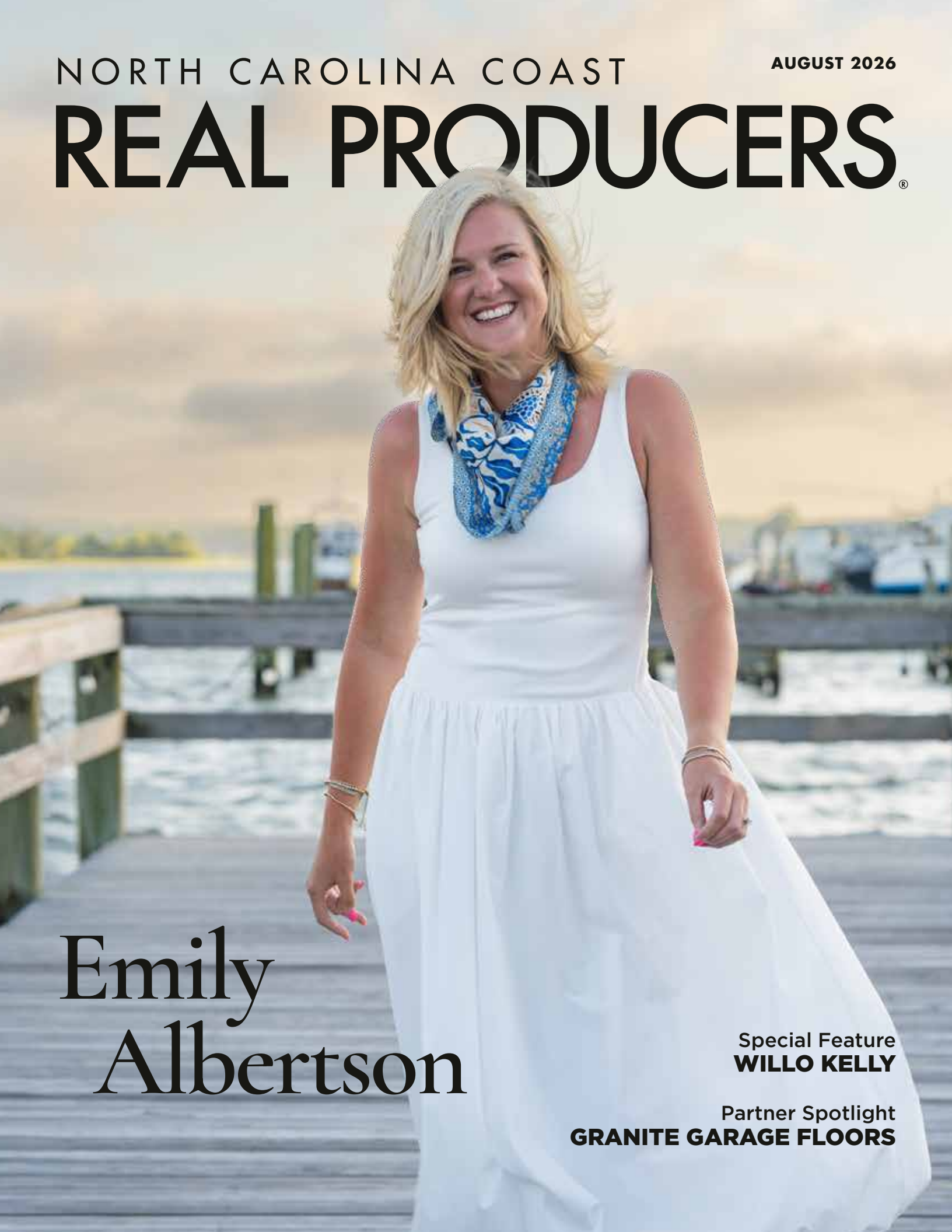


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AUGUST 2026

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A full-page photograph of Emily Albertson, a blonde woman with a bright smile, wearing a white sleeveless dress and a blue and white patterned scarf. She is standing on a wooden pier with the ocean and boats in the background.

