

EAST TEXAS

APRIL 2026

REAL PRODUCERS[®]



Heather
Kelly

BROKER
A Woman on Fire



Rising Star
**NATASHA
HARRELL**
Johnson Realty

Partner Spotlight
TRULY TITLE

Event Recap
**TOAST TO THE
TOP 2026**

CONNECTING. ELEVATING. INSPIRING.

East Texas

TREC #8942

Home Inspection Services, LLC

Serving East Texas Since 1996

OVER
50,000
HOME
INSPECTIONS
1996 212 Year
Combined
Experience 2025

STRUCTURAL INSPECTIONS
Residential - Buyer and Seller Inspections
Commercial, New Construction,
and Builder Warranty Inspections

“Free” WDI Inspections
Septic Inspections • Pools • Spas • Sprinklers
Water Wells & Water Testing
and many other systems.



866-727-0831

“One Call Inspects All”
SCHEDULE NOW →

East Texas PEST CONTROL

We Stop What's Buggin' You!



Call Us...
East Texas Pest Control Services, LLC
for Treatment Today!

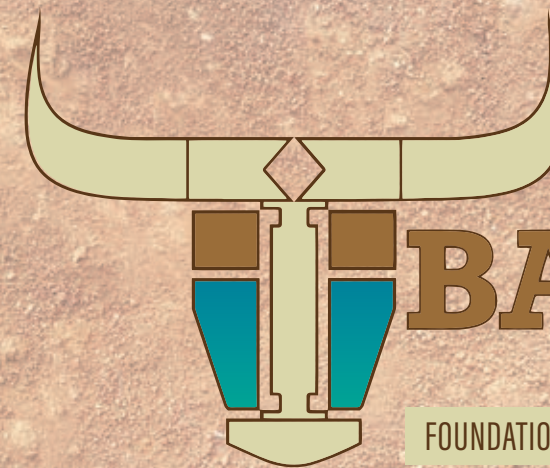
866-727-0831

Residential &
Commercial
**FREE
ESTIMATES**

**YOUR LOCAL MORTGAGE
EXPERTS ACROSS TEXAS,
OKLAHOMA, LOUISIANA
AND ARKANSAS**



903-247-0803 • tomhollyfield.com
1300 Hollybrook Dr. • Longview, TX 75605
Thomas L. Holyfield, NMLS# 210861



BARWELL SOLUTIONS™

FOUNDATION REPAIR | WATERPROOFING | SEAWALL REPAIR

903-330-6504 | www.BarWellsolutions.com

Contents



20
COVER STORY
Heather Kelly



24 Toast To the Top 2026 Recap

PROFILES



12 Truly Title



16 Natasha Harrell

IN THIS ISSUE

- 6 Preferred Partners
- 7 Meet The Team
- 10 Publisher's Note
- 12 Partner Spotlight: Truly Title
- 16 Rising Star: Natasha Harrell- Johnson Realty
- 20 Cover: Heather Kelly
- 24 Toast To the Top 2026 Recap



FRONTLINE

PAY AT
CLOSE
OPTION IS
HERE!!

CUTDOWN ON UPFRONT EXPENSES

One less out-of-pocket expense that you have to pay upfront, so you can focus on the excitement of your new home!

ELIMINATE SCHEDULING STRESS

Stress less about scheduling a thorough inspection by easily adding ancillary services for your home and rolling the cost into your closing costs.

903-407-1456
www.frontline-home-inspections.com
www.frontline-pest-control.com
TREC # 22985, TDA #0849853, TSPCL # 0851760

*Minimal convenience fee applies

903-363-9160
ASAPROOFING.COM

**IS YOUR ROOF
READY FOR SPRING
STORMS?**

Insurance companies are denying roof claims due to lack of maintenance!! We're here to help! Get your annual roof maintenance certificate and warranty today for **FREE!!** Call us ASAP to schedule an appointment for your free roof maintenance.

Find us on:
facebook.

Check out
our website

If you are interested in nominating people for certain stories, please email us at: Cherika.Johnson@n2co.com

Preferred Partners

This section has been created to give you easier access when searching for a trusted real estate affiliate. Take a minute to familiarize yourself with the businesses sponsoring your magazine. These local businesses are proud to partner with you and make this magazine possible. Please support these businesses and thank them for supporting the REALTOR® community!

