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TURNING Setbacks INTO Purpose



HOW **Paris Eghterafi** BUILT
A BUSINESS ROOTED IN CARE

PHOTOS BY ASHLEY MAXWELL PHOTOGRAPHY
WRITTEN BY CHRISTINA KITCHEN

For Paris Eghterafi, real estate has never been just about homes. It is about people. It is about stability. And for many of her clients, it is about a fresh start. Paris Eghtera knows what it feels like to lose a home. In 2008, in the middle of the financial crash that broke a generation of American homeowners, her own home slipped out of her hands. It was the kind of chapter most people would walk away from. She walked toward real estate instead. “Every time a client finds a home, it feels personal to me. Like I’m helping them step into something that really matters.” A year after the crash, Paris found herself helping a small team /ip houses across the Sacramento region. The work was practical — fixing, listing, selling — but watching the process unfold sparked something larger. “I didn’t just want to sell homes. I wanted to help people understand the process and make the right decision for their future.” By 2011, she was a licensed Realtor. She planned to start part-time. Within a few years, the impact she was having on clients made that impossible — and by every measure since, she has not slowed down. Fifteen years later, the same purpose still drives the business.

BUILT ON NUMBERS. DEFINED BY SOMETHING ELSE.

Today, Paris serves buyers and sellers across the Greater Sacramento area with Direct Realty & Mortgage. In the past year alone, she closed 37 homes totaling more than \$19 million in volume, including new construction

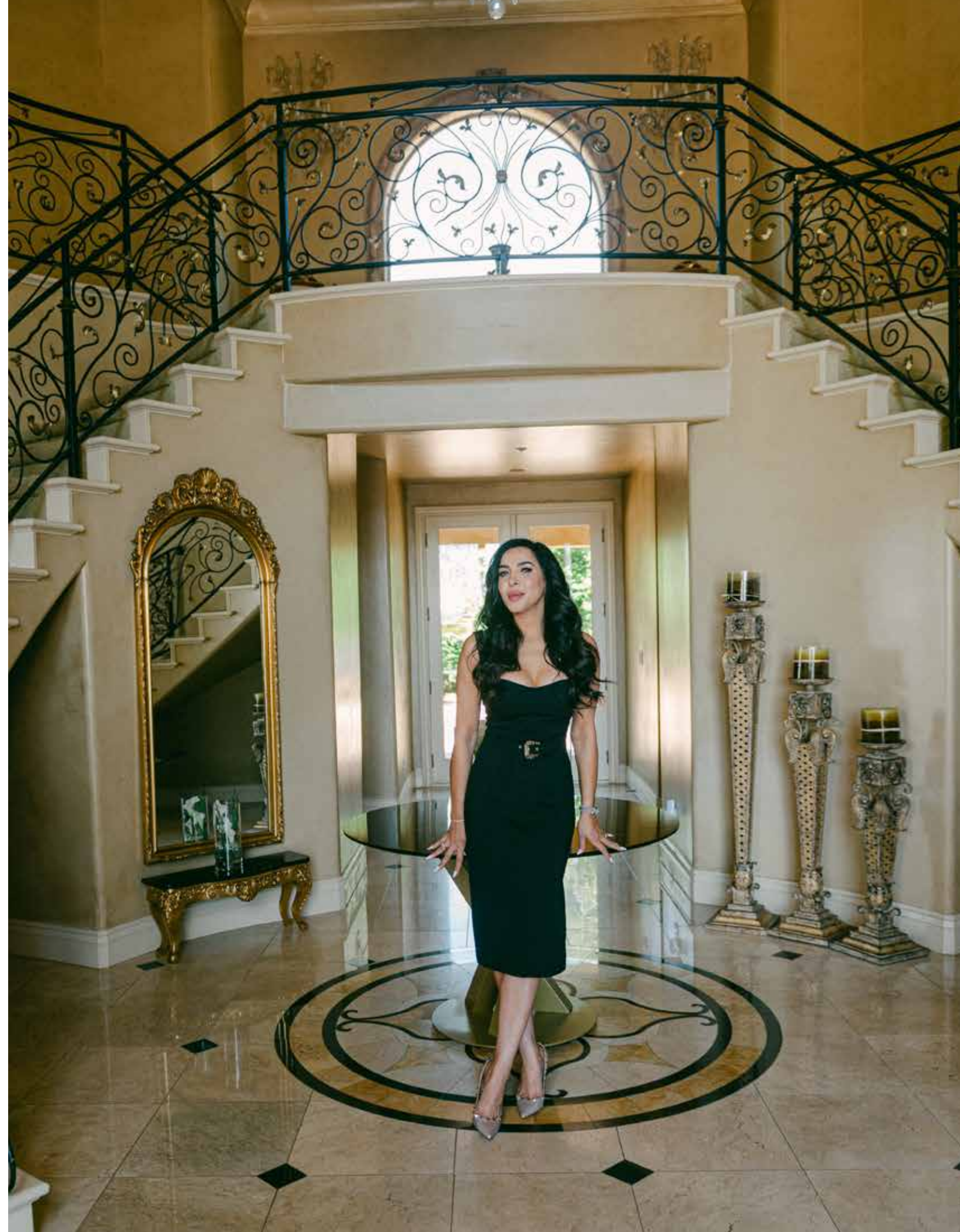
— work that recently earned her recognition as a Top 100 Agent in the Greater Sacramento Association of REALTORS®. But ask her what defines success, and the numbers come second. “Success is living in alignment with my values, building strong relationships, and making a positive impact on others.” That mindset shows up in how she runs every client relationship — and it is the reason most of her business comes from referrals and repeat clients. For Paris, closing day is the start, not the finish. “My clients are never just a one-time transaction. I check in, I help them plan ahead, and I stay part of their journey.” It is not a marketing line. It is how she actually works. A

