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COVER STORY

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

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Meet The Team



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Michael Berry
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Becky Mitchell
Photographer



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Photographer



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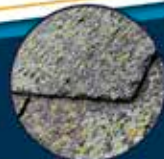
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Four different stories.
Four different journeys.

Yet they all remind us of the same truth: the people we encounter along the way often influence our lives more than we realize in the moment.

Perhaps that's why gratitude seems to become more natural with time. As we look back, we begin to appreciate not only the milestones, but also the detours. The closed doors. The unexpected introductions. The difficult seasons that prepared us for something greater. The individuals who believed in us, challenged us, or simply walked beside us when we needed them most.

At *Memphis Real Producers*, that's one of the reasons we tell these stories. Certainly, we celebrate excellence. But even more than that, we celebrate the people behind the success. Because every great career is really a collection of relationships, moments, and decisions that, together, create something far greater than any one achievement.

As you read this month's issue, I hope you'll enjoy each story. But I also hope you'll take a moment to reflect on your own. Who helped shape your journey? Who opened a door, offered encouragement, or changed the trajectory of your career with a single conversation?

Those people deserve our gratitude.

And perhaps the greatest opportunity we have today is to become that person in someone else's story.



Jeff White
Owner/Publisher

Connecting *the Dots*

There is something fascinating about looking back.

At the time, most of us don't realize we're standing in the middle of a defining moment. A conversation feels ordinary. A job seems temporary. A mentor offers a piece of advice. A new opportunity appears almost by accident. We simply take the next step without knowing where it will eventually lead.

It is only years later that we begin connecting the dots.

As I listened to the conversations behind this month's stories, I noticed a common thread. While each journey is unique, every one of them is marked by people who helped shape the path.

Steve Brown looks back over decades in real estate with a deep sense of gratitude. Rather than focusing on awards or accomplishments, he remembers the mentors, leaders, and

opportunities that appeared at just the right time. Looking through the lens of faith, he sees God's hand weaving together a story he could have never written himself.

Lauren Haynes can trace her philosophy of serving others back to lessons she learned long before she entered real estate. Experiences that may have seemed unrelated at the time became the foundation for the way she builds relationships today.

Leigh Ann Carkeet's story reminds us that no career is built alone. Every season introduced someone who encouraged, challenged, or inspired her to take another step forward.

Even the team at Lensman Photography has experienced growth through relationships—clients who became advocates, teammates who strengthened the business, and opportunities that grew from simply serving people well.

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Lensman

BY JEFF WHITE
PHOTOS BY LAURIE
WOOD PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography

More Than a Photograph

For most people, a camera captures a moment. For Mike Berry, it's always been about something much deeper: the team standing beside him.

Long before he photographed his first home, before Lensman grew into one of the Mid-South's most trusted real estate media companies, Mike spent three decades selling high-end broadcast equipment for Sony, working with television stations and even the NFL. The technology mattered, but over thirty years he learned something far more valuable.

People buy from people they trust. And great teams are what make that trust possible.

When Mike retired in 2019 and moved back to Memphis, he wasn't looking for a second career. Then, almost by accident, he came across an online course on real estate photography. Curiosity turned into opportunity, and by 2020, Lensman Photography was born.

"I knew photography," Mike says. "But what I really knew was customer service."

That instinct, to surround himself with people who shared it, is probably why the business found its footing so fast.

A Team Built on Trust, Not Just Talent

While many photography companies build their identity around equipment or turnaround time, Mike built Lensman around something far less tangible and far more lasting: the people who show up every day to do the work.



“People want to work with people they like,” he says simply. “And they want to know they’ll be taken care of.”

That belief doesn’t just shape how Lensman treats clients. It’s the same standard Mike holds for the team internally. The camera may open the door, but it’s the people behind it who keep clients coming back.

Growing Together, On Purpose

Lensman’s growth over the past six years hasn’t come from overnight success. It’s come from Mike investing in a team capable of carrying that growth together: refining workflows, eliminating bottlenecks, and building systems that let everyone do their best work.

Today, Lensman is a five-person team: three photographers, office manager Becky Mitchell, and Mike’s daughter, who runs social media from Arkansas. That growth happened because Mike built a team he trusted, then got out of their way.