ADVERTISING / MARKETING

RT Graphics, LLC
(903) 326-9200
www.rtgraphixllc.com

BANKING/ CREDIT UNION

Barksdale Federal Credit Union
(318) 226-4555
bfcu.org

CONSTRUCTION/REMODELING

Krystal Falls Construction
(903) 738-4210
krystalfallsconstruction.com

FOUNDATION REPAIR

Barwell Solutions
(903) 330-6504
www.barwellsolutions.com

HOME INSPECTION

East Texas Home Inspection
(903) 316-0342
www.easttexashomeinspection.com

Frontline Home Inspections and Pest Control

(903) 472-9329
www.frontline-home-inspections.com

Inspection Gator

(903) 277-1448
www.inspectorgator.com

HOME WARRANTY

Fidelity National Home Warranty
(903) 539-9167
www.homewarranty.com

HWA Home Warranty

(817) 219-4845
wcmahon@homewarranty.com

INSURANCE

Goosehead Insurance - Ashleigh Buchanan Agency
(903) 931-3115
www.gooseheadinsurance.com/ashleigh-buchanan/

Goosehead Insurance - Phaup Agency

Collin Phaup
(903) 245-0251
www.savedbythegoose.com

Rollo Insurance

(903) 520-3804
rolloinsurance.com/location/lindale-tx/

INTERIOR DESIGN

AntlerWorx
(903) 746-2395
www.antlerworx.com

MORTGAGE LENDER

CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC
(903) 316-1284
applywithcodyc.com

Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation

(903) 806-8181
www.arianathompson.com

Guild Mortgage

Tom Holyfield
(903) 452-8769
www.tomhollyfield.com

Guild Mortgage

Whitney Parks, Loan Officer
(903) 941-2798

MOVING COMPANY

All N One Moving
(903) 787-6683
Allnonemoving.com

Axe Moving

(903) 714-4469
www.Axemoving.com

Tyler Moving and Storage

(430) 437-3000
www.Tylermovingandstorage.com

PHOTOGRAPHER | REAL ESTATE MEDIA

Gary D Real Estate Photography
(903) 954-0355
garydrealstatephotography.com

ROOFING

ASAP Roofing and Construction
(903) 363-9160
www.asaproofing.com

Elevation Roofing

(903) 738-1152
www.elevation-roofing.com

Texas Edge Roofing

Chris Frazier
(214) 306-1353
texasedgeroofing.com

TITLE COMPANY

Homeland Title Company
(903) 330-1380
www.homelandtco.com

Truly Title

(903) 871-7577
www.trulytitle.com

US Title

(903) 753-9666
ustitleco.net

WEB DESIGN/SEO/SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Buzz Builderzz
(360) 930-1612
www.Buzzbuilderzz.com

Meet The Team



Cherika Johnson
Owner/Publisher



Dawn Sims
Writer



Bella Rubio
Writer



Laney Schroeder
Content Coordinator



Gary Durham
Video Content Coordinator



Stephen Tilmon
Photographer
Tilmon Media
Tilmonmedia.com



DISCLAIMER: Any articles included in this publication and/or opinions expressed therein do not necessarily reflect the views of The N2 Company d/b/a Real Producers but remain solely those of the author(s). The paid advertisements contained within the Real Producers magazine are not endorsed or recommended by The N2 Company or the publisher. Therefore, neither The N2 Company nor the publisher may be held liable or responsible for business practices of these companies.

HWA 13mo WARRANTY
Home Warranty of America

2025-26 US News 360 BEST HOME WARRANTY COMPANIES
Home Warranty of America

CREDIBILITY YOU CAN COUNT ON
Trusted for Over 25 Years!

GET 13 MONTHS OF PROTECTION

- Coverage for More Than 120 Items
- No Age Restrictions: All systems qualify
- Free Listing Coverage
- Easy Claims: Quick & hassle-free
- Affordable: Quality coverage, low cost!

COVERAGE THAT GIVES YOU REAL-LIFE ASSURANCE!

(888) 492-7359
HWAHomeWarranty.com

Sign up today and experience peace of mind! SCAN TO PLACE AN ORDER!

Wendy McMahon
Account Executive
Work: 281-731-7231 / Cell: 817-219-4845
wcmahon@hwahomewarranty.com

KF **Baron Harris**
(903) 738-4210
krystalfalls17@gmail.com

KRYSTAL FALLS CONSTRUCTION
2790 Owl Rd.
Diana Tx, 75640
krystalfallsconstruction.com

**Dirt work
Concrete
Asphalt**

Fire & Water Restoration **Remodeling**
Decks / Arbors

Insurance Claims **Wood Fences**
Outdoor Kitchens
New Construction
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL



TRULY
TITLE

Eded
BEDARD

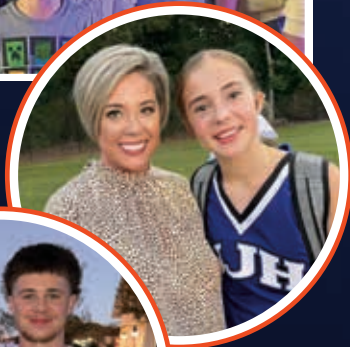
BRANCH MANAGER
ESCROW OFFICER

Eden Bedard is an Escrow Officer and Branch Manager with Truly Title Longview, bringing nearly a decade of experience in the title and escrow industry. She joined the Truly team in November 2021 and is known for guiding transactions smoothly from contract to closing.