Emily
Albertson

Special Feature
WILLO KELLY

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\$4,646,826,260



SALES VOLUME

10,154

TOTAL TRANSACTIONS



34.1

**AVERAGE
TRANSACTIONS
PER AGENT**

\$15.6M

**AVERAGE
SALES VOLUME
PER AGENT**



Contents



Emily Albertson **10** COVER STORY

PROFILES



16 Willo Kelly



Granite Garage Floors

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 By the Numbers
- 6 Meet the Team / Welcome our Preferred Partners
- 8 Preferred Partners
- 10 Cover Story: Emily Albertson
- 16 Special Feature: Willo Kelly
- 20 RP National Map
- 22 Partner Spotlight: Granite Garage Floors
- 28 Event Recap

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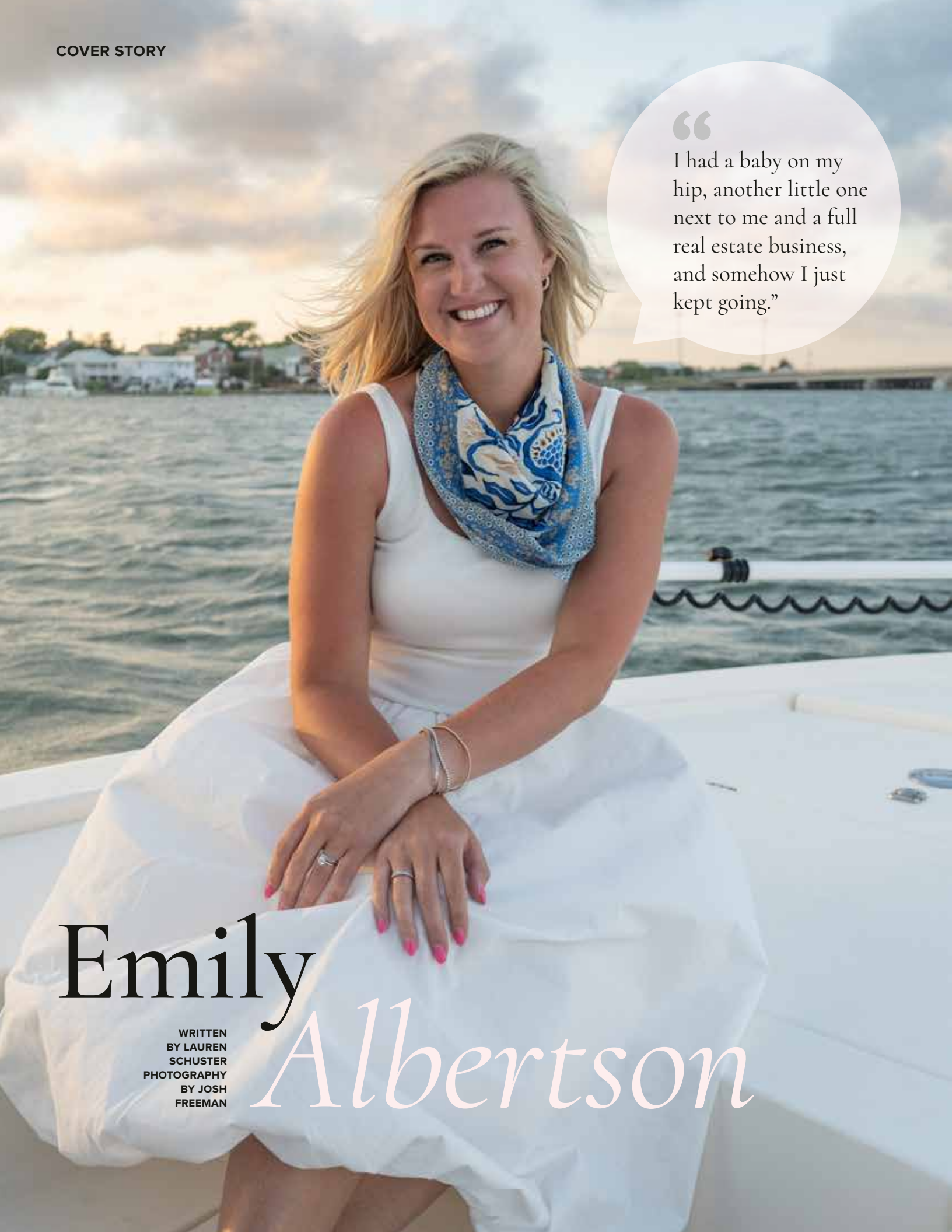
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“I had a baby on my hip, another little one next to me and a full real estate business, and somehow I just kept going.”