One of the biggest turning points came when Becky joined. Mike naturally thinks years down the road; Becky thrives in the daily details that let the team move with confidence. Together, they’ve built something neither could have built alone.

“We’re always asking how we can make things easier for our clients,” Becky says.

That question has quietly reshaped what Lensman offers. Every shoot now includes a five-day marketing kit with ready-to-use social graphics, website templates, and marketing materials, so agents can promote a property almost immediately. It’s a mindset the whole team shares: if a client needs photos, that’s expected. The real question is always, what’s next?

Hiring for Heart

Perhaps the most inspiring thing about how Mike builds his team is what he doesn’t prioritize first: photography skill.

“We can teach someone to take photographs,” he

explains. “It’s much harder to teach someone how to genuinely care about people.”

That belief is the heartbeat of Lensman’s culture. Every photographer is trained not just to create beautiful images, but to represent the team well, understanding they’re often walking into someone’s home during an emotional season of life. Every conversation matters as much as every photograph.

That investment in people extends beyond the current team. When one former photographer relocated to North Carolina, Mike helped prepare him to launch his own photography business and celebrated right alongside him when he succeeded.

“I love mentoring people,” Mike says. It’s a theme that surfaces again and again in conversations with both him and Becky. For Mike, it isn’t a footnote to the business. It is the business.

Success Measured in People



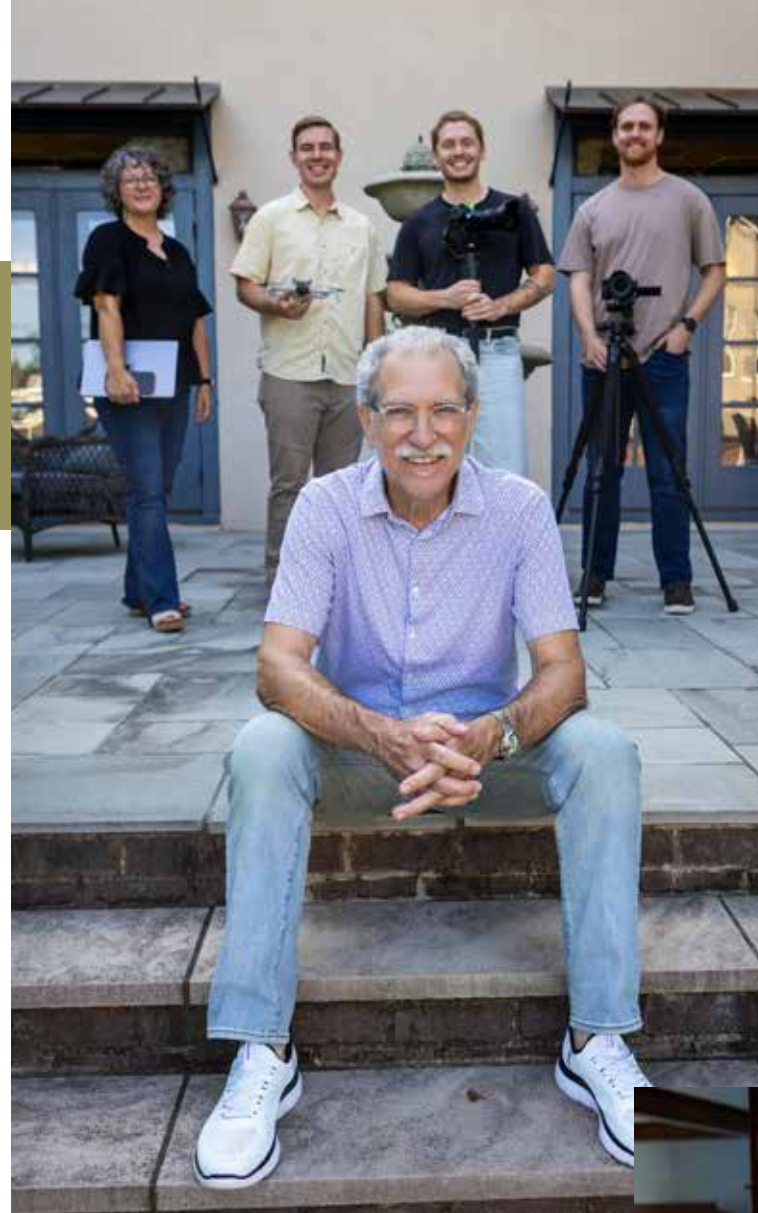
For Mike and Becky, success isn’t measured only in listings photographed or dollars earned. It’s measured by watching people grow, from photographers to clients to agents.