Eden began her career in 2016 as a receptionist at a title company and quickly worked her way up through the industry. As she often says, she didn't choose escrow—escrow chose her. What started as a new opportunity quickly became a passion for helping clients navigate the closing process with confidence.

Today, Eden is recognized for her **clear communication, attention to detail, and commitment to delivering a seamless closing experience** for agents and their clients.

Originally from Amarillo, Eden now calls Longview home. When she's not at the closing table, she enjoys spending time with her family and cheering on her kids at their sporting events.



Eden can answer emails faster than most people text back.

There **truly** is a difference.

YOUR EAST TEXAS

Teams

LONGVIEW OFFICE



Eden
BEDARD

BRANCH MANAGER
ESCROW OFFICER
eden.bedard@trulytitle.com



Kaytlynn
YARBROUGH

ESCROW ASSISTANT
kaytlynn.yarbrough@trulytitle.com

TRULY TITLE LONGVIEW
2393 H G Mosley Pkwy, Suite 200
Longview, TX 75604
(903) 781-5396

TRULY TITLE TYLER
1020 Asher Way, Suite 400
Tyler, TX 75703
(903) 871-7577

TYLER OFFICE



Destiny
MCFARLAND

BRANCH MANAGER
ESCROW OFFICER
destiny.mcfarland@trulytitle.com



Mikali
MAY

ESCROW OFFICER
mikali.may@trulytitle.com



TRULY ONE
Download our Truly ONE app and have all the numbers at your fingertips!

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Hannah
GOSSAGE

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
hannah.gossage@trulytitle.com



SPRING

A *Season* of Momentum



Spring always seems to bring a renewed sense of momentum in real estate. As the market begins to pick up across East Texas, it's a great reminder that our industry is built not only on transactions, but on relationships, leadership, and the shared commitment to serve our communities well.

One of the highlights of the past month was our first **Toast to the Top** celebration honoring the Top 300 agents in East Texas. Seeing so many professionals gathered in one room—connecting, celebrating, and supporting one another—was a powerful reminder of why *East Texas Real Producers* exists. This community is filled with individuals who work tirelessly for their clients and who continue to elevate the standard of professionalism in our industry.

Our goal with this magazine has always been simple: **to connect, elevate, and inspire** the professionals who are truly doing the business in East Texas. Each month, we are honored to share the stories of agents and industry partners who contribute to the strength of this community. Whether you are featured in these pages or simply part of the network that makes this industry thrive, you are an important part of the story we are telling together.

Thank you for being part of the *East Texas Real Producers* community. I look forward to continuing to highlight the people, partnerships, and stories that make our market so special.

— **Cherika Johnson**,
Publisher East Texas Real Producers

Correction: In the March issue's Preferred Partner Spotlight, Cody Castagno was incorrectly identified as the owner of CrossCountry Mortgage in Tyler. Cody Castagno serves as **Vice President of Lending for CrossCountry Mortgage**. We regret the error and appreciate the opportunity to correct the record.

ELEVATION
ROOFING & GUTTERS

903-686-0490
Elevation-Roofing.com

903-326-9200

RT GRAPHIX
LOGO DESIGN
SIGNAGE
BUSINESS CARDS
BANNERS
RIDER SIGNS

Your local mortgage lender
We mind the details, so you don't have to.

Whitney Parks
Loan Officer | NMLS #827730
903-247-0803 Office
903-941-2798 Cell

Guild mortgage

Website
Scan me

Scan me to get in touch

Guild Mortgage Company
Equal Housing Opportunity; NMLS 3274.
nmlsconsumeraccess.org; guildmortgage.com/licensing.

FIDELITY NATIONAL HOME WARRANTY homewarranty.com

Real Investment Protection

4 Great Plans including **25 Options** for Customized Coverage

- Fidelity National Home Warranty provides incredible value to your home!
- Protects both buyer and seller
- Provides evidence of your fiduciary duty to protect your clients and their home.
- A huge savings to homeowners from out of pocket expenses for repairs

Protect your clients **and yourself** with a Fidelity National Home Warranty!

BETH ELBERT
Sales Executive
903-539-9167
beth.elbert@fnf.com

TRULY TITLE

SUPPORTING EAST TEXAS AGENTS
FROM CONTRACT TO CLOSE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY DURHAM WITH GARY D PHOTOGRAPHY

Meet one of East Texas's most prominent title companies, Truly Title.

In 2021, the company opened two locations, one in Tyler and another in Longview, and quickly hit the ground running. Since their launch, Truly Title has become a familiar presence throughout the real estate community. Whether at an industry event, networking function, meeting, or gathering, you can count on Truly Title being there. The team takes pride in

building lasting relationships with the real estate community on every level and is "committed to delivering a closing experience centered around communication, professionalism, and strong relationships." That dedication has helped Truly Title become a trusted partner for agents, lenders, and clients across the region.