FINANCIAL MIND IN A WARM VOICE

What sets Paris apart even further is what she carries underneath the warmth: a degree in business finance and years of experience as a licensed loan officer. “I help my clients understand not just the home, but the long-term investment behind it.” Where many agents stop at the property, Paris walks clients through financing, long-term cost, equity strategy, and the practical decisions that determine whether a purchase actually serves their future. To her, a home is rarely just a place to live. It is security. Opportunity. A foundation.

RESILIENCE, LEARNED THE HARD WAY

That understanding is deeply personal. Originally from Iran, Paris moved to the United States at twenty. She worked in retail and banking while earning her





“
I LEAD WITH
empathy AND A
DEEP SENSE OF **care**.”

degree at Sacramento State, building her life one step at a time. Nothing was handed to her. “My past taught me resilience. It taught me to work hard, adapt, and never take anything for granted.”

That perspective shapes how she treats people today. She understands how much a home can mean to a family working — sometimes against the odds — to build stability and a better future. A defining moment came when she chose to leave a stable corporate banking job. She was comfortable. She was not fulfilled. “I took a leap of faith, went back to school, and stepped into real estate. It wasn’t easy, but it changed everything.” The lesson stayed with her. “Growth happens when you step outside your comfort zone, even when you’re unsure.”

LIFE BEYOND THE CLOSINGS

Outside of work, Paris stays close to the things that keep her grounded. She and her husband love to travel and experience new cultures. She makes time for friends, exploring new restaurants, staying active with Pilates, and quiet evenings at home with her dogs and cat. Those moments are not separate

from the work. They are part of how she shows up for it.

WHAT SHE WANTS YOU TO KNOW

If there is one thing Paris wants clients to take away about her business, it is the lens she works through. “I lead with empathy and a deep sense of care. I don’t just see transactions. I see people, dreams, and the next chapter of their lives.” That philosophy is rooted in a belief she lives by every day: “Be the change you want to see in the world.” It shows up in everything — how she communicates, how she advocates for her clients, how she builds relationships that outlast the transaction. When asked what she is most proud of, her answer is short. “I’ve built a business that’s aligned with my values. I love what I do, and I get to make a real impact on people’s lives.”

WHAT’S NEXT

Paris is planning the next chapter the same way she has approached every other one — intentionally. More clients. Wider reach. Deeper service. The numbers will grow. The mission will not. “I want to be remembered as someone who truly cared. Someone who showed up, worked hard,



and put my clients first.” In a fast-moving industry, that kind of consistency is rare. Paris Eghtera is not just helping people buy and sell homes across Roseville, Lincoln, Citrus Heights,

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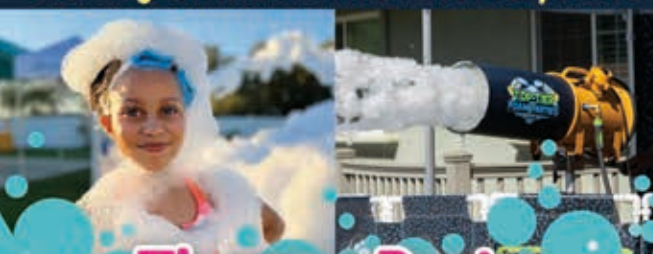
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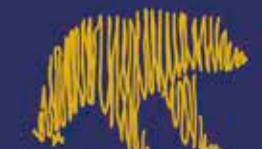
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MEET
RONNIE KALDANI,
CHAPMAN
REAL ESTATE
GROUP

PHOTOS BY SARAH NELSON
PHOTOGRAPHY
WRITTEN BY CHRISTINA KITCHEN

**For Ronnie Kaldani,
real estate isn't just
about transactions. It's
about transformation.**

It's about taking someone from a place of uncertainty to stability. From renting to owning. From dreaming to doing. And for Ronnie, that mission is deeply personal.

Born in Iran in 1987, Ronnie's story began long before he ever stepped into real estate. His family fled the country in 1990, spending two years as refugees before arriving in the United States in October 1992. They settled in the Sacramento area, where Ronnie grew up in the Arden-Arcade neighborhood.

That experience shaped everything.

"I had to grow up very fast," Ronnie says. "Coming to America with nothing and yearning for everything inspired every aspect of my life."

That hunger, that drive, and that perspective would eventually become the foundation of his business.

From Hospitality to Homes

Before real estate, Ronnie spent nearly two decades in the hospitality industry, working his way up from



bartender to manager to general manager in some of Sacramento’s busiest restaurants and nightclubs.

