

NORTH ALABAMA

NOVEMBER 2025

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# As the Thanksgiving season arrives and we reflect on what we're grateful for,

I find myself overwhelmed with appreciation for the incredible real estate community here in North Alabama. Launching *Real Producers North Alabama* has been a rewarding journey, and I am thankful for the warm welcome and support from all of you – our top-producing agents, trusted vendors, and community partners. In this season of gratitude, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks for the relationships we've built and the spirit of collaboration that defines the community.

This November is especially exciting because *Real Producers North Alabama* is hosting its first-ever event – our “Boots & Boogie” official launch party – on Friday, November 7 at Hays Farm. We're kicking off this publication in style, with an evening full of music, networking, and fun. This celebratory event is more than just a party; it's our way of honoring the people who have built this real estate community. We are coming together to celebrate you – the top agents whose dedication drives our industry, the exceptional vendors who provide invaluable support, and the community partners who make our successes possible. Boots & Boogie is a night to recognize and thank everyone who has contributed to the growth of this vibrant network.

Hosting this launch event is a natural extension of the mission behind *Real Producers*. From day one, *Real Producers* has been more than a magazine – it's a platform designed to connect, elevate, and celebrate our market's top real estate professionals. We serve the area's top agents by hosting exclusive events that introduce them to the best vendors in the industry, sharing in-depth stories of their success, and fostering a true

community through every issue. It's about building relationships and learning from each other as we grow together. By sharing stories and celebrating successes – and by bringing people together at events like this – *Real Producers* works to foster a strong sense of community among top-producing agents and trusted partners. Our mission is, and always will be, to connect, elevate, and celebrate the very best of our local real estate industry.

I am genuinely grateful to be part of this journey, and I'm filled with anticipation for the Boots & Boogie event. I cannot wait to see many of you on November 7 as we toast to our shared successes and launch this new chapter together. Your support and enthusiasm mean the world to me. Thank you for being the driving force behind *Real Producers North Alabama*. Together, we will continue to connect with one another, lift each other up, and celebrate all that we achieve.



With gratitude,  
**Deanna Eliashevsky**  
Owner & Publisher  
*Real Producers North Alabama*

# Blessing Baskets 2025

The Soden Team of Legend Realty is once again spreading kindness across Madison County with their annual Blessing Baskets initiative!

This year, their goal is to collect 75 filled baskets to brighten the season for families in need.

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- beans
- pasta
- rice
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- oatmeal
- shelf-stable milk
- applesauce
- fruit cups



Add a few extras if you'd like—small toys, toiletries, socks, or paper goods are always appreciated.

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Let's come together to make this Thanksgiving a little brighter for our neighbors in need. Every basket is a blessing!

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Call 256-520-9640 or your Soden Team Real Estate Agent:  
Nina Soden, Mary Gregory, Sherry Monge, Cristen Jackson, Kaye McGlothen, Chad Gay, Jackie Turner, Sherry Neal, Courtney Harvey, and Candice Walker

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*Kelsey*  
ZWACK

## Building a Legacy in Luxury & Leadership

BY DEANNA ELIASHEVSKY  
PHOTOS BY APRIL  
STANLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

In Huntsville's fast-moving luxury market, a new generation of leaders is redefining what success looks like—and few embody that shift more powerfully than Kelsey Zwack. The fourth generation in a family of Realtors, she's turned legacy into leadership, pairing timeless Southern integrity with a modern, high-performance edge. With more than \$127 million in career sales and a reputation for elevating everyone around her, Kelsey isn't just selling homes—she's shaping the next era of real estate in North Alabama.







“In real estate, you can build a business that changes your life—or one that changes the lives of others. If you’re lucky, it does both.”

**From Habitat to Huntsville**

Kelsey’s professional path began in 2012 at a community bank, helping families restructure delinquent loans to keep their homes. That experience ignited a passion for housing and stability that carried her into a five-year tenure with Habitat for Humanity International in Atlanta, where she traveled the country helping local affiliates manage their grant funds and better serve their communities.