Becky spends much of her day helping clients think beyond a single listing, an evolution toward marketing strategy and branding that came from a whole team empowered to think bigger.

Lensman is no longer just documenting homes. They’re helping Realtors tell their stories. Mike believes a team who genuinely cares about agents will always, in turn, take care of homeowners, buyers, and the whole real estate community.

The Heart Behind the Lens

As the business has grown, Mike admits the journey has surprised him. What started as a retirement side project has become a thriving company supporting multiple families. But the most rewarding part isn’t the growth itself. It’s the team that has grown alongside it.



There’s plenty of laughter around the office and plenty of stories that come from spending every day inside homes, meeting new people, and adapting together to whatever the day brings. But underneath the humor is something much deeper: trust.

Every Realtor who hires Lensman is trusting the team with one of their most valuable assets: their reputation. Mike doesn’t take that lightly, and neither does anyone on his team. Every interaction is another chance for the whole team to earn that trust all over again.

Looking ahead, Lensman has no plans to slow down. The team continues refining systems, expanding services, and finding new ways to help Realtors market themselves

more effectively. Not because growth is the goal, but because the people doing the work deserve to be proud of it.

The Real Foundation

It’s easy to assume Lensman Photography was built on cameras, drones, and editing software. Those things matter, but they’re not the foundation.

The real foundation is the team: people who genuinely care, brought together by a leader who believed that talent can be taught, but character can’t. Photography simply became the vehicle for something bigger.

Anyone can learn where to point a camera. What makes the difference is a team that knows how to focus on what matters most: each other, their clients, and the trust they’ve built one relationship at a time.

For Mike Berry and the team at Lensman Photography, it’s never just been about the picture.

It’s always been about the people, and the team that makes it all possible. ▼



Team Members L to R: Andy Campbell, Caleb Jones, Mike Berry, Evan Drennan, Becky Mitchell.

PLUS ONE:
The Small Things
That Make the
Biggest Difference

BY JEFF WHITE
PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH
LOONEY PHOTOGRAPHY

LAUREN HAYNES

SOME LESSONS STAY WITH YOU LONG AFTER YOU'VE FORGOTTEN WHERE YOU FIRST LEARNED THEM.

For Lauren Haynes, one simple philosophy has quietly shaped nearly every chapter of her life. It wasn't something she discovered in real estate. Long before her professional career began, it had already taken root. Looking back, she can see it woven through mentors, career changes, motherhood, and the relationships that have mattered most.

She just didn't have a name for it yet.

Lauren grew up in Collierville and graduated from the University of Memphis with a degree in Communication and Sociology. While still in college, she worked at Flight Restaurant, where every employee, regardless of role, was required to read Raving Fans by Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles.

The book introduced her to a simple but powerful idea: exceptional service isn't built through grand gestures. It's built through small, intentional acts of care that people remember long after the moment has passed. Long before she stepped into her professional career, that philosophy had already begun shaping the way she viewed service, relationships, and ultimately the way she would build her career.

There was a phrase everyone understood that perfectly captured that philosophy in Lauren's pre-graduation stage of life.

"Plus One."

It meant going above and beyond the expectation, doing one thing more than people expected: one extra phone call, one thoughtful follow-up, one small gesture that reminded someone they mattered. Sometimes, Lauren says, it was even "plus ten."

That mindset stayed with Lauren.

An internship at the Orpheum Theatre became a five-year career, but what she

remembers most isn't the productions or events. It's the people, especially the late Pat Halloran.

More than a supervisor, Pat became a mentor whose servant-hearted leadership left a lasting impression. Whether interacting with donors, patrons, or coworkers, he modeled a simple truth: people may forget what you did, but they'll remember how you made them feel.

That lesson stayed with Lauren.

Her career later took her into kitchen and bath design, a season that would become significant in more ways than one. It was there that she met her husband, Graham, and where her love for the home first began to take shape. She became fascinated by the way thoughtful design could influence how families gathered, lived, and created lasting memories. Every project represented a family's story, and every space would one day hold birthdays, holidays, and the ordinary moments that matter most.

