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**Lee Eatmon**  
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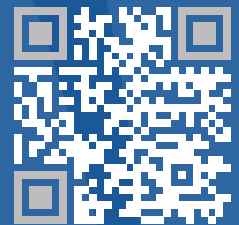
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# The Power of PROXIMITY

## WHY THE ROOMS YOU CHOOSE SHAPE THE RESULTS YOU CREATE

BY GABRIEL CHANDLER

Success in real estate is rarely about information alone. It's about **environment**.

Who you spend time with.  
What conversations your part of.  
Which rooms you consistently choose to enter.

We often hear the phrase “*your network is your net worth*,” yet many professionals continue to operate in isolation—staying busy, staying active, and hoping momentum follows. But growth doesn't happen by chance.

Hope isn't a strategy. Proximity is.

The most effective agents understand this. They don't simply work harder—they place themselves in environments where perspective expands, relationships deepen, and opportunity naturally follows. They know that the right conversations can accelerate progress faster than effort alone ever could.

That understanding is why Real Producers exists.

### A Room Designed With Intention

Real Producers isn't another networking group or industry association. It's a carefully curated platform created for the top 300 agents in our market—because when high-level professionals gather with purpose, the impact multiplies.

Every feature, every event, and every introduction is intentional. The goal isn't volume—it's alignment. We bring the right people together so collaboration happens organically, trust forms naturally, and growth becomes sustainable.

This is what turns presence into progress.

### Busy Versus Intentional

There's a difference between motion and momentum.

Staying busy can feel productive—but true growth comes from investing in relationships that stretch your thinking, sharpen your execution, and open doors you didn't even know were there.

If you're reading this, you've already earned your place among the best in the business. The real question is this: are you fully leveraging the ecosystem around you?

Are you showing up consistently?  
Are you building meaningful relationships with partners and peers?  
Are you placing yourself where long-term opportunities are created?

### The Next Quarter Starts Now

April marks a natural reset point. The first quarter is behind us, and the foundation for the rest of the year is being set right now.

This is the moment to be intentional about where you invest your time, energy, and attention.

If you're already engaged—continue leaning in.  
If you've been on the sidelines—this is your invitation.

This is your community.  
This is your network.  
This is Real Producers.

I look forward to seeing you at the next event. Let's make this quarter count.



**Gabriel Chandler**  
Publisher  
Cape Fear & Brunswick  
Real Producers

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# Does the Code of Ethics expect a REALTOR® to verify buyer and sellers identity?



The North Carolina Real Estate Commission's monthly eBulletin has included descriptions of several cases where licensed agents were disciplined for failing to discover what has been called "seller impersonation fraud" or a "fake seller scam." In addition to facing potential discipline by the Real Estate Commission, could the failure of a REALTOR® to discover such a scam also result in discipline under the Code of Ethics?

While the outcome of any ethics proceeding will ultimately depend on the facts of that particular case, we believe that there

are several articles of the Code of Ethics that could apply if an agent listed a property for sale without taking reasonable steps to verify that their client is actually the owner of that property.

**Article 2.** Article 2 of the Code of Ethics obligates REALTORS® to avoid misrepresentation of material facts relating to the property or the transaction in which they are involved. While REALTORS® are not expected to discover latent defects in the property, ownership of real property is not "latent"; it is almost always a matter of public record. Failure to verify a known fact could therefore lead to an Article 2 violation in some cases.

**Article 11.** Article 11 of the Code states that the "services which REALTORS® provide to their clients and customers shall conform to the standards of practice and competence which are reasonably expected in the specific real estate disciplines in which they engage." Given the proliferation of fake seller scams and their prevalence throughout the industry, a professional standards hearing panel could conclude that failure to conduct due diligence as to a seller's alleged identity constitutes incompetence.

**Article 12.** Article 12 of the Code requires REALTORS® to be honest and truthful in their real estate communications and to present a "true picture" in their advertising, marketing, and other representations. Standard of Practice 12-4 is perhaps most directly on point: "REALTORS® shall not offer for sale/ lease or advertise property without authority." If a REALTOR® fails to use reasonable diligence to confirm whether their seller-client is the true owner of the property they are listing, Article 12 may also apply.

