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Raising the Standard

WHY EXCELLENCE IS NOT A DESTINATION—BUT A DISCIPLINE

BY GABRIEL CHANDLER

In a competitive industry, good is common.

What separates the professionals who lead the market from those who simply participate is not access, opportunity, or tools—it’s standards.

The agents operating at the highest level didn’t arrive there by chance. They stayed committed when conditions shifted. They adapted when the market demanded more. And they consistently placed themselves around people who sharpened their thinking and elevated their expectations.

At Real Producers, that commitment to excellence is foundational.

What Truly Separates High Performers

Every agent has access to the same resources—technology, data, marketing channels, and platforms. The difference isn’t availability. It’s application.

Top performers don’t simply stay busy. They execute with intention. They build relationships with depth. They lead through consistency, not convenience. They don’t chase trends—they set tone. They don’t aim to keep up—they aim to raise the bar.

That’s why this platform exists: to highlight excellence, facilitate meaningful connection, and create environments where high standards are reinforced—not diluted.

Excellence Requires Intention
Growth doesn’t happen passively.

- It begins with honest reflection:
- Who is influencing your thinking?
- Where are you showing up consistently?
- What standards are you reinforcing through your daily habits?

The difference between strong and exceptional often comes down to the willingness to refine, recalibrate, and recommit—especially when momentum is already present.

If you’re reading this, it’s likely because you expect more—from yourself, your business, and the people around you.

The Rooms That Shape Results

The most meaningful shifts in a career rarely happen alone. They happen through conversation, proximity, and presence.

Whether it’s a Real Producers event, a panel discussion, or a simple exchange with a trusted peer, growth accelerates

when you step into the right rooms and stay engaged in the right conversations.

August is a natural checkpoint. A moment to assess, reset, and elevate.

The market will continue to evolve. The professionals who commit to excellence—who protect their standards and stay connected—will continue to rise.

Let’s keep raising the bar.



Gabriel Chandler
Publisher

Cape Fear & Brunswick
Real Producers



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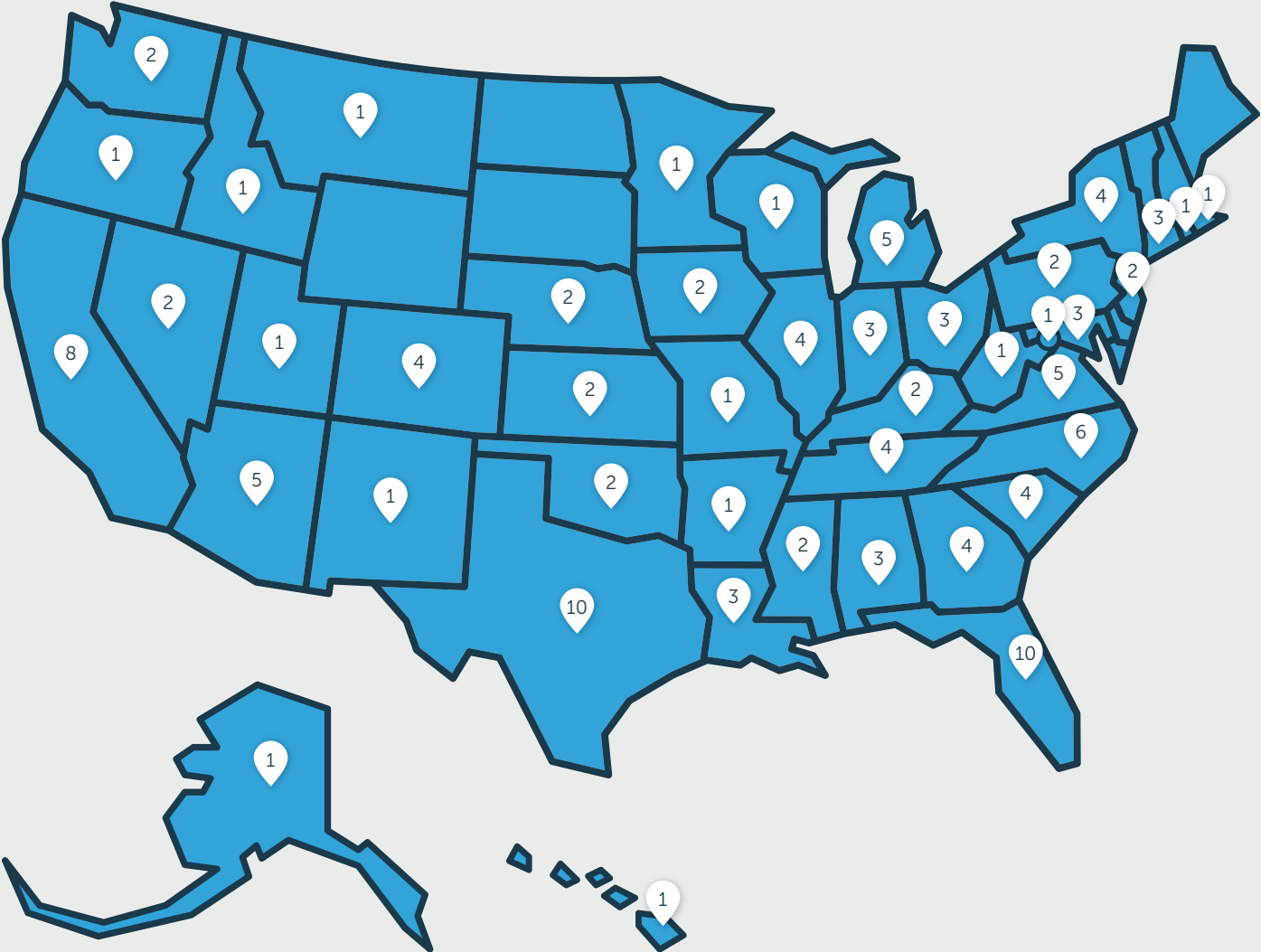


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Built on Relationships. Driven by Experience.

