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APRIL 2026

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Real Estate Resilience
SHANI VARDY

Agent on Fire
ERIC BAKER

A photograph of Mike Price, a bald man with a friendly smile, sitting on a brown leather sofa. He is wearing a dark blazer over a blue patterned shirt, dark jeans, and tan sneakers with orange soles. He has his legs crossed and is looking directly at the camera. The background shows a modern interior with a window and some furniture.

Mike Price

PHOTO BY ALLIE SANTOS

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COVER STORY

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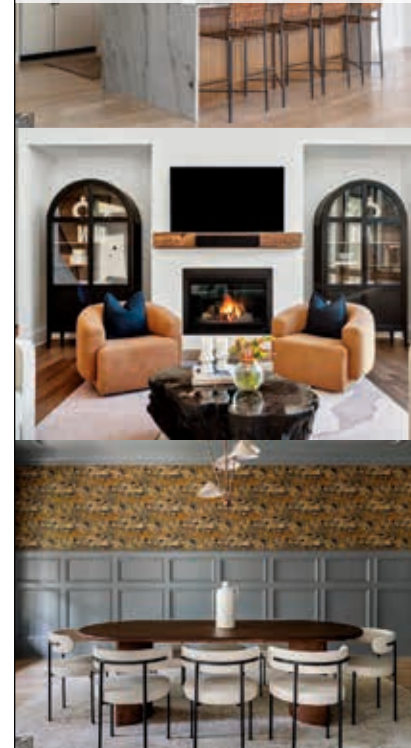


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Mike Price

“I don’t buy into the notion that good things come to those who wait. I rarely slow down.”

**UNSTOPPABLE ENERGY.
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BY ELIZABETH MCCABE • PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS

“Good things come to those who hustle and stay consistent,” says Mike Price.

“I don’t buy into the notion that good things come to those who wait,” he candidly comments. A go-getter, Mike is the first to tell you, “I rarely slow down.” He never quits, never gives up, and refuses to be negative. Just ask his wife, Shannon. “I’ve been married to Mike for 13 years and I have never seen him discouraged.” Obstacles are disguised as opportunities.

Why? It all goes back to his roots. “My mom really did set the stage for my success,” he reflects.

Mike and his brother were raised by a single mom, who doubled as a schoolteacher and a tutor. She took on side jobs continuously so they had what they needed. “Looking back, I know watching her thrive and provide for us during tough, tough times helped shape some of my core personality,” says Mike. “She showed me that hard work and persistence will always pay off.” That mindset has guided his entrepreneurial efforts.

Road to Real Estate

Before Mike committed to real estate, he spent most of his time in fitness and wellness.

“I ran a gym for quite a while,” he shares. He worked as a sales manager and learned leaps and bounds over a 3-year period. He progressed into personal training, helping his clients look better and feel better. “It was instant gratification,” he comments. “You could see results quickly.”

Throughout his time at the gym, he kept running into people who said the same thing: “You need to be in sales.”

It wasn’t until Mike kept referring business to real estate agents that he realized real estate could be a career. Although Mike had his license since 1998, he didn’t “get serious” until 2011.

When his friend encouraged him to get back into real estate, Mike listened. He changed the trajectory of his life, walking into a real estate company. His life has never been the same.

In fact, he had so much business that he needed to bring on additional agents in 2012, starting the Mike Price Team. His production had doubled between 2011 and 2012. “I couldn’t keep up with it by myself,” he admits. “I had a lot of opportunities to help others make a living.”

Today, the team includes four agents and an inside sales agent. The culture? Competitive, collaborative, and filled with laughter.

“They genuinely like each other,” says Shannon, Mike’s wife. “There’s friendly competition, a lot of joking. It’s fun.” Mike doesn’t lead by managing. He leads by example.

“He will never ask someone to do something he wouldn’t do himself,” Shannon says. “He’s an inspirational leader.”

The Power Behind the Team

If Mike is the growth driver, Shannon is the steady force shaping the culture. When they met, she was a corporate leader and business-savvy, people-savvy, and strategic. “Her influence has been tremendous,” raves Mike. In 2024, she retired from corporate America and became a licensed agent herself.

