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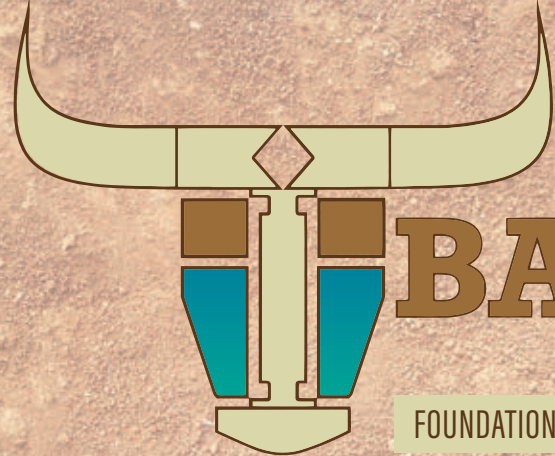
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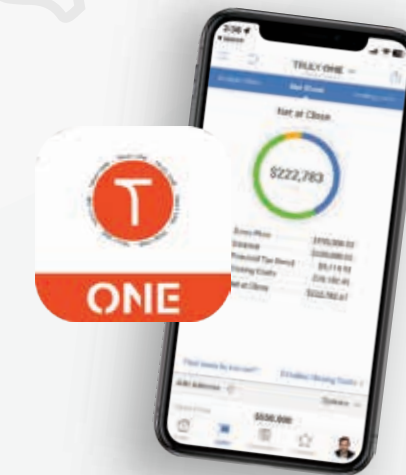
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There **truly** is a difference.

The Difference IS IN THE Little Things

BY CHERIKA JOHNSON

As we settle into the second half of the year, it’s easy to think success comes from one big listing, one viral post, or one lucky opportunity. But after spending the last year surrounded by some of East Texas’ top professionals, I’ve noticed something different.

The people who continue to grow aren’t usually chasing the next big moment. They’re committed to the little moments.

Think back to our February cover story featuring Mark Coleman. One of the biggest takeaways from his interview was simple: **successful agents answer their phones**. It sounds almost too obvious to mention, yet it’s one of those small disciplines that can make a tremendous difference. Every phone call answered, every follow-up completed, every promise kept is another opportunity to build trust and strengthen a relationship.

That same principle carries into this month’s cover story with Melanie Northcutt. If you’ve ever followed her on social media, you’ve probably seen her share the structure of her day—from the time she wakes up until the time she calls it a night. Her schedule isn’t about being busy for the sake of being busy. It’s about being intentional. Success doesn’t happen by accident. It happens when we consistently choose the habits that move us forward, even on the days when no one is watching.

That’s what I’ve come to admire most about the professionals featured in *East Texas Real Producers*. Their production numbers are certainly impressive, but behind those numbers are daily choices, steady discipline, and a commitment to serving people well. Excellence rarely arrives through one defining moment. More often, it’s the result of ordinary things done consistently over time.

As you enjoy this month’s issue, I hope you’ll look beyond the accomplishments and recognize the habits that helped create them. Sometimes the biggest breakthroughs don’t begin with a dramatic change. They begin with answering the next phone call, following through on a commitment, or simply making the most of today.

Thank you for continuing to make *East Texas Real Producers* a community built on relationships, professionalism, and excellence. Here’s to finishing the year strong—one intentional choice at a time.



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Whitney Parks

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WRITTEN BY BELLA RUBIO

All corners of real estate are competitive. There are several REALTOR® professionals hoping to win you over. But every now and then, you meet someone who stands out, and you connect with them because you can tell they come at face value. These are the individuals you seek out to assist you in some of life’s biggest transactions. Meet Whitney Parks. With over 24 years in the real estate industry, he has built a reputation for standing strong. Parks is a mortgage loan professional with Guild Mortgage, a top-five lender nationwide. He brings clarity, honesty, and a deep sense of loyalty to the clients he serves here in beautiful East Texas.