She couldn't have known it then, but years later the Lord would weave those experiences together. The passion for homes that first took root during that season, combined with the relationships and service that had already become hallmarks of her life, would find their purpose in real estate.

Then came ALSAC, the fundraising and awareness organization for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Watching families walk through unimaginable circumstances reshaped her perspective. Those years deepened her compassion, strengthened her faith, and taught her that showing up with kindness and empathy is often more important than having all the answers.

After the birth of her daughter, Lauren stepped away from her career to stay home with her children. She treasured that season and never viewed it as





a pause in her story. But over time, she sensed God leading her toward something new. She didn't see real estate simply as a career change, but as an opportunity to use the gifts He had given her to serve others well - and He prepared her well.

Real estate was exciting. It was also intimidating.

"I knew so many people in real estate already," Lauren says. "I wondered if there was really room for me."

Her husband, Graham, encouraged her to stop asking whether there was room and instead ask whether this was where God was leading her. That changed everything. If this was where God had called her, then every client, every home, and every conversation became an opportunity to serve Him by serving others well.

Only later did Lauren realize she wasn't beginning from scratch. Every chapter, Flight, the Orpheum, design, St. Jude, and motherhood, had quietly shaped not only the Realtor she was becoming, but the person she hoped to be. She admits that if she weren't in real estate,

she'd likely be home full-time with her kids, maybe even homeschooling them, a deep reflection of how family still anchors every decision she makes.

Today, Lauren serves clients with The Firm - Memphis Real Estate, a brokerage she admired long before she ever joined it. She was drawn to its professionalism and elevated standard of service, and found it especially inspiring that the company was founded by three women who built something with such a strong reputation and vision. More than anything, she wanted to be surrounded by people who shared her desire to continually raise the bar.

Her business has grown quickly, but Lauren rarely defines success by production. Instead, she measures it by trust.

Buying or selling a home is one of the biggest financial and emotional decisions many families will ever make. She believes every client deserves honest guidance, thoughtful preparation, clear communication, and an advocate who genuinely cares about the outcome, not just through closing

day, but long after the paperwork has been signed.

She approaches every relationship as something God has entrusted to her, hoping to steward it with well for His glory.

One of her favorite parts of the process is helping sellers prepare before their home ever reaches the market. Every home has a story to tell, and Lauren enjoys uncovering what makes each property unique before creating a strategy that allows buyers to see it, too. She believes the best results rarely happen by accident. They come from careful preparation, intentional marketing, and doing the little things well - the very philosophy that has guided her from the beginning.

That philosophy extends beyond her clients. Lauren believes the real estate community is strongest when agents choose collaboration over competition. She often says one of the most rewarding parts of her career has been building genuine friendships with fellow real estate agents and trusted industry partners who challenge, encourage, and support one another.

One particularly challenging transaction reinforced that belief. During an especially complicated closing, attorney Rees Hodges stepped in repeatedly with wisdom and support far beyond what anyone expected. It reminded Lauren that successful transactions are rarely the work of one person. They're built by trusted professionals committed to serving others well.

"Relationship building is becoming a lost art in real estate," Lauren says. "I believe we're called to encourage one another, celebrate each other's successes, and remember we're all working toward the same goal: serving people well."

Away from work, Lauren's priorities are simple. She and Graham are raising two young children, Graham and Lainey, along with their rescue dog, Rivers. With both sides of their family living nearby, shared dinners and everyday moments together have become one of life's greatest blessings.

"Our kids have the incredible gift of growing up surrounded by family and are supported by encouraging friends," Lauren says. "Their love and support have been such a blessing, and I never take that for granted."

Ask Lauren what matters most, and her answer comes without hesitation.

"My faith is what grounds me, my family is what motivates me, and serving others is what gives purpose to the work I do."

Those priorities don't compete with her business. They shape it: how she serves

clients, encourages fellow real estate agents, and measures success.

Years from now, Lauren knows most clients probably won't remember every showing they attended or every document they signed. But she hopes they'll remember something far more important: that she listened, that she cared, that she answered the phone, that she followed through, that she walked beside them through one of life's biggest decisions with honesty, compassion, and grace.

