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Shannon Malone



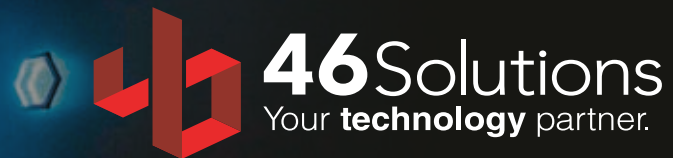
On Fire
**DREW
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**TOAST TO
THE TOP
RECAP**

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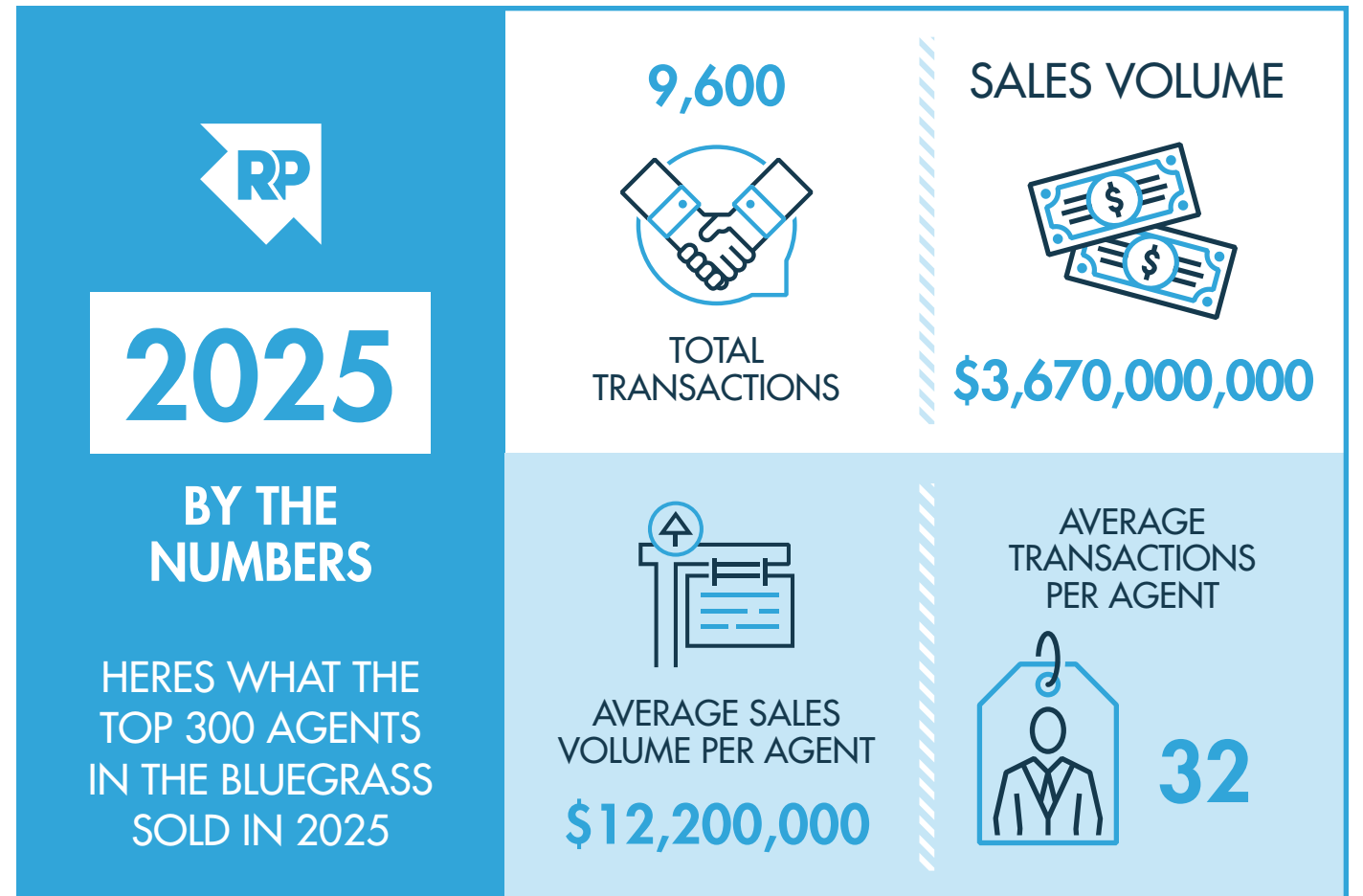