While it may seem like a different world, Ronnie sees a direct connection.

“The skills I built in hospitality transfer exceptionally well,” he explains. “You learn how to read people, anticipate needs, communicate clearly, and deliver under pressure.”

Even more importantly, he built something many agents spend years trying to create: a network.

“**One hundred percent of my business comes from referrals.”**

— RONNIE KALDANI



By the time Ronnie entered real estate in 2021, he already had deep roots across the Sacramento community.

But his decision to make the leap wasn’t just about opportunity. It was about purpose.

“I wanted to pursue work that would make my mother and father proud,” he says.

A Business Built on Relationships

In just a few short years, Ronnie has built an impressive business, closing 21 transactions and \$19.3 million in volume last year alone.

But ask him what he’s most proud of, and it’s not the numbers.

“One hundred percent of my business comes from referrals,” Ronnie says. “That’s everything to me.”

To him, that statistic isn’t just a metric. It’s proof.

Proof that his clients trust him.

Proof that they come back.

Proof that they send their friends and family.

Because Ronnie doesn’t treat relationships like transactions.

“The most important outcome is that my clients become like friends and family,” he says. “I’m there for them beyond real estate. I want to support their lives, not just their transactions.”

That mindset is what sets him apart in a crowded industry.

Creating Freedom Through Real Estate



At the core of Ronnie’s work is something bigger than buying and selling homes.

It’s impact.

“What I find most fulfilling is helping people achieve goals and dreams they never thought possible,” he says. “And creating financial freedom through real estate.”

That perspective comes directly from his own journey.

Starting over in a new country, watching his family rebuild from scratch, and learning early what stability really means has given Ronnie a unique lens on homeownership.

To him, a home isn’t just a place.

It’s security.
It’s pride.
It’s possibility.

Grounded, Focused, and Driven

Outside of work, Ronnie keeps life simple and intentional.

He enjoys going to the gym, playing golf, and traveling. So far, he’s visited 19 countries, continuing to expand his worldview and perspective.

But more than anything, Ronnie values the people closest to him.

Family is everything to him. He is an only child, and after the loss of his father and grandmother, his mother remains at the center of his world. Along the way, he has also built a close circle of friends who have become like family.

And today, one of the biggest sources of strength in his life is his fiancée, Anya.

Ronnie describes Anya as his whole world and his biggest supporter. In an industry that can be mentally and emotionally demanding, she has been the steady presence beside him through both the highs and the lows. She has seen the difficult moments behind the scenes and continues to encourage him through all of it.

“The love and support she shows me has completely shifted my mentality,” Ronnie says. “She is one of the primary reasons for my success.”

The couple got engaged in Alaska last August and are planning to be married this November.

That same loyalty, gratitude, and connection Ronnie values in his personal life naturally carry into the way he does business.

And when it comes to mindset, Ronnie keeps it real.

His favorite quote?

“Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth.” — Mike Tyson

Why does it resonate?

Because real estate, like life, doesn’t always go according to plan.

Deals fall apart. Markets shift. Challenges show up.

But for Ronnie, it’s about how you respond.

Defining Success on His Terms

Ask Ronnie how he defines success, and his answer is straightforward:

“Meeting and exceeding your personal goals.”

It’s not about comparing. It’s not about chasing someone else’s version of success.

It’s about setting a standard and showing up every day to exceed it.

That philosophy has already taken him far, and he’s just getting started.

Professionally, his goal is to retire at 55.

Personally, he wants to see all seven continents.

And along the way, he’s already checking off milestones, including a recent engagement in Alaska and an upcoming wedding this November.

A Legacy of Service

At the end of the day, Ronnie wants to be remembered for something simple but powerful:



“Being someone my loved ones can turn to.”

That says everything.

Because whether it’s family, friends, or clients, Ronnie shows up the same way. Reliable. Present. Committed.

“If there’s one thing I want people to understand,” he says, “it’s that everything about my business is about serving my clients. Not just in real estate, but in life also.”

And that’s exactly why his business continues to grow.

Not because he’s chasing deals.

But because he’s building relationships that last long after the closing table. 🏡