“Outwardly, Mike is the growth leader,” she explains. “He moves the needle. I help bring clarity with how we move forward, what the goals are, what roles look like.” She isn’t in day-to-day sales, but she’s deeply involved in team development and events. Together, they present a unified vision.

“He wakes up extremely happy,” she says with a grin. “Laughing. It’s invigorating and exhausting all at once.” His enthusiasm and people personality are contagious. Objections aren’t part of his vocabulary.

“An objection is just a stepping stone,” he says. “How do we create something better out of this?”

Breaking a Cycle

Mike’s life hasn’t been without serious challenges.

He grew up with a family history of alcoholism. Though immersed in fitness, he found himself drinking too much. He saw firsthand what alcohol had done to people he loved. Seventeen years ago, he made a decision that would redefine everything.

“I knew it wasn’t serving me,” he says. “If I wanted to reach the goals and dreams I had, something had to change.”

It was the hardest decision of his life. And the most freeing. He set a new course. And once he did, the momentum was undeniable.

Now, he supports others walking a similar path. The experience doesn’t define him, but it strengthened the tenacity already wired into him.

“I always knew there was something bigger and better ahead,” he says.

A Brain Wired for Curiosity

Mike also openly shares something many wouldn’t expect: he has a fairly severe case of ADHD.

“If you spend time with me, you’ll see big ideas on Post-its everywhere,”



he says with a laugh. “I’ll probably interrupt you, not because I’m disinterested, but because I’m excited.”

For years, he tried to tame it. Now? He harnesses it.

“I live in curiosity and excitement,” he says. “Curiosity is my superpower.”

Time blocking helps. Systems help. But more than anything, he’s learned to embrace how his brain works. That same wiring shows up in his red-haired, blue-eyed 11-year-old son, John Michael.

John Michael is witty, high-energy, and endlessly entertaining. Mornings in the Price household are loud and joyful. There’s laughter, basketball, Rubik’s cubes, and rapid-fire banter.

“He’s a walking Mike Price,” Shannon jokes. “He’s hilarious,” chimes in Mike.

The family makes time intentionally, whether having coffee together every morning or watching shows at night with plenty of pauses to talk. It’s not just about being under the same roof. It’s about being present.

Even now, as John Michael’s basketball skills start to surpass his dad’s, Mike wouldn’t have it any other way.

Ask Mike what matters most, and the answer is immediate. “My wife and my son. That’s my world,” he smiles.

