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# Contents

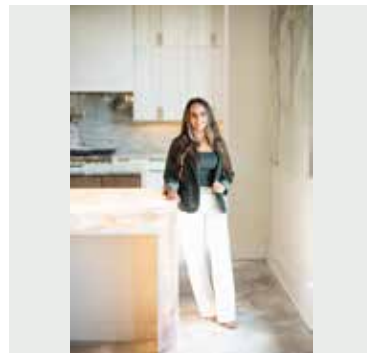


Desiree Keebaugh **32** COVER STORY

## PROFILES



**14** Jasmine Nguyen



**20** Jennifer Wolff



**24** RELI Title, Lori Ogles



**28** Julie LaBelle

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 5 Preferred Partners Index**
- 8 Publisher's Note**
- 10 Expert Article:** The Agent Who Knows The Street, By Tim Weisheyer
- 14 Featured Agent:** Jasmine Nguyen
- 18 Nonprofit:** Opportunity Place
- 20 Broker Feature:** Jennifer Wolff
- 24 Partner Spotlight:** RELI Title, Lori Ogles
- 28 Rising Star:** Julie LaBelle
- 32 Cover Story:** Desiree Keebaugh

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# OWN YOUR OWN MicroMarket

“Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will stand before kings; they will not stand before obscure men.”  
Proverbs 22:29

As we move through the summer market, it's easy to get distracted by the big picture. National headlines, interest rate chatter, market predictions, and social media noise constantly compete for our attention. But the agents who build lasting businesses understand something powerful: you do not need to dominate the entire market. You need to own your micro-market.

Your subdivision. Your condo community. Your farm area. Your niche. Your network.

When you become the authority within a defined space, everything changes. You stop chasing business and start attracting it. Your marketing becomes intentional, your messaging becomes clear, and your name becomes synonymous with a specific community. Referrals grow because people know exactly who you are and what you represent.

Owning a micro-market is not about ego. It is about focus. It is about understanding inventory trends before they hit the MLS, knowing the builders, the HOA nuances, the rental restrictions, and the lifestyle details that matter most to buyers and sellers. It is about becoming the trusted resource instead of simply another option.

This is also where *Emerald Coast Real Producers* plays an important role. ECRP exists to elevate top professionals and strengthen meaningful relationships within our local real estate community.

When you consistently position yourself among the Top 300, build strategic partnerships, and collaborate with the lenders, title professionals, and industry leaders featured throughout these pages, you reinforce your authority and strengthen your brand.

Micro-market dominance is rarely built alone. It is built through connection, collaboration, and consistency. It is built in rooms like ours.

So this month, I challenge you to think intentionally about your business. What is your defined micro-market? Are you marketing consistently within it? Are you building partnerships that strengthen your position? Are you visible in the right circles?

The Emerald Coast is diverse, growing, and full of opportunity. There is room for excellence in every corner of our community, but clarity always wins. You do not need to be everywhere. You simply need to be exceptional somewhere.

Own your space. Protect your reputation. Build depth over breadth. And let's continue elevating this market together.



With clarity and confidence,  
**Taylor Labno**  
Publisher, *Emerald Coast Real Producers*



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- Sept 10** *Leading with Purpose | 10 am | Shoreline*
- Oct 08** *Power Panel: taking your business to the next level. 10am | Shoreline*
- Oct 14** *SP Appreciation Event | Regatta Bay | 10:00 - 12:00*
- Nov 12** *Business Planning | 10 am Shoreline*
- Dec. 04** *Installation | 6:00-10:00 | Emerald Grande*

Register for Events



## THE AGENT WHO

# KNOWS THE STREET

BY TIM WEISHEYER

There's a version of success in real estate that a lot of people chase. The one that looks like maximum volume, maximum reach, maximum everything. And while there's nothing wrong with ambition, I've watched plenty of high-performing agents hit a ceiling they didn't see coming, because they were so focused on growing wide that they never grew deep.

The agents I've seen build something truly sustainable didn't do it by trying to be everything to everyone. They did it by becoming the undeniable authority in a specific place, for a specific type of customer, at a specific point in their journey. They owned their market. Not the whole market, but their market.

**The Illusion of Broader Being Better**  
When you're building a real estate business, the natural instinct is to stay open, take every opportunity, and not close any doors. Early on, that makes sense. You're learning the market, finding your rhythm, and figuring out where you add the most value. But at some point, that same instinct starts working against you.