Top producers, builders, developers, and industry professionals from across the region came together for a morning of meaningful connections and practical lessons from some of Southeastern North Carolina’s most accomplished real estate professionals.

On August 6, Brunswick Real Producers joined *Cape Fear Real Producers* at Hotel Ballast in Wilmington for the **2026 Regional Builder Expo & Market Update**, bringing together leading REALTORS®, builders, developers, and industry professionals from across Southeastern North Carolina.

The morning was built around two things that remain invaluable in real estate: **strong relationships and learning from people who have already achieved what others are working toward.**

The Builder Expo created the connections, giving Brunswick agents an opportunity to meet directly with builders and industry partners from across the region. The program that followed brought the experience—covering everything from land and builder relationships to branding, luxury real estate, leadership, team

culture, mindset, and the habits behind sustained success.

Experience Worth Sharing
Peter Vinal opened the program with a comprehensive look at commercial development and economic growth across the region, giving attendees a broader perspective on the projects and investment taking place throughout Southeastern North Carolina.

From there, five accomplished real estate professionals took the stage to share lessons drawn from very different paths to success.

Mike Rokoski broke down land and development, including how to recognize development potential, better position land for sale, and become a valuable resource to builders rather than simply another agent sending them listings.

Julio Fuentes shared how differentiation, branding, niche expertise, relationships, and relentless work helped him build his business in a highly competitive industry. He also spoke about the importance of understanding every side of a transaction to better serve the client.

Lynne Galloway offered a look inside luxury real estate, from winning high-end clients to marketing properties at a level that reflects their value and understanding how luxury buyer expectations have evolved.

Stephanie Lanier focused on leadership and culture—sharing insight into building a high-performing team, identifying the qualities that can’t be taught, and creating an environment where talented people want to stay.

Jack Hamilton drew from decades of transactions and coaching to address

the habits, mindset, and mistakes that separate agents who consistently perform at a high level from those who struggle to reach the next level.

Different specialties. Different experiences. Different paths to success. But each conversation gave attendees something they could take back and apply to their own business.

More Than \$50,000 Given Back to the Room

The morning also came with some serious surprises.

Dream Finders Homes gave away \$50,000 in commission vouchers, while participating builders and Real Producers Preferred Partners

contributed more than \$3,000 in additional raffles and prizes throughout the event.

Events like this are possible because of partners who continue to invest in our real estate community. A special thank-you to our Brunswick Real Producers event sponsors and partners: Coastline Insurance, Chesapeake Homes, Coastal Carriers Moving & Storage and Mortgage investors Group.

Beyond the speakers, giveaways, and presentations, however, the greatest value of the morning may have been much simpler: getting the right people in the same room.

Builders met agents. Relationships were strengthened. Ideas were exchanged.

New connections were made. And professionals from Brunswick County and the greater Cape Fear region had the opportunity to learn from one another and build relationships across the markets we serve.

Thank you to Peter Vinal, Mike Rokoski, Julio Fuentes, Jack Hamilton, Stephanie Lanier, and Lynne Galloway, along with every builder, partner, sponsor, and REALTOR® who helped make the 2026 Regional Builder Expo & Market Update such a success.

Real estate is built on relationships. And the stronger those relationships become, the stronger our entire real estate community becomes.







2026 REAL ESTATE RULE CHANGES:

WHAT WILMINGTON BROKERS NEED TO KNOW

As North Carolina's real estate market continues to evolve—especially in fast-growing coastal areas like Wilmington—2026 has introduced several regulatory updates that every broker, firm, and investor should understand. While none of these changes radically alter brokerage practice overnight, together they signal a continued push toward transparency, accountability, and professional standards.

Fee Adjustments and Administrative Updates

One of the most immediate changes impacting all licensees is financial. Effective April 1, 2026, the North Carolina Real Estate Commission (NCREC) increased the annual license renewal fee from \$45 to \$50. This modest adjustment reflects rising administrative costs but also reinforces the importance of timely renewal during the May 15–June 30 window.

Additionally, application fees for new brokers have increased slightly, now sitting at approximately \$105. While not burdensome, these incremental increases are worth factoring into brokerage budgeting and recruiting conversations.

Rule Modernization and Compliance Focus

The NCREC approved a series of rule updates in early 2026, many of which focus on clarifying existing practices rather than introducing entirely new ones. The overarching theme is tighter compliance—particularly around licensing, education, and brokerage conduct.

Education requirements remain consistent at 8 hours annually, but updated course content for 2025–2026 places heavier emphasis on legal updates, fair housing, and agency responsibilities. For Broker-in-Charge (BIC) roles, supervision and accountability continue to be a focal point, reflecting ongoing concerns about team structures and oversight.