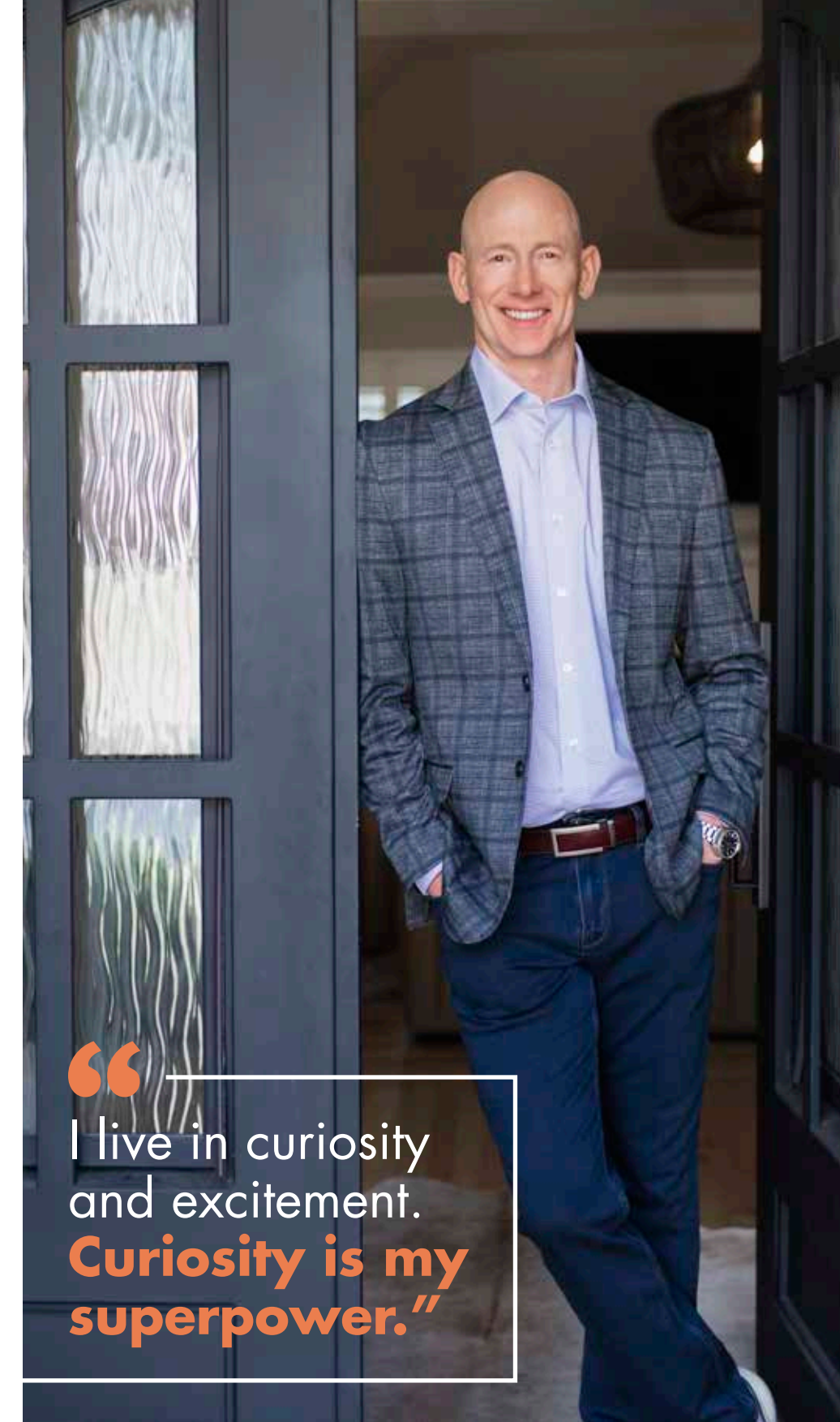
Leading Beyond Transactions

For Mike, the next chapter in real estate isn’t about unit count. Yes, the team ranks among the top in their Georgia brokerage. Yes, they aim high. But 2026? It’s about leadership.

“I’m focused on the growth of our agents, personally and professionally,” he says. “Creating leaders who create leaders.”

He envisions a collaborative real estate community, one that breaks out of silos and focuses on shared growth.

“At the end of the day, it’s helping people,” he says. “Not just buyers



“I live in curiosity and excitement. Curiosity is my superpower.”

and sellers. Agents too. If I can show someone one system that lets them close three more deals, or spend more time with their family, that’s a win.”

He pauses.

“I’ll never be satisfied,” he adds with a grin. “There’s always more to explore.”

And if history tells us anything, Mike Price isn’t slowing down anytime soon.



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Shani Vardy

OVERCOMING ODDS & UNSTOPPABLE

BY ELIZABETH MCCABE • PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS

Cancer. Infertility. A turbulent childhood. Moving to a city with no connections. One of those challenges in and of itself could be crushing and life-altering. But all four? Shani Vardy learned to soar where others would have wallowed in self-pity.

today,” she shares. Shani then went back to New York to take care of some immigration issues and that’s where she got married. She found a job in fine jewelry manufacturing. “I learned so much in that business, managing the operations of valuable high end jewelry distribution,” she says.

Life then threw her a curveball.

“I struggled with infertility for 6 years,” she laments. “Maybe this is my path,” she told herself. “I wanted to have a child so deeply.” Questions consumed her. “Do we give up? What do we do?” She decided upon IVE, but the road wasn’t easy. But it was worth it.

“I got pregnant and we ultimately had our little girl.”