Scammers are becoming more sophisticated every day, and so this article should not be read to cast blame on any REALTOR® who becomes a victim of a scam. It should also be noted that other articles of the Code could apply depending on the circumstances. All that said, listing agents are expected to be vigilant and take reasonable steps to verify a seller's true identity. Failure to do so may not only violate the License Law, but also the Code of Ethics.

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# HAROLD & JACOB

ANSWERING  
THE CALL  
TO SERVE

WRITTEN BY DAVE DANIELSON  
PHOTOS BY T.J. DRECHSEL

**F**or Jacob Dempster, real estate isn't just a career—it's a calling shaped by family, mentorship, and a passion for helping others achieve their dreams. Born and raised in Fayetteville, North Carolina, Jacob grew up watching his father balance a thriving law practice with being a present and devoted dad. That example of leadership and service would lay the foundation for Jacob's approach to business: combine hard work with integrity and prioritize people above all else.

### A Career Built on Vision and Mentorship

Jacob earned his marketing degree from Methodist University's Reeves School of Business in 2019 and was licensed in real estate by March of 2020. "I knew I wanted a career that allowed me to build something meaningful while leaving room to be present for my future family," he says. He immediately joined the Harold Chappell Team at NextHome Cape Fear, where he learned the nuances of the industry and how to run real estate as a true business.

His first months coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a challenge that might have overwhelmed any new agent. "I didn't close my first transaction until six months in," he recalls. But Jacob leaned on Harold's guidance, learning to work by referral and to focus on providing exceptional service long after a closing. This mentorship would shape not only his early success but the leadership style he now brings to the NextHome Cape Fear office.

### Teamwork and Leadership at the Forefront

Today, Jacob is a key partner in NextHome Cape Fear and a guiding force for the team's agents. A typical day begins at 8 a.m., opening the office and preparing for the team's daily call, where they coordinate strategies and discuss client needs. Much of Jacob's focus is on growth—both in nurturing client relationships and helping agents expand their businesses. He even travels

weekly to NextHome's Jacksonville office to mentor staff there. "Being a leader and protector—for both agents and clients—is the most rewarding part of my career," he explains.

The results speak for themselves. In 2025, the Harold Chappell Team closed over \$84 million in sales, and Jacob continues to focus on growth through referrals, relationships, and mentorship. "Working by





**“REAL ESTATE IS A SERVICE INDUSTRY.**

Our job is to provide an exceptional experience for clients and agents alike.”



referral changed the game for me,” he says. “It allows me to work with people I genuinely care about while having time for family.”

#### **Passion Beyond Real Estate**

Jacob’s personal life is rich with travel, cooking, and exploration. His love of travel began in childhood, with family trips across the U.S., and expanded in college while studying abroad in England, Ireland, and Scotland. He and his wife, Lauren, are committed to exploring the world together before starting a family, with a trip to Italy planned for 2026. Cooking is another passion—he often experiments with new recipes and shares them with colleagues, blending creativity with camaraderie.

Jacob’s commitment to service extends to the

community. He supports Canine Companions through NextHome, contributes to his church LifePoint, and works with WARM NC on home restoration projects. “Real estate is a service industry,” he says. “Our job is to provide an exceptional experience for clients and agents alike.”

#### **The Mentors Behind the Success**

Much of Jacob’s growth can be traced to the influence of two key mentors: his father, who taught him the value of kindness, integrity, and balance, and Harold Chappell, whose decades of experience have been a blueprint for excellence. Harold, a former top-producing agent and successful entrepreneur, has guided Jacob from his first transactions through to becoming a partner in the brokerage. “Harold has

shown me how to be a great agent, a great businessman, and a great mentor,” Jacob notes.