Now in their fifth year, their mission has remained the same from the start: "We simply create an environment where

everyone involved in a transaction feels supported from contract to close." At Truly Title, the team understands that real estate is a relationship-driven industry and values the strong partnerships they build with the agents and lenders they work alongside every day. This mindset guides the way they serve their clients and partners and has become a key part of their continued success, as well as the reason many real estate professionals trust Truly Title and return as repeat clients.

Their commitment to success extends beyond their own team; they strive to ensure their clients experience success in every transaction. When asked what success looks like to them, Truly Title shared, "Success for Truly Title is defined by the experience we create for others. When clients, agents,



“
WE SIMPLY CREATE AN
ENVIRONMENT WHERE EVERYONE
INVOLVED IN A TRANSACTION
FEELS SUPPORTED FROM
CONTRACT TO CLOSE.”

lenders, and partners walk away from a closing feeling happy, confident, and empowered, our team knows they have done their job well. "By prioritizing clear communication and attentive support, their teams work to make every closing as smooth as possible, creating a positive experience for clients, REALTORS®, lenders, and partners alike.

Truly Title also offers modern tools designed to create an even smoother experience. These resources help REALTORS® run

their businesses more efficiently by providing access to net sheet calculators, buyer estimates, remote earnest money depositing, geo-prospecting tools, and equity and mortgage insights. These innovative solutions are another way Truly Title supports REALTORS® by offering practical resources that simplify their day-to-day business.

Another valuable resource Truly Title provides is continuing education courses for agents as they expand and grow their businesses. These courses, along with the company's digital tools and resources, give agents quick and convenient access to the information they need while working with clients and navigating transactions. Truly Title is committed to keeping pace with an ever-changing market and understands the challenges that come with evolving industry demands. As the team explains, "Technology is always evolving, and we strive to be a company that evolves with those demands." For the team at Truly Title, one of the most rewarding aspects of their work is seeing how these efforts help agents continue to grow and succeed.

When asked about one of the most rewarding parts of the job, Truly Title shared, "One of the most rewarding parts of the job is celebrating the milestones of the agents we serve. From their very first closing to their first million-dollar listing and everything in between, we love being part of these exciting moments in our clients' careers. Watching them grow and succeed over time is something we truly cherish." For the team at Truly Title, seeing the excitement and satisfaction that come with a successful transaction is one of the most fulfilling parts of their work.

Their culture stems from the leadership and support of a statewide network of professionals who share knowledge, encouragement, and inspiration across offices. As the team at Truly Title explains, "Culture matters, and it starts at the top. Our leadership sets the tone by leading with integrity, guidance, and a genuine commitment to the people who make the company what it is." At Truly Title, that culture is reflected in the relationships they build and in the way they serve the agents and partners they work alongside across East Texas.

That strong culture also shapes the impact they hope to leave on the real estate industry. When asked what legacy they hope to create, the team at Truly Title shared, "Looking ahead, we hope to leave a lasting impact on the industry by continuing to raise the standard for what a closing experience should feel like. As the final stop on the path to homeownership, we take pride in being a breath of fresh air at the finish line."

At Truly Title, the message is simple and consistent: There Truly is a difference. It is a difference reflected in their relationships, their service, and their commitment to creating a closing experience that stands apart. With offices in Tyler, Longview, and throughout the state, their team stands ready to ensure clients and REALTORS® alike experience that difference every step of the way.



Grateful.

Serving our community is a privilege we don't take lightly.
 Thank you for the opportunity to serve you as friends and neighbors!

www.ustitleco.net • (903) 753-9666

LONGVIEW • GILMER • HENDERSON • KILGORE • MARSHALL • TOLEDO BEND

UST | CO
 U.S. TITLE COMPANY, INC.

TYLER MOVING AND STORAGE

MOVING DONE WITH CARE.

Your Trusted Moving Experts in Tyler & East Texas.

- Residential & Commercial Moves
- Packing & Secure Storage
- Friendly, Reliable Service

(903) 595-6853 | www.tylermovingandstorage.com
 info@tylermovingandstorage.com

FAIRWAY | Ariana Thompson

BOOST YOUR REAL ESTATE SUCCESS
 WITH FAST, RELIABLE MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS

CONTACT ME TO TAKE YOUR BUSINESS TO THE NEXT LEVEL!

ARIANA THOMPSON
 LOAN OFFICER | NMLS 1293244
 903-806-8181
 ARIANA.THOMPSON@FAIRWAYMC.COM

SCAN ME

Copyright © 2024 Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation. NMLS#2289. 4750 S. Biltmore Lane, Madison, WI 53718. 1-866-912-4800. Intended for industry professionals only. All rights reserved.

Natasha Harrell

WRITTEN BY CHERIKA JOHNSON
PHOTOGRAPHED BY LANEY SCHROEDER

In real estate, success is often measured in numbers — transactions closed, volume produced, milestones achieved. But every now and then, someone comes along who reminds us that true impact isn't built on numbers alone. It's built on people, purpose, and the quiet consistency of showing up with a servant's heart. That someone is Natasha Harrell.