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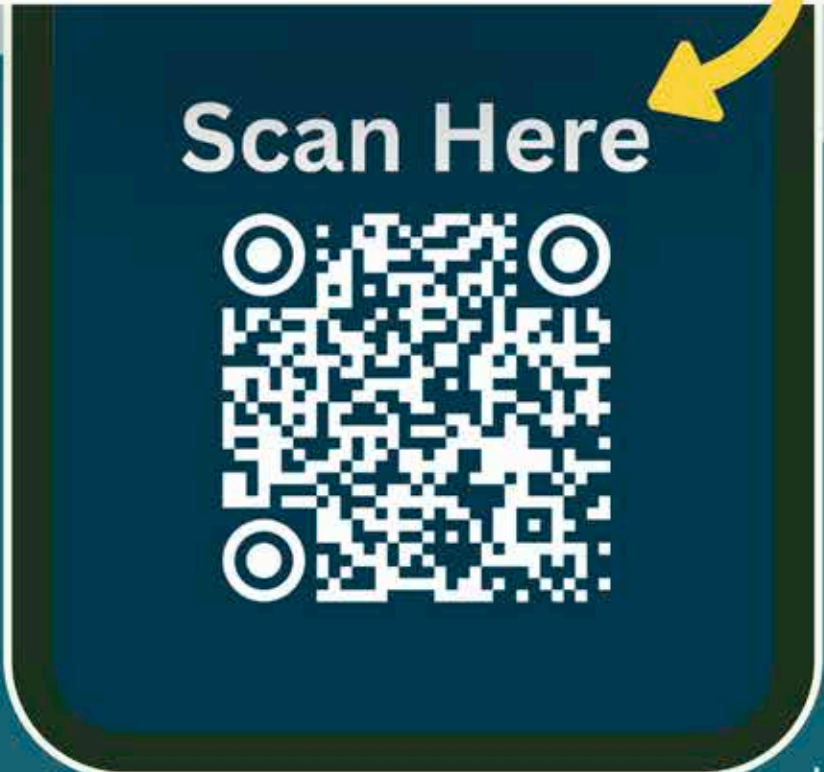
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PHOTOS BY OLHA MELOKHINA PHOTOGRAPHY
WRITTEN BY CHRISTINA KITCHEN

Meet **Ennis Dzapo** of Roseville Floors & More

For Ennis Dzapo, flooring is about far more than materials, measurements, and installation timelines. It's about transformation. It's about creating spaces that feel warm, welcoming, and alive again. Most importantly, it's about doing things the right way, even when that means taking more time, putting in extra effort, and refusing to cut corners.

As the owner of Roseville Floors & More, Ennis has built a reputation rooted in craftsmanship, honesty, and relationships. In an industry where speed and volume often take priority, he has intentionally gone in the opposite direction. His business is built on meticulous preparation, transparent communication, and quality work designed to last for decades.

That mindset comes from experience.

Ennis learned the flooring trade at just 20 years old and spent years subcontracting for large corporate chains. While the work helped him sharpen his skills, it also opened his eyes to what was missing in the industry.

"True quality is often sacrificed for speed in high-volume, impersonal work," he shared in his questionnaire.

Over time, he realized he wanted more control over the final product and the customer experience. He didn't want to simply contribute to someone else's vision. He wanted to build a company that reflected his own standards and values.

That decision led to the creation of Roseville Floors & More.

For Ennis, every project matters because every home matters. He understands that flooring can completely change the feeling of a space, and he genuinely enjoys watching that transformation happen in real time.

"I love walking into a space that feels outdated, drab, or worn out, and leaving behind something that completely changes the energy of the home," he explained. "When a client sees their new flooring for the first time, their reaction is the best part."

That emotional connection is what continues to drive him.

He doesn't see himself as someone simply installing floors. He sees himself as helping elevate the everyday lives of the people he serves.



From the preparation underneath the flooring to the final finishing touches, he believes the unseen work matters just as much as the visible result.

That attention to detail has become a defining part of his business.

But Ennis's story starts long before Roseville Floors & More.

Born in Bosnia, Eastern Europe, Ennis immigrated to the United States with his family in 1996 as a young child. His family arrived with very little and had to rebuild their lives from scratch in

“

THE PRICE OF
ANYTHING IS THE
**AMOUNT OF LIFE YOU
EXCHANGE FOR IT.**”

— HENRY DAVID THOREAU



an unfamiliar country. Watching his parents work tirelessly to create opportunities for their family left a permanent impact on him.

“Witnessing their tenacity taught me early on that nothing is impossible,” he shared. “It shaped who I am today.”

That upbringing instilled a mindset centered around hard work, humility, resilience, and gratitude. Ennis often reflects on how fortunate he feels to have the opportunities his family fought for, and he approaches both business and life with a deep appreciation for that sacrifice.

“As a Bosnian-born immigrant, I grew up with the understanding that every opportunity is a gift,” he said. “My family’s journey from a war-torn country to rebuilding in America was a masterclass in resilience.”

That perspective also shapes how he defines success.

For some entrepreneurs, success is measured in numbers or accolades. For Ennis, success looks much simpler and much more meaningful.

“To me, success is having a flexible schedule, slow mornings, and the freedom to show up for your family,” he shared.

Family plays a central role in his life. He and his wife stay busy raising their two children, ages 15 and 12,

both of whom are heavily involved in competitive soccer. Weekends are often filled with tournaments, travel, and the chaos that naturally comes with active kids and a busy household.

And honestly, he wouldn’t have it any other way.

One of the things Ennis values most about entrepreneurship is the flexibility it provides. Owning his business allows him to be present for the moments that matter most, whether that means attending games, traveling with his family, or simply slowing down enough to enjoy life together.

When he’s not working, travel is one of his greatest passions. Every summer, Ennis and his family spend six weeks in Europe, reconnecting with loved ones and making memories together in Croatia.

Those experiences reinforce one of his favorite philosophies in life: “The price of anything is the amount of life you exchange for it.” — Henry David Thoreau.

For Ennis, that quote serves as a reminder to prioritize time, relationships, and experiences over material things.

That same people-first mentality is also the foundation of his business.