#### **Harold Chappell: A Legacy of Excellence**

Harold’s story is one of entrepreneurship and dedication. Born in Nash County, North Carolina, he earned an accounting degree from King’s College in 1969 and later built IllumElex Corporation into one of the largest lighting management companies in the U.S. After selling the business in 1996, he transitioned to real estate, founding what would become NextHome Cape Fear and growing it into two thriving offices with a team that closed over \$84 million last year.

For Harold, the heart of real estate has always been relationships. “Success comes as you build trust,”



**“WE WANT TO BE THE HAPPIEST**

**and most productive office, not just the biggest.”**

a new agent, helping a first-time homebuyer, or consulting on a complex transaction, they approach every opportunity with care, expertise, and dedication.

**Looking Ahead**

Jacob's goals are as ambitious as they are thoughtful: grow the NextHome Cape Fear office, expand the team with motivated agents, and continue refining systems that prioritize people over transactions. “We want to be the happiest and most productive office, not just the biggest,” he says. Both mentor and protégé recognize that real estate success isn't defined by numbers alone—it's measured by the impact they have on lives, the trust they build, and the legacy they create.

In Wilmington's dynamic real estate market, the partnership between Harold Chappell and Jacob Dempster exemplifies the power of mentorship, vision, and human-centered leadership. Together, they are not only selling homes—they're building a community rooted in trust, integrity, and shared success.

he says. “Trust with staff, clients, agents, and vendors is the greatest gift this business offers.” He continues to mentor Jacob, helping him develop not only as an agent but as a leader, ensuring the next

generation of NextHome agents is equipped to thrive.

**A Focus on People and Purpose**

Both Harold and Jacob share a philosophy that sets NextHome Cape Fear

apart: Humans Over Houses. Their work emphasizes relationships, mentorship, and integrity, creating a culture where agents are supported, clients are guided, and communities benefit. Whether it's mentoring

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# MORTGAGE INVESTORS GROUP

COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY

WRITTEN BY DAVE DANIELSON  
PHOTOS BY JACOB SHNIDER



Mortgage Investors Group (MIG) has officially arrived in southeastern North Carolina, bringing with it more than 35 years of experience as one of the Southeast's most respected independent mortgage lenders. Founded in 1989, MIG has built its reputation on personalized service, clear communication, and a commitment to helping homebuyers find financing solutions that truly fit their long-term goals.

Now, with a growing presence in Wilmington and the surrounding coastal communities, MIG is offering a fresh yet deeply seasoned mortgage resource to one of North Carolina's most dynamic markets.

Operating out of its Wilmington office at 1209 Culbreath Drive, Suite 213, MIG combines the strength of a long-established regional lender with the responsiveness and accessibility of a local team. The result is a high-touch lending experience designed to support first-time buyers, move-up clients, relocations, and refinances—all while serving as a reliable partner to Realtors throughout the region.

**A Company Built on Experience and Trust**  
What sets Mortgage Investors Group apart is not simply its longevity, but how the company

is structured. MIG's in-house processing and operational support allow loan officers to focus on education, communication, and strategy. Clients benefit from transparency, consistency, and a smoother path from application to closing.

At the local level, the Wilmington branch is led by Branch Manager Don Owens, whose consultation-based approach emphasizes clarity, preparedness, and thoughtful guidance. The branch also benefits from the leadership and market knowledge of industry veteran Jeff Gilley, who is well known and highly respected throughout the Wilmington area. Together, they provide a strong foundation for a team-oriented culture that prioritizes relationships over transactions.



### A Local Team with Complementary Strengths

Powering MIG's southeastern North Carolina presence is a tight-knit team of three local loan officers: Adam Herendeen, Andrew Buchbinder, and Tom Pritchard. While each brings a distinct background and skill set, they share a common philosophy—putting clients and partners first.

Adam Herendeen is known for his proactive communication and problem-solving mindset. His ability to anticipate issues and keep all parties informed helps transactions stay on track and reduces stress for both clients and agents.

Tom Pritchard brings a calm, steady presence to every transaction. With decades of experience working directly with homeowners, Tom is valued for his thoughtful guidance, attention to detail, and ability to relate to clients navigating important financial decisions.