Wholesaling Clarified as Brokerage Activity

Another important legislative update affecting investors and off-market transactions is the clarification that residential property wholesaling constitutes brokerage activity and therefore requires licensure.

This change is especially relevant in markets like Wilmington, where investment activity and assignment

contracts have grown in popularity. The law also introduces consumer protections, including cancellation rights for homeowners, signaling increased scrutiny of investor-driven transactions.

What This Means for Wilmington Professionals

For brokers operating in Wilmington and the surrounding Cape Fear region, the takeaway is clear: professionalism and compliance continue to take center stage. The regulatory environment is tightening—not dramatically, but steadily.

Firms should prioritize:

- Strong BIC oversight and documentation practices
- Clear communication around compensation structures
- Ongoing education that goes beyond minimum CE requirements
- Careful handling of investor and wholesale transactions

In a market defined by growth, relocation demand, and coastal investment, these updates reinforce a simple reality: the agents who succeed in 2026 and beyond will be those who adapt quickly, operate transparently, and stay ahead of regulatory change.

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Robbin Perron

MAKING AN IMPACT

For Robin Perron, real estate is more than transactions—it's about relationships, service, and making a tangible difference in the community. Her journey to the housing industry was unconventional, shaped by careers in airlines, sports, corporate America, and education. Yet each experience built a foundation for the empathy, discipline, and leadership she now brings to her clients and colleagues.

From Airlines to Real Estate

Robin's professional story began in the skies. From 1989 to 1998, she worked with American Airlines and Midway Airlines, which brought her to North Carolina. Following that, she explored opportunities in the sports and entertainment sectors, including Team Connection, Total Sports, and OnSport, alongside the dot-com boom. Despite these exciting ventures, Robin realized she needed formal education to unlock her next chapter. Returning to college at NC State, she graduated cum laude with a degree in education and a minor in business management. While the classroom wasn't the ultimate fit, coaching middle school and travel softball teams planted the seeds for her natural talent in mentorship—a skill she would later apply to both clients and new agents.

Her corporate journey continued with roles at Cintas First Aid and Safety and Cintas Fire National Accounts, but Robin still felt the pull toward something more personal, flexible, and rewarding. In



2016, during the process of buying her own home in North Carolina, a friend and real estate agent noticed her keen attention to detail and suggested she pursue a license. That small observation ignited a passion that would become her career. Robin earned her real estate license in 2017, initially balancing it with her corporate work before committing full-time in 2020.

Rising Through the Ranks

Since joining Keller Williams Innovate and Coastal Living Enterprises, Robin’s growth has been impressive. In her first year at Keller Williams, she received the LEAP Award for her significant earnings jump. Over the past few years, she has advanced from Bronze to Gold status, steadily increasing her transaction count from 8 in her early years to 20 closings in 2025, securing a spot in the top 20% of agents at her market center. Robin also earned the prestigious Spirit Award for community engagement and volunteerism and was

invited to sit on Keller Williams’ Agent Leadership Council. Real Producers recognized her in 2025 as one of the Top 300 agents in New Hanover, Brunswick, and Hampstead counties—a milestone that speaks to her commitment to both professional excellence and service.

Passion Beyond the Closing Table

For Robin, real estate is inseparable from her volunteerism. She believes that helping others, even in small ways, creates lasting impacts. “No matter what kind of challenge you have going on in your life, the moment you put yourself aside and do something good for someone else, your challenges just don’t



seem so big,” she says. Her main volunteer projects include the Surf Rider Foundation, Pajama Jams, and the Pleasure Island Sea Turtle Project, among other initiatives.

With Surf Rider, Robin participates in beach cleanups and dune restoration, ensuring that the coastline and oceans remain protected. Pajama Jams allows her to collect and distribute pajamas to



local schoolchildren during the holidays, providing warmth, comfort, and inclusion to those in need—her third year of involvement yielded 299 pairs for children across the community. With the Pleasure Island Sea Turtle Project, Robin participates in early morning patrols to monitor nesting turtles, a process that has provided her with the unforgettable experience of holding a baby loggerhead in her hands.

