry, had often told her she would make a great real estate agent. While she didn't pursue the profession immediately, she never forgot his words. It was a chance encounter with her own agent, Mary G, that ultimately pushed her to take the leap. Encouraged by Mary's confidence in her abilities, Holly dove headfirst into the world of real estate—and she



hasn't looked back since. Though her father passed away in 2021, Holly hopes he would be proud of the work she's doing now.

Tackling Challenges with Positivity

In the ever-evolving world of real estate, challenges are inevitable. But for Holly, obstacles are simply unsolved problems waiting for a solution. Her experience as a military spouse has honed her ability to make quick, well-informed decisions—an invaluable skill in the fast-paced real estate market.

She also embraces the power of social media, using it as a tool to educate and connect with others.



Holly's background in teaching shines through as she breaks down complex real estate topics and market trends, making them accessible to clients and fellow agents alike. And when the going gets tough, her sense of humor keeps her grounded. "Call me Miss Positivity," she says, "but most of the time I see challenges as a problem that just hasn't been solved... yet."

Motivation and Growth in a Competitive Industry

Real estate is a competitive field, but Holly thrives on the limitless opportunities it presents. For her, success is not just about closing deals—it's about making a lasting impact. Her ultimate motivation? Faith and family. With each goal she aims toward, and every ounce of effort put forth, Holly is driven to walk in purpose, lead with love, and create a beautiful future for those most dear to her heart.

To continue growing in the industry, Holly surrounds herself with professionals who share her commitment to excellence. She actively participates in local and state Realtor associations and contributes to various committees. "There are a lot of good agents out there," she says, "but I am working hard to be one of the greatest."

A Heart for Clients and Community

For Holly, nothing is more rewarding than receiving a referral from a past client or another agent. These moments serve as powerful reminders of why she does what she does. She is on a mission to reshape public perception of real estate agents by providing genuine, client-focused service. "I strive to be the agent my clients want to work with anytime they need real estate help for themselves or those they care for," she shares.

"THERE ARE A LOT OF GOOD AGENTS OUT THERE," SHE SAYS, "BUT I AM WORKING HARD TO BE ONE OF THE GREATEST."

The Power of Mentorship and Networking

Holly credits much of her success to the guidance and generosity of her mentors. From shadowing seasoned agents to receiving late-night advice, she knows the value of having experienced professionals invest in her growth. She extends heartfelt gratitude to mentors like Mary Gianelloni, Kelli Van Pelt, Jimmy Burgess, Thomas Canada, and Brandy Brown for their role in shaping her journey.

While she doesn't engage in traditional networking in the usual sense, Holly focuses on nurturing meaningful relationships. "I try to be a good friend and take care of my people," she explains. She believes that when you genuinely give without expectation, it always comes back around.

Finding Work-Life Integration

Balancing personal and professional life is a challenge for any real estate professional, but Holly has mastered the art of integration. With over a decade of experience as a military spouse and entrepreneur, she understands that perfect balance is elusive. Instead, she focuses on blending work and family in a way that suits their unique needs.

Her daughters often help with real estate tasks, whether it's folding mailers or setting up open houses. Yet, no matter how busy her schedule gets, she never misses a soccer game or swim meet. And through it all,



her husband remains her biggest supporter, patiently adapting to the unpredictable rhythm of a real estate agent's life.

Looking Ahead

Holly D'Arcy is more than just a Realtor—she's an educator, investor, mentor, and community builder. Her dedication to her clients, family, and professional growth sets her apart in the industry. As she continues to rise, she remains committed to making a meaningful impact, both in real estate and in the lives of those around her.

For those looking to connect with Holly, she invites you to follow her journey on Instagram @HomesByHollyD, where she shares insights, local highlights, and a glimpse into the life of a real estate agent who truly loves what she does.

With her unwavering drive and heart for service, there's no doubt—Holly D'Arcy is a name to watch in the real estate world.