Andrew Buchbinder adds a client-first, strategy-driven perspective shaped by nearly two decades of experience in sales, marketing, communications, and leadership. His consultative approach focuses on helping buyers understand their options and feel confident about the path they choose.

Together, the three loan officers collaborate closely, drawing on one another's experience to ensure clients receive well-rounded support and Realtor partners have dependable, knowledgeable lending professionals at their side.

### Serving the Market with Purpose

Mortgage Investors Group specializes in full-service residential mortgage lending, offering a wide range of loan products tailored to individual needs. Rather than quoting rates in isolation, the team focuses on building personalized solutions that align with each client's financial picture and long-term objectives.



This approach resonates strongly with top-producing Realtors in the region. MIG's partners value dependable pre-approvals, fast and honest communication, and a team that addresses challenges early and collaboratively. By working transparently and proactively, MIG helps protect both the client experience and the agent's reputation.

### Rooted in Community and Relationships

Beyond the loan process, MIG's local team is deeply invested in the community it serves. The Wilmington area's blend of coastal living, military presence, and steady growth makes it a unique market—one that benefits from lenders who understand both local nuances and broader market conditions.

While the mortgage industry often demands availability beyond traditional hours, the MIG team embraces that responsibility as part of its commitment to service. Being present when clients and partners need guidance is not viewed as an inconvenience, but as a core part of the job.

### A Mortgage Partnership Built to Last

At its core, Mortgage Investors Group's expansion into southeastern North Carolina is about building

Mortgage Investors Group specializes in full-service residential mortgage lending, offering a wide range of loan products tailored to individual needs. Rather than quoting rates in isolation, the team focuses on building personalized solutions that align with each client's financial picture and long-term objectives.

lasting relationships—within the community, with Realtor partners, and with the clients who trust the team with one of life's most important financial decisions. By combining regional strength with local expertise, MIG offers something increasingly rare in today's lending environment: experience without ego, expertise with empathy, and a truly collaborative approach to home financing.

For Realtors and homebuyers alike, MIG's Wilmington team represents a mortgage partner committed to clarity, consistency, and long-term success—today and well beyond the closing table.

# Kim ANTOLINI

WRITTEN BY DAVE DANIELSON  
PHOTOS BY JACOB SHNIDER

## LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

In the world of real estate, longevity and adaptability are hallmarks of true professionals. For Kim Antolini of Corcoran HM Properties, both have defined a career that spans more than three decades, multiple states, and evolving markets. Today, based at 5900 Oleander Drive in Wilmington, North Carolina, and living in Ocean Isle Beach, Kim brings with her a depth of experience that few can match—and a passion for service that extends far beyond closing day.

### **From West Virginia Roots to Real Estate Foundations**

Kim's real estate journey began in 1992 in Elkins, West Virginia, at a small private firm called Propst Realty. What started as a position as office manager quickly became something more. By 1993, she was a licensed agent, immersed in a rural market that required versatility and grit.

"In Randolph County, you didn't specialize—you learned everything," Kim recalls.

Commercial transactions, land sales, residential properties, development projects—she was exposed to every facet of the industry. Under the mentorship of Lanny Propst, she learned not only contracts and negotiations, but

integrity, patience, and the value of truly understanding the mechanics behind every deal. From timber acquisitions to early renovation-and-resale projects—long before "flipping" became a buzzword—Kim built a foundation rooted in comprehensive knowledge.

That early start earned her recognition as Realtor of the Year in Randolph County in 1999, a milestone that affirmed her commitment to excellence.

### **Charlotte: A New Chapter and a New Perspective**

Later that year, Kim relocated with her family to the Charlotte area. Having personally navigated four moves within the region, she developed firsthand insight into the relocation experience. For a time, she stepped away from real estate and returned to her original calling in education.