After she and her husband, Matt—an aerospace engineer with NASA—settled in Huntsville, Kelsey decided it was time to continue her family’s legacy on a more personal level. With a degree in Housing Studies from the University of Minnesota,

she transitioned into real estate full-time, combining her technical knowledge with her heart for service. “My career began as full-time and has now become more than full-time,” she says with a smile.

**A Legacy of Grit and Guidance**

Kelsey’s drive to excel traces back to her grandfather, Richard Anderson, whom she lovingly calls Poppy. A self-made professional with a long, storied career in sales, his work ethic and determination left a lasting mark on her. “His career and work ethic have inspired me throughout my entire life,” Kelsey shares. “I saw what Poppy was able to provide for his family, and it inspired me to strive to create a similar life for my own.”

That example—of building something from the ground up, with equal parts ambition and integrity—became the compass for how she approaches both business and life.

**Continuing a Legacy: The Golden Handoff**

In 2024, Kelsey experienced another defining moment in her career: a “transition of trust” with one of Huntsville’s most respected names in real estate, Bob Gifford.

“Bob is an icon and a legend—38 years in real estate and a pillar in our community,” Kelsey says with deep admiration. The two merged their businesses in what they called a golden handoff, a seamless blending of values, vision, and care for clients.

“Bob has been both a spiritual and professional mentor to me,” she continues. “I have the benefit of his counsel, and he’s taught me so much about not just real estate, but about life.”

While Bob now resides in France, Kelsey continues serving his esteemed clients with the same dedication and warmth that defined his legacy. “It’s an honor to continue what he built,” she says. “He set the standard, and I’m proud to carry that torch forward.”

This merging of heritage—both familial and professional—has become a hallmark of Kelsey’s journey: honoring the past while leading with innovation into the future.

**Heritage Partners: Heart First, Always**

At Keller Williams Horizon, Kelsey leads Heritage Partners, a tight-knit team known for professionalism and heart. Two full-time agents, three full-time admins (one licensed), and their indispensable “Mr. Bill” form the foundation of the business.

“I have the best team,” Kelsey says. “Everyone is selfless, intelligent, and hardworking.”

Linda Hunziker has been by Kelsey’s side for three years and is, in her words, “my rock.” Last year, Marty Paulson joined the team as a Buyer Agent and has amazed Kelsey with her heart for her clients—growing her business tenfold and quickly becoming a top agent within the brokerage in her own right. Behind the scenes, Robby Sharpe and Tatiana Fears are the indispensable backbone of Heritage Partners, managing every contract from start to close with precision, knowledge, and an unwavering advocacy for clients.

Together, the team has closed \$40 million in sales year-to-date, earning accolades including Rookie of the Year, #1 Agent in Alabama, and #5 Team in the Southeast Region for Keller Williams.

What sets them apart is Kelsey’s philosophy: old-school service meets expert practice. “I don’t pay for leads or chase clicks,” she says. “I’ve built my business through relationships, referrals, and a true mastery of the craft.” That people-first

approach has earned her unmatched trust and loyalty in a competitive market.

“Old school is the new school. My business is built on real relationships and a servant’s heart.”

**Leading in Luxury**

Beyond her personal production, Kelsey has stepped into a key leadership role as the Luxury Market Center Liaison for Keller Williams Horizon. In this position, she curates trainings and resources to help agents elevate their skills and better serve high-end clients throughout Huntsville’s booming luxury market.

Her leadership philosophy centers on empowerment. “Your business will grow to the extent you can lead,” she says—a mantra from her business coach that she carries into every decision.

That mindset also fueled her bold move to help open the KW Horizon Market Center in 2025, expanding opportunity for agents across North Alabama. For Kelsey, leadership isn’t about control; it’s about cultivating growth. “I’ve been blessed to reach every goal I set for myself,” she says. “Now my focus is helping my team and brokerage reach theirs.”