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2025

BY THE NUMBERS

HERES WHAT THE TOP 300 AGENTS IN THE BLUEGRASS SOLD IN 2025

- 9,600** TOTAL TRANSACTIONS
- \$3,670,000,000** SALES VOLUME
- \$12,200,000** AVERAGE SALES VOLUME PER AGENT
- 32** AVERAGE TRANSACTIONS PER AGENT



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WHAT A 70.3 IRONMAN TAUGHT ME ABOUT BUSINESS



Last year, I spent a considerable amount of time training for and completing my second 70.3 Ironman. If you're not familiar with the format, it consists of a 1.2-mile swim, a 56-mile bike ride, and a 13.1-mile run. While the race itself is certainly challenging, what surprised me most was how much the experience mirrored many of the lessons I've learned in business over the years.

Like many people, when I first signed up, my attention was always focused on race day. I thought about crossing the finish line, accomplishing something difficult, and checking a major goal off the list. But what I fully thought about were the small chunks of daily habits that lead to a successful race day, and how that actually mattered compared for the months leading up to it.

The race lasts a few hours, the preparation takes many months, and hundreds of hours.

As I look back, that's probably the first lesson that stands out. Most meaningful accomplishments are built long before anyone sees the result. The finish line gets the attention, but the real work happens in the quiet moments when nobody is watching. It's the early morning workouts, the decision to train when you don't feel like it, and the willingness to stay committed long after the excitement of a new goal has worn off.

I see a similar pattern in the real estate industry. From the outside, it's easy to notice the impressive production numbers, the awards, or the recognition that comes with being among the top agents in a market. What we don't always see are the countless conversations, follow-ups, appointments, and difficult decisions

that happened months or even years earlier. Success often looks sudden to those observing from the outside, but those living it know it was built one day at a time.

Another lesson that surprised me was how often progress felt invisible. There were stretches of training where I wasn't sure I was getting any better. The workouts were time consuming, stretching, preparing, doing the laundry (If my wife reads this she'll give that a few thumbs up). Even though I had completed this same race in 2023, the distances for training at times still felt long. There wasn't some dramatic moment where everything suddenly became easy. Yet when I looked back over several months instead of several days, the improvement was undeniable.

That perspective has been helpful for me beyond triathlon training. In business, we're often tempted to evaluate our progress too frequently. We judge a week, a month, or even a single conversation and try to determine whether we're moving forward. Sometimes growth doesn't reveal itself that quickly. Sometimes the relationships we're building, the habits we're developing, and the systems we're improving need time before their impact becomes visible.

One of the most practical lessons I learned came from pacing, and how to train in Zone 2. In endurance sports, there is a constant temptation to go too hard too early. You feel strong, the adrenaline is high, and you convince yourself that you can maintain a pace that simply isn't sustainable. Eventually, the bill comes due.

Business can work the same way. Many high achievers are wired to push, produce, and pursue the next opportunity. Those qualities can be tremendous strengths, but they can also create blind spots. I've learned that sustainable success requires managing energy just as carefully as managing time. A full calendar isn't always a sign of effectiveness. Sometimes it simply means we're moving faster than we can maintain.

Perhaps the lesson that has stayed with me the most is that we are often capable of more than we initially believe. Before beginning this journey, completing a 70.3 felt like something reserved for a different type of person. Someone who knew how to swim, a long distance runner from their time in high school, list a ton of personas. Then I witnessed a race and noticed, there were so many walks of life that were completing this race. I knew if I could put in the time and learn it, I could do it too.

What I discovered was that most significant goals become achievable when we stop focusing on the entire distance and start focusing on the next step. Over time, consistency has a way of changing what's possible.

As I think about the agents and partners who make up this *Bluegrass Real Producers* community, I see that same principle at work. The people featured in these pages did not arrive where they are through a single breakthrough moment. Their success was built through years of learning, adapting, improving, and continuing to move forward when progress wasn't always obvious.