Whitney earned his bachelor’s degree in business management from LeTourneau University, graduating magna cum laude. He currently serves as Secretary of the Foundation Board for the Tyler Metro Chamber of Commerce. In his early professional career, Whitney was a financial advisor. This experience provided an opportunity to enter the mortgage world. Parks shares that he “stumbled into real estate by doing mortgages as a way to help my customers.”

His journey began when he met with a mortgage lender who took the time to explain how he could improve his life and the future of his family. Mr. Parks quickly recognized that the information shared with him was life-changing, and because of the impact it had on his life, he decided to pursue a career in the mortgage industry to educate and help others. “It all started because



I did it for me first by refinancing my house and was able to pay off all my debt. As the mortgage lender sat there talking to me, I said, wait a minute, how do I do what y’all are doing? It was a personal experience that changed my life. Because it happened to me first, it unlocked my passion to help other people.” That moment became the foundation for his career, shaping his passion for guiding others toward smarter investments and a stronger financial future.

When we asked Mr. Parks what shaped who he is today, he did not point to industry icons or celebrity entrepreneurs. Instead, he focused on the source of his strength and discipline. “My relationship with the Creator of

heaven and earth,” he shares. “I have had mentors along the way at different stages of my life who The Most High placed in my life at the perfect time to help me make better decisions.” There was a humility in his response that made me step back and contemplate it. The fact that he gave recognition not to himself but to others was touching. When you approach life in this manner, it tends to pour into everything you do.

A couple of years ago, the company I worked for was hosting a large event. I sought out a few of our REALTOR® friends to partner with to help promote it. The goal was to find someone personable, passionate about their work, and capable of capturing an audience’s attention. One of the first names that



came to mind was Whitney Parks. I’ll admit, I was a little nervous to ask if he would be willing to make a video for us. His reputation in East Texas is well-known, his presence strong, and I was not sure his calendar had even a sliver of space. But I also knew of his character, and that is what led me to call him.

Without hesitation, I reached out to Whitney and asked if he would be willing to help. He was a team player, not only willing but also happy to collaborate. After I hung up the phone, I felt like I hit the jackpot. This was one of my first encounters with Whitney, and I was impressed with the quality of the content he produced. To this day, I am grateful that we connected.

Over the years, I have watched Mr. Parks remain actively involved in the real estate community. This is a testament not only to his devotion to his company but also to the clients he serves. To succeed in the real estate



world, you must be present and involved. However, what truly stands out about Whitney is his transparency. It is refreshing to talk with him and see a person who is raw and shares straight from the heart. Transparency resonates with everyone, and it is one of the reasons Whitney continues to find success in what he does and why his clients keep coming back.

In his interview, we asked him what sets him apart from his peers; he replied, “My heart for people. I work to establish a relationship that allows me to become an advisor for my customers. This builds trust and referrals. I am not afraid to take on tough tasks or to be boldly honest.” The moment I heard his response, a subtle, amused laugh slipped out. I laughed because truth is the best policy, and not everyone is brave enough to be that straightforward. But when you are making major financial life choices, honesty is exactly what you want. There is real strength in truth. It

builds trust, encourages growth, and sets the tone for a relationship built on respect. That is the kind of quality you hope to find in the person handling your mortgage needs.

Mr. Parks also shared that he is passionate about “helping first-time home buyers and people who never thought they could buy a home. I also teach people that real estate is a true wealth-building block, and if they allow me to help, I take what they want to accomplish and show them how real estate fits into that. And if they don’t have the cash to buy real estate, they need a mortgage.” Although he is driven to help others achieve the American dream or build wealth by getting out of debt, Mr. Parks is equally intentional about protecting the balance in the life he has worked so hard to build. “I work until the work is done, and I make sure I stay focused. That way, I have plenty of time for the other pursuits in life I wish to accomplish. The main thing is: do not let people waste your time, and don’t you waste your time, and work-life balance is easy.”