**Philanthropy and Purpose**

Success, for Kelsey, has always been tied to service. She’s helped raise over \$50,000 for local nonprofits through KW HSV’s annual Chili for Charity, and every 25 homes her team sells, Heritage Partners donates to an animal rescue organization.

During the holidays, they sponsor multiple families through the Village of Promise, providing gifts, meals, and hope. “I think a lot about mothers who don’t have my resources,” she says. “It’s important to help them.”

That blend of compassion and action defines her brand—powerful, productive, and deeply rooted in community.

“I’ve hit every goal I set for myself. Now my mission is to help others do the same.”

**Family and the Legacy Ahead**

At home, Kelsey’s life is as full as her calendar. She and Matt are raising their spirited five-year-old, Jane, alongside two standard poodles—Scarlett (13) and Maverick (7). “Poodles and houses—that’s pretty much all there is to know about me,” she laughs.

They live in a historic Huntsville neighborhood, where weekends are spent walking the dogs and sipping coffee on the porch. Despite her demanding career, Kelsey works hard to protect family time. “No matter how great of a Realtor I am, that’s not my legacy,” she says. “I want Jane to remember me as someone who showed up, who taught her to be strong, and who supported her dreams.”

**Advice for the Next Generation**

Kelsey is passionate about guiding new agents,

distilling her lessons into a few timeless truths:

- Lead with service. Come from a heart of service; clients are counting on you.
- Work hard and stay humble. Set big goals, reach them, then set bigger ones.
- Never stop learning. Improve constantly and share what you know.
- Own your success. Her favorite mantra, shared by mentor Leigh Stephens: “If it is to be, then it is up to me.”

That mindset has carried her from her Habitat for Humanity days to the upper tier of Alabama real estate—and continues to guide how she leads, sells, and serves.

**The Final Word**

Nearly a decade into her career, Kelsey Zwack stands as a testament to what happens when legacy, leadership, and love for the craft intersect. She’s built a thriving business, opened a market center, raised thousands for charity, and helped countless families find their place to call home.

But beyond the numbers, her true success lies in the ripple effect she’s created—a network of agents, clients, and community members inspired by her commitment to excellence and heart.

“In real estate, you can build a business that changes your life—or one that changes the lives of others,” she says. “If you’re lucky, it does both.”

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the **BDB CONSTRUCTION** way

BY DEANNA ELIASHEVSKY

In a city as fast-growing as Huntsville—where craftsmanship and innovation meet Southern tradition—BDB Construction stands as a name synonymous with integrity, precision, and trust. Founded in 2014 by Ben Brocato, BDB Construction has become a leader in custom homebuilding and large-scale residential renovations across North Alabama, where every project reflects both the homeowner’s vision and the care of a builder who truly loves his craft.

**Building from the Ground Up**  
Ben’s story begins in New Orleans, Louisiana, but it’s Huntsville he’s

long called home. Construction was never a passing interest—it was a calling that took root early. “I was always drawn to the construction industry,” he says. “I started by working for my uncle’s company during summers, and by high school, I was fascinated by architecture and design.”

That curiosity led him to Auburn University, where a conversation with a department advisor changed everything. “I went to Auburn intending to study architecture, but my advisor told me my skills and interests were better aligned with Building Science. It turned out to be the best advice I ever got.”

Ben graduated in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science in Building Construction, a program that emphasized commercial work—but his heart was always in residential. After several years working as an estimator and later a project manager, he decided to take the leap. In 2014, BDB Construction was born.

**The Philosophy: Be the Best, Not the Biggest**  
When it comes to guiding principles, Ben doesn’t rely on catchy slogans—he relies on wisdom earned through years in the field. “A former employer once said he never wanted to be the biggest builder, just the best,”







“

## This business isn't only about building homes— IT'S ABOUT BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS.

*Realtors, designers, subcontractors, and fellow builders... earning and maintaining their respect is equally important to me.”*

Ben reflects. “That resonated with me, and it’s something I’ve carried with me ever since.”