Emily Albertson

WRITTEN
BY LAUREN
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BY JOSH
FREEMAN



Right to left: Dalton, Linden, Mack, Emily

Balancing Big Dreams and Little Moments

Emily Albertson did not grow up planning to sell homes. But looking back, the path makes more sense than she ever expected.

She grew up in a military family, calling Jacksonville home for most of her life while her father served on active duty. After graduating from Jacksonville High School, she headed west to Appalachian State University in Boone. Even Emily laughs now at the fact that she chose the mountains, especially since she has always considered herself more of “a water girl.” But looking back, Appalachian State became the place where she found important pieces of her story, including her husband, Dalton.

Emily studied athletic training at App State and

eventually worked with the football program during her senior year. For a while, she thought that might be her future. She applied for NFL internships and imagined herself on the sidelines of a professional team. But when none of those opportunities worked out, she found herself back home in Emerald Isle, newly certified as an athletic trainer and unsure of what would come next.

That is when her dad suggested real estate.

Her dad had always seen something in her that she had not fully seen in herself yet. He would tell her that real estate made sense for her, not only because she loved homes and design, but because she loved people, serving others and helping them through important life moments.





“

I want my kids to look back and know that their mom was there for everything.”

The idea made sense. Emily remembered being a little girl in Stafford, Virginia, riding bikes with friends to model homes, baby dolls in tow, just to play house in the staged spaces. She loved homes before she understood that love could become a career.

With the support of her parents, Emily enrolled in real estate classes at Carteret Community College. At first, the material felt completely foreign. She had spent years studying muscles, bones and the human body. Suddenly, she was learning about equity, contracts and business terms she had never used before.

“I remember coming home and telling my mom, ‘I feel completely overwhelmed. I don’t know if this is ever

going to click,’” Emily said. “Everything was so foreign to me.”

But she kept going. In 2017, on her twenty second birthday, Emily passed her real estate exam. Soon after, she joined the Castro Real Estate Team at Coldwell Banker Sea Coast Advantage, where Diane, a well known top producer in the area, gave her an opportunity Emily still credits as one of the biggest reasons she was able to start strong.

“She really poured into me and gave me a database full of leads, and I just ran with it,” Emily said.

She got her first contract within her first two weeks. She sat in her parents’ house, dialing and dialing until something happened. Slowly,

she built experience, trust and a name for herself.

Now entering her ninth year in real estate, Emily has grown into a career that fits her personality and her heart. She loves people, houses and serving her clients well. But the part of her story she is most proud of is not just production. It is how she has built a business while raising her family.

Emily and Dalton welcomed their son, Mack, in June of 2020. Dalton had been deployed for most of her pregnancy and made it home only about twenty four hours before Mack was born. One year later, on Mack’s first birthday, Emily found out she was pregnant with their daughter, Linden.

Both children grew up, quite literally, inside the world of real estate.

“I do not know what maternity leave is,” Emily said. “I remember showing houses with him in a carrier, probably two weeks old.”

In 2022, with a one year old and a newborn, Emily sold 74 homes, the most she had ever sold in one year.