With a degree in education, she taught mathematics at Holy Trinity Catholic Middle School, St. Mark Catholic School, and Christ the King Catholic High School within the Mecklenburg Area Catholic Schools system. Teaching sharpened her communication skills and reinforced her love of helping others build confidence—traits that would later strengthen her real estate practice.



After retiring from teaching in 2017, Kim reconnected with Peggy Peterson, who had once helped her family relocate. Their partnership led to the formation of the Peggy Peterson Team at Corcoran HM Properties. The collaboration proved powerful: the team earned Sales Team of the Year honors in 2018, 2019, 2021, and 2022, serving clients across North and South Carolina.

#### Starting Over on the Coast

In July 2023, Kim embraced a new challenge—relocating full-time to Ocean Isle Beach and launching her business anew along the North Carolina coast. Though she had vacationed there for more than 20 years and owned property locally for seven, living there full-time required deeper immersion.

“For anyone who knows me, you know I love a challenge,” she says.

She dedicated her first six months to studying the nuances of coastal real estate—flood zones, insurance variables, seasonal market patterns, and neighborhood dynamics. Mentor and friend Grace Schroeder became an invaluable guide, patiently fielding Kim’s many questions as she navigated unfamiliar territory.

While 2024 was a solid year, something felt incomplete. Midyear, Maren Brisson-Kuester reached out with news that Corcoran HM Properties was expanding to the North Carolina coast. The invitation to return felt serendipitous.

“The answer was an easy yes,” Kim says.

In 2025, she was named Top Producer for Corcoran HM Properties in Wilmington, marking a triumphant continuation of her career in a new market.

#### A Partnership at Home

Behind Kim’s professional success is steadfast personal support. She and her husband begin each morning over coffee, reviewing MLS hot sheets and discussing market trends. Though he isn’t licensed, his business acumen and thoughtful perspective provide a daily sounding board.

“He’s the supporter everyone wishes they had,” she says.

Outside of work, Kim finds joy in walking their dogs, Buddy and Mickey, practicing yoga and Pilates, and running—“when it’s warm.” She also treasures time playing games like Bananagrams and Rummikub when her sons or niece are in town.