That mindset shows up in every detail of his work. From site prep to final walk-throughs, BDB Construction is known for excellence, communication, and collaboration. Realtors who partner with Ben know that when he’s involved, clients receive honest guidance, transparent processes, and craftsmanship that stands the test of time.

“We can help Realtors and their clients with any aspect of the

custom homebuilding process—from architect recommendations and bank coordination to material selection and construction oversight,” he says. “We keep communication consistent before, during, and after completion. It’s a relationship-driven business, and that’s how I approach it.”

### **Adapting, Evolving, Thriving**

Like every great builder, Ben has weathered his share of industry changes. “Two events really defined my professional perspective—the 2008 housing crash and the COVID-19 pandemic,” he explains. “The

crash made me more aware of the financial side of construction, while the pandemic forced me to completely reimagine how to build efficiently amid uncertainty.”

Through material shortages, price swings, and extended procurement timelines, Ben learned to embrace flexibility. “Change is inevitable. It’s human nature to resist it, but to succeed in business—and in life—you have to adapt.”

That mindset has kept BDB Construction thriving even in volatile markets, solidifying its reputation for reliability, quality, and innovation.

### **Family, Foundations, and Fulfillment**

For Ben, the greatest joy of building isn’t found in blueprints

or profit margins—it’s in the process and the people. “There’s something really rewarding about watching a project evolve—from a dirt lot into a home where families will make memories,” he says. “Every project is unique, every challenge different, and that’s what keeps it exciting.”

It’s also personal. “My favorite part is creating something tangible that I can show my daughters,” he smiles. “I love when they recognize a house and say, ‘Daddy built that.’”

Ben and his wife, Julie, have been married for 12 years and share two daughters, Celie (8) and Charlotte (5). Together, they love traveling, outdoor adventures, and enjoying all that North Alabama has to offer—weekend trips to Chattanooga, Mentone, or Lake Guntersville, bike rides, hikes, and family game nights. “We love music and live events—



places like Stovehouse or Concerts in the Park where the kids can dance and we can all relax.”

When he’s not working, you’ll find Ben golfing, fishing, cooking, or gathering with friends—simple joys that balance the demands of running a growing company.

### **Success Built on Integrity**

Ask Ben how he defines success, and his answer is immediate:

referrals and respect. “People are trusting me with one of the largest investments of their lives,” he says. “When a client recommends me to their family or friends, that’s the highest compliment I can receive. It means they felt heard, valued, and taken care of.”

But it’s not just client trust that matters—it’s the respect of peers. “This business isn’t only about building homes—it’s about building relationships,” Ben adds. “Realtors, designers, subcontractors, and fellow builders... earning and maintaining their respect is equally important to me.”

That’s the ethos that defines BDB Construction today: craftsmanship rooted in integrity, collaboration built on communication, and a commitment to excellence that never wavers.

“When I look back on my career,” Ben reflects, “I hope I’m remembered as a man of integrity—a quality-driven builder who did the right thing, even when it was harder. It’s not just about dollars and cents. It’s much more than that.”

### **Connect with BDB Construction**

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# Where HEART Meets HOME

## M E E T L I S A W A R N E R D I C K E N S

When it comes to real estate, Lisa Warner Dickens has built her success not through shortcuts or social-media hype, but through twenty-two years of steady excellence, meaningful relationships, and an unwavering belief in treating people with kindness.

A Realtor® with Kendall James Realty in Alabama and Coldwell Banker Realty in Ohio, Lisa has guided hundreds of families through one of life’s biggest transitions. With \$36 million in career volume and \$1.4 million closed last year alone, her career is a testament to the power of perseverance, empathy, and a genuine heart for service.

### A Career Built on Flexibility and Family

Lisa’s journey into real estate began in 2003, after a pivotal season of motherhood and change. Following her husband Mike’s graduation from The Ohio State University, the couple relocated to the East Coast for several years before returning home to Ohio.