When it comes to balancing his personal life, one of the greatest sources of gratitude in his life is his family. He proudly shares, “My wife and children inspire me; they are wonderful people.” He and his wife, Kim, have been married for 28 years, and together they have four children: Ashli, a TV producer with KXAN NBC; Alani, a



corporate recruiter for H-E-B; Whitney II, an engineer with TechServ; and April, who works in marketing with Romph Pou. It is clear that his family is one of the greatest reasons he works so hard. They continually support and uplift one another. The loyalty and love he has for his family are evident when he shares, “They are my heart, and I will do anything to protect them and ensure their happiness.”

He also attributes deep gratitude to his grandparents, figures he has always looked up to and who shaped the values he carries today. “My grandparents do anything and everything for family, and what meant the most to them was legacy. I think about the good times with them and the lessons they taught me that still matter to this day.”

In his spare time, Whitney studies market trends, is a self-described “movie buff,” gardens, and enjoys anything that gets him outdoors. He also dedicates time each morning to studying scripture. His faith is something many might be surprised to learn about him: “I do not participate in traditional religion, but I love studying scripture and value my relationship with the Creator.” That daily discipline is part of what drives his success and reflects the way he strives to live. He shares, “We were created to accomplish a mission, and if we do that, we have truly found success.”

Whitney Parks has spent the last twenty-four years helping others understand the power of homeownership and building wealth. His commitment to serving clients was influenced by his own experiences. To him, it is not only about assisting with real estate needs, but, as he puts it, about “building relationships and bringing people together. We’re just better together and so much more powerful. But the important thing is to keep your own identity while you do it.” After more than two decades in the profession, Whitney’s advice is grounded in collaboration and honesty.

The advice he offers to those following a similar path emphasizes the importance of leading with authenticity and



allowing the legacy you build to become an inspiration for others. In that same spirit, Mr. Parks’ advice for anyone considering a career in real estate is direct and grounded in reality: “Take it seriously. Not everything that glitters is gold, and never covet anyone else’s success for your own.”

To him, commitment and success are earned through dedication, discipline, and people coming together. Part of that success, he explains, comes from pursuing goals that offer true return on investment. And when it comes to homeownership, he nudges others with a line that captures his message perfectly: “You gotta live somewhere, you might as well own it!” It’s simple, but it embodies what he does best: encouraging others to build stability, confidence, and long-term wealth through the homes they choose.



The three words Whitney says best describe him are: “Passionate, Grounded, and Shalom (peace).” Each word echoes a different part of what makes him approachable and effective. The deep sense of peace he carries is reflected in all he does and accomplishes. And although real estate may be competitive, people like Whitney Parks remind you that authenticity still wins. His face-value ethic, his loyalty to his clients, and his unwavering belief in the power of homeownership have shaped a career built on trust. His dedication to educating and guiding families toward ownership and financial confidence is the kind of impact that lasts far beyond the moment they get the keys.

Ultimately, Whitney’s story is about staying authentic, working hard, building relationships, and investing to secure your future. 🏡





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FAQS

Q: Who Receives This Magazine?

A: The top 300 agents in East Texas based on volume for the previous year and our Preferred Partners. There are thousands of agents in the region and you, in this elite group, are the cream of the crop. Just to be included in this group is an accomplishment that testifies to your hard work, dedication, and proficiency.

Q: Do Real Estate Agents Have To Pay For Magazines Or Events?

A: NO! The magazine and events are FREE to agents and funded by the partners who advertise.

Q: What Kind Of Content Will Be Featured?

A: This is all about you. We'll do personal and unique stories on members in the community, providing you with a platform to inspire others. As we grow, we'll add fresh content focused entirely on you. It costs absolutely nothing for a REALTOR® to be featured. We are not a pay to play model; we write real stories, about Real Producers, and we're always accepting nominations. We will consider anyone brought to our attention— we don't know everyone's story so we need your help to learn about them!

Q: Who Are Our Partners?

A: Anyone listed as a "Preferred Partner" in the front of the magazine is funding and fueling this community



and is an essential part of it. They are the top professionals in their industry. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine and attend our events. One or many of you have recommended every single Preferred Partner you see in this publication. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for the best REALTORS® in the area, but the best affiliates as well, so we can grow stronger together.

Q: Does Real Producers Have Events?