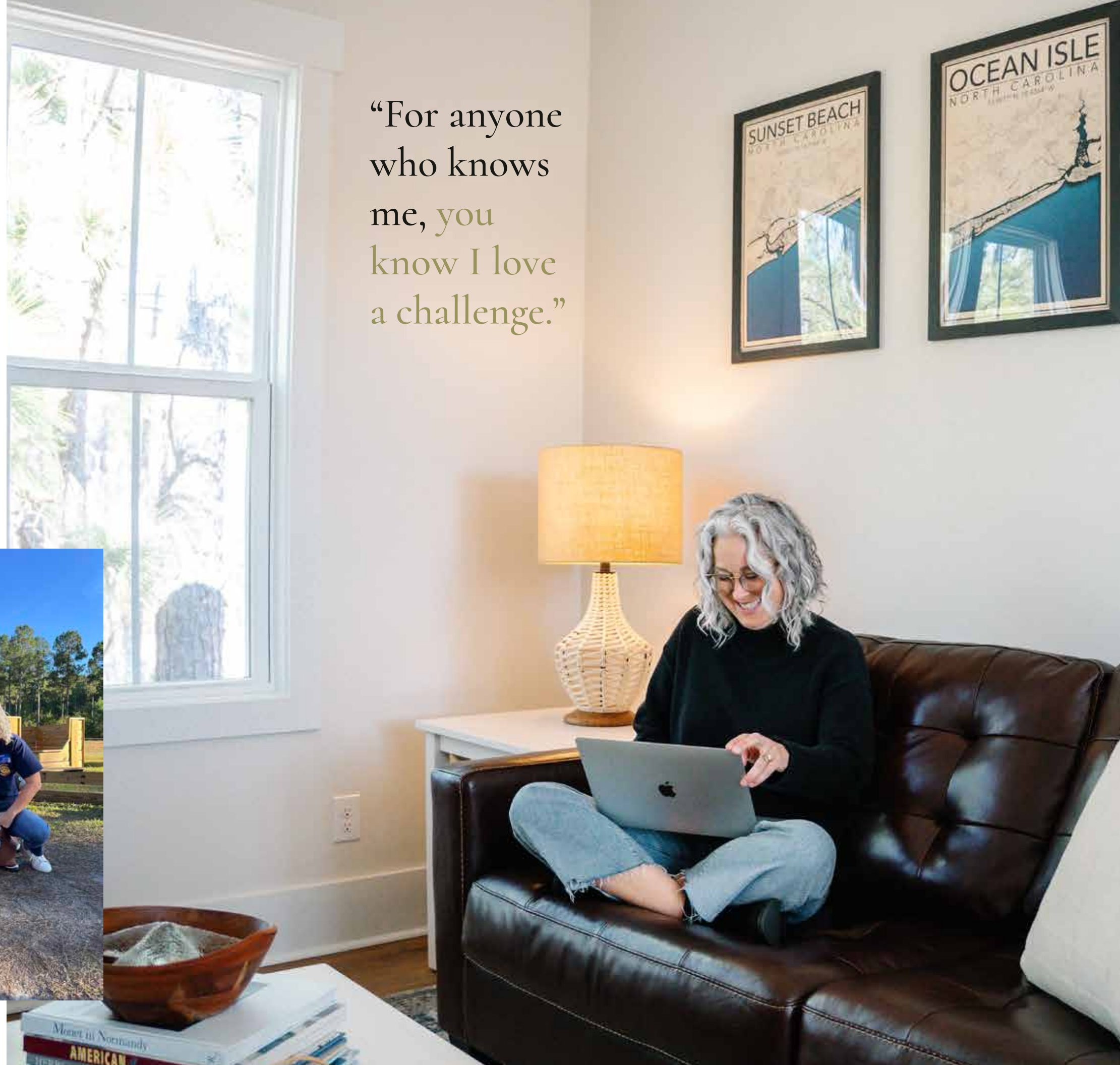
#### Service Above Self

Community involvement has always been central to Kim’s life. In Charlotte, she served extensively through her parish and school communities, even acting as service chairperson at her final school, coordinating outreach initiatives with local organizations.

In Ocean Isle Beach, she sought a new avenue for service and found it with the South Brunswick Islands Rotary. Guided by Rotary’s mission of “Service Above Self,” she quickly became an active member and was recently nominated as Public Image Chairperson.



“For anyone who knows me, you know I love a challenge.”

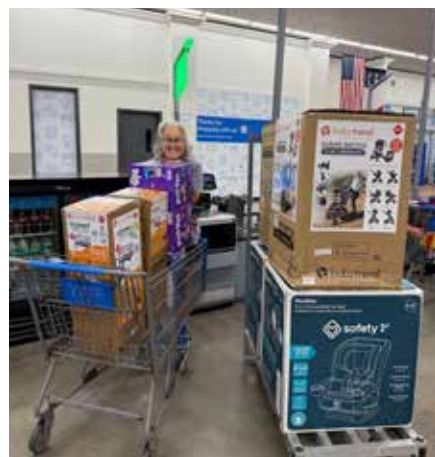




“The impact is what matters. Every dollar goes back into our community.”

In this role, Kim oversees communications, branding, and media outreach—aligning the club’s messaging with Rotary International standards while promoting local initiatives. Two major annual fundraisers anchor the club’s impact: the Three Bridges Tour cycling event each November and Monte Carlo Night in March.

Monte Carlo Night, held at the Sea Trail Convention Center, has quickly become a signature community event. Featuring exceptional food, entertainment, faux gaming tables, and an online auction with prizes ranging from original artwork to even an African safari, the event netted over \$45,000 last year. Every dollar raised supports local schools and youth-focused initiatives throughout Brunswick County.



“The impact is what matters,” Kim says. “Every dollar goes back into our community.”