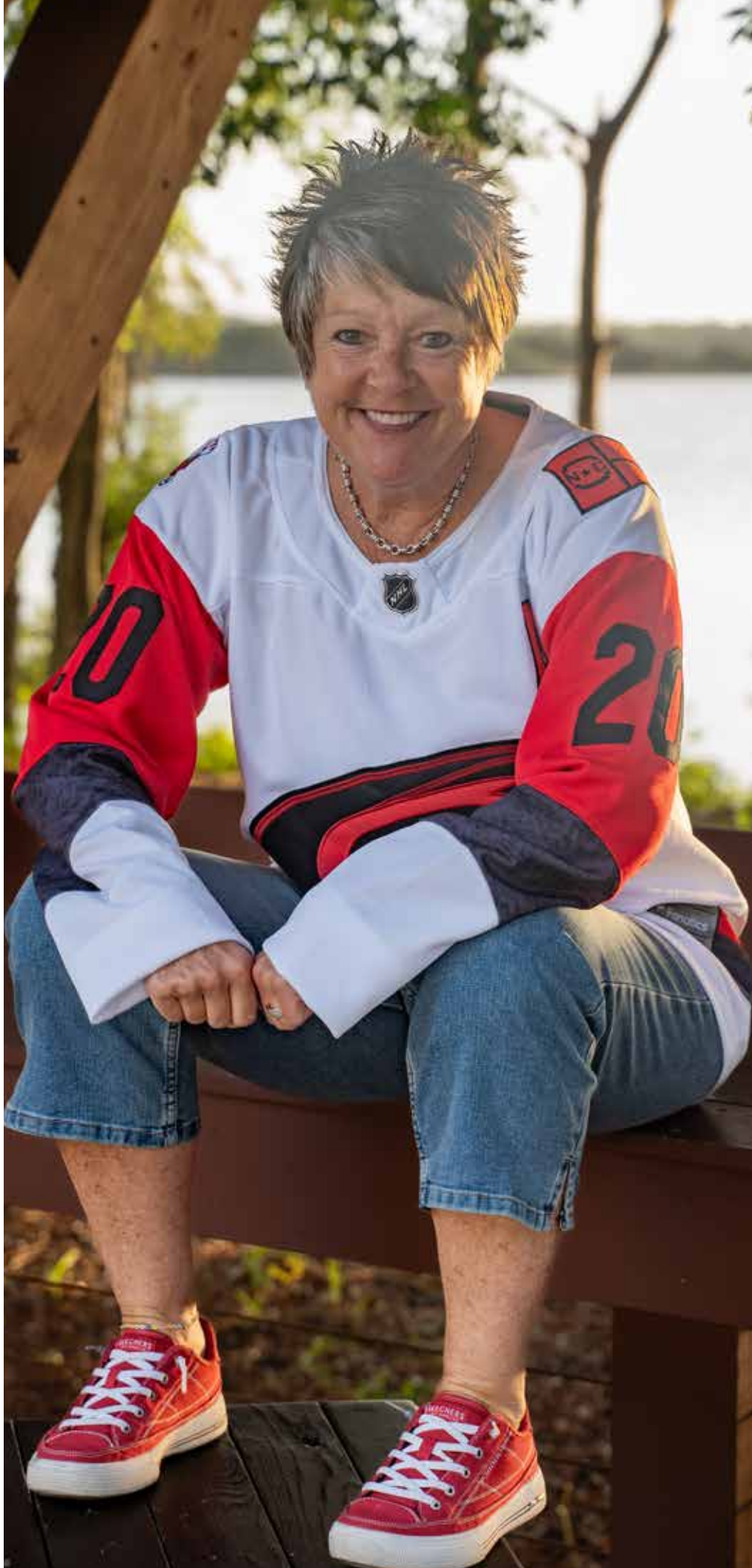


A Personal Philosophy of Service and Balance

Robin’s approach to life mirrors her professional ethos: small actions, compounded, create meaningful results. Whether it’s helping clients navigate the complexities of buying or selling a home, mentoring new agents, or cleaning a stretch of beach, her philosophy is consistent. “Your village can make small impacts... when joined together, huge impacts,” she says. Her hobbies reflect the same sense of grounding—spending time outdoors, tending her yard, enjoying beach visits, crafting, puzzles, and music.

Support Systems and Mentorship

Robin credits much of her success to a strong support network. At Keller Williams, Manda Price and the leadership team have nurtured her growth, revealing untapped potential





“Do the next right thing... and above all... be grateful.”

the airline industry to real estate, from mentoring youth to volunteering for causes close to her soul, she has forged a career that blends professional success with personal fulfillment. Her dedication to clients, colleagues, and the community exemplifies the philosophy that real estate is about people first—building relationships, creating opportunities, and making a positive impact every step of the way.

In Wilmington, Robin Perron is not just a realtor; she is a mentor, volunteer, and advocate for her community. Through her work, she continues to show that success isn't measured only in transactions but in the lives touched, the trust earned, and the legacy left behind. ▀

she didn't know she had. Her personal life is equally important, with Lauren providing unwavering support as both a cheerleader and partner in creating a life aligned with Robin's values. Though Robin's parents are no longer here to witness her achievements, she carries their memory in her commitment to “do the next right thing... and above all... be grateful.”

A Legacy in the Making

Robin Perron's story is one of adaptability, purpose, and heart. From



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TAMARA FOSDICK

Coastal Roots at Work

WRITTEN BY DAVE DANIELSON
PHOTOS BY: LOGAN BURKES OF BURKE'S MEDIA

Tamara Fosdick's story begins in Glen Cove, New York, where coastal living wasn't a luxury—it was a way of life. Raised in Locust Valley along Long Island Sound, she grew up surrounded by the rhythm of the water and the elegance of the Gold Coast. Early on, she developed an appreciation for homes, communities, and the feeling of belonging—an appreciation that would later define her career.

Her childhood also instilled compassion and resilience. When her grandfather suffered from aphasia after a medical trauma, a young Tamara helped him communicate again in Russian, her first language. That experience—quiet but profound—planted the seeds for her lifelong passion: helping people find their voice and their place in the world.

From Beauty to Business Acumen

Before entering real estate, Tamara spent 17 years in the beauty industry working with powerhouse brands like Bumble and Bumble, American Crew, Revlon, and CND. Her role focused on distribution and partnerships with salons and sales teams, where she





honed her skills in relationship building, marketing, and negotiation.

“Best hair days ever,” she jokes, but the experience was no laughing matter—it was foundational. The beauty business taught her how to present, position, and sell a vision, all of which translate seamlessly into her real estate career today.