Flooring projects can feel overwhelming for homeowners. There’s disruption, expense,



uncertainty, and stress. Ennis understands that, which is why he focuses heavily on communication, honesty, and making the process as seamless as possible for every client.

“I love taking that stress away,” he said. “When I can make the process seamless, answer questions honestly, and leave clients with a beautiful space and peace of mind, I know I’ve done my job.”

That commitment has helped him build more than just a customer base. It has helped him build trust.

At the end of the day, that’s what matters most to him. Not being a one-time service provider, but becoming someone clients can confidently call again and again.

Through expert craftsmanship, dependable service, and genuine relationships, Ennis Dzapu continues to prove that success is not just about what you build. It’s about how you build it, and the people you impact along the way. ▀

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Debbie Bell | Branch Manager & Escrow Officer

With over 26 years in the industry, Debbie Bell brings a deep understanding of the escrow process and the ability to successfully navigate even the most complex transactions. She is known for her problem-solving skills, attention to detail, and commitment to ensuring escrows close smoothly and efficiently. Clients and colleagues rely on her for her dependability, clear communication, and dedication. Debbie is a proud wife and mother of two. She has a beloved French bulldog, Petunia, who joins her at the office each day and adds a little extra joy to the workplace. In her free time, she enjoys playing golf, spending time with family and friends, playing games, and exploring new foods as a true foodie.



Jennifer Buss | Escrow Officer

Jennifer Buss is an Escrow Officer with 27 years of experience in the industry. She is known for her strong focus on accuracy, clear communication, and providing a smooth, stress-free closing experience for both clients and agents. Jennifer takes pride in being responsive and proactive, ensuring every transaction is handled with care and professionalism from start to finish. Outside of work, Jennifer loves going to concerts, horseback riding, and relaxing on her ranch.



Lynette Collins | Escrow Officer

With over 30 years of title and escrow experience, Lynette loves building strong relationships with her clients. She believes excellent communication and a high level of customer service are the foundations of a strong team. She also believes that having a strong attention to detail and a commitment to every aspect of a transaction has been the key to her success. In her downtime, Lynette loves spending time with family and friends, traveling, trying new recipes, gardening, and unwinding with a good Chardonnay.



Haley Koch | Escrow Officer

As a dedicated escrow officer, Haley is committed to delivering exceptional customer service with professionalism, attention to detail, and a genuine passion for helping others. She enjoys guiding clients through the escrow process and celebrating with homeowners at closing during one of life's biggest milestones. Haley values strong relationships, teamwork, and creating a smooth and positive experience for everyone involved in a transaction. Outside of work, she's a proud wife and mom of two young children, and family is at the heart of everything she does. In her free time, you'll usually find her planning a trip to Lake Tahoe, her favorite place to unwind, or enjoying country concerts.



Karen Lindsay | Sales Executive

With over 28 years of consultative sales experience, Karen is passionate about her commitment to supporting her clients' success. She is known for her responsiveness, industry knowledge, and ability to encourage her clients to think outside the box. Outside of work, Karen loves to play golf, ride her e-bike on local trails, and spend time with friends. She is a lifelong Giants fan and a proud mom to her one-year-old French Bulldog, Charlie who keeps her on her toes.



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BUILDING MORE THAN A CAREER:
THE RELENTLESS RISE OF
PRANEY NAND
"MR CLASSY"

PHOTOS BY ASHLEY MAXWELL PHOTOGRAPHY • WRITTEN BY CHRISTINA KITCHEN



When you meet Praney Nand, one thing stands out right away. His success is not luck. It is the result of discipline, sacrifice, and a steady commitment to doing things the right way.

Known by many as “Mr Classy,” Praney has built a reputation as “Your Calm and Collected Realtor/ Mortgage Loan Officer,” a phrase that perfectly reflects both his personality and the way he approaches business. Whether clients are buying, selling, or navigating financing, they know they can count on him to stay steady, solution-focused, and dependable through every step of the process.

Praney’s story starts well before his first real estate deal. In November 2015, he moved to the United States from Fiji at just 19 years old. Like many who arrive with big dreams and limited resources, he did not take the easy route.

Early on, he worked multiple jobs at once to build a foundation. At one point, he held two full-time positions. He worked days at Folsom Lake Toyota and nights at

an Apple warehouse. On weekends, he picked up landscaping work. It was a season defined by long hours, very little sleep, and a strong drive to get ahead.

That work ethic has never left him.

By 2017, while attending Los Rios Community College, Praney earned his real estate license. Around that same time, he began working with a small handyman, property management, and house flipping company. This is where things started to click. He gained hands-on experience with everything from escrow files to hard money loans to the day-to-day work behind a property.

“It opened my eyes to what was possible,” he says. “I began to understand the process from start to finish.”

The progress was not instant. Over the next few years, Praney continued balancing school, work, and side hustles. He drove for Uber and Lyft, delivered parts, and kept doing landscaping, all while slowly building his real estate business in the background.

In 2020, he stepped into a role with Dignity Health



“
I saw how many people
DID NOT FULLY
UNDERSTAND
the home
buying process.”

lending side of the business. That mentorship inspired Pranay to expand his knowledge and pursue his Mortgage Loan Originator license in 2021.