A: Yes! Along with the magazine, we will host quarterly events exclusive to this community, where you—the

best of the best—get together at local venues to socialize, mastermind, deepen our connections, and better our businesses. We will communicate about events through the magazine and on social media.

Q: How Can I Recommend A Business Or Feature Story?

A: If you are interested in contributing, nominating REALTORS® to be featured, know of top-notch affiliate partners who you believe should be a part of our community, or would simply like to network; email or call us. I look forward to hearing from you!

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CHOOSING JOY, SERVING OTHERS,
BUILDING A LIFE WITHOUT REGRETS

WRITTEN BY CHERIKA JOHNSON
PHOTOS BY CALLYNTH PHOTOGRAPHY



Imagine walking into an event where hundreds of volunteers are buzzing with excitement, thousands of book lovers have gathered from across the country, and everywhere you look, there are unicorns. Unicorn shirts. Unicorn decorations. Unicorn energy. Somewhere in the middle of all the excitement is Lin Reynolds, proudly wearing the title of “Head Unicorn,” coordinating a team of 20 “Unicorn Helpers” while helping lead one of the largest charitable book events in the country alongside her two sisters Murphy Rae and founder and author Colleen Hoover.

It sounds whimsical, and that’s exactly the point.

For Lin, unicorns have never simply been a mascot. They represent joy, imagination, kindness, and the belief that extraordinary things can happen when people come together for something bigger than themselves. It’s a philosophy that has shaped not only a nationally recognized charitable event but also the way she serves every real estate client who trusts her with one of life’s biggest decisions.

“My goal has always been to make people smile,” Lin says. “Life is serious enough already.” That perspective is woven into everything she does.

Although she’s been a licensed REALTOR® for less than three years, Lin has already built an impressive career, closing more than \$31 million in sales during her first 32 months in the business. While those numbers certainly speak for themselves, they’re not the first thing she hopes people notice. Instead, she’d rather be remembered for how she made people feel. “I want my clients to know they can trust me,” she says. “If they leave the closing feeling like they gained a friend, that’s a win.”

It’s a refreshing approach in an industry often focused on rankings, awards, and production. While Lin appreciates success, she has never allowed numbers to define it. To her, success looks much different. “Happiness,” she says without hesitation. “Waking up excited about your life.” That mindset didn’t appear overnight. It was cultivated long before she ever unlocked her first front door for a client.

Growing up, Lin’s family didn’t have many financial resources, but they had something far more valuable: a mother who refused to let circumstances determine her daughters’ futures. When Lin dreamed of becoming a pilot as a teenager, paying for flight lessons wasn’t an option. Rather than allowing the dream to fade away, her mother encouraged her to find another path. Lin earned flying lessons by working at the local airport, learning one of the greatest lessons of her life in the process: where there’s determination, there’s usually a way forward. That lesson became a guiding principle.

Over the years, Lin built successful careers in sales, occupational therapy, education, and mortgage lending. Yet despite professional success, something was missing. Friends encouraged her for years to pursue real estate, but starting over in her mid-forties felt intimidating. Eventually, she asked herself a question

“
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“ I WANT MY CLIENTS TO KNOW THEY CAN TRUST ME. IF THEY LEAVE THE CLOSING FEELING LIKE THEY GAINED A FRIEND, THAT'S A WIN.”



that would change everything: “What will I regret the least?” It wasn’t about choosing the easiest path. It was about choosing the one she would be proud to look back on years later.

That decision led her into real estate, where she discovered exactly what she had been searching for—a career

built on relationships, problem-solving, and helping people through one of the biggest transitions of their lives.

Her clients quickly discovered that working with Lin doesn’t feel transactional. Yes, she’s knowledgeable. Yes, she’s professional, but she’s also quick with a joke, celebrates every

milestone, and somehow manages to lower the stress level in situations that often feel overwhelming.

Her signature “Unicorn Agent” brand reflects her belief that buying or selling a home doesn’t have to feel intimidating. A little laughter, a little encouragement, and a lot of honesty can transform the entire experience. That same spirit of encouragement extends well beyond real estate.