The Spark That Became a Calling
Tamara’s interest in real estate was ignited at a young age. At just eight years old, she witnessed her family navigate a major life transition—selling two homes and merging into one. The real estate agent guiding them, “Miss Anne,” left a lasting impression. She was polished, compassionate, and attentive—someone who made a complex process feel manageable and even reassuring.

“If you can
read the story,
THE NUMBERS
REVEAL
PATTERN.”

That moment stuck. Tamara knew she wanted to do what Miss Anne did—help people through one of the most significant transitions of their lives with care and confidence.

Building a Career with Intention
Licensed in December 2020, Tamara quickly established herself in the industry. She began her career with Keller Williams on the Summers Real Estate Team, where she was the team’s original agent. It was a formative experience that gave her both structure and momentum.

In 2022, she joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Carolina Premier Properties, where her business flourished. With approximately \$30 million in career volume and \$15 million in recent production, she has

consistently proven her ability to deliver results. Her accolades include Top Listing Agent 2025, Top Selling Agent 2025, Presidents Circle, and Chairmans Circle honors—along with recognition as a Top 300 agent.

A Strategy-Driven, Heart-Centered Approach
What sets Tamara apart is her blend of strategy and authenticity. She doesn’t sugarcoat, and she doesn’t discount—her focus is on value, honesty, and precision.

She approaches real estate like a puzzle, using data, numbers, and storytelling to find the right fit. “If you can read the story, the numbers reveal patterns,” she explains. That analytical mindset allows her to comp homes accurately and guide clients with confidence.

But beneath the strategy lies something deeper: heart. Tamara is deeply motivated by people—their stories, their needs, and their dreams. She views real estate as more than transactions; it’s





about aligning lives with the right spaces at the right time.

Balancing Life, Family, and Business

Tamara’s daily life reflects her priorities. Each morning begins with her 13-year-old son, Maxim—a moment she cherishes as irreplaceable. After school drop-off, her “Tamara mode” kicks in: follow-ups, showings, planning, and client care. Fitness, family time, and business responsibilities weave together in a dynamic, ever-changing rhythm.

She doesn’t believe in a perfectly balanced life. Instead, she believes in awareness—showing up fully where she is needed most, whether that’s for her family or her clients.

Her husband, a radio personality known as “Foz,” plays a major role in both her personal and professional growth. He models discipline, risk-taking, and consistency—values that influence their shared business ventures, which include a brewery, a welcome service, a med spa, and a growing real estate portfolio.

Overcoming Challenges and Embracing Growth

Tamara entered real estate later in life, which initially posed challenges—especially in adapting to digital marketing and social media. Instead of resisting, she embraced learning, partnering with trusted professionals and refining her voice.

Her philosophy is simple: age is not a barrier, and authenticity wins. She shows up as herself—honest, direct, and committed. That authenticity has become one of her greatest assets in a competitive market.

Passions Beyond the Profession

Outside of real estate, Tamara finds joy in gardening, landscaping, paddleboarding, biking, and home design. Travel fuels her spirit, while music—especially 90s rock and EDM—keeps her grounded and inspired.

She also gives back through charitable efforts, supporting organizations like Dream Makers, Ripple Effect Foundation, and Pipeline To A Cure.

Defining Success on Her Own Terms

For Tamara, success isn’t measured by numbers alone—it’s defined by impact. Success means being present, raising her son with intention, and leaving people better than she found them.

Her goal is not just to close deals, but to create meaningful experiences and help clients transition into the next chapter of their lives with confidence and peace of mind.

A Lasting Impression

At the core of Tamara Fosdick’s business is a simple but powerful philosophy: how people feel matters most.

“I want my clients to always remember how I made them feel,” she says.

In an industry driven by numbers and transactions, Tamara stands out by prioritizing connection, care, and trust—ensuring every client not only finds the right home, but feels truly at home along the way. 🏡

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Denise *DAKOULIS*

Integrity & Personal Drive

From a home office in Wilmington, North Carolina, Denise Dakoulis has spent more than three decades quietly building a reputation that speaks louder than any marketing campaign. As the owner and broker-in-charge of Sky's the Limit Realty, Inc., Denise has created a business defined not by scale, but by consistency, trust, and a deeply personal commitment to doing things the right way.



“You’re honest and trustworthy, and people value that.”

From Legal Precision to Real Estate Expertise

Before entering real estate, Denise built a successful career in the legal field as a paralegal, specializing in personal injury, workers’ compensation, and business litigation. It was in business litigation where she found her stride—working closely with clients, preparing cases for trial, and mastering the details that often determine outcomes.

Her aptitude didn’t go unnoticed. At one point, an attorney she worked with of-

fered to pay for her to attend law school, recognizing that she was already performing many of the responsibilities of an attorney. While the opportunity was compelling, life had other plans.

A relocation to Wilmington would ultimately shift her path—and introduce her to a new career that would draw heavily on the very skills she had developed in law.

A Leap of Faith—and a Fresh Start

When Denise arrived in Wilmington, she

faced a blank slate. No established network. No local connections. No built-in client base. Instead of returning to the legal profession, she made a bold decision to pursue real estate.

It was her father’s words that helped solidify that choice.

“You’re honest and trustworthy, and people value that,” he told her.

