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COVER STORY

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Huntsville Continues to Defy Expectations

A new year carries its own kind of electricity. Not the loud, flashy kind — the quiet, intentional current that comes from momentum, vision, and the belief that big things can come from consistent effort. As we step into January, I feel that charge running through North Alabama's real estate community more than ever.

Huntsville continues to defy expectation. While many markets across the country experienced contraction and recalibration, our Rocket City kept its steady climb — fueled by innovation, population growth, and a real estate ecosystem that refuses to settle for average. The agents in these pages are proof of that resilience. You are the strategists, connectors, problem-solvers, and neighbors — the kind of professionals who shape not only transactions, but trajectories.

This month, I encourage you to reflect on the habits, relationships, and opportunities that carried you here — and the ones that will carry you forward. The best producers don't wait for the market to reveal its direction; they read the data, anticipate the shifts, and position themselves as trusted guides long before the client knows they need one.

That is the power of preparation. That is the power of leadership. That is the power of community.

And community is exactly what Real Producers is built to strengthen.

In 2026, we will continue elevating the top performers across North Alabama — not only through stories in print, but through intentional connection. Conversations at tables.

Partnerships that make business smoother, stronger, faster. Moments where one introduction sparks ten new opportunities. The pages ahead highlight agents who embody this spirit, and I hope their journeys challenge you to think boldly, act decisively, and never stop evolving.

Thank you for being here — for reading, for showing up, for leading our industry with integrity and courage. I am honored to walk into this new year alongside you.

Here's to fresh goals, full pipelines, fearless growth — and to a market that rises because we do.

Cheers,
Deanna Eliashevsky
Publisher/Owner



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JESSICA & JOHN ZORIO

Helping North Alabama Find Its “Home Dream”

BY DEANNA ELIASHEVSKY

On a fall evening in Athens, you’re just as likely to find Jessica and John Zorio cheering from the sidelines as you are sitting at a closing table. One of their boys is lining up at the start of a cross-country meet, while their other children are hustling onto nearby fields with cleats laced for club soccer. Saturdays often mean cheering at a race and then heading straight to the soccer fields—another full, fast-paced reminder of how seamlessly family and career intertwine in the Zorio household.”

In between cheers, Jessica’s phone buzzes. A relocation client has a question about schools and soccer leagues. She steps aside, answers calmly, and then slips right back into the stands, shouting their son’s name as he rounds the last turn.

That’s the Zorios in a snapshot: fully present for their family, fully present for their clients—no dividing line, just one life lived with intention, service, and a whole lot of heart.

From High School Sweethearts to a Husband-and-Wife Team

Jessica and John’s story starts long before real estate. They were high school sweethearts in Maryville, Tennessee, then students

together at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. In 2007, they married and moved to Huntsville for John’s job.

Life got wonderfully busy. Four kids followed—Dawson, Carter, Nora Kate, and Clayton—and Jessica spent thirteen years as a stay-at-home mom, homeschooling and hybrid schooling their children while building a home life centered on faith, sports, and community.

“I realized that if I could manage four kids, I could take on just about anything,” Jessica laughs. That realization didn’t just spark a career move—it reframed how she saw herself.

In 2018, when the opportunity arose to move back to North Alabama, they didn’t hesitate. “It just felt like coming home,” John shares. “We loved it here the first time, and we knew this was where we wanted to plant roots.”

Those roots run deep now. They’ve brought family closer, built friendships through their church, and found themselves woven into the fabric of Athens, Huntsville, and the greater North Alabama community they serve.

A New Career, the Right Time

In 2022, with their kids growing and life entering a new season, Jessica stepped into real estate full time. Her background—an English degree with a minor in Communications, work with a local government contractor, and years of running a household—didn’t just transfer over; it turned out to be a secret weapon.

“Writing, paying attention to details, and communicating clearly with people... those skills are literally what I use every day,” she says. Whether she’s drafting a contract, emailing an attorney, or walking a nervous first-time



buyer through the process, Jessica leans on those strengths.

Her business grew quickly. Clients responded to her calm presence, thoroughness, and the way she treated them like people first and transactions second. As demand increased, the next step became obvious—even if it wasn’t originally part of the plan.