“I look back at that time of my life and I am still amazed by it,” Emily said. “I had a baby on my hip, another little one next to me and a full real estate business, and somehow I just kept going.”

As proud as she is of that year, Emily’s goals have shifted as her children have grown. Mack, now six, is playing baseball and

made the all star team. Linden, now four, is in dance and gymnastics. Their schedule is fuller, their needs are different and Emily is intentional about being present.

“I want my kids to look back and know that their mom was there for everything,” Emily said. “Mom’s job never got in the way.”

That desire is rooted in her own childhood. As a military kid, Emily understood that her dad missed things

because service required it. Her mom, however, was always there. Now, Emily wants to offer that same consistency to her own children while still continuing to dream big in real estate.

“My kids come first,” Emily said. “I still want to do big things in the real estate world, but I want to be available.”

Today, real estate is part of the Albertson family rhythm. Dalton, now out

of the military, works as a land development project manager for D.R. Horton in Wilmington. Their children see both sides of the industry, their dad helps build the houses their mom helps clients buy and sell.

For Emily, that full circle feeling is special. The little girl who once played house in model homes is now raising two children who know lockboxes, showings, neighborhoods and the pace of the business by heart.

Emily Albertson is a producer, a wife, a mom and a woman determined to build a life where ambition and presence can exist together. She is proud of the homes she has sold, but even more proud of the family she is building along the way. 🏡



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Willo KELLY

BUILDING A STRONGER
OUTER BANKS REALTY
COMMUNITY

WRITTEN BY LAUREN SCHUSTER • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE LEECH

When Willo Kelly talks about the Outer Banks, she does not speak from a distance. She speaks like someone who has sat in the meetings, read the filings, listened to the worries, watched the coastline change and carried those conversations with her long after the workday ended.

As Chief Executive Officer of the Outer Banks Association of Realtors, Willo leads with warmth, urgency and conviction. Her passion is not performative. It comes from years of showing up for people, learning the issues that shape a community and believing deeply that knowledge only matters when it is shared.

“I feel very passionate about empowering people,” Willo said. “Knowledge is power, and not only is knowledge power, but with the knowledge you become empowered.”

Real estate was not the career path Willo originally imagined. Originally from

Maryland, she began her professional life as a systems administrator for a company that handled employee benefit plans. Later, after moving to Currituck County with her family, she became involved in the community through volunteering. With no family nearby, those connections helped her build roots in a new place.

That involvement eventually led her to become the first hired executive of the Currituck Chamber of Commerce. For seven years, she helped represent the voice of business in Currituck County while also working in tourism, events, member services and community outreach.

Those years taught her how closely business, government and community are connected. She worked with local elected officials, served on boards, made trips to Raleigh and began to understand how decisions made in meeting rooms could affect families, businesses and property owners along the coast.

After moving to Nags Head, Willo became the joint Government Affairs Director for both the home builders and the Realtors. She held that position for 13 years, traveling across eastern North Carolina and becoming deeply involved in stormwater rules, sea level rise, coastal regulations and property insurance.

“Whatever you put into it is what you are going to get out of it.”



“We are here to be the voice of the industry, first and foremost.”



Insurance advocacy became one of the defining pieces of her career. Willo read through a rate filing that was nearly 2,000 pages, determined to understand what was behind rising premiums and how it affected people living and buying property on the coast.

“I guess I don’t want to say I have seen too much,” Willo said. “But wanting to help people, and seeing where homeowners would call me and I would look at their policies, I would think, where is your advocate?”

That desire to be an advocate has stayed with her. In 2018, Willo stepped into the CEO role at the Outer Banks Association of Realtors. The position brought together everything she had learned through chamber work, government affairs, advocacy and community engagement.

Today, her role is both operational and deeply mission driven. She manages staff, works with the Board of Directors, helps guide the strategic plan, oversees committees, supports professional development, works closely on government affairs and helps ensure that the association remains a strong voice for real estate in the Outer Banks.