**Looking Ahead**

For Kim, the future is about both visibility and growth—growing Rotary

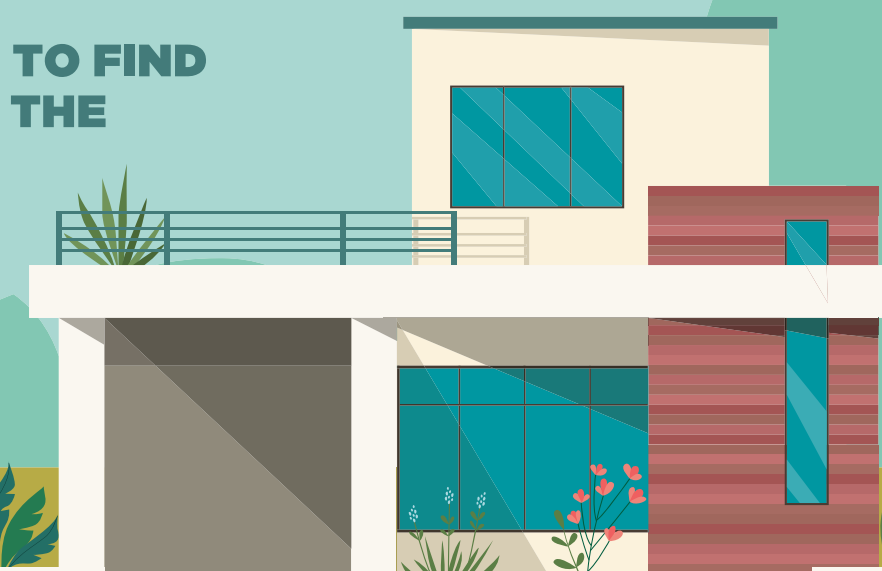
membership with service-minded individuals and continuing to establish the organization as a cornerstone of community impact. Professionally, she remains committed to serving coastal buyers and sellers with the same depth of knowledge and integrity that defined her early years in West Virginia.

Her career reflects a pattern: embrace change, master the details, and serve wholeheartedly. Whether guiding a first-time buyer, supporting a luxury waterfront seller, or helping coordinate a community fundraiser, Kim Antolini approaches every endeavor with purpose.

In real estate and in life, she has proven that starting over isn’t starting from scratch—it’s building on a foundation strong enough to carry you anywhere.

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# Advocacy, Integrity & Service

From the quiet neighborhoods of Huntington, New York, to the coastal communities of Brunswick County, Helen Wils has built a real estate career defined not by flash, but by fierce advocacy and steady integrity. As a single agent with HAVEN Realty Co., based at 2801 Market Street in Wilmington, North Carolina, Helen has spent the past six years serving buyers and sellers throughout Bolivia, Southport, and the surrounding coastal region with a clear mission: protect her clients, communicate clearly, and negotiate thoughtfully.

## From Classroom to Closing Table

Before real estate, Helen spent more than a decade as a middle and high school English teacher. A graduate of Stony Brook University (BA in English, 2007) and St. Joseph's University (MA in Literacy and Cognition, 2015), she dedicated her early career to shaping young minds.

"Those were hard years," she says. "But they built me."

# Helen Wils

WRITTEN BY DAVE DANIELSON  
PHOTOS BY JACOB SHNIDER





“Those were  
hard years.  
But they  
built me.”

Teaching sharpened her ability to communicate complex ideas clearly, manage competing demands, and lead with empathy. On her classroom door hung a quote that still guides her today: “Weeds are flowers, too, once you get to know them.” Above all, she wanted her students to be good people—kind, respectful, and thoughtful. That philosophy now informs the way she approaches clients and colleagues alike.

Licensed in December 2019, Helen entered real estate just months before a global pandemic reshaped the housing market. Instead of shrinking back, she

leaned in—building her business on preparation, professionalism, and calm confidence during uncertain times.

#### **A Lifelong Love of Homes**

Helen’s interest in real estate started long before she ever considered it as a profession. As the youngest of three, she often tagged along with her parents to open houses, showings, and closings. Whether out of necessity or curiosity, those outings left an imprint.