“I got licensed to help Jessica,” John says. “Showings, open houses, giving her clients more availability—that was the goal.”

But it didn’t stay “helping” for long. John’s background in business, logistics, and Human Resources—managing operations for Fortune 500 companies and overseeing hundreds of employees—translated beautifully into real estate. Problem-solving, people management, and staying composed when things get complicated are second nature to him.

By 2025, John had transitioned into real estate full time. What began as support had turned into a true husband-and-wife team.

Two Agents, One Client-Focused Mission

Jessica and John aren’t trying to build the biggest team in town. They’re focused on building the right one—just the two of them, fully aligned, serving each client at a high level.

“We’re passionate about how we serve, not just how many people we serve,” Jessica says.

Their clients get two licensed professionals, each with distinct strengths. Jessica brings warmth, detail, and a deep empathy for what people are walking through. John brings structure, strategy, and a steady hand when emotions run high. Together, they offer:

- Twice the availability. Showings, inspections, last-minute needs—someone can always be there.
- Twice the perspective. Two sets of eyes on every contract, every timeline, every detail.
- A unified standard. Whether it’s a starter home, an investment, or a high-end listing, their level of service doesn’t change.

“Our non-negotiable is top-tier service for all clients at all price points,” Jessica explains. “It’s not about the house or the number on the HUD. It’s about the people sitting across from us.”

“Home Dreams,” Not Just “Dream Homes”

Ask Jessica why she became a Realtor®, and you won’t hear the usual buzzwords. She talks about “home dreams.”

“Everyone’s ‘home dream’ looks different,” she says. “For some, it’s selling an aging parent’s home

while they move to assisted living. For others, it’s buying their first investment property, or finding more space for a growing family—or less space after the kids leave. Sometimes it’s just a piece of land they won’t build on for ten years.”

That language—home dreams—matters. It shifts the focus from a picture-perfect house to real life.

For relocation clients, the Zorios don’t stop at bedrooms and bathrooms. “Helping them find their home here might

mean recommending a soccer league, a dentist, a mechanic, an optometrist, or a church,” John says. “We want them to feel like they belong, not just like they bought a house.”

They see themselves as full-service guides, helping people find not only a physical home, but a place in the community.

Learning Into Confidence

Like many new agents, Jessica faced a common early challenge: confidence in an industry where no two days look alike.

“Real estate doesn’t come with a script,” she says. “Every client, transaction, and market shift is different. That can either intimidate you or push you to learn.”

Jessica chose the second option. She asked questions. She studied contracts until they felt second nature. She talked with seasoned agents and mentors, researched every option until it made sense, and mentally filed away each new situation so she’d be better prepared the next time.

Over time, what once felt daunting became a strength. Today, she’s known for being thorough, proactive, and unflappable—someone clients can trust to walk them through surprises without losing momentum.

Faith, Family, and the Sidelines

Away from showings and closings, life in the Zorio household is full—and fast.

Dawson, their oldest, is a Boy Scout on the verge of earning his Eagle Scout rank and runs varsity cross country and track for Athens High School. Carter, at 13, runs cross country and track at Athens Middle. Nora Kate, 12,

plays club soccer and suits up for her middle school team as well. Clayton, the youngest at 9, also competes in club soccer.

“We spend a lot of time on the sidelines,” Jessica says with a smile. “And we wouldn’t trade it.”

The family is deeply involved at Athens First Methodist, where John volunteers with the youth group. Faith and community aren’t side notes in their life; they are cornerstones.

When they do find a free weekend, you’ll likely find them hiking, traveling, or cheering on local teams—from Huntsville City’s MLS Next Pro squad to the Rocket City Trash Pandas and the Huntsville Havoc.

Jessica squeezes in runs whenever she can and always has a book nearby. John enjoys golf and college football, and Duke—the family dog adopted from a local rescue five years ago—is happy as long as he’s in the middle of it all.

Advice for New Agents: Use the Quiet Season Well

When Jessica talks to up-and-coming agents, she doesn’t sugarcoat the early days.

“When you first start, it’s usually slow,” she says. “You’re excited, you’re ready to work—but the phone isn’t exactly ringing off the hook yet. That can be discouraging.”