If you ask those who know her best to describe her in one word, the answer comes quickly: thorough. Not just in the way she handles contracts or negotiations, but in how she approaches life. Natasha doesn't stop at finding an answer — she digs deeper. She wants to understand the "why" behind the solution, the story behind the need, and the heart behind the person sitting across the table.

It's that mindset that has made her stand out in a meaningful way and earned her one of the highest honors in the local industry — being named the 2025 Longview Area Association of Realtors® Realtor of the Year. For Natasha, recognition has never been the goal. Service is.

A Life Built on Serving Others

Long before she ever helped someone buy or sell a home, Natasha was building a life rooted in pouring into people. For nearly a decade, she worked as a financial planner, running her own office and leading a team focused on bringing financial education to everyday families. It wasn't just about building wealth — it was about building



**SERVING
WITH HEART**

confidence and clarity for people navigating life's biggest decisions. That season of her life shaped everything that came next.

"I've always believed you can learn more about a person through their actions than their words," Natasha says. And her actions have consistently pointed in one direction: toward service.

Whether mentoring youth through Longview Partners in Prevention, volunteering with Junior Achievement and Teen Court, or stepping into leadership roles through Leadership Longview, Natasha has made it a priority to stay connected to the heartbeat of the community she calls home. That same commitment naturally followed her into real estate.



From Calling to Career

When Natasha transitioned into real estate six years ago, she didn't just change professions — she expanded her mission. Today, as a Realtor® with Johnson Realty in Longview, she has built a reputation for being someone who shows up fully. Clients know she's not just there to get them to the closing table. She's there to walk with them through the entire journey.

And sometimes, that looks a little unconventional. Natasha has been known to install smoke alarms, replace GFCI outlets, pick up water heaters, paint rooms, and even buy trim materials — whatever it takes to help a deal come together and a family move forward. To her, those moments aren't above or beneath the job. They are the job. "I just want things to work for my clients," she says simply. That level of ownership is rare. And it's one of the many reasons she has quickly become a multi-million-dollar producer within her brokerage.

A Servant's Heart in Every Room

While many agents focus solely on building their own business, Natasha continues to invest heavily in building others. Within the Longview Area Association of Realtors®, she has served on multiple committees and helped lead impactful initiatives — including food drives, hurricane relief efforts, and hands-on renovation projects for

nonprofits serving survivors of human trafficking and their children.

Her recognition as Realtor of the Year reflects more than production. It reflects presence. The award honors professionals who elevate the industry through leadership, character, and service — and those who know Natasha would tell you she embodies all three. Her approach is never performative. It's personal.

If there's a need, Natasha shows up. If there's a project, she rolls up her sleeves. If there's a person who needs encouragement, she makes the call. That same generosity carries into her brokerage family. Colleagues know that if they're stuck on a contract, overwhelmed with a situation, or simply need someone to talk through a challenge, Natasha is always just a phone call away. Not because she has to be — but because that's who she is.

“

I've always believed you can learn more about a person through their actions than their words.”





separate who she is at home from who she is in business. The same patience, intentionality, and love she brings to her family is what she brings to every client, colleague, and friend. Somehow, in the middle of a full schedule and a growing business, she still finds time to be present — cheering from the sidelines, making memories, and building a life her girls can be proud of, because at the end of the day, that legacy matters most.

The Power of Being Thorough

In a world that often celebrates speed, Natasha Harrell stands out because she chooses depth. She listens longer. She serves deeper. She cares louder through her actions than most people ever could with words. Being thorough, for Natasha, isn't about perfectionism. It's about intention. It's about honoring the trust people place in her and responding with excellence every single time. While being named Realtor of the Year marks an incredible milestone, those closest to her know it's only the beginning, because when someone builds a life anchored in service, growth isn't optional — it's inevitable.

A Rare Kind of Leader

East Texas is filled with talented real estate professionals, but every once in a while, someone comes along who reminds us what this industry is really about.

Relationships. Integrity. Service. Natasha Harrell embodies all three.



She is the agent who will stay late to make sure a deal works. The friend who answers the phone when you need encouragement. The leader who shows up when the community needs hands and heart, and in a profession built on trust, that kind of consistency is priceless.

For those who know her, it's no surprise she's already making waves. For those just meeting her, it won't take long to see why. When you encounter someone who truly loves people — and proves it through action — it leaves a lasting impression. That's exactly the kind of impact Natasha Harrell is making across East Texas.

One thoughtful decision, one selfless act, and one thoroughly served client at a time.

Excellence Without Ego

One of the most refreshing things about Natasha is how she carries her success. Despite her accolades and production, there's no ego in the room. Just humility, warmth, and an infectious smile that makes people feel instantly at ease.

Those who know her will tell you her laugh is just as memorable as her work ethic. It's genuine, joyful, and often shows up right when it's needed most. She has a way of finding the positive in any situation — not by ignoring reality, but by choosing perspective. In an industry that can be fast-paced and emotionally charged, that kind of steady optimism is a gift.