Those qualities weren't developed overnight. They were formed by

a mentor who modeled servant leadership, by witnessing courage through St. Jude, by seasons devoted to family, and by trusting God's direction one step at a time.

Before her career even began, she called it "Plus One." Years later, Lauren realized it had become far more than a customer-service philosophy. It became the standard she would carry into every role: anticipating needs before they arise, noticing the details others overlook, and believing that one small, thoughtful act can transform an ordinary experience into one people never forget. ❧



“I believe we’re called to encourage one another.”



LEIGH ANN



CARKEET

RELATIONSHIPS
First

BY JEFF WHITE
PHOTOS BY
CALEB NELSON

Before Leigh Ann Carkeet ever unlocked the front door of a client's new home, she was opening barn doors.

Leigh Ann, daughter of Dr. Larry and Donna Mehr, grew up on a ten-acre horse farm in Southaven, Mississippi, where her father spent more than 50 years serving the community as an equine veterinarian. Long before DeSoto County became one of the fastest-growing areas in the Mid-South, it was open pasture, quiet roads, and neighbors who knew one another by name.

Watching her father care for both animals and the families who depended on them taught Leigh Ann a lesson that would eventually define her own career.

Relationships come first.

After graduating from what is now Northpoint Christian School, Leigh Ann earned a Marketing Management degree from the Fogelman College of Business at the University of Memphis. She began her career with a small Germantown company serving physical, occupational, and speech therapists.

Real estate wasn't part of the original plan.

In fact, she nearly followed her father's footsteps into veterinary medicine. But after surviving organic chemistry, she realized marketing was a better fit.

Then came another conversation with her dad.

"He told me to get my real estate license because it was something I could always fall back on."

Neither of them imagined that "backup plan" would become a career spanning more than 21 years.

Leigh Ann earned her license in 2004 and began selling homes the following year after being downsized from her marketing position. What initially felt like an unexpected career change quickly became a calling.

"I love helping people achieve their dreams," she says.

That passion carried her beyond individual transactions and into leadership.

Encouraged by her mentor, Peggy Leigh, Leigh Ann joined the Board of Directors for the Northwest Mississippi Association of REALTORS® in 2008. She would serve for nearly 15 years, including as Board President in both 2020 and 2021 during one of the most challenging periods the industry has ever experienced.

Rather than simply navigating uncertainty, Leigh Ann focused on strengthening the profession. One accomplishment she's especially proud of was helping support greater collaboration among regional associations through the launch of MLS United, bringing professionals together across traditional geographic boundaries.

It's a philosophy she still carries today. One of her goals is to continue building stronger referral relationships between Memphis and North Mississippi because she believes everyone benefits when trusted professionals work together.

That same mindset shapes the way she serves clients.

After more than two decades in real estate, Leigh Ann has learned that no two people need the same kind of agent.

Some need frequent communication and reassurance.

Others simply want honest guidance and room to make their own decisions.

"If I had a superpower," she says with a laugh, "it would be reading people."

She has learned to adapt to each client's personality instead of expecting every client to fit the same process.

"I LOVE HELPING PEOPLE
ACHIEVE THEIR *dreams.*"



Among the hundreds of transactions she’s completed, one still stands out.

A family with two chronically ill children needed to sell their home. Preparing for repeated showings felt almost impossible given everything they were already carrying.

Before the home even reached the market, another RI believe we’re called to encourage one another. ontacted Leigh Ann looking for a property that perfectly matched a buyer’s needs.

The house sold without a single public showing.

Looking back, Leigh Ann doesn’t see it as coincidence.

“It was like God just provided exactly what they needed.”

Moments like that remind her that real estate is often about much more than contracts and closing dates. Sometimes it’s about easing a burden when a family needs it most.

Away from work, Leigh Ann’s greatest role is being a wife and mom.

She and her husband, Geoff, have been married for 14 years and are raising two daughters, Kendall and Maddie. Their family calendar stays full with softball, horseback riding, ballet, and one shared passion—Disney.

A self-proclaimed Disney enthusiast, Leigh Ann has visited Disney World and Disneyland numerous times, enjoys Disney Cruises, and is even a certified Disney Travel Planner.



What she loves most about Disney isn’t simply the destination.

It’s the experience.