For years, Lin and her sisters have poured their hearts into Book Bonanza, a large-scale charitable event that brings together authors, readers, volunteers, and communities while raising awareness and financial support for meaningful causes. Behind the scenes, months of planning and hundreds of volunteers make the event possible, creating an experience that has become known not only for books but also for generosity, connection, and community.

As the self-proclaimed “Head Unicorn,” Lin oversees her team of Unicorn Helpers with the same enthusiasm she brings to every other part of her life. It’s organized chaos in the best possible way, fueled by countless volunteers who believe in giving back and creating something special for others.

Serving others has always been one of Lin’s greatest passions. Whether highlighting smaller charities, connecting rescue pets with loving families, or simply encouraging someone who needs a reminder of their own worth, she believes everyone has the ability to make someone else’s life a little brighter. “You can’t help everyone,” she says, “but you can absolutely change someone’s world.”

That heart for service has become even more personal in recent years. Lin openly shares her journey living with Early Onset Parkinson’s disease. She also manages chronic pain from multiple spinal injuries, challenges that would understandably cause many people to slow down. Instead, she has chosen transparency, openly discussing both the struggles and the tools that help her continue living a full life. She has built



a daily wellness routine focused on movement, recovery, and hope, often sharing her experiences to encourage others facing difficult health journeys of their own.

Her honesty has created connections she never expected. People regularly reach out to thank her—not because she has all the answers, but because she’s willing to share both the victories and the difficult days.

That’s Lin. Authentic. Hopeful. Resilient. She refuses to allow adversity to become her identity.

Family has also remained the constant thread running through every chapter of her life. Married to her soulmate for more than twenty years, she treasures

time spent with her husband, daughter, extended family, and the dozens of relatives who gather at her home each Thanksgiving. Summers are spent on the lake, traveling in the RV, crafting, taking photographs of the night sky, hosting themed parties, and creating memories with the people she loves most. It’s easy to see why joy comes so naturally to her...She intentionally creates it.

As our conversation came to a close, one thing became abundantly clear. Lin isn’t chasing recognition. She’s chasing significance. The awards are nice. The production is exciting. The milestones are worth celebrating, but none of those things define success in her eyes.



Instead, she hopes people remember that she was honest. That she cared. That she made them laugh during stressful moments. That she gave back whenever she could. That she built relationships instead of transactions. Most of all, she hopes they remember they could trust her.

Perhaps that’s what makes someone a unicorn after all. Not because they’re impossible to find, but because once you meet one, you’ll never forget them. 🦄



Melanie NORTHCUTT

WRITTEN BY DAWN SIMS
PHOTOS BY LINDSEY STEELE PHOTOGRAPHY

The Art of Southern Hospitality

I'd love to tell you about the house I imagined when I sat down with Melanie Northcutt. If Melanie were a home, she wouldn't be sleek and modern with sharp angles and floor to ceiling windows. Her walls wouldn't match colors on trend or try to impress with excess.

She would be a Southern Grand millennial cottage, thoughtfully collected over time, where antique brass catches the afternoon sunlight and every room feels as though it has welcomed generations before you. Original hardwood floors would creak with character. Blue and white ginger jars would hold fresh hydrangeas clipped that morning. Fine china wouldn't be tucked away for holidays because every day would be reason enough to use it. There would be a silver tray waiting with coffee, a stack of well loved books on the side table, and a chair that invites you to stay awhile. As she and I talked, I realized that picture had very little to do with interior design. It has everything to do with who Melanie Northcutt is.

There is an intentionality about Melanie that is difficult to describe until you've experienced it firsthand. Every answer is thoughtful. Every story has purpose. Every person she mentions is spoken about with genuine admiration and gratitude. Even before we talked about real estate, it became obvious that relationships are the foundation of everything she builds. It is no surprise, then, that the brokerage she founded reflects those same values. Sugar Magnolia Properties is not simply where Melanie works. It is a second home.