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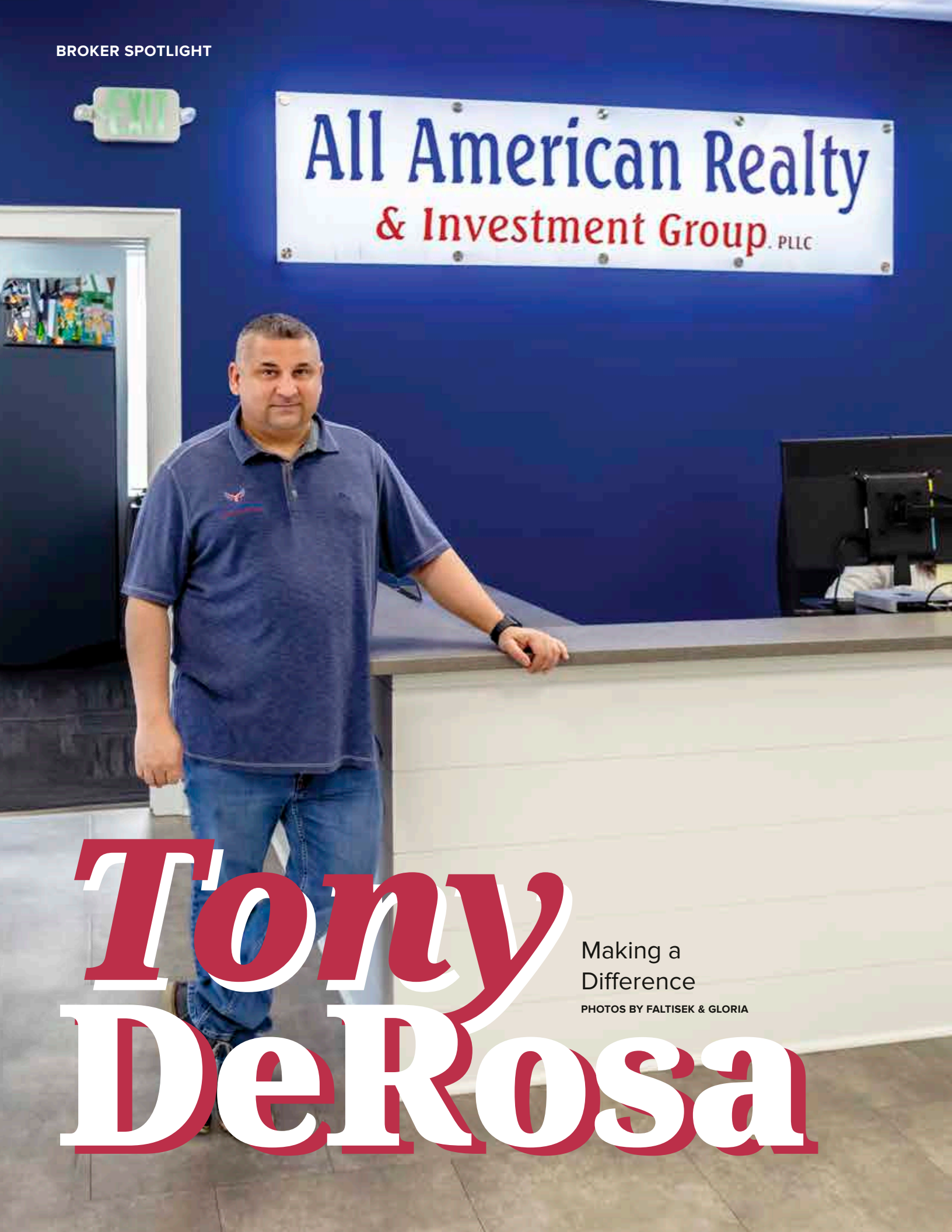
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Tony DeRosa

Making a
Difference

PHOTOS BY FALTISEK & GLORIA

After leaving active-duty Air Force in May of 2000 and transitioning into the Reserves, Tony DeRosa embarked on his real estate journey by purchasing his first investment property. What started as a simple fix-and-rent project quickly evolved into a passion for real estate investing. His second purchase—a distressed triplex—required extensive renovations, including urgent electrical repairs that likely prevented a disaster. Through these early experiences, Tony realized the potential in real estate and began building his expertise in property management and investment strategies.

One of the key observations Tony made early on was how dissatisfied many property owners were with their management services. With his natural problem-solving skills and hands-on approach, he found that managing repairs

and tenant relations was something he could handle efficiently, even before the wealth of online resources available today. At the same time, he took on a civil service job at Eglin Air Force Base, where coworkers frequently turned to him for real estate advice. Military life often comes with frequent relocations, and many service members didn't fully understand the nuances between sales agents, property managers, and investors—but they trusted Tony's insight. This realization sparked an idea: by mastering multiple aspects of real estate, he could build a career with diverse revenue streams and long-term success.

After years of balancing federal employment and real estate investing, Tony made the bold decision to go all in. Leaving behind the security of a government job was not easy—especially with a wife, two daughters, and a

mortgage to consider—but he knew it was time to take control of his future. He launched All American Realty and Investment Group, determined to build a company that aligned with his vision of integrity, service, and excellence.