Those words became the foundation of her business.

Denise began working full-time in real estate in January 1993, and from the very beginning, she approached the profession with discipline, focus, and a long-term mindset. Over the years, she worked with several respected firms, including Coldwell Banker Seacoast and RE/MAX, where she found a culture that aligned with her standards of professionalism and performance.

In 2015, she took the next step—launching her own firm, Sky’s the Limit Realty, Inc.

Building a Business on Reputation

Unlike many in the industry, Denise has intentionally chosen to remain independent. While she has successfully led a team in the past, she now works solo by design, allowing her to maintain complete control over the client experience.

Her business is built almost entirely on referrals—a reflection of the trust she has cultivated over decades of service.

“Referrals are one of the greatest compliments I can receive,” she says.

That trust has been earned through consistent, high-level performance across multiple market cycles. While she has achieved numerous accolades—including Rookie of the Year honors, RE/MAX Platinum Club recognition, Hall of Fame status, and Top Producer awards—Denise places far more value on longevity and client relationships than on annual production numbers.

Standing Out with Strategy—and a Little Creativity

Early in her career, Denise encountered an unexpected challenge: her name was often mispronounced or forgotten. Rather than seeing it as a setback, she turned it into an opportunity.

Branding herself as “The Skydiving Agent,” she created a memorable identity that sparked conversation and helped her stand out in a crowded market.

It wasn’t just a clever marketing move—it was authentic. Denise had completed over 100 skydives, a personal accomplishment that reflected her adventurous spirit and willingness to take calculated risks.

That same mindset—bold, strategic, and grounded in preparation—has carried through every aspect of her career.

A Detail-Oriented, Results-Driven Approach

Denise’s legal background continues to shape how she





“Waking up every day and still enjoying what I do—that’s success. Taking care of my clients at the highest level and loving the work.”

she also understands the importance of balance. Her days often begin early and extend into the evening when needed, but she remains intentional about creating space to recharge.

Travel is one of her personal goals moving forward—an opportunity to step away, gain perspective, and return refreshed.

Outside of real estate, Denise has led a life rich with adventure. In addition to skydiving, she has earned her pilot’s license with an instrument rating, traveled internationally, and explored interests ranging from skiing and scuba diving to writing music and playing guitar.

Today, she enjoys a quieter—but no less fulfilling—life with her two Shih-poos, Lulubelle and Delilah, who often accompany her on daily drives.

Family, Fulfillment, and Forward Momentum
Family plays an important role in Denise’s life. Married

in 2015, she gained a daughter and son through marriage, along with their spouses, and is now a proud grandmother to three. For Denise, success is not defined by numbers or accolades, but by something far more personal.

“Waking up every day and still enjoying what I do—that’s success,” she says. “Taking care of my clients at the highest level and loving the work.”

Her advice to others in the industry reflects that same philosophy: prioritize people over profit, stay ethical, and never cut corners.

A Career Defined by Integrity

At her core, Denise Dakoulis is decisive, driven, and deeply committed to her clients. She moves quickly, solves problems efficiently, and approaches every transaction with a sense of responsibility that never wavers.

But beyond the professionalism and precision is something equally important—approachability.

“I believe professionalism, integrity, and personality can coexist,” she says.

It’s that balance that has defined her career—and continues to set her apart.

In an industry that often chases the next deal, Denise remains focused on something more enduring: doing the job right, building lasting relationships, and proving—day after day—that when it comes to real estate, the sky truly is the limit. ❏

operates as a real estate professional. She places a strong emphasis on contracts, documentation, and clear communication, ensuring that every transaction is handled with precision.

“Put everything in writing,” she advises. “It protects everyone involved and eliminates misunderstandings.”

Her commitment to ethics and professionalism has also led to leadership roles within the real estate community, including serving as Chair

and Vice Chair of the Ethics and Professional Standards Committee. She has also been invited to share her expertise on a panel at the RE/MAX International Convention.

Known for her calm, solution-oriented approach, Denise navigates challenges with confidence and clarity—qualities that clients value, especially in complex transactions.

Passion, Balance, and a Life Well Lived
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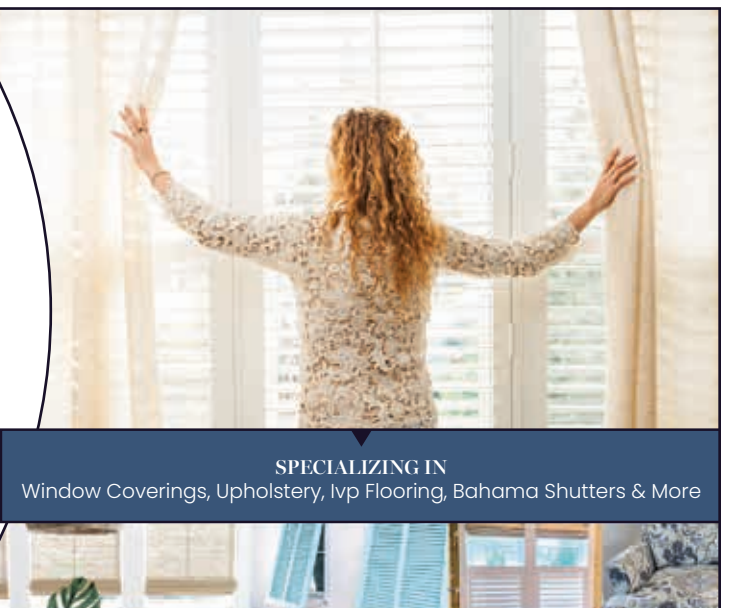
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JONATHAN PEELE

WITH COASTLINE INSURANCE ASSOCIATES



Serving Their Best Interests

WRITTEN BY DAVE DANIELSON
PHOTOS BY: LOGAN BURKE'S MEDIA

Jonathan Peele has built more than just an insurance agency—he's built a reputation. As President of Coastline Insurance Associates, headquartered in Southport, Peele has spent over two decades redefining what it means to serve clients in an industry often perceived as transactional.