When you're trying to serve everyone, your message gets watered down, and your marketing becomes generic. Your conversations lack the kind of specific, local insight that makes a customer feel like they're talking to someone who actually knows what they're talking about. In a world where buyers and sellers have access to more information than ever, generic doesn't cut it anymore. What cuts through is real, specific, earned knowledge that no algorithm can replicate and no out-of-market agent can fake.



### What It Actually Means to Own a Market

Owning a market isn't just knowing the zip code. It's knowing the inventory patterns, which neighborhoods tend to move quickly, and which ones sit. It's knowing the school zones, the HOA dynamics, and the new development that's coming in eighteen months that most people haven't heard about yet.

More than the data, it's knowing the people, like the families who've lived in a neighborhood for fifteen years, the investors who cycle through specific price points, and the first-time buyers who consistently underestimate what that commute is going to feel like in six months.

That kind of knowledge doesn't come from casting a wide net. It comes from intentional focus sustained over time. And when you have it, you stop being another agent and start being the person customers call first, because they know you understand their situation in a way someone else simply won't. That's a different kind of trust. And in this business, trust is the whole game.

### Specialization Isn't Limiting. It's Compounding.

I think a lot of agents resist going deep on a niche because it feels like they're leaving business on the table. And I understand that instinct. But here's what I've seen play out over and over again.

When you become genuinely known for something specific, whether that's a particular community, a type of transaction, a customer demographic, or a price point, the referrals you get become better, more targeted, and more aligned with where you actually do your best work. The conversion rate for those referrals goes up dramatically because the person sending them has already done the positioning work for you.

"Call Tim. He knows this area better than anyone."

That sentence is worth more than any advertising campaign you'll ever run.



The agents who try to compete everywhere end up truly competing nowhere. The agents who build real depth in the right places earn a reputation that starts doing the work for them. Over time, that compounds in ways that broad-market chasing never will.

### How to Think About It

If you're trying to identify where your depth should be, I'd encourage you to start with what's already true. Where are you getting the most repeat and referral business? What types of customers do you do your best work with? What geographic areas or property types do you find yourself genuinely interested in enough to stay current on without it feeling like a chore?

Those signals are telling you something.

And once you've identified it, the move isn't to immediately narrow everything. Instead, start investing more intentionally in that area. Show up more, learn more, and communicate more specifically about what you're seeing there. Let your market presence in that space grow deeper while the rest of your business continues naturally.

Over time, the depth becomes the differentiator. And that's when you stop chasing the market, and the market starts coming to you.

The agents who continue to build real businesses, not just production numbers, understand that growth and scale don't always mean going wider. Sometimes the smartest move you can make is to go deeper where you already have an edge, and let that become the foundation on which everything else is built.

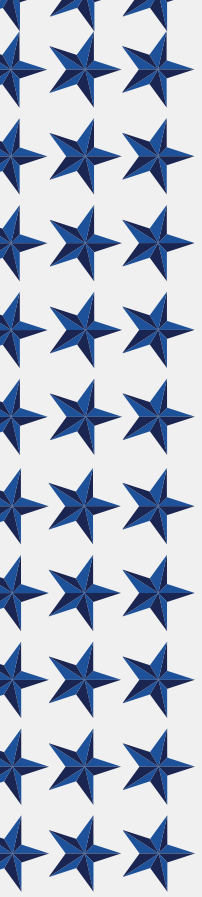
*The agents who own their market didn't get there by accident. They got clear on where their edge was and invested there intentionally. The Micro-Market Audit is where that clarity starts. Scan below to download your free copy.*



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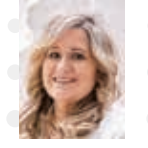
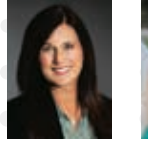

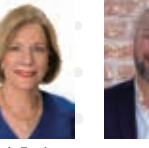
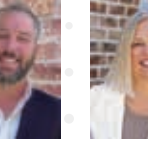

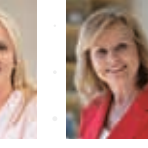





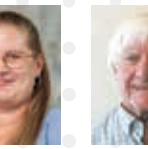

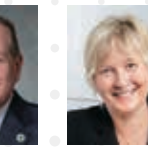
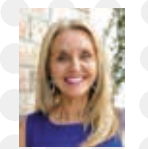
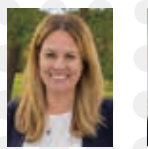
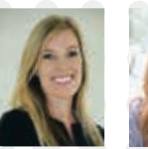