They welcomed their daughter, Raphael, and, in Shani’s words, “the love of our life.” Smart, sharp, and spirited, Raphael is her mother’s mirror in more ways than one. “People tell me she’s me, but now I’m learning from her.”

That’s when Shani had an epiphany. “I didn’t want to bring her up in New York,” she says. She wanted to move to Atlanta to give her daughter a better life. And move they did.

“I had to grow up quickly,” explains Shani. That would be an understatement. Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, her family immigrated to the United States in 1992. “I was 6 years old,” recalls Shani. After moving to Atlanta for 2 years, her father got a job in New York and they ended up moving to Brooklyn. By the age of 9, her new life in Brooklyn marked the beginning of a journey that would shape who she is today.

“There was a lot of turbulence in my teenage years,” she says. Shani learned things and saw things that were beyond her age. At 19, she wanted to find herself.

“I went back to South Africa at 19,” she reflects. “I was lost in my life. What better way to find myself than start at the beginning?”

She lived there for 3 years and met her husband. “Being in South Africa, I met so many different people with so many different cultures. I completely opened myself to the world. It is one of the foundations that I stand on



“We left our jobs and came to Atlanta. We didn’t have a lot. We got a little apartment, starting off with two beach chairs in our living room, a bed, and a crib,” she says. It was a humble beginning. “I didn’t know a single soul,” she adds. Shani was just starting a new life.

Her daughter was just eight months old when Shani made another life-altering decision: she would get her real estate license.

“I always felt like I was meant to accomplish something amazing,” she says. “There was this person inside of me pushing to come out. I needed purpose.”

She joined Method Real Estate Advisors at the beginning of 2020 and is now one of the top producing agents in the brokerage. 2020 was an unusual time to launch a career. The world was shutting down. Many seasoned agents pulled back. Shani leaned in. “All the top producers were quarantined,” she says. “I thought, ‘This is my chance.’”

She sold 13 homes her first year, an extraordinary achievement for a brand-new agent navigating a pandemic market.

And then just when her career was taking off, she found a lump in her throat.

A CT scan revealed a three-centimeter tumor in her neck. Surgery followed. Even if it was benign, it had to come out. Days later, as she sat across from her doctor, she heard the words that stop time: it was cancer.

“It was a huge shock to my system,” she says.

Seven weeks of radiation followed. The treatment drained her physically. But emotionally? She chose a different response.

“I could have stayed in bed and wallowed,” she says. “Instead, I dove deeper into my work.”

She would attend radiation appointments and then go show homes, sometimes with a visible bandage. “My body was sick,” she says. “But I was not.”

Work became an anchor. So did her family. So did her friends. “Even in the hardest season, I could still make a difference in other people’s lives,” she reflects. “That saved me.”

After years of scans and waiting, the news finally came: remission. Cancer-free.

“The experience didn’t slow me down,” she says. “It clarified who I am.”

She describes feeling reborn. Nothing rattles her easily now. “The only thing that can truly upset me is health,” she says. “Everything else? You can work through it.”

Nearly seven years into her career, she still has moments of disbelief. “I think about the girl who had to grow up fast and keep pushing forward,” she says. “She would be so proud.”

Shani approaches real estate with the same intensity she brings to life. “If there’s a hard conversation to have, let’s go,” she says. “I’m at the forefront of the battle.”

Her clients aren’t transactions; they’re relationships. Many become close friends. She answers calls long after closings. “I’m not just here to sell you a house,” she says. “I’m here to help you.”

Atlanta, once a city where she knew no one, is now home in every sense. A mommy-and-me group introduced her to one friend, which led to another, and another. “My circle exploded,” she says. “The friends I’ve made here are my family.”

She returns to South Africa each year so Raphael can experience the world beyond her backyard. “I want her to see what I’ve seen,” she says.

And then came another milestone, one deeply personal.

For 6 years, Shani and her family rented while she built her business and saved diligently. In New York, homeownership hadn’t been part of her family story. Renting was simply the norm.

But in October 2024, she changed that narrative.

“I saved and bought my own home,” she says. “We are the first homeowners in my family.”