Today, Pranay works as both a Realtor and Loan Officer with Lynel Ford Realty. He also maintains a full-time career in accounting, which gives him a unique perspective and skill set that benefits his clients.

But what really sets Pranay apart is not just what he does. It is why he does it.

Having built his life from the ground up, he understands what it takes to save money, build credit, and qualify for a home. That experience shapes how he works with every client.

“I saw how many people did not fully understand the home buying process,” he

explains. “And sometimes that led to bad decisions or situations that could have been avoided.”

Because of that, Pranay takes an education-first approach.

He walks clients through every step so they feel confident and informed. Even if it does not lead to a deal right away, he is focused on building relationships that last.

That approach has paid off in a big way.

Today, referrals drive much of Pranay’s business. There is no greater compliment than when a past client trusts him enough to recommend him to family or friends. Running into those clients around town and hearing about the people they’ve sent his way is a reminder that the relationships he builds



extend well beyond the closing table.

“It reminds me that this business is built on trust,” he says.

There is also a major advantage clients get when working with Pranay. He offers both real estate and lending services in one place.

That means buyers can get help with financing and

pre-approvals, and sellers benefit from his ability to evaluate how strong an offer really is. He is not just looking at price. He is looking at the full picture behind the buyer.

On top of that, he connects clients with trusted vendors and stays accessible throughout the entire process. It is why many people describe him as calm,

steady, and someone who always finds a solution.

One of the most defining moments in Pranay’s life came during his early working years.

At the time, he was juggling multiple jobs and barely sleeping. One day, while driving his parents, he fell asleep at the wheel. His mom had to yell to wake him up.

That moment changed everything.

“I realized I could not keep living that way,” he says. “I needed to make a change.”

That decision led him to focus on school and find a path that would give him stability and purpose. It also eventually led him deeper into real estate.

The journey was not easy. In his first two years, he did not close a single deal. He was young, new to the country, and did not have a network. But he stayed consistent, built relationships, and kept going.

Today, that persistence has paid off.

He has built a successful career, achieved financial stability, and recently purchased a two-acre property where his parents can enjoy their retirement. For him, that milestone means everything.

Family is at the center of his life. As the youngest of four siblings, he values time with both his family here in the United States and his relatives in Fiji. He is also engaged and enjoys spending time with his fiancé and

“
It reminds me that this business is
BUILT ON
TRUST.”

parents doing simple things like cooking, traveling, and trying new restaurants.

When he is not working, you can usually find him on a golf course, exploring local spots, or working on projects around his property.

Looking ahead, Pranay has a clear vision for the future. He plans to become a licensed broker and grow his brand, Classy Realty Inc, into a trusted name throughout Sacramento. He also wants to invest in and flip distressed properties, helping improve neighborhoods while creating opportunities for others.

At the end of the day, his definition of success is simple.

It is about having a strong reputation built on trust and integrity. It is about creating financial stability while also having a happy and grounded home life.

And the advice that has stuck with him along the way is just as simple.

Be patient. Be honest. What is meant for you will find its way.

For Pranay Nand, that is not just something he believes. It is something he has lived. ▀



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CREATING ART That Lives Beyond THE EVENT

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY EDI HSU

A CONVERSATION WITH Edi Hsu, OWNER OF EDI HSU ART

There are vendors who provide a service, and then there are those who create an experience. Edi Hsu falls firmly into the latter category. We recently sat down with Edi, the artist behind Edi Hsu Art, to learn how his unique approach to live event painting transforms fleeting moments into lasting works of art.

From live fashion portraits to storytelling paintings that capture the atmosphere of an entire event, Edi's work is rooted in helping people feel seen, celebrated, and remembered long after the evening ends.

Tell us about your business. What do you do?

I create live art for events and weddings, specializing in fashion portraiture painted in real time so guests leave with a personalized piece of artwork. I also create live event storytelling paintings that capture the atmosphere, emotion, and memorable moments of an event and weddings as they unfold, including custom painted storybooks.

My goal is to create artwork that people genuinely treasure—not just while they're watching me paint, but for years afterward.

What event services do you offer?

My primary service is live-painted portraits of guests and couples. I offer both traditional ink-and-watercolor originals and digital paintings that can be printed immediately.

I also create storytelling paintings that document an entire event through multiple scenes and moments. One of the most popular forms of this is a custom live-painted storybook of a couple's wedding day where I paint special moments and traditions throughout the wedding, such as the first look, exchanging vows, cutting the cake, dances, and so on—whichever moments are the most important to the couple.

For larger events, digital artwork can be displayed on large screens so guests can watch the creative process unfold in real time. Everything can be customized with branding, and for high-volume events, I bring a team to ensure every guest enjoys a seamless experience.

What did you do before starting your business?

My background combines both technical and creative disciplines. I earned an engineering degree from Cornell University before completing my Master of Fine Arts in San Francisco.

Along the way, I worked in graphic design, children's illustration, book design, experimental art, and the tech



industry in UI and UX. Looking back, every step helped prepare me for the business I have today.

What inspired you to pursue this path?

Travel played a huge role in shaping my career. Wherever I went, I found myself fascinated by people—their personalities, clothing, movement, and expression. I realized I wanted to create artwork that celebrated those unique qualities.