For many people in East Texas, Melanie Northcutt is recognized as the broker and owner of Sugar Magnolia Properties, the boutique brokerage tucked inside historic downtown Longview. Over the last thirteen years, she has built a respected career, 100% referral based, helping hundreds of East

Texas families buy and sell homes, but if you ask her about production, she'll humbly steer the conversation elsewhere. As they say in the south, "the higher the branch, the harder the fall."

"The relationships are far more important than the numbers," she spoke with a warmth that turned a business philosophy into pure gospel. A philosophy that has guided every chapter of her career. "I focus on traditional clientele and honoring each property." It's not about buying and selling for Melanie, it's about the families she's helping and the story within the walls of each home.

Growing up right here in East Texas, Melanie envisioned herself working for a large advertising agency in Austin, joking that she wanted to become the female version of Don Draper from Mad Men, minus the cigarettes and ten o'clock bourbon. Though her marketing degree and management minor from Stephen F. Austin State University

pointed straight towards a future in advertising, life ended up rewriting the script.

Her first professional role was with Enterprise Rent A Car, an experience she laughingly describes as "boot camp for life." Washing cars in the East Texas summer while wearing business attire and pantyhose wasn't exactly glamorous, but it taught lessons that would eventually become the backbone of her leadership. Sales. Accountability. Resilience. Customer service. Most importantly, it taught her how to build relationships under pressure, something every real estate agent eventually learns is far more valuable than any polished pitch. Later, she joined the Kilgore College Small Business Development Center as Training Coordinator, combining her love for marketing, entrepreneurship, and community. Her community involvement runs deep. At one time, she somehow found the time to serve on 12 boards. Working alongside local business owners only strengthened





her appreciation for East Texas and the people who choose to invest their lives here.

Although her mother had built a successful career in the industry, Melanie knew she wanted to find her own path before following similar footsteps. Then something clicked. She realized real estate wasn't simply about houses. It combined every part of herself she loved most. Marketing. Design. Negotiation. Entrepreneurship. Service. Storytelling.

Real estate entered the picture in 2012 and four years after earning her license, she became a broker. One day later, she opened Sugar Magnolia Properties. "I didn't want to create the biggest



brokerage," she explained. "I wanted to create one that felt genuine, purposeful, and unmistakably authentic to who I am. One that felt like home."

As an agent, I found myself nodding throughout our conversation because so much of what Melanie said resonated beyond contracts and closings. We all spend countless hours talking about production, marketing strategies, and market conditions. Yet sitting across from her, those conversations seemed secondary. Then she looked at me and smiled. "Dawn, we're both storytellers." It was one of those moments that settles right deep in your soul!

"Being in real estate, I have learned that it's not about selling the home. It's not about the money. It's about the families and our part in their story." That sentiment perfectly describes Sugar Magnolia. Walk through its doors and you'll notice something different. Yes, the historic downtown office is beautiful, but the atmosphere goes far beyond good design. The music playing in the background is carefully chosen. The scent that welcomes visitors is much like the scent of fresh baked cookies. The handwritten notes, the way the phone is answered, and the overall experience creates a sweet-tea kind of welcome because Melanie believes people should feel something long before they ever begin discussing real estate.



The brokerage's name itself carries meaning. While many assume Sugar Magnolia simply reflects Southern charm, it is also inspired by one of Melanie's favorite Grateful Dead songs. Like so much of her life, it blends tradition with unexpected personality. That type of delectable deliberation extends to the people who work beside her. I couldn't help but smile hearing Melanie talk about her agents. Around Sugar Magnolia, they aren't simply agents. They're affectionately known by titles like "Sugar Darlins" and "Whiskey in a Teacup," playful recognitions that somehow manage to communicate both affection and belonging. Behind the charming names is a mentorship philosophy that runs remarkably deep.

At least once each quarter, Melanie schedules one-on-one time with every single agent. These sit-downs are far more than a routine review of contracts or business plans; they are a safe space to talk through professional goals, personal lives, spiritual well-

being, challenges, and victories. Ultimately, these meetings are less about rigid accountability and more about genuinely investing in another human being.