Disney is intentional about creating moments people remember, and Leigh Ann approaches real estate the same way. She wants clients to remember not only buying or selling a home, but also how they felt throughout the journey.

Balancing family and career hasn’t always been easy.

While serving as Board President, there were days when motherhood and leadership collided. She still remembers bringing one of her young daughters to a board meeting because there simply wasn’t another option. Instead of criticism, she received encouragement from fellow leader Larry Webb, who reminded her that being present for her child was exactly where she needed to be.

That moment stayed with her.

“I don’t think enough attention is brought to the super parents out there trying to do it all,” she says. “My clients are incredibly important, but my kids are always going to come first.”

It’s also part of the advice she gives newer agents.

Stay teachable.
Ask questions.
Lean on experienced brokers and trusted mentors.

Real estate presents new personalities and unexpected challenges every day, and no one succeeds by pretending they have all the answers.

In 2023, after the passing of her father, Leigh Ann stepped away from board leadership to devote more time to her family. It marked the close of one chapter, but it also reinforced the lesson that had quietly shaped her life from the beginning.



Relationships matter most.

They inspired a young marketing graduate to earn a real estate license.

They led her into leadership within her profession.

They continue to guide every conversation with every client who places one of life’s biggest decisions into her hands.

Because long after the contracts are signed and the moving trucks have pulled away, Leigh Ann Carkeet hopes people remember more than the house they bought or sold.

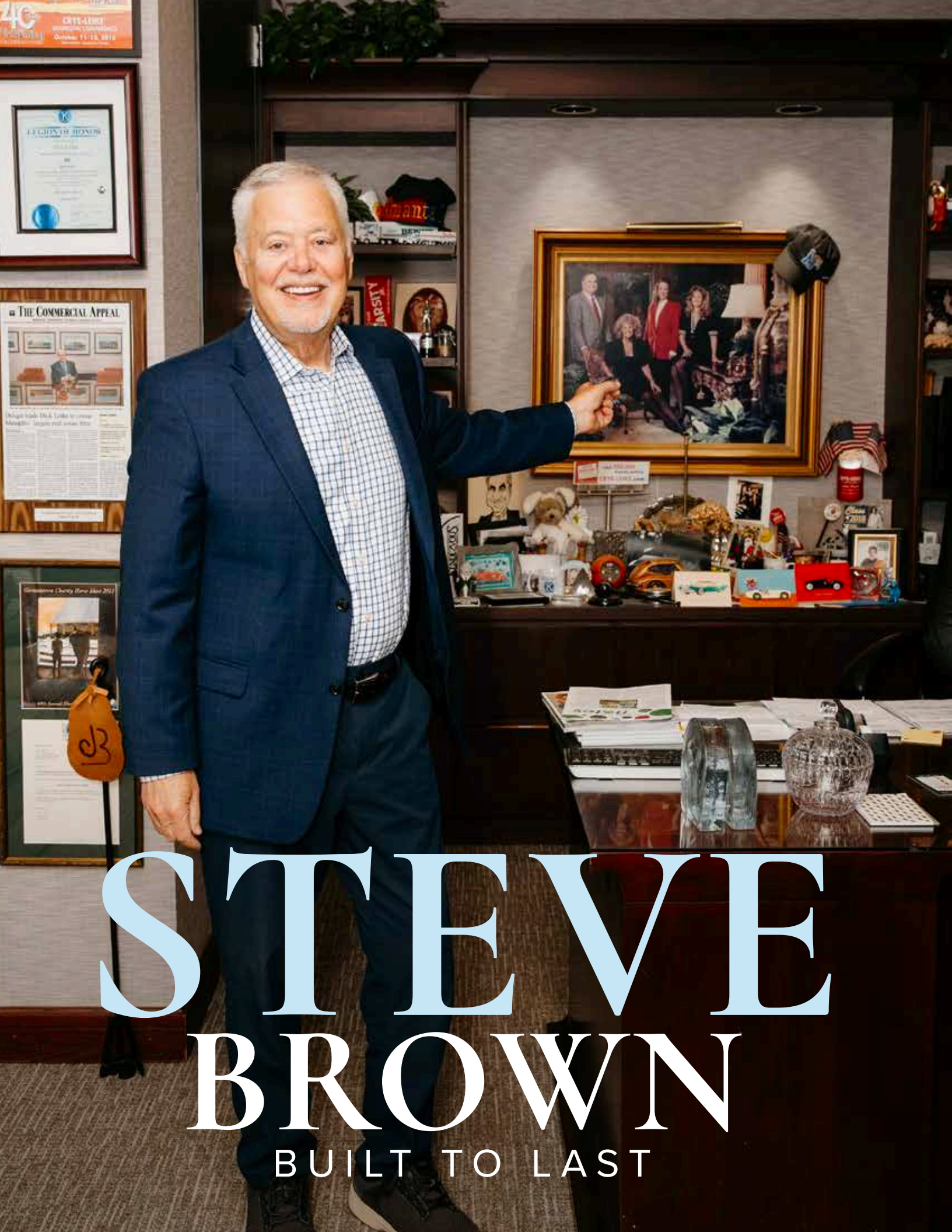
She hopes they remember how they were cared for along the way. 🏡