From Humble Beginnings to Coastal Leadership

Peele's journey into the insurance world began in 2002, but the seeds of his philosophy were planted much earlier. Growing up in Hickory, North Carolina, he was deeply influenced by his mother, who served as the executive director of a nonprofit organization. Watching her help families through times of crisis instilled in him a lifelong commitment to service.

After graduating from the University of North Carolina Wilmington with a degree in Business Finance, Peele chose to make southeastern North Carolina his home—a decision inspired by childhood visits to his grandparents in Carolina Beach. That sense of community would later become the foundation of his business.

The Birth of Coastline Insurance Associates

In 2010, a pivotal moment reshaped Peele's career. The agency he had been managing was sold, and its owner retired. Rather than seek another position, Peele saw an opportunity

to preserve something he valued deeply: a culture rooted in service, integrity, and relationships.

"I wanted to maintain the level of service my mentor taught me," he reflects. That mentor, Walter Hester, had shown him not only the mechanics of the insurance business but also the importance of treating clients and partners with respect and care.

With that vision in mind, Coastline Insurance Associates was born.

A Service-First Philosophy

What sets Coastline apart is its unwavering commitment to a **service-over-sales approach**. In an industry where commission-driven incentives often dominate, Peele has taken a different path. His agents are not paid based on commission splits. Instead, the focus is entirely on advising clients.

"We're not here to sell a policy," Peele explains. "We're here to educate and guide."

This philosophy plays out in every client interaction. Whether helping a homeowner understand coverage nuances or assisting a small business owner in finding the right policy, the team takes time to explain options thoroughly. They shop across multiple carriers to find the best fit—not just the lowest



price—because, as Peele emphasizes, “not all policies are created equal.”

A Trusted Partner for Realtors and Clients

For real estate professionals, having a dependable insurance partner can make or break a transaction. Peele understands this dynamic intimately.

“Realtors trust us with their clients, and that means we’re an extension of their reputation,” he says.

Coastline’s approach ensures that referred clients receive personalized attention, clear communication, and thoughtful guidance. This not only protects the client but also reinforces the Realtor’s credibility. It’s a collaborative relationship built on shared goals: delivering exceptional service and ensuring clients are adequately protected.

Culture as the Cornerstone of Success

Ask Peele what drives the company’s success, and his answer is immediate: culture.

“Our mission is simple—we’re here to help people,” he says.

That mission resonates throughout the organization. Every team member is licensed, highly trained, and committed to continuous learning. Peele believes that **knowledge is power**, and he invests heavily in educating his team so they can better serve clients and referral partners.

The agency’s growth—spanning offices in Southport, Oak Island, Wilmington, and Wrightsville Beach—is a testament to that culture. But for Peele, success isn’t just measured in numbers.



“The most rewarding part is watching my team grow. **Helping someone develop their career and achieve success—that’s what drives me.**”

Giving Back to the Community

One of the defining characteristics of Coastline Insurance Associates is its deep commitment to community involvement. Peele firmly believes that businesses have a responsibility to give back.

“If you want your community to support your business, you must first support your community,” he says.

This philosophy is more than words—it’s a requirement. Every agent is expected to engage with local charities and nonprofit organizations, whether through financial contributions or volunteer work. For Peele, this commitment is both personal and professional, rooted in the values he learned from his mother.

Mentorship and Meaningful Rewards

While business growth is important, Peele finds his greatest fulfillment elsewhere.

“The most rewarding part is watching my team grow,” he shares. “Helping someone develop their career and achieve success—that’s what drives me.”

He also takes pride in guiding clients through complex situations, particularly during claims. In those moments, the agency’s role shifts from advisor to advocate, ensuring clients feel supported when they need it most.

Peele credits much of his own success to the people around him. His wife, Beth, has been a constant source of support, while his Vice President, Josh Whitaker—who has been with him since day one—has played a critical role in shaping the agency. Together with their team, they’ve built something that extends beyond business.

Looking Ahead

As Coastline Insurance Associates continues to grow, Peele’s vision remains clear: **help more people**. Expanding the team into underserved areas will allow the agency to reach new clients while maintaining its commitment to personalized service.

At the heart of it all is a simple yet powerful philosophy: “Providing a helping hand is the best gift you can give somebody else.”