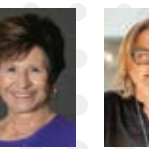

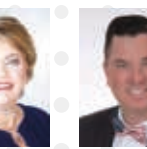

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# JASMINE NGUYEN

## BUILDING A BUSINESS & A LIFE ON HER OWN TERMS

PHOTOS BY ETHAN HAMILTON, MADHOUSE MEDIA

**F**or Jasmine Nguyen, real estate wasn't part of a long-term master plan. It was a pivot, made during a season that demanded resilience, adaptability, and the willingness to start over. What began as a practical decision has evolved into a business built on intention, consistency, and strategic growth.

Originally, Jasmine had her sights set on architecture. She enrolled in college with plans to design homes, but life had other priorities. Marriage, motherhood, and major life transitions shifted her path, making it clear that finishing school wasn't the right move at the time.

So she recalibrated.

"If I couldn't design the homes, I realized the next best thing was to help people find and sell them and build something just as meaningful in the process."

That mindset, solution-oriented and forward-moving, became the foundation of her real estate career.

Like many agents, her first year came with challenges. One transaction. Limited guidance. A lot of trial and error. But instead of getting discouraged, Jasmine treated it as data.

"I realized pretty quickly that I needed more than just a license. I needed structure. I needed to actually learn the business."

In her second year, she joined a team that exposed her to high-level opportunities, innovative projects, big ideas, and even potential television concepts. But while the environment was exciting, it lacked the core systems she knew she needed to grow.



That realization became a defining moment.

She stepped away from the noise and made a strategic move to Realty One Group Emerald Coast, where she's spent the last four years building a business with real foundation and momentum.

"I needed to find my people, and once I did, everything changed."

Today, Jasmine operates with a clear philosophy: consistency beats intensity.

In a competitive market like the Emerald Coast, she believes the agents who win long-term are the ones who treat their business like a system, not a series



business, and small, consistent touches compound over time.

Outside of real estate, her biggest focus is her daughter, who is already developing her own interests in band, culinary arts, and entrepreneurship. Jasmine's goal is to create a life that expands opportunities, not just for herself, but for her family.

That vision extends beyond Florida.

With a deep love for travel and new experiences, Jasmine has explored destinations across the U.S. and internationally, including Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Australia. Some of her most memorable experiences include swimming with whale sharks and canyoneering through waterfalls, adventures that reflect her willingness to step outside her comfort zone and embrace life fully.

Her long-term goal is to eventually relocate to Sydney, Australia, after her daughter graduates, a move that reflects both her adventurous spirit and her commitment to designing a life on her own terms.

Through every phase of her journey, Jasmine has remained focused on one thing: building something sustainable.

Not just quick wins. Not just transactions.

A real business, rooted in relationships, backed by systems, and driven by someone who isn't afraid to evolve.

And perhaps most importantly, she is doing it her way, and she's just getting started. 🍀

“  
**YOU DON'T REALLY FIND  
 BALANCE, YOU CREATE**  
**STRUCTURE  
 & EXECUTE.**”

of random actions. From automated follow-ups to intentional client touchpoints, she focuses on staying top of mind without overcomplicating the process.

“It's not about doing everything. It's about doing the right things consistently.”

That approach is especially critical given her schedule.

Jasmine is a full-time agent and a full-time mom, balancing business growth with raising her daughter, who is currently a high school freshman. For years, she also worked additional jobs while building her real estate career, long days that required discipline and a strong sense of priority.

Her perspective on balance is simple:

“You don't really find balance, you create structure and execute.”

That execution shows up in how she nurtures relationships. Whether it's a quick check-in, a birthday message, or a well-timed follow-up, Jasmine understands that real estate is a relationship-driven

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# OPPORTUNITY *Place*

## BREAKING *The Cycle*, ONE FAMILY AT A TIME

**W**hat starts as a simple “yes” can sometimes turn into something much bigger.

For Tanya Rauch, Chairman of the Board at Opportunity Place, that yes came five years ago when she agreed to join the organization’s board as a favor to a friend. At the time, homelessness was not a cause she felt personally connected to, and she had little understanding of what the organization truly did.

That changed quickly.