That ability has become especially valuable in today’s market.

With buyers enjoying more choices than they’ve had in years, sellers have to work harder to make their homes stand out. Meanwhile, headlines and social media create constant distractions.

Leigh Ann encourages clients to tune out the market noise and focus on what they can control.

“Yes, there are challenges,” she says. “But I can’t change those. What I can do is help clients understand what we need to do to accomplish their goals.”



STEVE BROWN

BUILT TO LAST



BY JEFF WHITE
PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH
LOONEY PHOTOGRAPHY

STEVE BROWN has spent more than four decades in Memphis real estate. Ask him to explain that career, and he won't start with numbers, deals, or titles.

He'll start with people.

A mother who encouraged him toward a career he hadn't yet imagined for himself. Early employers who gave him a chance to prove himself. Mentors who showed him that integrity and humility mattered as much as production. A wife whose faith strengthened his own. A son whose life, and passing, changed his perspective on what matters most.

At the time, none of it looked remarkable. They were just people, showing up in ordinary moments.

Looking back, Steve sees it differently.

"I can look back now," he says, "and see how God placed people in my life at exactly the right time."

That conviction is the thread running through his entire career, and it's the

same thread that now runs through thousands of agents whose lives Steve has shaped in return. What God built in him over four decades, Steve has spent building into others. That's what makes it built to last.

A Foundation Laid at Home
Steve Brown was born at Methodist Hospital and spent his childhood moving from places in California to Kentucky as his father's job with BF Goodrich required, but most of his years, including high school and college were spent in Memphis. It was a classic 1960s upbringing: a bike, a neighborhood ballfield, and long summer days with nowhere in particular to be.

He loved history and language arts, found his way into theater, and pressed a transistor radio to his ear to catch the music of the era. As a teenager, he saw Simon and Garfunkel and Led Zeppelin play live, memories he still carries with him.

But if music shaped his memories, it was his mother who shaped his character.

She was quietly faithful, the kind of woman who taught and modeled hard work and perseverance without ever making a show of it. More than that, she recognized potential in her son long before he recognized it in himself. While Steve was a student at Memphis State and working nights at NAPA distribution center, she was the one who suggested he get his real estate license.

At the time, it sounded like ordinary motherly advice. Looking back, Steve realizes it was the first of many moments that would redirect the course of his life.

Learning to Recognize Opportunity
Before real estate, Steve worked nights as a cook at Dandy's Hamburgers, ultimately becoming the shift manager and as a shipping clerk at NAPA; the kind of jobs that teach lessons no classroom can. Show up. Work hard. Take pride in every responsibility, no matter how small.

Once licensed, he joined Martin and Herring, one of Memphis' premier

development companies, (with over 2500 sales per year in their heyday) selling new construction. One experience from those early days became a defining lesson.

A buyer showed real interest in the builder's model home, the one everyone assumed wasn't actually for sale. Others advised Steve not to pursue it. Trusting his instincts, he asked the buyer and his broker questions, arranged for a delayed closing and closed the deal.

The commission was exciting. The confidence it gave him mattered even more. It taught him that opportunity often belongs to whoever is willing to ask one more question and believe in a possibility others have already written off.

Years later, Steve recognized another truth hidden inside that same moment. Someone had believed in him enough to let him try.