Her advice? Don’t waste that season.

“Show up,” she says. “Go into the office. Get to know other agents, even outside your brokerage. Listen to their wins and their challenges. And most importantly, use that time to build your systems—your communication standards,



“WE’RE
PASSIONATE
ABOUT HOW
WE SERVE,
NOT JUST
HOW MANY
PEOPLE WE
SERVE.”

your workflows, your follow-up processes, and the experience you want every client to have.”

Defining non-negotiables early—like the Zorios’ commitment to high-level service for every client—lays the foundation for a business that can grow steadily and sustainably.

A Business Built on How People Feel

One quote has shaped the way Jessica approaches both life and business:

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

“That’s what I want people to remember,” she says. “Whether it’s my kids, my husband, my friends, or my clients—I want them to look back and feel loved, valued, heard, and supported.”

For Jessica and John, real estate is more than contracts and

closings. It’s a calling—one that allows them to step into some of the most tender, exciting, or challenging chapters of people’s lives and offer steady guidance, clear communication, and genuine care.

“We don’t take lightly the privilege of being invited into someone’s story,” John says. “Whether they’re relocating here, selling during a difficult season, or buying their very first home—we’re grateful to be there.”

In a market as fast-growing and competitive as North Alabama, the Zorios have built something refreshingly simple and deeply powerful: a client-first business rooted in gratitude, faith, and family.

They’re not just helping people buy and sell houses. They’re helping people find their place, their next chapter, and their own version of a home dream in a community they truly love.

And for Jessica and John Zorio, that’s the real win.





STEADY,
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Meet *Amy Williams*

There's a specific kind of Realtor who rises—not in a flash, not on luck, not on noise—but through discipline, service, and the steady climb of someone who shows up year after year and quietly builds something solid.

That's Amy Williams.

Her name may feel familiar, and that's not accidental. Her business hasn't grown by chasing every lead—it's grown because people remember her. They remember how she made them feel. They remember that she answered the phone. They remember that she listened, explained, guided. They remember her integrity.

And they send their friends. Their family. Their co-workers.

Because trust travels. And Amy builds it well.

From Rochester Hills to the Rocket City

Before Huntsville was home, life took Amy and her family across states—Michigan to Georgia and then to Alabama. Those moves weren't just relocations; they were education. Every closing table they sat at, every agent they worked with, shaped something in her.

At some point, she realized the truth most agents recognize only in hindsight:

"I knew I could do as good—if not better—than the agents who helped us buy and sell through those moves."

She waited until the timing was right—until her oldest was driving and her season at home as a full-time mom had reached a natural shift. Fall of 2014, she stepped into real estate, beginning in property management with Capstone Realty before transitioning full-time to residential sales. She later moved to @Homes Realty and eventually to Legend Realty Madison, where



she serves today as an Associate Broker, also licensed in Tennessee.

And then she got to work.

A Business Built Slowly, Intentionally, and With Purpose

Amy didn't launch into real estate with a database handed to her. She built one—lead by lead, client by client, handshake by handshake.

Her growth hasn't been explosive; it's been consistent. Predictable. Earned.

Production:

- 2025: \$9.57M
- 2024: \$8.8M
- 2023: \$8.5M
- 2022: \$7.1M
- 2021: \$8.3M

Most agents never reach that level. Even fewer sustain it. Amy climbed to it—and she keeps climbing.

Today, 95% of her business is referral-based. That didn't happen by accident. It took five years of grit, follow-up, database discipline, showing up at client events, and caring long after the closing gift was delivered.

Her philosophy is simple:

"Every opportunity is an opportunity to learn. You don't arrive in this industry. You grow in it."

Amy is still growing—still sharpening skills, still leaning into new systems, still adapting. This year marks her first using a Transaction Coordinator,



a step many agents wait too long to take. Delegating isn't a sign of stepping back—it's a sign of rising up.

Faith, Family, and a Life That Outruns Loss

There's something else beneath the trajectory of her success—something deeper, quieter, anchoring.

Amy lost her father to a heart attack when he was just 43. She and her siblings have now outlived him. The weight of that is not lost on her.

"Three of his children have lived longer than he did."