“I realized how much I missed working, but I also wanted to be present for our two young children,” she recalls. “Real estate seemed like the perfect fit—flexible, challenging, and rewarding.”

That decision launched a 22-year career that has thrived on balance. While others saw real estate as a side hustle, Lisa made it a full-time profession from day one. Her early success was undeniable, earning accolades like Coldwell Banker’s Rising Star Award (2003) and the Columbus Board of Realtors \$5 Million and \$10 Million Producer Awards.

### Roots and Resilience

Born and raised in New Philadelphia, Ohio, Lisa credits her parents for instilling the values that guide her today—integrity, gratitude, and the importance of making them proud. After graduating from Kent State University with an associate degree in Office Management, she began her professional life in Human Resources at the local Chamber of Commerce before finding her true calling in real estate.

*“Expectations and transparency are everything.”*

Her life has been defined by devotion—to her family, her clients, and her faith in hard work. “Being married for 36 years has been one of the most defining parts of my life,” she says. “We started our marriage while my husband was in graduate school, and we learned quickly how to work hard, sacrifice, and support each other. Those lessons have carried through every chapter since.”

### Relationships Over Transactions

Lisa’s business is almost entirely referral-based—about 95% of her clients come from repeat business and personal recommendations. For her, that statistic isn’t just a metric; it’s the highest compliment.

“One of the most rewarding parts of my job is when clients refer me to their friends and family,” she explains. “It means they trusted me, felt cared for, and want others to have that same experience.”

Lisa is meticulous about communication, ensuring that her clients understand every detail of their transaction—especially in today’s evolving market. With inventory fluctuations, interest-rate shifts, and brokerage compensation changes following the 2024 NAR lawsuit, she makes client education a top priority.

“Expectations and transparency are everything,” she emphasizes. “If we talk early and often, we can eliminate surprises and make the process as stress-free as possible.”

### Finding Balance, Keeping Perspective

Balancing real estate with family life hasn’t always been easy—but it’s something Lisa has mastered over the years. “When my kids were little, I literally wrote their games and competitions into my schedule as ‘appointments,’” she laughs. “I learned early on that family time had to be intentionally protected.”

Now, with her children grown, Lisa and Mike are enjoying life as proud parents and grandparents. Their daughter Taylor and son-in-law Reece live nearby in Alabama with their adorable two-year-old daughter, Michaela, while their son Ian resides in Cleveland. “We’re an easy-going bunch,” she says. “We love the pool, the beach, and catching up over good food and drinks.”

### Purpose, Passion, and Perspective

In 2018, Lisa expanded her professional credentials by earning her Ohio Insurance License, a reflection of her commitment to continual learning. She’s

equally passionate about giving back, supporting Cancer and Alzheimer’s research—causes close to her heart after losing grandparents to each disease.

Outside the office, Lisa enjoys walking with a podcast or audiobook, reading, and sharing wine with friends. Her favorite quote perfectly captures her philosophy: “Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.”

### Wisdom Worth Sharing

Asked what advice she’d give to new agents, Lisa doesn’t hesitate. “Communication is key—with your clients and your peers. Never stop learning, and truly understand the contracts you’re asking your clients to sign. Knowledge builds confidence—for you and for them.”

Her clients would describe her as kind, attentive, and deeply professional—someone who makes the buying or selling process feel comfortable and manageable. “I hope I’m remembered for being a calming, helpful presence,” she reflects. “Real estate can be stressful, but it doesn’t have to be. My job is to make it easier.”

### Looking Ahead

After more than two decades, Lisa still loves every part of the business—especially the paperwork, which she admits with a laugh is her favorite part. “It’s strange, I know! But I love the details.”

There’s no talk of retirement on her horizon—only continued purpose. “This career has given me so much,” she says. “As long as I can, I’ll keep helping families find the homes that fit their stories.”

Steady, humble, and deeply authentic, Lisa Warner Dickens is proof that success in real estate isn’t measured by flash, but by heart.

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