It's also one of the reasons clients trust her so deeply. They know she will tell them the truth, guide them wisely, and walk with them faithfully.

Rooted in What Matters Most

While Natasha pours deeply into her career and community, her greatest pride lives much closer to home. She is a devoted wife to her husband, Anthony, and a proud mom to their two daughters, Ava and Naomi — the center of her world and the reason behind so much of what she does. To Natasha, success isn't about balance as much as it is about alignment. She doesn't

AXE MOVING
WE CUT THE HASSLE OUT OF MOVING
903-714-4469

CALL FOR A FREE QUOTE
Marcus and Stephanie Howell
Veteran Owned & Operated
Moving Since 2015
TXDOT- 2728235 | TXDMV- 008919517C

B Buzz Builderzz

DIGITAL MARKETING Agency Best Solutions

Elevate Your Brand with Us

OUR SERVICE :

- Business Profile Creation & SEO Optimization
- Lead Services
- Ad Services

CONTACT US

Buzzbuilderzz.com
430-267-2899

Rollo INSURANCE *Lindale*
THE DIFFERENCE IS REAL

Trey Mazratian
Independent Insurance Advisor
Home • Auto • Life • Farm & Ranch

Call or Text Trey
903-520-3804
www.RolloInsurance.com

The Ember that Built a Real Estate Empire

WRITTEN BY DAWN SIMS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN TILMON WITH TILMON MEDIA AT TILMONMEDIA.COM

PHOTOS TAKEN AT FLATT 55 WINE CELLAR & SOCIAL CLUB

“KINDNESS AND COMPASSION ARE NOT WEAKNESSES. THEY ARE GIFTS AND TOOLS THAT WILL HELP YOU GROW.”

Heather Kelly



Nearly twenty years ago, Heather Kelly walked into a real estate office carrying two things that would define the path ahead of her. One was determination. The other was her infant daughter, Anna, nestled in her arms as she began learning an industry that can be both exhilarating and unforgiving. When Heather told me that story during our conversation, I could immediately picture it. A young mother showing up day after day, baby in tow, determined to make a place for herself in a profession where few people outside her family truly believed she would succeed.

For six months straight, Heather woke up, dressed cute, and went to the office every single day. Anna often rested comfortably on her arm, as Heather jokingly described it, “like a little purse,” while she immersed herself in learning everything she could about real estate. She made cold calls, studied the market, researched properties, and began building knowledge in an industry that rewards resilience above almost anything else. At that point she had no guarantees. She simply believed that if she kept showing up and putting in the work, something would eventually spark. Six months later, she closed her first sale. That moment lit the flame that has carried her through the next nineteen years.

Before real estate ever entered the picture, Heather had built a background in marketing and public relations. She loved the creativity behind marketing and the strategy involved in shaping how something is presented to the world. Real estate allowed her to combine those strengths while also giving her something she had always wanted. Independence. She often says she was drawn to the profession because she wanted to be the architect of her own success. There is courage in that kind of decision, especially for a young mother stepping into an unpredictable career path, but ambition has always been the catalyst for Heather’s story.

What is remarkable is how quickly that ambition found direction. Within her very first year in real estate, Heather already knew she wanted to become



“
IF I HAVE
DONE
ANYTHING
RIGHT IN
MY LIFE, IT
IS BEING A
DEVOTED
MOM TO MY
CHILDREN.”

a broker. Many people might consider that a distant goal when they are just learning the basics of the industry, but to Heather it felt like a natural progression. Over the years she carefully observed the brokerages she worked with, paying attention to what worked well and what she believed could be improved. Some offices excelled in culture. Others thrived through structure or innovation. Heather quietly gathered those observations and began shaping a vision of her own. She wanted to build something that combined the strengths

she admired while introducing ideas that felt fresh for the area. She often says she was determined to be a trend breaker, someone willing to lift the veil on what a brokerage could look like in this community.

Listening to Heather talk about the women who impacted her life, it becomes clear where that courage originated. The strongest influence she credits is her grandmother, a woman who grew up during a time when education, careers, and independence



were rarely encouraged for women. Instead of accepting those limitations, Heather's grandmother chose to design her own path forward. She pursued success in a way that challenged the expectations placed on her generation. Heather remembers watching that example unfold and realizing that boundaries often exist only until someone decides to move beyond them. That belief became a spark she carried with her long before she ever negotiated a real estate contract.

If her grandmother helped ignite that early fire, motherhood deepened it. Heather and her husband Cody met when they were teenagers and have grown up side by side ever since. Their life together has been built on partnership and steadiness, something Heather says has always brought her peace. Their daughter Anna, who once accompanied Heather in those early days at the office, is now graduating early from the University of North Texas with a future that looks incredibly bright. Their son Gray is a sophomore at Spring Hill High School, already displaying the inquisitive mind and entrepreneurial spirit that makes Heather smile when she talks about him. When I asked Heather about her greatest accomplishment, I expected to hear something about the brokerage she built or the hundreds of agents she has helped guide throughout her career. Instead, her answer came fast and no doubt, with warmth. “Anna and Gray”, she told me, is what she is most proud of. “If I have done anything right in my life, it is being a devoted mom to my children.” As a mother myself, I understood exactly what she meant in that moment. The pride in watching your children grow into their own



people is something no professional milestone can replace.