Whether your goals this year are professional, personal, or somewhere in between, my encouragement is simple: trust the process longer than feels comfortable. The results you're hoping for may be taking shape even when they're not yet visible. Keep showing up. Keep doing the work. Let us all remember that some of the most worthwhile accomplishments in life are built gradually, one consistent day at a time.

Aaron Hutchison
Publisher

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Maggie Wells

PHOTOS BY KENI PARKS

For Maggie Wells, real estate is about creating a stress-free experience for her clients—something she worked hard to achieve after a career path that was anything but straightforward.

Originally from a small town in southern Indiana, Wells attended high school in Louisville before earning her undergraduate degree from Transylvania University and an MBA from Bellarmine University. While completing her education, she spent 10 years in retail management with Walgreens. It was during the purchase of her first home with her husband, Mike, that she began to see real estate as a career opportunity.

“The more I learned about it, the more interested I became,” Wells says. “Managing a retail store required coordinating many moving parts and working with a wide variety of people, which translated well to real estate.”

Now nine years into her real estate career, including eight years full-time, Wells leads Live in Kentucky Homes at Real Broker. After gaining experience on real estate teams, she launched her own and has focused on building a supportive, client-centered business. Her team currently includes agent Ryan O’Gara and executive virtual assistant Maricor Mata, both of whom have been with her for nearly four years. This year, Mike will also join the business after obtaining his real estate license, bringing more than 20 years of construction and remodeling experience through his company, Wells Remodeling.

Wells is also passionate about helping others grow. Through VA Collaborate, she helps real estate professionals connect with virtual assistants to expand their businesses more effectively.



A strong believer in mindfulness, Wells incorporates yoga, meditation, and a balanced approach into both her personal and professional life. She teaches at the High Street YMCA and strives to create a nurturing environment for both clients and team members.

Today, approximately 85% of her business comes from referrals,

reflecting her commitment to relationships, education, and exceptional service. Outside of work, Wells stays active in the community, serving on the board of the High Street YMCA, helping lead Lexington Women for Good, and enjoying family time with Mike, their daughters Embry and Lucy, and their two rescue dogs.

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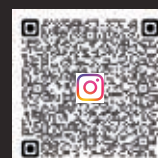
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Shannon

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From the large front windows of her downtown Morehead office, Shannon Malone watches her hometown move in real time. She notices who is opening businesses. Who is renovating buildings. Which storefronts are busy. Which roads are being discussed at city meetings. Who just bought property. Who is growing. Who is struggling. Who needs help.

“Just call me Mrs. Kravitz,” she laughs. But beneath the humor is something deeper: Shannon genuinely cares about her community. “This is my hometown,” she says. “I want to know what’s going on. Information is currency, and it’s helpful.”

That care and consideration for others has shaped not only Shannon’s real estate career, but her entire life.

If there is a chamber lunch, a city council meeting, a planning and zoning meeting, an economic development discussion, or a community event happening somewhere in Rowan County, chances are Shannon is there. She believes local REALTORS® should be fully immersed in the communities they serve.

“How can you represent clients if you don’t know what’s happening in the neighborhood?” she asks. That boots-

Everybody

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PHOTOS BY JARON JOHNS
WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH MCCABE

“ This is my
hometown.
I want to know
what’s going on.”



on-the-ground mentality has helped Shannon become one of the most recognizable and respected names in Kentucky real estate.

Today, she is the broker and owner of Homeland Real Estate, a hyper-local brokerage she officially launched on February 4, 2022. The company currently includes 12 agents, with several more already in training.

Her leap into real estate was unique. Before returning to the industry full-time in 2006, Shannon worked as an assistant human resources manager and safety director for a manufacturing facility in Morehead. Prior to that, she spent nearly a decade in Chicago working as a labor and employment paralegal for an international conglomerate.

And before that? She was a college student at Morehead State University trying to figure out what to do with her life. “I was one of those people who just kept taking classes that interested me,” she says.