For years she had been selling the dream, then returning to a rental. “I wanted it so much for myself,” she admits.

Today, her home is her sanctuary. A self-proclaimed homebody, she finds joy in cooking, listening to blues music in the kitchen, going to the gym, and spending unhurried time with her family. “I’ve created a peaceful home,” she says. “Something I needed my whole life.”

Looking back, the obstacles didn’t define her. They prepared her.

“Any challenge that comes my way now,” she says with a smile, “I laugh. All right. Let’s go.”

Her strength doesn’t come from avoiding hardship. It comes from walking straight through it. “There is no giving up in my life,” she says. She’s a fighter and an overcomer. She also reached another important milestone, turning 40 this past January, a time of celebration and reflection.

Looking back over her life, Shani didn’t “stand a chance,” as she puts it.

“It just goes to show that you can have an imperfect childhood and upbringing, but if you have the courage and will to get what you want, you can get everything you want in life,” she concludes. “I am proof of this.”

“Any challenge that comes my way now, I laugh. All right.

Let's go.”



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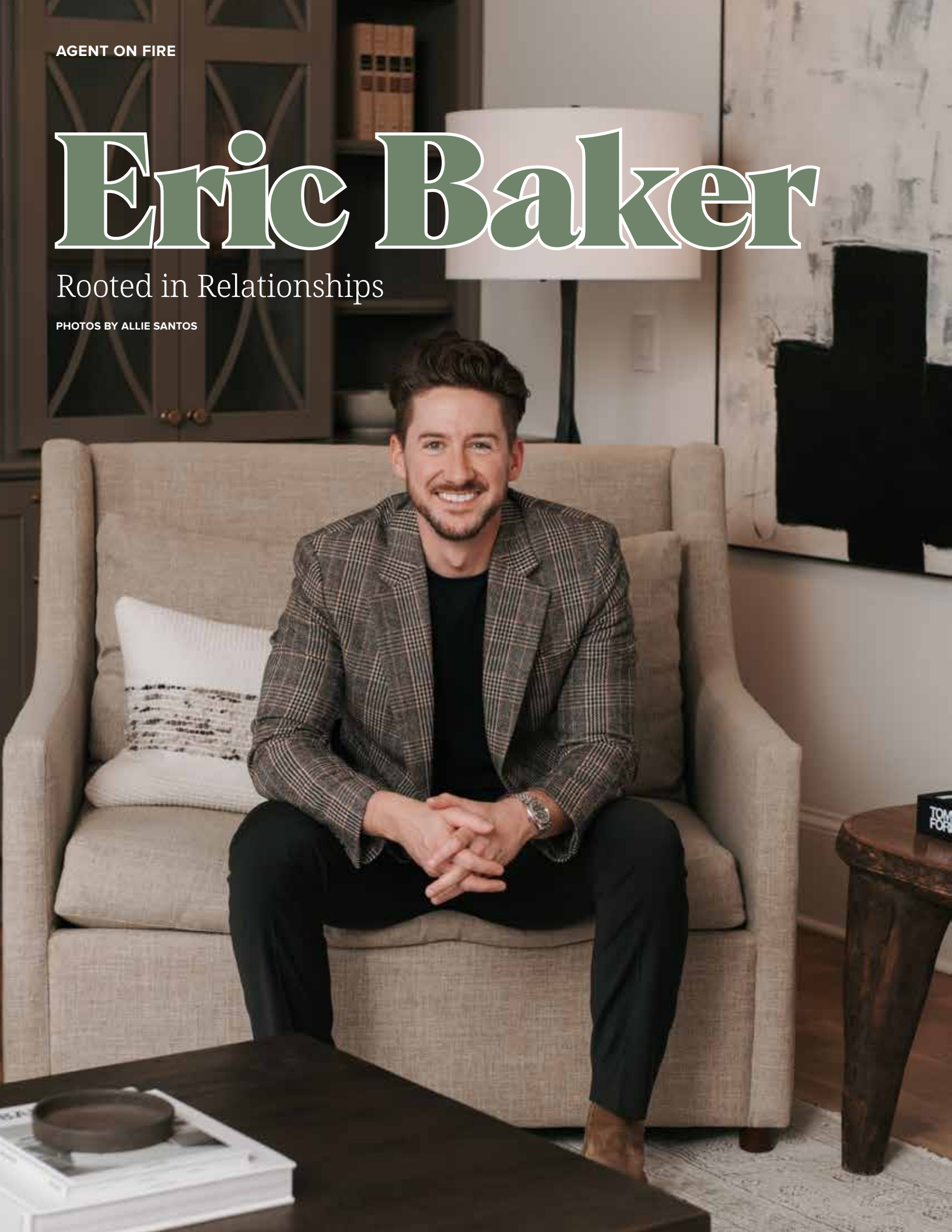
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Eric Baker