The Mentors Who Changed Everything

Every meaningful career can usually be traced back to someone who opened a door. For Steve, those people were Harold Crye and Dick Leike.

When Steve joined Crye-Leike in 1980, the company was growing but still writing its story. In 1980, they had 3 offices and 77 agents. What stood out to him wasn't simply the vision for expansion. It was the character of the men leading it.

Harold and Dick demonstrated that ambition and humility could exist side by side. That success never required sacrificing integrity. That leadership wasn't about building yourself up. It was about building others.

Steve absorbed every lesson. Over the following decades, he rose from broker to general manager to President of Residential Real Estate, helping lead Crye-Leike through extraordinary growth as it expanded across seven states and grew to more than 3,000 agents.

Yet ask Steve about those years, and he won't begin by talking about market share.

He'll talk about people.

Weekly coaching meetings from Harold. Developing future leaders. Watching agents discover a confidence they didn't know they possessed.

The titles were never the destination.

People were.

Today, Steve recognizes that Harold and Dick gave him far more than a career. They showed him what faithful leadership looks like. And without even realizing it at the time, he began becoming that same kind of mentor to others.

Faith Refined Through Joy and Heartbreak

Life has a way of teaching lessons that business never can.

Steve met Jennifer, the woman who would become both his wife and his greatest partner in life. Together they built a family, and Jennifer eventually became involved in the company's property management business.

Their first son, Wesley loved sports, particularly baseball, becoming a sought after pitcher. He also loved trains, day trips with both grandmothers and loving parents who always believed he would develop his own path. Recently finishing a 3 year stint in the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne division, he is now finishing his bachelor's degree and selling insurance with Allstate insurance.

Their lives would also include profound heartbreak. Their second son, Aubrey, lived with a rare disorder that shaped how every member of the family saw the world. His life, and ultimately his passing, changed Steve forever. Rather than focusing on his passing, he chose to recall the effect Aubrey's life had on others that would follow while at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital. The doctors at VCH referred to Jennifer as an "exemplar mother."

I CAN LOOK BACK NOW
AND SEE HOW **GOD**
PLACED PEOPLE IN MY
LIFE AT EXACTLY THE
RIGHT TIME."



CONTINUED ►

There are seasons that deepen success. And there are seasons that deepen the soul.

This was the latter.

Rather than weakening Steve's faith, those difficult years strengthened it. They reminded him that careers are temporary, but people are eternal. That realization reshaped his priorities. Business became a platform. Faith became the foundation underneath it.

A Mission Beyond Real Estate

As Steve's influence within Crye-Leike continued to grow, so did his desire to make an impact beyond the real estate industry.

He became deeply involved with ministries like Third Millennium and The Finishing Fund, organizations committed to equipping church leaders and reaching unreached people groups around the world with the Gospel.

The same leadership skills that helped build a brokerage now became tools for advancing a much bigger mission. To Steve, these were never separate callings. They were connected. God had entrusted him with influence, and influence was something to steward, not simply enjoy.



Steve and his mom



Becoming One of Those People

Near the end of our conversation, Steve shared a story that captures how he now sees his own life.

A pastor once asked a room full of people to stand if they could provide the first and last name of all four of their grandparents. Nearly everyone stood.

Then he asked them to remain standing if they could also provide the first and last name of all eight of their great-grandparents.

Almost everyone sat back down.



Steve with members of The Finishing Fund.

The point was simple. Within just a couple of generations, most names are forgotten, unless a life continues on through the people it shaped.

That message has stayed with Steve ever since, maybe because his own story was written by people who faithfully invested in him. His mother. His mentors. His wife. Friends and colleagues who showed up at exactly the right time, in moments that only looked ordinary until years later.

Now, after more than four decades in Memphis real estate, thousands of agents and employees could tell a remarkably similar story about Steve Brown himself. A conversation. A lesson. An opportunity. A moment when someone believed in them before they believed in themselves.

In many ways, Steve has become one of the very people God once placed in his own life.

And perhaps that is the truest measure of a life built to last. Not the titles held. Not the company built. Not even the success achieved.

But whether, years from now, someone looks back on their own journey and says, "God placed that person in my life at exactly the right time."

For countless people across Memphis real estate, Steve Brown has been exactly that person. ❧

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