Eventually, an advisor pointed out something obvious: nearly all her coursework centered around real estate and law. “So that’s what we did,” Shannon says with a laugh. She earned both a real estate degree and a paralegal degree approved by the American Bar Association while working in a real estate office during college. Later, she moved to Arizona and officially entered the business full-time.

“It just felt natural to me,” she says. That phrase comes up often when Shannon talks about her career. Real estate feels natural to her because she genuinely enjoys people, problem-solving, and the unpredictability that comes with the business. “It’s something new every single day,” she says. “When you’re dealing with people, it’s never boring.”

Even after nearly two decades as a full-time REALTOR®, Shannon says the market still surprises her regularly. “I don’t even pretend to have everything

figured out anymore,” she admits. “Things change constantly.”

What has never changed is her work ethic. “There is no secret sauce,” Shannon says plainly. “You have to be willing to put the work in. You have to network, talk to people, meet people, and be involved.”

And sitting behind a computer waiting for business to happen? That is not Shannon’s style. “You cannot sit behind the computer and do real estate,” she says firmly. That’s the foundation for Homeland Real Estate.

When Shannon opened the brokerage, she intentionally structured it around local expertise. Kentucky has 120 counties, and Shannon believes every market operates differently. Her agents are encouraged to work in the communities they actually live in so they deeply understand the schools, neighborhoods, businesses, and people there. “That’s really important to me,” she says. “I want agents to know their hometowns.”

Shannon also prides herself on mentoring new agents. “I would take a brand-new agent all day long,” she says. “I can teach. I can share.” She remains extremely hands-on with training and stays actively involved in transactions alongside her team. “I’m very in the trenches,” she says.

What matters most to Shannon is that her agents genuinely care about people. “If all you’re going to do is chase the dollar, this is not the company for you,” she says. “These are people. This is their life savings. This is their future.” That perspective comes from years of watching how homeownership impacts families emotionally, financially, and personally. “I’m a huge believer in homeownership,” Shannon says. “I’ve seen how it changes people’s confidence and affects their lives.”

Her relationships with clients rarely end at the closing table. “With some families, I’m the family REALTOR®,” she says. “Now I’m helping the children of clients I worked with years ago buy homes.”



Sometimes those moments become emotional. “I’ve been known to cry at the closing table,” she laughs.

Real estate also gave Shannon something deeply important as a mother: flexibility. While raising her children, she realized traditional corporate life would not allow her to be present for field trips, sports, and the moments that mattered most.

“I told them they would need me more when they got older,” she says. Real estate gave her the freedom to build a successful career while still showing up for her family.

Today, as an empty nester, Shannon pours even more energy into her community. She serves on local boards, participates in economic development initiatives, attends downtown meetings, and remains deeply involved throughout Morehead.

When she is not working, she enjoys hiking, reading, renovations, traveling, and restoring her 135-year-old downtown building. She is also preparing to remodel a home in Lexington.

Still, work is never very far away. “I don’t really have a life,” she jokes. But honestly, Shannon Malone would probably not want it any other way. Because for her, real estate has never been simply about buying and selling homes. It is about people. It is about community. And it is about helping the place she calls home continue to thrive.

“Welcome to our hometown,” Shannon says warmly. “We’re glad you’re here.”



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TOAST TO THE TOP 2026

PHOTOS BY BLUEGRASS REAL ESTATE MEDIA



There are few things more rewarding than taking a moment to celebrate the people who continue to raise the standard of excellence in our industry.

Recently, we had the privilege of gathering with members of this year's Top 300 class for our annual Toast to the Top celebration at Mirror Twin Brewing. This was an opportunity to pause, connect, and recognize the dedication, leadership, and commitment that each of these agents brings to the Central Kentucky real estate community.

A special thank you goes to our **Title Sponsor, Rural 1st**, for helping make this celebration possible. Their continued support allows us to create meaningful opportunities for top-performing agents to build relationships beyond the transaction and invest in the strength of our local real estate community.

What made this event special was not simply the recognition itself, but the conversations that took place throughout the room. New connections were formed, familiar faces reconnected, and stories were shared among professionals who understand the discipline and perseverance required to perform at a high level year after year.