Rooted in Relationships

PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS



Eric Baker has spent his entire life in and around Metro Atlanta, but his childhood experience gave him a unique perspective on what it means to belong to more than one place at once.

“I grew up in Marietta and have lived here for my entire life,” Eric says. “But interestingly went to Cherokee County schools, because my mom was a high school teacher at Sequoyah High School.” Eric’s dad lived in Henry County, south of the city, so Eric spent the majority of his childhood traversing back and forth across the city and growing up in three different places.

That meant daily commutes for Eric and his brother. “We went out of district and commuted every day from Marietta to Canton,” he explains. “So in a way I feel like I grew up in three different places simultaneously. Because I guess in a way I did.”

That early experience of seeing different communities and perspectives may have helped shape the curiosity and independence that would later define his career.

After high school, Eric enrolled at Kennesaw State University and began studying marketing. College, however, never quite felt like the right path.

“I went to Kennesaw State University for marketing but dropped out after a couple of years and never went back,” Eric says. “I was never passionate about school in the traditional sense.”

That does not mean he stopped learning. Quite the opposite.

“I have always loved education and consider myself a passionate lifelong learner,” he says. “But really only about things I feel matter to my life and the lives of the people around me.”

At the time, he felt pulled toward building something of his own rather than following a traditional academic route.

“I just felt like I was wasting time being there and have always had a much stronger pull to entrepreneurialism versus traditional education,” Eric says. “Even when I was a kid, I was like that. So I just needed to leave and create something of my own.”

That entrepreneurial spirit showed up immediately. Eric’s first job as an adult was not working for someone else. Instead, he launched his own freelance marketing and advertising business.

“Technically my first job was actually my own business doing freelance marketing and advertising,” he says. “I designed print advertisements for around 140 different companies here in Atlanta and did that for a number of years.”

While he enjoyed the experience, Eric eventually realized the work was more of a creative outlet than a long-term passion.

“Ultimately I found that it was more of a hobby than something I was deeply passionate about,” he says. “But it was great experience from an entrepreneur perspective.”

He later spent time working at Home Depot in the building materials, hardware and paint departments, gaining valuable experience in a more traditional workplace setting.

Everything changed in 2013 when Eric discovered the industry that would become his true calling.

“I got into real estate in 2013, which somehow feels like it was both two years ago and 24 years ago,” he says with a laugh.

The path began with a simple conversation. While working part time at a bank during college, Eric met a client who was a real estate broker.



“After some brief conversation, she asked me kind of dumbfounded why I wasn’t in real estate,” he recalls.

At the time, Eric assumed he was too young to pursue it.

“But I thought I was too young based off all the real estate agents I knew up to that point,” he says.

Still curious, he spent a couple of months learning the basics of the business and informally interning with her.

“For the next couple of months I kind of interned with her and learned some of the basics,” he says. “I got licensed later that year and never looked back.”

Over the years, Eric built his business while working at Keller Williams, where he spent a decade refining his skills and growing his brand.

“Originally I chose Keller Williams for the sheer volume of training and education they offered,” he says. “I spent 10 years with KW and genuinely loved my time there. It was a huge part of building the brand I have today.”

A few years ago, Eric felt ready for a new chapter.

“As my business had evolved and my average price point had increased, I felt like it was time for a new chapter,” he says.