That approach makes perfect sense after learning about the influential figures in Melanie's own story. She speaks about her family with tremendous admiration, drawing from a deep well of generational wisdom. Her mother demonstrated grace, kindness, and perseverance while balancing multiple jobs and returning to school. Meanwhile, her father faithfully modeled consistency, discipline, and responsibility through his decades of service as a teacher and coach at Kilgore High School. Her grandmothers perfectly balanced warmth with hard work, proving to Melanie that hospitality and excellence can exist beautifully together.

Even today, those foundational lessons continue cultivating the culture inside Sugar Magnolia. Melanie fondly reminisced about visiting her aunt in Louisiana as a small child. Being pushed in a stroller down the vibrant streets of New Orleans, she fell hopelessly in love with the moss draped trees and the effortless

"I didn't want to create the biggest brokerage. I wanted to create one that felt genuine, purposeful, and unmistakably authentic to who I am. One that felt like home."



warmth of the culture. Decades later, those early memories still shape the deep-rooted nature of Southern hospitality she embodies every day.

She laughed while telling me she’s an only child, admitting there’s probably a little perfectionism that comes with it. “If I’m in something,” she said, “I’m gonna be present and all in.” That commitment shows up everywhere. It shows up in the boutique brokerage she intentionally keeps small so she can invest deeply in her agents instead of simply expanding for growth’s sake. It shows up in the carefully curated office. It shows up in the client experience. It even shows up in the way she describes honoring a property. That phrase stayed with me because it reflects a level of respect that extends beyond transactions. Homes, after all, hold people’s lives. Throughout our conversation, another theme was beautifully woven in like gold thread: hospitality. Not hospitality



as a business strategy. Hospitality as a way of life.

Melanie grew up hearing her mother’s familiar advice that “you catch more flies with honey than vinegar.” That simple lesson became far more than a childhood saying. Kindness became a framework for leadership, relationships, and business. Whether mentoring agents, serving clients, or engaging her community, she consistently leads with grace before anything else. Her influence reaches far past the front porch of real estate.

She has been recognized with numerous awards, including the inaugural ETX View Magazine 40 Under 40 Most Influential Real Estate Agent in East Texas, the Longview Chamber Emerging Leader Award, and countless community recognitions. She founded Young Professionals of Longview, served as the seventy eighth President of Junior League of Longview, and continues mentoring future leaders while speaking locally and nationally about leadership and people first business. Yet even discussing these accomplishments, she redirects the attention toward the people who helped make them possible. Perhaps that humility explains why Sugar Magnolia feels less like a brokerage and more like a gathering place.

Outside of work, Melanie gravitates toward the same things that inspired the house I imagined before we ever began talking. She loves antique stores, interior design, music, history, old movies, books, yoga, traveling, and beautiful spaces filled with character. She jokes that if you invite her into your home, she may accidentally rearrange your bookshelf or style your coffee table before leaving.

When I asked where she sees herself ten years from now, her answer wasn’t filled with lofty business goals or ambitious expansion plans. She simply smiled. “Ten years ago, I never imagined I’d be where I am today. I just want to be in a better place than I am now. I would love if everything is just as it is now, but better.” And that, my darlings, is Melanie.

Real estate often celebrates bigger, faster, and more, but Melanie seems perfectly content measuring success differently. She wants people to feel cared for. She wants agents to grow into better professionals and better people. She wants clients to remember how they were treated long after they’ve forgotten the paperwork. Success, in her world, is measured with a cup of hard work, a heavy pour of kindness, a dash of faith, and letting it all slow-cook over time.

As our conversation came to a close, I found myself thinking back to the home I pictured before we met to chit-chat. I realized I had been wrong about one thing. It wasn’t the antiques, the ginger jars, or the polished hardwood floors that made that imagined home memorable. It was the feeling inside it. The feeling that someone had prepared a place just for you. The feeling that every detail had been considered because you matter. The feeling that you were genuinely welcome.

After spending time with Melanie Northcutt, I have a feeling that’s exactly what people experience when they walk through the doors of Sugar Magnolia Properties. And in a career that is built on helping people find a house, perhaps there’s no greater compliment than creating one long before anyone ever reaches the front door of their own home.

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