“We are here to be the voice of the industry, first and foremost,” Willo said. “We are here to serve our members. We are here to help you be successful. We are here to help you save money. We are here to help you make money.”

For Willo, serving Realtors means far more than sending reminders or hosting meetings. It means helping members understand the larger forces shaping their market. In the Outer Banks, real estate is tied to insurance, beach nourishment, erosion, local ordinances, tourism, property management, economic development and the long term cost of coastal homeownership.

“All real estate is local,” Willo said. “Only we know what is happening here on the local level. We know best how to solve our own problems.”

That belief drives what she wants to build within the Outer Banks real estate community now. Willo wants members to be informed, engaged and connected. She encourages Realtors to read the association’s communications, attend events, participate in committees and understand the issues that could affect their clients before those issues become problems.

“What I tell everyone is, as with many things in life, whatever you put into it is what you are going to get out of it,” Willo said.

Under Willo’s leadership, the association continues to focus on education, advocacy, professional standards, charitable events and tools that help members better serve the public. Through OBAR University, government affairs briefings, The Mile Post newsletter, networking opportunities and community conversations, she wants Realtors to have access to the information they need to lead well.

Outside of work, Willo is a mother, grandmother, caregiver and music lover. Her four grandchildren bring her tremendous joy, and her 50 minute drive to and from work often becomes time for podcasts, audiobooks or music. Those personal pieces matter because they reflect the same quality people see in her work: she cares deeply.

Willo Kelly is not simply managing an association. She is helping shape a professional community rooted in knowledge, responsibility and local pride. Her leadership is built on years of listening, learning and advocating, and her vision for the Outer Banks realty community is clear.

Be informed. Be engaged. Be willing to help. And remember the phrase that has stayed with her through every chapter of her career.

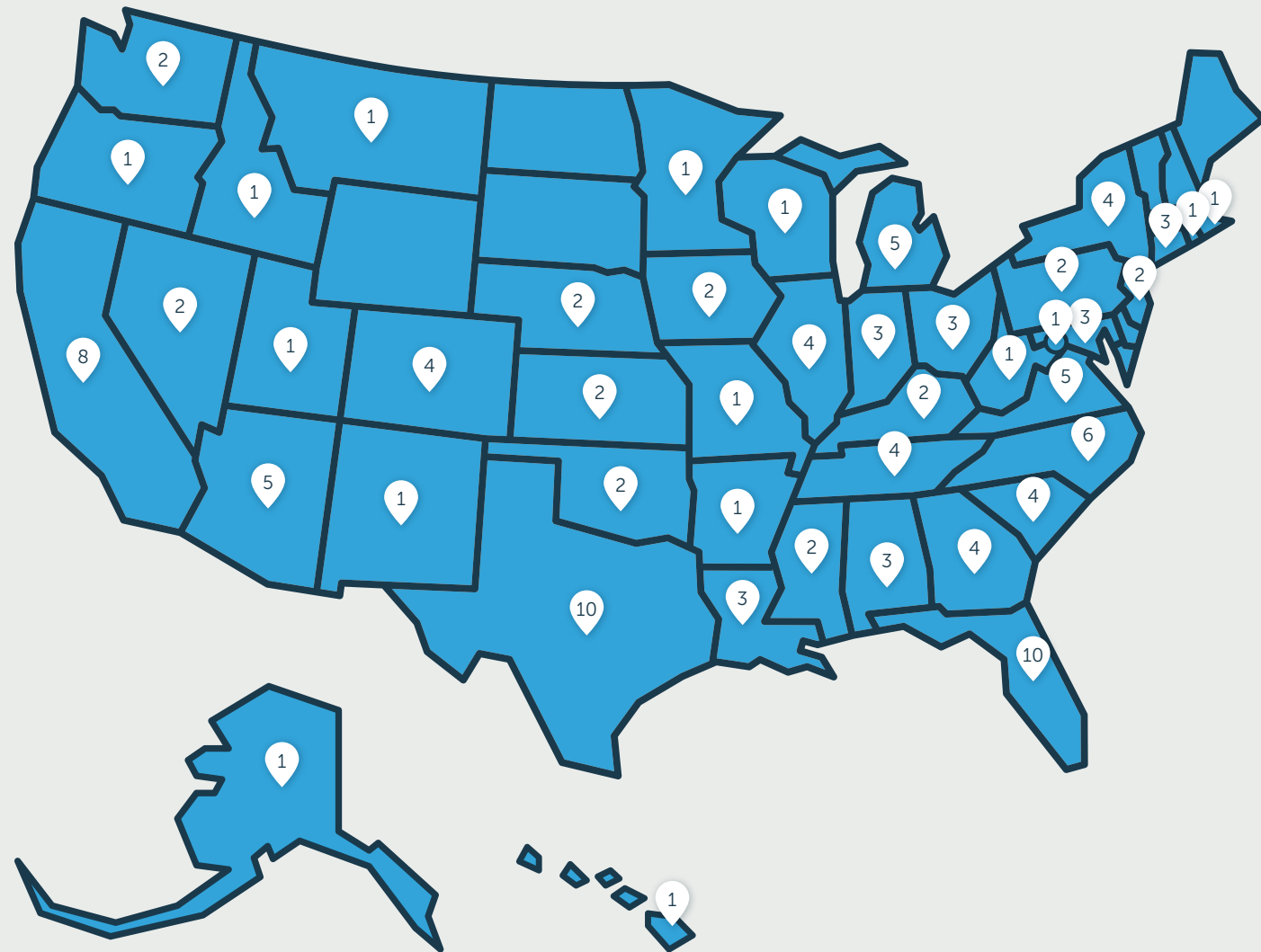
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Granite Garage Floors