That chapter led him to Ansley Real Estate, where he says the company’s branding, marketing and support stood out immediately.

“I believe they have the best branding and marketing anywhere in the Southeast,” Eric says. “Their agent support is second to none.”

For Eric, though, the real focus has always been the people he serves.

“I genuinely care about this industry and I fundamentally believe we play a huge and important role in our clients’ lives,” he says.

He believes the industry is shifting in a positive direction as well. Rather than removing real estate agents from the process, many companies are doubling down on resources and support that help agents better serve their clients.

“After years of trying to eliminate the traditional agent with iBuyers and agent-less programs, they realized the consumer really does not want that,” Eric says. “It is an emotional and deeply personal process and people want an advocate they can trust.”

Outside of work, Eric is happiest when he is exploring somewhere new.

“Anyone who knows me knows that I am happiest when I am traveling and exploring,” he says. “I love camping, road trips and off-roading any chance I can get.”

He laughs that he may simply be wired for adventure.

“I probably need to just admit that ultimately I am an adrenaline junkie,” he says. “I don’t think a life without crazy adventures is worth living.”

That same passion carries into his commitment to giving back. For nearly nine years, Eric has served on the Board of Directors for MUST Ministries, an organization focused on homeless rehabilitation and support services.

“It has truly been the honor of a lifetime,” he says.

The organization provides emergency shelter, food programs, workforce development and health services for people in need across metro Atlanta.

“No single organization will ever fix homelessness,” Eric says. “But if we can just help one person, one family, one single mom live a better life because of the work we do, then that by itself makes my life worth living.”

For Eric, success in business and life ultimately comes down to one simple principle.

“Operate with integrity,” he says. “Anyone can screw someone out of a check one time. But if you want a consistent, lifelong business, treat people well, operate with integrity and trust the good will always come back to reward you.”



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2025

BY THE NUMBERS

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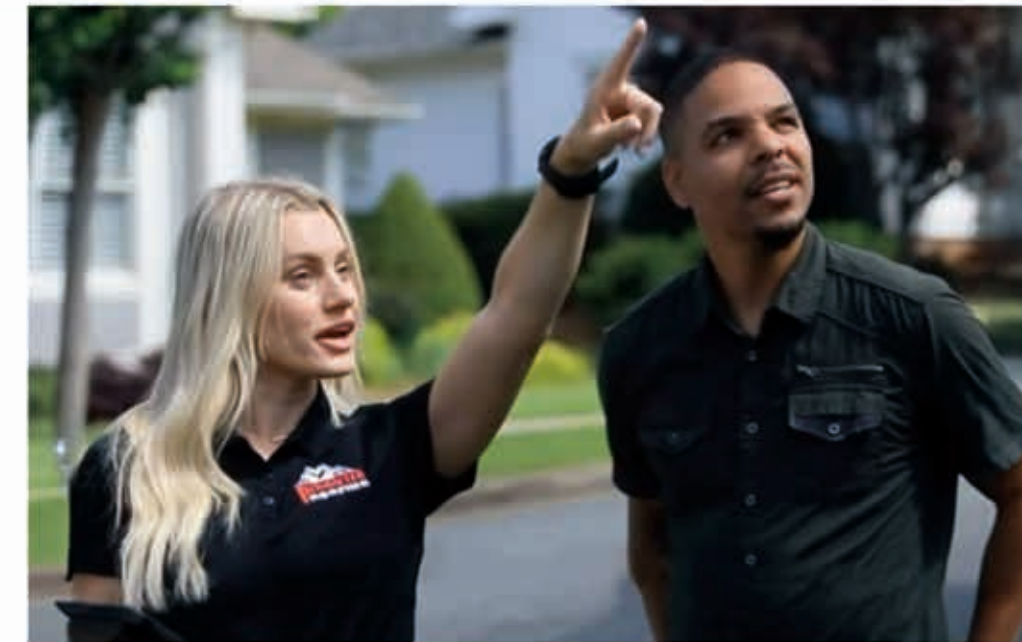
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