This gathering also marked an exciting milestone for *Bluegrass Real Producers*. We are now in our fourth year in print, and that tenure is only possible because of the incredible agents and partners who continue to invest in this community. Since our first issue, our mission has remained the same: to celebrate the accomplishments of top-performing agents, tell meaningful stories, and create opportunities for genuine relationships to flourish.

As we look ahead, we are excited for the conversations, masterminds, social gatherings, and shared experiences still to come. The relationships built through this community continue to remind us that success is about more than production numbers. It is about leadership, generosity, and the impact we have on the people around us.

To every member of this year's Top 300 class, congratulations on your achievement. Thank you for the example you set within our industry and for being part of the *Bluegrass Real Producers* community.

We look forward to celebrating many more stories and strengthening many more relationships together in the years ahead.



CONTINUED ►



DREW PATTON



BUILDING MORE THAN HOMES, CREATING LASTING RELATIONSHIPS IN REAL ESTATE

PHOTOS BY ANGELA VAUGHT

In the competitive world of real estate, success often hinges on more than just closing deals and hitting sales targets. For Drew Patton, a top sales agent at Weichert REALTORS® Ford Brothers, it is about forging genuine connections, delivering exceptional service, and living a purpose-driven life that sets him apart. Since entering the real estate industry in 2018, Drew has built a remarkable career, closing over 50 transactions last year alone with a total volume around \$15 million. His story is one of passion, hard work, and a deep commitment to his clients and community.

Before stepping into real estate, Drew's professional journey was rooted in two very different but equally impactful fields: mental health and construction. He spent years developing a case management division and focusing on life coaching and counseling, roles that fed his love for connecting with people and making a difference in their lives. Simultaneously, he cultivated his skills in construction, working alongside his father and grandfather on various carpentry projects at a young age and then in his 20's began larger-scale projects of full remodels and new constructions. This unique blend of experiences prepared Drew not just to sell homes, but to understand the nuts and bolts

of properties and the importance of building strong foundations, both literally and figuratively.

Drew's decision to become a real estate agent was driven by his extroverted nature and desire to work hands-on with people rather than being confined behind a desk. Early conversations with his broker revealed his initial goal: to sell his own remodels, spec homes, and investment properties without the pressure of traditional office constraints. Yet, thanks to the mentorship and support from Matt Ford and the Ford family at Weichert REALTORS® Ford Brothers, Drew quickly became a top producer, expanding his focus to helping others buy and sell homes.

What began as a personal business strategy blossomed into a fulfilling career centered on client success and meaningful relationships.

One of the most rewarding aspects of Drew's work is witnessing the transformative power of real estate on families. For him, it's about more than transactions, it's about helping people achieve their dreams. Whether it's a young family purchasing their first home against the odds or a seller moving on to their next chapter, Drew strives to make every experience smooth, enjoyable, and stress-free. The relationships he builds do not end at closing; they become lifelong bonds as he watches his clients thrive in their new communities.

Drew distinguishes himself through a few key practices that many agents overlook. First, he offers auction services through his firm, understanding that some situations call for this approach rather than traditional listings. This commitment to putting clients first, even when it means referring business elsewhere, demonstrates Drew's integrity and



dedication to the best outcomes. Second, he emphasizes thorough education and transparency, ensuring clients fully understand contracts, financing options, due diligence, and the entire buying or selling process. His proactive communication helps prevent surprises and empowers clients to make informed decisions. Third, Drew really emphasizes the importance and role that churches play in their communities local and abroad and he practices generous giving, tithing 10% of his earnings back to local churches and community programs. This commitment to giving reflects his faith and belief in supporting the foundations that strengthen communities.

Kentucky, Drew's home state, is a source of pride and excitement for his clients and himself. With its diverse landscapes from agricultural plains to rolling hills and mountains, plus abundant lakes and rivers, the region offers an unmatched quality of life. The culture, world-class