Motherhood has also inspired the way Heather leads, in ways that are impossible to miss once you spend time around her. I say that not only as someone who interviewed her for this story, but also as an agent who has experienced that direction firsthand. Long before I joined her brokerage, I had seen glimpses of the maternal instinct that naturally guides the way she works with people. Heather has a way of recognizing when someone needs encouragement, guidance, or simply the reassurance that they are capable of more than they believe. It is a rare balance of compassion and strength, and it creates an environment where agents feel both supported and challenged to grow.

Heather describes that part of her personality simply. She says she has always leaned into her maternal side. Caring, guiding, teaching, and protecting come naturally to her because those instincts were already deeply rooted in her life before she ever stepped into a leadership role. That perspective helped design the brokerage she eventually built, a place where agents are valued as people first and professionals second.

Each morning before the workday begins, Heather takes a moment to ask a simple question. What can she do

“
AMBITION IS NOT A FLAW. IT
WAS PLACED ON YOUR HEART
FOR A REASON.”



taught her that playing small only dims the fire that makes someone unique.

I asked her what she would say if the 2026 Heather could speak

to the 2007 Heather. Her answer was unmistakably her. “I would tell her that kindness and compassion are not weaknesses. They are gifts and tools that will help you grow. And ambition is not a flaw. It was placed on your heart for a reason.”

What started out as a glimmer of hope in the heart and mind of a little blonde in heels, shines much brighter today. Heather now leads 86 agents and broker associates across seven locations throughout Texas, with additional expansion already on the horizon. Yet when you sit down and talk with her, the focus rarely stays on numbers or growth for long. The conversation always finds its way back to people. The clients whose lives change through a home purchase. The agents who walk through her doors searching for direction. The family who has supported her through every season of the journey.

When I look at Heather Kelly through the lens of both a writer and an agent who has experienced her mentorship, one thing becomes clear. The fire that began nearly two decades ago was never only about building a successful brokerage. It was about creating a place where others could discover the spark within themselves. And in true Heather fashion, she continues to do exactly that, letting that steady flame guide the way for everyone fortunate enough to stand within its warmth.

that day to help others. Sometimes that means helping a family navigate the emotional process of buying or selling a home. Other times it means guiding an agent through a challenging transaction or encouraging them to pursue a goal they have been hesitant to claim for themselves. That desire to serve others is not something Heather speaks about casually. It is woven into the way she approaches every aspect of her career.

One of the honors she holds closest to her heart is receiving the Heroes Served award through her involvement with Homes for Heroes. The program allows her to give back to community members who dedicate their lives to serving others such as first responders, healthcare professionals, military members, and educators. Being able to impact those lives in a meaningful way is something Heather considers one of the most rewarding parts of her career.

During our conversation, Heather also spoke about something she finds surprisingly difficult in the industry. It is not the long hours or the market fluctuations. It is watching talented people underestimate themselves. She has encountered many professionals whose work she deeply admires, yet they struggle to see their own value. Earlier in her career she found herself caught in a similar mindset, believing that validation had to come from someone else's approval. Experience eventually



Toast to the Top 2026

CELEBRATING THE TOP 300 EAST TEXAS LEADING REAL ESTATE AGENTS

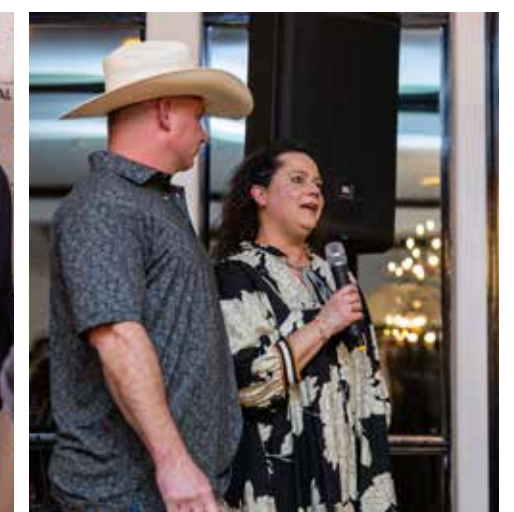
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN TILMON WITH TILMON MEDIA

On February 26, *East Texas Real Producers* hosted its inaugural **Toast to the Top**, bringing together many of the area's most accomplished real estate professionals for an evening dedicated to connection, recognition, and celebration.