A Hands-On Approach to Leadership

As a Broker, Tony distinguishes himself by remaining actively involved in the day-to-day operations of his business. His primary focus is supporting his staff, ensuring they have the tools, training, and encouragement to succeed. Unlike many brokers who take a more

behind-the-scenes role, Tony personally engages with nearly all of All American Realty's clients. He believes in transparency and invites open communication, ensuring that any concerns are addressed promptly. His hands-on approach fosters trust, accountability, and strong client relationships.

The company culture at All American Realty is built on teamwork, optimism, and a solutions-driven mindset. Tony and his team believe in focusing on what can be done rather than dwelling on obstacles. They prioritize doing the right thing in every situation, owning up





to mistakes, and constantly seeking ways to improve. With a commitment to transparency and continuous growth, Tony ensures that integrity remains at the core of every transaction and interaction.

Investing in People

For Tony, success isn't just about closing deals—it's about investing in people. He believes that motivation and work ethic come from within, and his role as a leader is to provide the right environment for his team to thrive. He focuses on hiring individuals with a positive, proactive attitude and then equips them with the resources they need to excel. His open-door policy allows team members to discuss everything from real estate strategies to personal challenges, creating a strong, supportive work environment. By fostering a culture of trust and collaboration, he ensures that his team members feel valued and empowered to contribute meaningfully.

One of Tony's proudest recent success stories highlights his

commitment to mentorship. In September, a longtime family friend mentioned that her daughter, Megan, was interested in real estate but had been turned away by another broker who told her to get her license first and then return. Knowing Megan's strong work ethic since childhood, Tony saw her potential and took her under his wing. With his guidance, Megan obtained her real estate license in just six weeks, then became a full-time property manager, and within six months closed her first sale. To Tony, these moments—helping someone discover and achieve their potential—are the greatest accomplishments in real estate.

Staying Ahead in a Changing Market

Tony stays ahead of market trends through a combination of continuing education, industry conferences, and leveraging local Realtor association resources. Because he remains actively engaged in his brokerage, he has firsthand insight into market shifts and opportunities. All American



Realty eliminates unnecessary red tape, allowing for quick adaptation to effective strategies. By collaborating with other professionals and staying informed about new tools and best practices, he ensures his team is always equipped to navigate the evolving real estate landscape.

Advice for Aspiring Brokers

For those looking to succeed as brokers, Tony emphasizes the importance of transitioning from an employee mindset to that of a business owner. Many aspiring brokers fall into the trap of working in their business rather than on it—handling every detail themselves

instead of building scalable systems. To reach the top levels of the industry, he advises focusing on hiring the right people, delegating effectively, and resisting the urge to micromanage. Growth comes from empowering others, maintaining ethical business practices, and prioritizing long-term sustainability over short-term gains.

Making a Difference

As a broker, leader, and mentor, Tony continues to make a lasting impact on the industry, his clients, and the team he has built. His dedication to excellence, transparency, and investing in people sets him apart, proving that success in real estate is about much more than just buying and selling—it's about making a difference.

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MASTERMIND EVENT RECAP

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Although attendance was lower than usual due to Spring Break, we consider our first Mastermind event a huge success! Not only was the venue stunning (thank you Carrot Top Designs!), but the content “Lead Generation” fostered lots of relevant and timely conversations amongst the agents in attendance. We look forward to our next one!

Meet our sponsor, Brad Hacker!

Brad is one of the newest members of the Emerald Coast Real Estate community. He is a Senior Mortgage Planner & Financial

Coach at Benchmark Mortgage. In 2021, after over 20 years of vacationing up and down the coast and dreaming of owning a place there, he and his wife Crystal took the leap and purchased a place in Miramar Beach. He, Crystal, and his two daughters Whitney & McKinley LOVE the gulf coast and while they also love their Old Kentucky Home, they are ridiculously tired of winter. It only makes sense he is taking the next step and launching the Hacker Team Emerald Coast!

With over two decades of experience in the industry as a mortgage lender, real

estate investor and sales & financial coach, Brad holds the designation of Certified Mortgage Planner from The Duncan Group, a renowned mortgage industry training organization. He has consistently ranked in the Top 1% of Mortgage Originators in Mortgage Executive Magazine and is featured as one of the Top Lenders in America in the Scotsman Guide.

Brad is super excited to work with Emerald Coast Real Estate agents to help the local owner, veteran, investor & second home buyer make a smart

financial decision in their transaction and provide an amazing home loan experience. In addition to serving borrowers, Brad collaborates with a diverse range of Realtors and Real Estate offices, conducting training sessions covering topics such as mortgage basics, customer service, personal finance, and effective sales techniques.