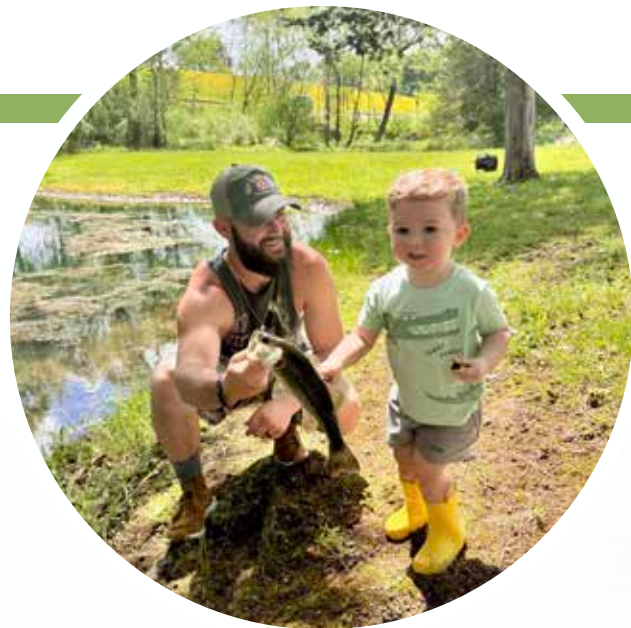


hunting and fishing opportunities, outdoor activities, friendly people, and unique traditions like horse racing, bourbon and Kentucky Basketball make Kentucky a special place to live. Drew enjoys sharing this passion with newcomers, helping them discover the joys of the area.

On a personal level, Drew's story is shaped by his faith, relationship with Jesus, family, and resilience. Born and raised in Somerset, Kentucky, he earned a degree in Psychology and Business Administration while playing college football. His drive for hard work and balance between mental and physical endeavors has been a lifelong lesson learned from family. A pivotal and heartbreaking moment came in 2025 when he and his wife lost their son Lawson during the second trimester. This tragedy deepened their faith, strengthened their marriage, and inspired them to support others facing similar struggles. Drew's family, including his wife and their two boys, enjoys outdoor activities like hunting, fishing, gardening, and boating, a lifestyle that keeps them grounded and connected.

Drew's guiding philosophy is captured in his favorite quote, "Do now what others won't, so that you can do later what others can't." This mindset drives his financial discipline and dedication to building a secure future that allows freedom to give back generously. It also defines his approach to real estate:

“
Do now
what others
won't, so
that you can
do later what
others can't.”

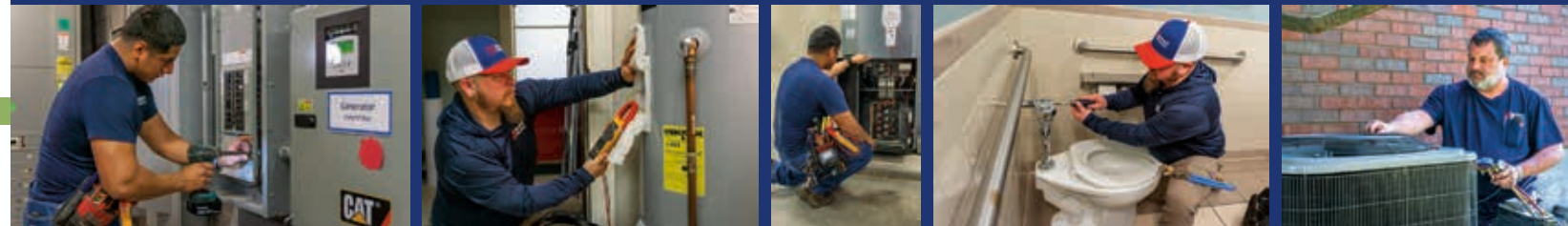


working tirelessly for his clients as if they were family, ensuring their needs come first, and fostering cooperation and respect throughout every transaction.

Looking ahead, Drew remains committed to serving families with integrity and passion. He plans to continue working hard, helping clients achieve their

real estate goals, and growing his family's legacy on the farm. His vision includes raising his children to be hardworking and respectful, enjoying life's simple pleasures, and supporting future generations through giving and community involvement.

In an industry often viewed as transactional, Drew Patton stands as a shining example of how real estate is truly about people, purpose, and perseverance. His story is a testament to the power of hard work, faith, and genuine care to create not just successful careers but lasting impacts on lives and communities. For top agents seeking inspiration and a reminder of why this profession matters, Drew's journey is a beacon of hope and dedication. ▾



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