Held at Sweet Hills Event Center, the event honored the **Top 300 real estate agents in East Texas**—the professionals who are truly driving the business and shaping the housing market across the region. As guests arrived, the room quickly filled with energy, conversation, and the spirit of community that makes the East Texas real estate industry so special. Agents, brokers, and industry partners gathered to celebrate their shared success while

building relationships that help elevate the profession.

A special thank you goes to the incredible sponsors who helped make the evening possible: **Inspection Gator; Goosehead Insurance – Ashleigh Buchanan; Tyler Moving and Storage; All-N-One Moving; Frontline Home Inspection & Pest Control; and Whitney Parks with Guild Mortgage.** Their support played a vital role in bringing this celebration to life and in recognizing the agents who continue to raise the bar in our industry. As the first **Toast to the Top** for *East Texas Real Producers*, the evening marked the beginning of what promises to be a meaningful tradition celebrating the leaders of our real estate community.





903-278-5097
INSPECTIONGATOR.COM

Inspection Gator
HOME & COMMERCIAL

We do more!

- MORE** TYPES OF SERVICES
- MORE** AVAILABILITY
- MORE** CUSTOMER SERVICE
- MORE** THOROUGH INSPECTIONS
- MORE** EDUCATING CLIENTS
- MORE** EXTENSIVE TRAINING

[Schedule Online](#)

TX LIC# TREC 1008 | OK LIC# 70002359 | AR LIC# HI 1529 | CA LIC# 087541 | MAC2179

★★★★★

"Always the best service from the office staff and the inspectors. So impressed with the lengths inspectors go to make sure the client knows every detail of their inspection notes. Very pleased every time I use them!"

-Tony M.





goosehead
INSURANCE

You give them the keys and we give them the coverage.

The best of East Texas work with the best in East Texas.



Collin W Phaup, CIC
Agency Owner - Tyler
903.534.5800
collin.phaup@goosehead.com




Scan to get a quote



Scan to get a quote




Ashleigh Buchanan
Agency Owner - Longview
903.215.8242
ashleigh.buchanan@goosehead.com



Randy R. Eskelson

REAL ESTATE LAW
BUSINESS FORMATION
ESTATE PLANNING



903-330-1380
Randy@Eskelsonlawfirm.com
5234 Old Jacksonville Hwy.
Ste 210 Tyler, TX 75703



Homeland Title provides **RED CARPET SERVICE** that our customers and your clients deserve



Homelandtco.com
903-509-1400
5234 Old Jacksonville Hwy.
Ste 100 Tyler, TX 75703



Your trusted local lending experts

At CrossCountry Mortgage, we're dedicated to serving our community. Trust us to know the local market and put you first every step of the way.



Cody Castagno
Vice President of Lending
NMLS266839
M: 903.316.1284
cody.castagno@ccm.com
applywithcodyc.com



Kristie Van Huis
Senior Loan Officer
NMLS266847
M: 903.360.4663
kristie.vanhuis@ccm.com
ccm.com/kristie-van-huis



Sean Crisp
Loan Officer
NMLS2326615
M: 512.809.8536
sean.crisp@ccm.com
ccm.com/sean-crisp



Dayton Cargill
Loan Officer
NMLS1775310
M: 903.220.5903
dayton.cargill@ccm.com
ccm.com/dayton-cargill

CROSSCOUNTRY MORTGAGE, LLC | 2326 Duelling Oaks Drive, Suite A, Tyler, TX 75703 | 2524 Oak Manor, Suite 101, Tyler, TX 75703
Equal Housing Opportunity. All loans subject to underwriting approval. Certain restrictions apply. Call for details. All borrowers must meet minimum credit score, loan-to-value, debt-to-income, and other requirements to qualify for any mortgage program. CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC NMLS3029 NMLS2775368 NMLS2643240 (www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org). This office is licensed and examined by the Office of the Consumer Credit Commissioner of the State of Texas. 250_866e4h96




GARY D
REAL ESTATE
PHOTOGRAPHY

Real Estate Video Tours & Reels
Drone Footage & Aerial Shots
Headshots & Branded Photography
Commercials & Brand Storytelling
Portrait Photography
Podcast Production
Graphic Design & More

Let's create something great!



WWW.GARYDREALESTATEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM
903-954-0355 garydrep@gmail.com



TEXAS EDGE ROOFING
GENERAL CONTRACTORS, LLC



CHRIS FRAZIER
East Texas Project Manager
214-309-3562
3122 Nealy Way, Box #124,
Longview, TX 75605
texasedgeroofing.com
chris.frazier@texasedgeroofing.com

www.AllInOneMoving.com ★ (903) 500-9960

ALL-N-ONE MOVING

Local Moving ★ Long-Distance Moving ★ Commercial Moving ★ Loading & Unloading ★ Packing Services ★ Senior Moving Services

Moving Soon?

BOOK NOW




**BUILD OR BUY YOUR
DREAM HOME**

Text or call us at
318-549-8170



Get pre-approved at bfcu.org!

Federally insured by NCUA. Membership eligibility required. NMLS# 410765 