In an industry often defined by policies and premiums, Jonathan Peele has proven that success is ultimately about people. And in the communities he serves, that approach is making all the difference. 🏡



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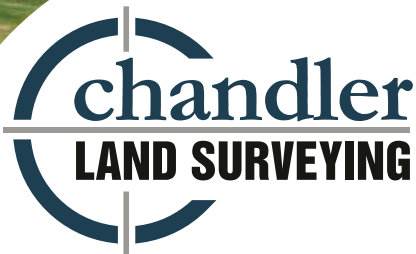
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Crystal DANFORD

A Stewardship Approach to Success

WRITTEN BY DAVE DANIELSON
PHOTOS BY: LOGAN BURKES OF
BURKE'S MEDIA

Along the shoreline of Coastal North Carolina, where salt air meets long-term vision, Crystal Danford has quietly built more than a real estate brokerage—she has built a legacy. As Broker-In-Charge and Owner of Buy Coastal Real Estate, Inc., Danford approaches her work with a philosophy rooted not in volume, but in stewardship—of property, relationships, and community.

From Classroom to Coastline Leadership

Danford's journey into real estate began with a strong foundation in education. A lifelong resident of Coastal North Carolina, she earned her Master's degree in Educational Administration & Supervision from UNC Wilmington and spent years as both a teacher and administrator in New Hanover County Schools. That experience, she says, continues to shape how she leads today.

"Preparation, structure, and thoughtful guidance—those principles came from my time in education," Danford explains. "They're still central to how I run my business and support my clients."

In 2006, she transitioned into real estate, while she continued working in the school system until 2015. By 2015, she had stepped into a leadership role as Broker-In-Charge, marking a new chapter not only for her career but for her family as well.

A Family Business, Built for Generations

What began as a mother-daughter partnership with her daughter, Courtney Hanley, has evolved into a multi-generational enterprise. Courtney played a pivotal role in shaping the foundation of the business, and today, additional family members are involved, with even the next generation growing up immersed in the work.

"Family is central to everything we do," Danford says. "We're not building volume—we're building legacy."

This family-first approach influences every aspect of the brokerage's culture. Rather than pursuing rapid expansion, Buy Coastal Real Estate has remained intentionally boutique,

focused on long-term relationships and sustainable growth.

A Boutique Brokerage with Strategic Vision

In an industry often driven by numbers, Danford has taken a different path. Her firm emphasizes quality over quantity, offering a highly personalized approach to residential brokerage and advisory services. From investment analysis to renovation planning and property staging, Danford remains deeply involved in each step of the process.

Her day-to-day work spans a wide range of responsibilities: advising clients on residential and commercial opportunities, overseeing renovation projects, optimizing rental strategies across long- and short-term properties, and mentoring agents within the brokerage.

"I enjoy the transformation process," she says. "Whether it's helping a client see the potential in a property or guiding a renovation from start to finish, there's something incredibly rewarding about bringing a vision to life."

Real-World Experience That Shapes Expertise

What sets Danford apart is her hands-on experience as both a broker and an investor. Over the years, she has renovated and flipped properties, managed rental portfolios, and explored coastal land opportunities—including an island property that reflects a long-term development vision.

She is currently overseeing a renovation within Landfall, a project that underscores her strategic approach to property positioning and long-term value.

"These experiences give me a different perspective," Danford explains. "I'm not



just advising clients from theory—I’ve been in their position. I understand the risks, the opportunities, and the importance of making informed decisions.”

Culture Rooted in Integrity and Accountability

At the heart of Buy Coastal Real Estate is a culture defined by integrity, preparation, and accountability. For Danford, reputation is not just a business asset—it’s deeply personal.

“In a coastal community, your reputation compounds over time,” she says. “Every transaction matters. Every interaction matters. I approach each one as if my family name is attached to it—because it is.”

This philosophy extends to how she recruits and mentors agents. Drawing again from her background in education, Danford prioritizes building a smaller team of well-prepared professionals rather than scaling quickly without structure.

“I believe in developing strong agents with clear systems and accountability,” she says. “That’s how you build something sustainable.”

Navigating a More Strategic Market

As the real estate landscape continues to evolve, Danford sees a shift toward greater complexity—and greater opportunity for those prepared to meet it.

“Today’s market requires more strategy than ever before,” she notes. “Buyers are more analytical, and sellers need to be intentional about how they position their homes.”

Her ability to guide clients through these complexities—whether evaluating investment potential, planning renovations, or identifying land opportunities—has become a defining strength of her business.

Defining Success Beyond Transactions

For Danford, success is not measured in closed deals or annual volume. Instead, it is defined by longevity, impact, and the ability to create something meaningful for both her clients and her family.

“Success means building something that lasts,” she says. “It’s helping families create stability, protecting value through thoughtful strategy, and creating a business that can continue for generations.”

“Every transaction matters. Every interaction matters. I approach each one as if my family name is attached to it—because it is.”





“I approach real estate as stewardship. We’re not just facilitating transactions—we’re helping shape the future of our community.”

opportunities. But at its core, her mission remains unchanged.

“I approach real estate as stewardship,” she says. “We’re not just facilitating transactions—we’re helping shape the future of our community.”

In a fast-paced industry often defined by short-term wins, Crystal Danford stands apart by playing the long game—building not just a business, but a legacy rooted in integrity, vision, and the enduring value of home. 🏡

Outside of work, Danford embraces the very lifestyle she helps others discover. Whether boating, walking coastal trails, or simply enjoying the rhythm of life by the water, her connection to the region remains as strong as ever.

A Legacy in Motion

As Buy Coastal Real Estate continues to grow, Danford remains focused on refining systems, supporting her team, and expanding her advisory role in investment and development



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