Loss shapes perspective. It sharpens purpose. It reminds us that time is not permanent, and the work we do with our lives should matter.

Amy's faith is the through-line. Her family is the priority. Her career is the platform she uses to serve both.

Her mother—her best friend—shaped her walk with Christ and her understanding of strength. That relationship didn't just influence her life; it molded her character.

You can feel it in her business. You can see it in how she treats people.

Who Amy Is, Beyond the Contract

She's a grandmother now—something she speaks about with a softness in her voice. She loves Orange Theory, walking, reading, collecting dishes with history behind them. She listens to classical music and opera, watches Detroit sports, attends the symphony.

And she treasures the moment she spots past clients at client events. Not because it's a business touchpoint—because it's personal. Because they stayed. Because they're still hers.

That is the reward. Not the closing. The connection.

Advice for the Next Wave of Agents

Her words for new Realtors aren't loud—they're wise.

*Be teachable.
Show up during the slow seasons.
Build your database like it's gold—because it is.
And never stop learning.*

Success is not urgency—it's accumulation. It's the compounding effect of consistency.

Amy embodies that.

The Future

Real estate has given her something rare: flexibility without limitation. She sees herself working for at least another decade—maybe more. The beauty is, she gets to choose.

She gets to design a business that supports her life, not swallows it. She gets to invest in her clients, her community, and now—her grandbaby.

She gets to keep rising.

A Final Word

Amy Williams doesn't need a spotlight to shine. She has built her business brick by brick, client by client, referral by referral. Not flashy. Not loud. Just real.

And real rises.

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Associate Broker
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“Boots & Boogie”

Kick-Off Event Held at Hays Farm

On November 7, Real Producers North Alabama hosted its first Boots & Boogie event — a relaxed, relationship-focused evening designed to bring top-producing agents and preferred partners together off the clock and in the same room.

Held at Hays Farm, the event welcomed 80–100 guests representing many of the most active professionals in North Alabama real estate. Each person checked in, grabbed a name tag, and immediately began scanning the room for familiar faces.

It wasn’t a high-pressure networking event. It wasn’t a sales pitch. It felt more like colleagues with mutual respect spending time together without deadlines attached.

Guests showed up in boots and denim instead of suits and formality. The tone of the event matched the dress code — simple, welcoming, and easy to settle into.

The bar offered two signature cocktails, The Real Producer and The Rocket Man, which naturally became talking points throughout the night. People chatted over drinks, caught up on the past year, compared notes on the market, and exchanged cards when it made sense — organically, not forcefully.

No stage. No schedule.
Just time to connect.

The mission of Real Producers North Alabama is straightforward:

Connect the top ~500 agents in our market with one another and with the partners who help them succeed.

We tell the stories behind production in the magazine, but events like Boots & Boogie bring those stories to life. It gave agents and vendors the chance to strengthen relationships built during transactions and spark new ones for the year ahead.

People talked shop when it naturally came up, but many conversations drifted into family, travel, future goals, and even a little shared exhaustion from a fast-moving market. That’s connection — not just contact.

North Alabama continues to grow rapidly. With that growth comes opportunity, competition, and constant change, all of which make genuine relationships more valuable than ever.

Boots & Boogie worked because it was simple — good venue, good people,

enough time and space to talk. Guests stayed, mingled, and left with new connections or stronger ones than they arrived with. No big production needed.

Sometimes, the most effective gatherings are the ones that just let people simply breathe.

A Strong First Step

This was the first event of its kind for Real Producers North Alabama, and it set a strong foundation. More events will follow — thoughtfully planned, community-focused, and built around the same purpose: to bring together the professionals who move our market forward.

If November 7 is any indication, we’re just getting started.



THE RELENTLESS RISE OF TRENTON HAMMOND

BY DEANNA
ELIASHEVSKY



If you ask most top producers how they got here, they'll walk you through milestones — closings, numbers, growth patterns, goals met and exceeded. But Trenten Hammond's story doesn't start with real estate. It starts much earlier, in a place where adulthood arrived too soon, responsibility arrived too heavy, and stepping up wasn't optional — it was survival.