When he is not working, you'll most likely find Brad tearing up fairways at a local golf course, hanging out at the beach or pool with Crystal and the girls or at some sports arena cheering on his beloved Kentucky Wildcats! He is so excited to get to know everyone and help in anyway he can.

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PAUL DOMENECH

Whatever it Takes

BY DAVE DANIELSON
PHOTOS BY FALTISEK & GLORIA AND
DAVID BACA, FLORIDA COASTAL STUDIOS

If you’ve had the experience of talking with Paul Domenech, you know you’ve been in the presence of a champion. While that is literally true in a number of ways, all of the accolades and honors that this top producer has earned are by-products of the champion spirit that lives within him. Indeed, Paul holds nothing back when it comes to helping those around him.

From the world of mixed martial arts (MMA) matchmaking to the competitive landscape of real estate, his story is one of resilience, servant leadership, and relentless determination. Now, as a Rainmaker at Keller Williams Emerald Coast, Paul is not only making waves in the real estate industry but also changing lives along the way.

**Fighter to Founder:
The Unconventional
Path to Real Estate**

Before stepping into the world of real estate, Paul spent 15 years as an MMA matchmaker, curating fights and setting up events. His career in combat sports was more than just about wins and losses; it was about mentorship, personal growth, and guiding athletes through their journeys.

“I was the first to do a state-sanctioned MMA fight in Florida in Key West,” Paul recalls. “It was about picking fighters who could challenge and elevate each other, ensuring they walked away with valuable experience regardless of the outcome.”

That sense of responsibility and protection eventually led him to real estate. When he referred a student—an airman—to an agent, he realized the weight of that decision. “I told him, ‘I want to protect people. That’s what I do.’

Servant leadership is at my core, and I knew I could bring that same philosophy to real estate.”

**Overcoming Barriers: A
Lesson in Persistence**

Paul’s path to becoming a licensed real estate agent was not without obstacles. In 2015, he passed the pre-licensing exam but faced an unexpected roadblock—his past. A felony conviction from his youth initially prevented him from obtaining his real estate license.

“I had spent time in prison when I was 19 for raving and drugs,” he shares openly. “That record followed me to MMA, but I overcame it there. I thought real estate would be the same.”

Instead, he found himself in front of the licensing board, required to present extensive documentation, including letters of recommendation from industry leaders and executives. “They told me, ‘Your past will actually help you.’ That moment reaffirmed my belief that everything I had been through was preparing me for this.”

**The Relentless
Pursuit of Mastery**

Real estate, like MMA, is a game of endurance. Paul quickly realized that success wasn’t about talent alone—it was about consistency and tenacity.



on self-leadership. “I fill myself up every morning so I can pour into others,” he explains. This mindset has helped him accomplish incredible feats, including completing an Ironman triathlon—a challenge he took on despite an accident that left him with 88 stitches just weeks before the race.

“My preparation and consistency paid off. I beat my goal by an hour, finishing in 12 hours and 28 minutes,” he proudly states.

Faith, Family, and the Future

Paul’s faith is a driving force in his life and business. “If God has given me the ability, then I must use it,” he affirms. “We often get in our own way, but



“I never felt entitled to anything,” he says. “I sought out knowledge. I made it my mission to prove the people who believed in me right.”

His definition of luxury in real estate isn’t tied to price tags but rather to service. “Luxury is the level of care and dedication you get from me, no matter your budget.”

Servant Leadership in Real Estate

For Paul, real estate is more than just transactions—it’s about stability, hope, and faith. “This industry has its peaks and valleys, but my job is to create an environment of confidence for my clients.”

His daily success stems from a structured routine centered

“

Our business is structured like Chick-fil-A’s service with Amazon’s ease. That’s what we call the ‘Domenech Effect.’”

I believe if something is placed in front of me, I need to step into it.”

His family remains at the center of his motivation, particularly his son. “He’s my driving force,” Paul says.

In addition to his personal and professional pursuits, Paul surrounds himself with high-caliber mentors and colleagues. He trains with Alex Vidal, the International President of ERA, and continues his passion for martial arts as a Second Degree Black Belt, teaching kids at Capatio Jiu Jitsu and MMA in Fort Walton Beach.

The Domenech Effect: A Business Built on Service and Excellence

Paul’s real estate team operates with the same discipline and commitment that he has carried throughout his life. His team includes Ann Paulsen, Joshua Colbert, Alaina Barrow, his mother Diane Wagner, and a group of dedicated professionals who ensure that clients receive top-tier service.