Eventually, I discovered that painting people live created an immediate emotional connection unlike anything I'd experienced before. Watching someone see themselves through my artwork for the first time confirmed that this was exactly what I wanted to dedicate my life to.

What do you find most fulfilling about your work?

Seeing someone's reaction when they first look at their portrait is incredibly rewarding. In that moment, they often feel seen in a new way, and I love being able to help someone feel beautiful and appreciated.

It's equally meaningful knowing that my artwork continues to live with people after the event. When a painting hangs in someone's home and reminds them of a special memory, it becomes much more than entertainment—it becomes part of their story.

What makes your business different?

Three things stand out.

First, I focus on capturing the individual—not simply what they're wearing, but who they are.

“
I believe **HANDMADE
ART WILL BECOME
EVEN MORE VALUABLE**
because of the authentic
human
connection
it creates.”



Second, the painting process itself becomes entertainment. Guests don't simply wait for finished artwork—they get to watch it come to life.

Third, I'm able to paint a large number of guests during an event without sacrificing quality. That means more people leave with something meaningful while maintaining a polished, elevated experience for everyone involved.

Tell us about yourself.

I'm originally from the California Bay Area and have also lived in Ithaca, San Francisco, Dallas, and Brooklyn. Each city influenced me differently, but New York especially challenged and sharpened me as an artist.



My background in engineering taught me structure and problem-solving, while my artistic education helped me develop a deeper appreciation for beauty, storytelling, and human connection.

Together, those experiences shaped the way I approach both life and my business.

Was there one defining moment that changed everything?
Absolutely.

When I was 24, I was traveling alone in Kobe, Japan. I finally worked up the courage to ask complete strangers if I could paint them. Despite the language barrier, we connected through art.

When they saw the finished paintings, I realized something profound: this form of art could create genuine human connection almost instantly across cultural, racial, language, social divisions, and more.

How has that experience influenced your work today?

It gave me confidence to trust my instincts and pursue work that feels authentic.

It also reinforced my belief that the best artwork isn't simply beautiful—it captures something truthful about the person and the moment. Live painting allows me to preserve both.

Outside of work, what do you enjoy?

I'm naturally curious, so I love traveling, exploring cities, spending time in nature, people-watching, reading, and watching films.

I also enjoy cooking for family and friends. Sharing meaningful experiences has always



been more important to me than anything extravagant.

Is there a quote that inspires you?

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment."

That quote resonates deeply because choosing an artistic path wasn't always the safest or most conventional option. Remaining true to myself has ultimately made both my work and my life far more meaningful.

How do you define success?

Success means building a life that feels authentic.

It's creating work that genuinely impacts people while giving me the freedom to continue choosing a path that aligns with who I am. Financial success matters, but lasting relationships, meaningful experiences, and creating something of real value matter even more.

What's the best advice you've ever received?

I've learned that beauty alone isn't enough. Great art should make people feel something.

That philosophy guides every event I work. My hope is that each painting doesn't simply document a moment—it helps people relive it.

What has been your greatest achievement?

Building a sustainable career around meaningful artwork.

It took years of persistence, experimentation, and growth, but knowing that my work brings

joy to others and preserves important memories makes every challenge worthwhile.

What do you hope people remember about you?

I hope people remember that I brought more beauty into the world and helped them recognize the beauty within themselves.

More than anything, I hope they remember that I treated people with kindness, kept my word, and created artwork that truly mattered.

What's next for Edi Hsu Art?

I want to continue creating meaningful artwork for people around the world while exploring new forms of artistic expression.

As technology continues to evolve, I believe handmade art will become even more valuable because of the authentic human connection it creates. My goal is to continue helping people celebrate life's most meaningful moments—one painting at a time. 🎨



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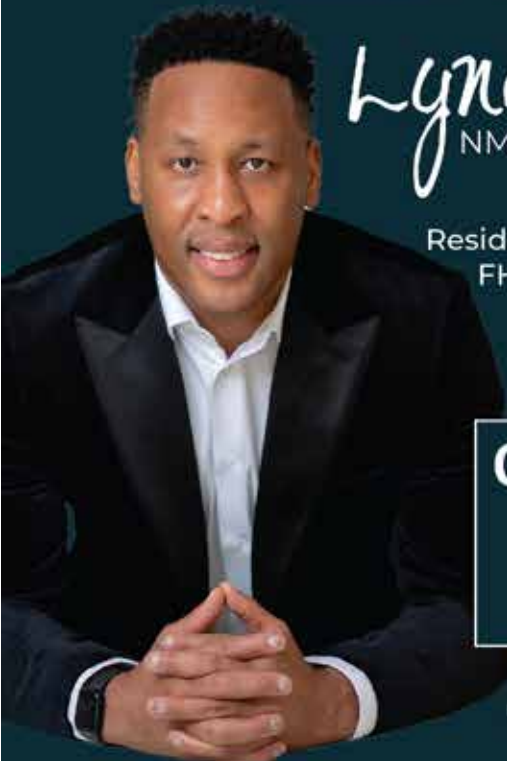




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DIANA Shakirova

FROM TIRASPOL TO TOP PRODUCER

PHOTOS BY OLHA MELOKHINA PHOTOGRAPHY • WRITTEN BY CHRISTINA KITCHEN

Success stories rarely begin at the top. For Diana Shakirova, the path to becoming a high-producing real estate professional started thousands of miles away in a small Eastern European city and was built through resilience, faith, and relentless determination.