Born in Rensselaer, Indiana and raised in Gunterville from the age of six, Trenten grew up fast. By tenth grade, school gave way to work — not because he lacked ambition, but because his family needed stability. So he showed up. He earned a paycheck, paid bills, supported where he could, and quietly built grit the way most teenagers build yearbooks and memories.

That grit — steady, unglamorous, formed under pressure — would become the backbone of his entire career.



From retail aisles to real estate contracts

For twelve years, Trenten managed a retail chain across North and Central Alabama. He was good at it — genuinely good — rising quickly and managing people, operations, and the thousand moving parts it takes to keep a store alive. During that time, he and his wife, Jaimie, opened their first nutrition shop with just \$5,000 in savings. One store grew to four across Gunterville, Cullman, Rainbow City, and Fort Payne.

Then came the crash.

Online competition surged. Profit margins shrank. They

condensed four stores into one and shifted to meal prep — pivoting, adapting, surviving. And just as the ground felt unsteady, it gave way altogether. His full-time retail position was eliminated.

No job. A struggling business. Debt mounting. A young family depending on him.

A crossroads that could break a person — or make one.

A leap without a safety net

Remember the realtor who always stopped to talk real estate in the store? That quiet pull never left. Even during the hardest financial

season, Trenten felt the nudge toward something more. With enough money saved for online real estate classes, he told Jaimie — the woman he calls his foundation — that he was doing it. No backup plan. No easing in. Just commitment.

On the morning he was scheduled to take his state exam — September 22, 2019 — everything shifted again. A call came from the sheriff's department. His mother, newly sober and recently reconciled with him after years of strained distance, had passed unexpectedly.

Pain has a way of freezing people in place. But Trenten rescheduled his exam, worked through the grief, and passed. It wasn't convenient. It wasn't easy. But it was another moment he burned the boats, chose forward momentum, and refused to retreat.

Six years later—he's rewritten the record books

Today, Trenten Hammond is more than a REALTOR®. He is a force.

- Career Volume: \$170,928,672



- 2024 Volume: \$48,121,640
- Ranked #1 in MCBOR (Volume + Units): 2022, 2023, 2024
- #1 in Valley MLS in Units Sold (2023, out of 2,872 agents)
- #6 in Valley MLS in Volume (2023)
- Top Independent Agent (Non-Builder Team) in 2024 in both units and volume

His numbers are massive, but numbers alone don’t tell the story.

His discipline does.

Trenten shows up. Every day. Still. He treats real estate like work — not chance, not hope, not “maybe business will come to me.” He believes consistency is the unfair advantage no one can replicate unless they’re willing to out-show-up everyone around them.

His favorite quote speaks for him: “If you want to take the island, burn the boats.”

He did. Twice. Maybe more.

People first, every time

Ask Trenten what drives him, and he won’t talk about awards. He’ll talk about people.

The widow selling an estate she never expected to navigate alone. The family on the edge of foreclosure until equity saved them. The elderly couple holding hands, choosing the place they’ll grow old together. The first-time buyer who sends a message that says, “*You changed our life.*”



Those are the wins that matter to him — the quiet ones. The personal ones. The ones without plaques.

Real estate, for Trenten, is not houses. It’s humans.

“People are at the center of everything for me. If you serve well, success follows naturally.”

A business built like a family — because it is
Trenten’s team is small, nimble, and deeply aligned:

Jaimie Hammond — Operations + all-things-everything
His wife of 18 years. His anchor. His partner in life and work.

Amanda Goodwin — Administrative Assistant
The paperwork powerhouse ensuring nothing slips through the cracks.

Angie Briscoe — ISA / Database Management
The newest addition — organized, driven, essential to the engine.



“PEOPLE ARE AT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING FOR ME. IF YOU **SERVE WELL,** SUCCESS FOLLOWS NATURALLY.”

“If this feature keeps one agent from giving up too soon, then it’s worth every word.”

Legacy is bigger than production

Yes — Trenten is one of the most dominant agents in Marshall County and Valley MLS. Yes — his volume is staggering. But if you ask him how he wants to be remembered years from now, he won’t list numbers.

He’ll say he hopes people felt guided. Felt protected. Felt seen. Felt helped through a life transition that mattered.

Because success is impressive — but impact is unforgettable.

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open, with purpose and curiosity leading the way.

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