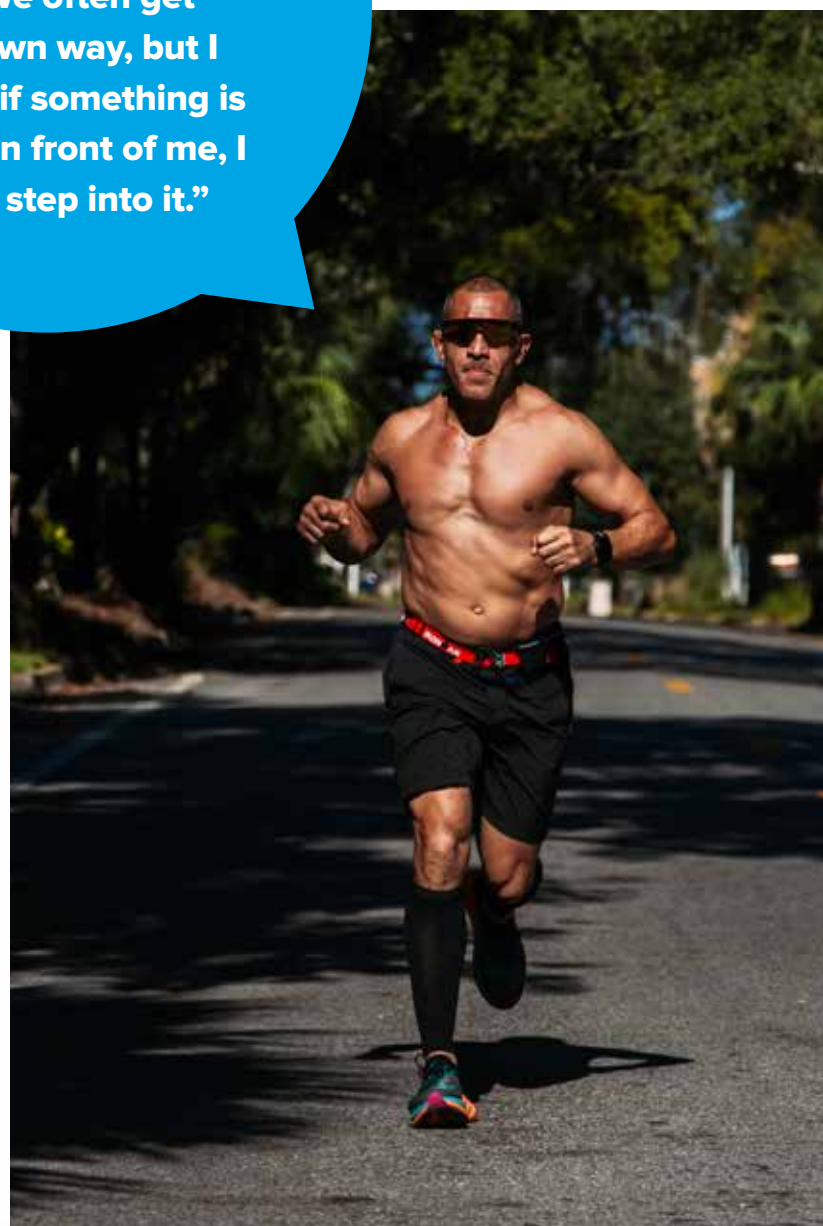
“Our business is structured like Chick-fil-A’s service with Amazon’s ease. That’s





“

If God has given me the ability, then I must use it. We often get in our own way, but I believe if something is placed in front of me, I need to step into it.”



what we call the ‘Domenech Effect,’” Paul explains.

His business consistently earns awards for customer service, a testament to his philosophy: “Every day, all day, I am willing to do whatever it takes. No matter how dark it gets, I don’t believe we are buried—I believe we are planted. Like bamboo, it might take years, but when we grow, we grow seven stories tall.”

Final Words: Kind, Savage, Life-Changing

When asked how he would like to be remembered, Paul doesn’t hesitate: “I was kind. I was savage. I changed lives.”

This philosophy defines everything he does, from mentoring young fighters to guiding families through one of the biggest financial decisions of their lives. His journey is proof that resilience, faith, and a relentless pursuit of excellence can turn any obstacle into an opportunity.

Day by day, Paul Domenech makes good things happen for those around him. In the process, his all-in approach makes an impact. Because those who have been honored to know him understand that Paul will hold nothing back when it comes to serving their interests.





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