QUALITY YOU CAN SEE,
PREPARATION YOU CAN TRUST

WRITTEN
BY LAUREN
SCHUSTER
PHOTOGRAPHY
BY JUSTIN WHITT

When Michael Diehl moved back to Eastern North Carolina, he was looking for more than a business. He wanted to build something of his own, stay rooted in the community he called home and create a lifestyle that made sense for his growing family.

Before Granite Garage Floors Coastal Carolina, Michael served in the United States Navy and later lived and worked overseas as a defense contractor. The work took him around the world, but when he returned to the coast and started a family, he knew it was time to build something closer to home.

“I wanted something I could grow here,” Michael said. “Once we started our family, being rooted in Eastern North Carolina mattered more than ever.”

Originally from Beaufort and raised in Jacksonville, Michael settled in Swansboro, where his wife is from. Entrepreneurship had always been part of his world. His family owned restaurants, and through those experiences, he saw the importance of good systems, strong service and people who cared about the details.

That background, paired with his military experience, helped shape the foundation of Granite Garage Floors Coastal Carolina.

“The Navy taught me attention to detail, and this business rewards that,” Michael said. “The final product is only as good as the preparation that happens before anyone sees it.”

That focus on preparation is what drew him to the Granite Garage Floors model. The company

specializes in industrial grade coating systems for residential and commercial spaces, using products such as epoxy, polyaspartic, polyurea and urethanes. The Coastal Carolina website highlights concrete preparation, designer finishes, a two day installation system and a Lifetime Satisfaction Warranty, all centered around floors that are designed to look and last like granite.

For Michael, the business was never just about coating concrete. It was about creating a process customers could trust and building a team that could carry that standard into every project.

That team includes Taylor Miller, Marshall Judon and Wayne Sharpe. Together, the Granite Garage Floors Coastal Carolina team brings more than 40 years of combined experience across service, operations, trades and customer focused work.

Taylor grew up in Swansboro and spent years working on boats before joining the company. After living in Orlando and Charleston, he moved back home, bought a house in downtown Swansboro and ended up becoming Michael’s neighbor. Their friendship grew through their shared connection to the water and their shared interest in building something meaningful.