She remembers plotting, at six years old, to hide in a closet during a showing so buyers would think the house

was haunted. She recalls a strange homeowner drifting past a window on a rope swing during a tour, and the unmistakable sweetness of Entenmann’s pound cake served at an open house. She remembers agents who felt like extended family after months of working together.

Real estate, to Helen, was never just transactional. It was personal. Emotional. Memorable.

It made sense that she would one day step into that world herself.

#### **Building a Coastal Business**

Since 2022 alone, Helen has generated more than \$28 million in career volume, including \$8,921,809 last year. Yet her focus has never been on chasing numbers. Instead, she concentrates on advocacy, strong communication, and negotiation strategies rooted in preparation—not pressure.

“I don’t posture or strong-arm,” she explains. “I problem-solve.”

Her approach resonates in a market that often feels high-stakes and emotionally charged. Transactions can carry the weight of life transitions—marriages, relocations, retirements, loss. Helen has learned to navigate not only shifting markets but also the emotional gravity clients bring to the table.

Like many professionals, she has wrestled with work-life balance and self-doubt. What steadies her is preparation and a simple internal reminder: her job is not to “win” against another agent. It is to protect her client’s best interests.

#### **The Rhythm of a Full Life**

Life at home in Supply, North Carolina, is vibrant and full. Helen and her husband are raising three children—ages 5, 7, and 12—who, in her words, are brave, confident, respectful, and deeply connected to one another.

“I wanted my kids to be close-knit,” she says. “And they really are.”

Her husband, a talented artist, brings creativity into their home in literal





**“I serve. I protect my clients’ best interests. And I operate with integrity.”**

asks direct questions about what clients truly want, and acts accordingly. Growth is a goal—but sustainable growth. She is learning to say no to what doesn’t align.

Work-life balance, she says, requires intention and honesty. Some seasons are full throttle. Others demand rest. Boundaries and recovery are not luxuries; they are prerequisites for longevity.

ways—currently hand-painting thousands of flowers across their living room wall. He is also her steady partner in balancing the demands of parenting and business.

No two days look the same. Mornings might include showings or inspections. Afternoons could bring negotiations, marketing, or client calls. In between, she teaches barre classes and coordinates family logistics. If she doesn’t have to cook dinner, she jokes, that’s a win.

Movement is central to her life—barre, Pilates, gym workouts, beach walks, hikes. Discipline and humility, she says, come from constantly refining your form—whether in fitness or in business.

**Service as a Compass**

Helen supports Virginia Williamson Elementary School, Cedar Grove Middle School, and Brunswick Family Assistance, staying active in the community she serves. That spirit of service is not performative; it’s foundational.

“I serve. I protect my clients’ best interests. And I operate with integrity,” she says simply.

Her favorite part of being a Realtor is watching clients walk away feeling secure and supported. She speaks with particular pride about those who credit her with helping reshape their financial futures—retirements strengthened, investments positioned wisely.

Changing someone’s trajectory through thoughtful real estate decisions is deeply satisfying. But equally important is how they feel during the process: informed, protected, calm.

**The Game Changer**

Ask Helen what transformed her business, and her answer is immediate: clear communication and consistency. The second shift was more personal—leaning into who she actually is rather than trying to emulate someone else.

Authenticity has become her differentiator. She leads with service,

**Defining Success**

Professionally, success means sustainability and clients who feel confident in their decisions. Personally, it means presence—being there for her children’s milestones, nurturing friendships (including childhood friends who still send her books like *Lost & Found* by Kathryn Schulz), and maintaining strong family ties.

Her advice to up-and-coming top producers is straightforward: Know your contracts. Communicate clearly. Don’t let ego lead negotiations. And remember—it’s about your client’s goals, not your desire to close.

In an industry often fueled by urgency and volume, Helen Wils offers something steadier: thoughtful advocacy, disciplined preparation, and genuine care. On the North Carolina coast, she has built more than a business. She has built trust.

And for her clients, that makes all the difference.

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