Diana entered the real estate industry in 2019 and quickly began making her mark. Last year alone, she closed 67 transactions totaling more than \$35.9 million in production, a level of performance that reflects not only her skill but the trust she has earned from her clients.

Her impact has also extended far beyond production. She was honored to be named Person of the Year 2024 in the Slavic-speaking community across Sacramento, Placer, and El Dorado counties, a recognition that reflects both her professional success and the meaningful relationships she has built within her community.

But numbers alone do not tell the real story behind Diana's success.

To understand the foundation of her career, you have to go back to the beginning.

A New Life in a New Country

Diana moved to the United States when she was just eighteen years old. She arrived without speaking English and faced the same challenges many immigrants encounter when starting over in a completely unfamiliar place.

Her first job was working as a janitor at a fitness club, cleaning bathrooms and doing whatever was necessary to survive. At the same time, she enrolled in college, determined to build a future through hard work and education.

Those early years were not easy. Balancing school, work, and the challenge of adapting to a new culture demanded discipline and persistence. But that experience shaped the mindset she carries into her business today.

Nothing was given. Everything had to be earned.

That lesson became one of the most powerful influences on her career.

Discovering Her Calling

Before entering real estate, Diana studied at American River College and worked as a referral coordinator at Elica Health Center. While she valued the experience, she always felt a pull toward something more entrepreneurial.

Her first exposure to real estate came through investing. She became fascinated with the process of analyzing opportunities, understanding market trends, and building long term wealth through property.

Over time she realized that what excited her most was not simply investing for herself, but helping others make the same kind of smart decisions.

Encouragement from her son in law, who was already working in real estate, gave her the confidence to take the leap into the industry.

WHEN I NEGOTIATE, I THINK ABOUT HOW I WOULD HANDLE THE SITUATION IF I WERE BUYING OR SELLING MY OWN PROPERTY.

THAT LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY CHANGES everything.

Once she started, the direction of her career became clear.

"I knew immediately that this was where I was meant to be," she says.

A Personal Approach to Business

What sets Diana apart is the way she approaches every transaction. For her, real estate is never just another deal.

She treats each client's decision with the same seriousness she would bring to her own investment.

"When I negotiate, I think about how I would handle the situation if I were buying or selling my own property," she explains. "That level of responsibility changes everything."

Empathy also plays a major role in how she serves her clients. When helping buyers evaluate a home, she often asks herself a simple but powerful question.

"Would I live here?"

If the answer is not a confident yes, she encourages her clients to keep looking until they find the right fit.

Diana also stays deeply invested in every step of the process. She refuses to treat transactions as routine. Every client matters, and every deal deserves full attention from start to finish.

Early Lessons in Responsibility

Long before she entered the world of real estate, Diana learned the value of responsibility growing up in Tiraspol as the oldest of five sisters.

Her father often worked away from home to support the family, while her mother was deeply involved in church ministry. Because she was the oldest, Diana naturally took on many daily responsibilities.

Each morning she walked her younger sisters to school and kindergarten before rushing to her own classes. After school, she stopped at the store for groceries, picked them up, and helped bring everyone home.

At one point she even started cleaning the staircases in her apartment building to earn a little spending money.

Looking back, she sees those experiences as formative.

"They taught me discipline, leadership, and resilience," Diana says. "Those lessons built the foundation for everything I do today."

Success Through Impact

Despite her professional achievements and recognition within her company, Diana defines success in a much deeper way.

For her, success means making a meaningful difference in people's lives.

Helping families navigate major financial decisions, negotiate strong opportunities, and build long-term stability through real estate is what motivates her every day.

She also believes that gratitude and generosity are essential parts of success. Before taking her real estate licensing exam, Diana made a promise that if she succeeded, she would give ten percent of her income to charitable causes.

That commitment continues to guide her life and her business today.

Recharging and Looking Ahead

Real estate is a demanding career, and Diana admits that her family often jokes she is always on call. When she truly needs to reset, she turns to a place that brings her clarity.

The ocean.

There is one beach she visits whenever she needs perspective. Sitting quietly and watching the sunset allows her to recharge and return to work with renewed focus.

Her family also plays a vital role in keeping her grounded and motivated. They are her biggest

supporters and the driving force behind her determination.

Looking toward the future, Diana sees enormous opportunity ahead.

Professionally, she hopes to build something much bigger than a successful individual career. Her vision is to create a strong team, expand her influence, and open doors for others who want to succeed in real estate.

Personally, she believes growth should never stop.

For Diana, the future is about scale, leadership, and legacy.

And if there is one thing she hopes her story will demonstrate, it is this.



THEY TAUGHT ME
DISCIPLINE, LEADERSHIP, &
resilience.

Where you begin does not
determine where you can go.

With resilience, faith, and
relentless work, the possibilities
are limitless. ▀



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