“I wanted to help build something from the ground up,” Taylor said. “It was exciting to be part of something new and to help create what it could become.”

Taylor and Marshall were Michael’s first two employees, starting on the floors while Michael handled sales, customer interaction and business

Right to left: Marshall Judon, Taylor Miller, Wayne Sharpe, Michael Diehl





operations. As the company grew, so did their roles. Marshall became a lead supervisor, while Taylor moved into operations management and sales. Wayne has also become part of the team helping bring the company's standard of quality and service to clients across the coast.

Michael is intentional about growing from within. He wants every team member to understand not only the technical side of the work, but also the importance of how they show up in someone's home or business.

"THE FINAL PRODUCT IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THE PREPARATION THAT HAPPENS BEFORE ANYONE SEES IT."
-MICHAEL DIEHL

"We are not just teaching people how to install floors," Michael said. "We are teaching a standard. How you communicate, how you treat the property, how you clean up and how you carry yourself all matter."

While garages remain the core of the business, Granite Garage Floors Coastal Carolina also works on outdoor spaces, interiors, commercial

properties, industrial areas and warehouse spaces. The company has also expanded into garage storage solutions, including cabinetry, giving homeowners a more complete way to transform one of the most used spaces in the home.

In the coastal market, that need continues to grow. Some clients call after moving into a new home. Others are building new construction or finally getting to the garage after completing other projects around the house.

"A garage is often the next space people are ready to reclaim," Michael said. "Once they clean it out, they start to see what it could become."

That is where Granite Garage Floors Coastal Carolina comes in. The finished product may be beautiful, but Michael believes what happens before the final reveal is what truly matters. The grinding, preparation, product knowledge and attention to detail are what allow the team to stand behind its work.

The company has already built relationships with local builders and professionals, and Michael sees more growth ahead. While much of the work has been focused east of Jacksonville, the company plans to expand further into Wilmington, New Hanover County and Brunswick County.

For Michael, growth only works if the standard stays the same.

"I WANTED TO HELP BUILD SOMETHING FROM THE GROUND UP." -TAYLOR MILLER

Whether the team is transforming a garage, upgrading a commercial space or helping a homeowner create a cleaner, more durable and polished space, Granite Garage Floors Coastal Carolina is building its name on preparation, pride and people.

"This is something customers may not need, but they want it because it changes the way they use their space," Michael said. "Our job is to make sure they love the result and feel good about the entire experience." ▼



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JC Jackson Homes x Real Producers

North Carolina Coast Real Producers partnered with JC Jackson Homes for an engaging lunch and learn that gave local Realtors practical knowledge they can immediately use when working with buyers interested in building on their own land.

Hosted at the JC Jackson Homes Design Studio, the event brought agents together for an afternoon of networking, lunch, and valuable education centered around the On Your Land building process. From understanding land evaluations and financing considerations to navigating permitting and construction timelines, attendees gained a clearer picture of what it takes to guide clients from an empty lot to a completed home.

The JC Jackson Homes team shared common challenges buyers face throughout the process and explained how Realtors can confidently position themselves as trusted resources while partnering with an experienced builder.

To make the afternoon even more memorable, JC Jackson Homes celebrated its 20th anniversary by raffling off a Yeti cooler filled with JC Jackson Homes swag, valued at more than \$500. Congratulations to Susan Goines of the Beach Life Properties Team with Coldwell Banker Sea Coast Advantage, who took home the prize!

A special thank you to the entire JC Jackson Homes team for hosting us and sharing their expertise while providing

a welcoming atmosphere with lunch and refreshments. Events like these are exactly what Real Producers is all about: bringing top real estate professionals together to build relationships, strengthen industry knowledge, and ultimately better serve clients throughout our coastal communities.

Lauren Schuster
Publisher & Owner
North Carolina Coast Real Producers
Photography by Tre Cogdell



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