“Once you see it, and you understand what’s happening and the impact being made, it’s almost impossible not to want to help,” Tanya shares.

Today, that initial hour-a-month commitment has evolved into a leadership role where Tanya is helping guide one of the most impactful nonprofits in the region. Located in Fort Walton Beach, Opportunity Place is dedicated to one clear mission: ending the cycle of homelessness for women and families in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

And they are doing it in a way that sets them apart.

Opportunity Place is the only shelter in both counties that keeps families together. While many traditional shelters separate families for safety or logistical reasons, Opportunity Place has created a model that prioritizes unity. Their dorm-style living environment allows parents, children, and even extended family members to remain under one roof during some of the most difficult times in their lives.



“We don’t define what a family should look like,” Tanya explains. “We meet people where they are.”

That philosophy is central to everything they do.

Whether it’s a single mother with children, a father raising his kids, or even grandparents caring for grandchildren, Opportunity Place provides a safe, supportive space for families to stay together while working toward stability.

But what truly makes Opportunity Place unique is not just the shelter itself. It’s what happens during the stay.

As a 90-day emergency shelter, the organization provides far more than a temporary place to sleep. Each resident is supported by a coordinated team working together to meet both immediate and long-term needs. Shelter coordinators ensure safety and day-to-day operations run smoothly, while also making sure families are cared for in a consistent, stable environment. Each evening, hot meals are served, made possible by dedicated community volunteers who play a vital role in the experience.

For families with children, support goes even deeper. A youth services coordinator works directly with the kids, creating structure, connection,

and a sense of normalcy. Weekly youth nights provide a space for children to simply be kids again, even in the midst of uncertainty.

All of these pieces work hand in hand with case management services, which are at the core of Opportunity Place’s mission. From budgeting and financial planning to career resources and community connections, every step is intentional and designed to help residents move forward.

“If you follow the program, you can be ready for housing in 90 days,” Tanya says.

That level of structure and support is what helps break the cycle, rather than simply pause it.

Still, like many organizations serving vulnerable populations, Opportunity Place faces a major challenge that goes beyond its walls: the rising cost of housing.



Even when families complete the program successfully, finding affordable housing remains one of the biggest obstacles to long-term stability. To address this, the organization is actively exploring opportunities to develop transitional housing that can bridge the gap between emergency shelter and permanent living.

It’s just one example of how Opportunity Place continues to evolve to meet the needs of its community.

Internally, that evolution has been just as significant. When Tanya stepped into her role as Chairman, the board had dwindled to just a handful of active members following the challenges of the pandemic. Through her network and leadership, she helped rebuild a diverse and engaged board made up of professionals across industries, including real estate, law, engineering, marketing, and more.

That renewed energy has already begun to make an impact, from launching new fundraising initiatives to expanding community awareness.

For Tanya, the growth of Opportunity Place is not just about numbers or expansion. It’s about impact.

“It’s about giving people a real chance,” she says.

And in a world where housing instability continues to rise, that chance can mean everything.

At its core, Opportunity Place is more than a shelter. It is a place of reset, of rebuilding, and of hope. A place where families are not just housed, but supported, guided, and given the tools to move forward.

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# JENNIFER WOLFF

## REDEFINING WHAT LEADERSHIP LOOKS LIKE

In real estate, leadership can look a lot of different ways. For some, it is measured in production numbers, office growth, or awards. But for Jennifer Wolff, leadership has always come down to something much simpler: how you treat people. At Coldwell Banker Realty in Fort Walton Beach, Jennifer has built a reputation not only as a strong leader but as someone who genuinely cares about the people around her. Whether she is mentoring agents, nurturing long-term client relationships, or creating a supportive office culture, her approach has remained the same from the very beginning.

PHOTOS BY SAMANTHA LAPOMARDO

“You have to be kind, and you can’t be greedy,” she says. “If you just take a step back and treat people like humans, everything else will come.”

It is a philosophy that has shaped her entire career. Jennifer’s journey into real estate started long before she officially obtained her license. While serving tables in her early twenties, she and her husband began flipping houses together. What started as an investment opportunity quickly sparked something bigger. By 2014, she officially earned her real estate license and entered the business during one of the industry’s most challenging seasons: the short sale and foreclosure market.

Her very first transaction was a \$52,000 sale in Fort Walton Beach. Even more impressive, she never actually met the client in person. The buyer found her through Facebook, reached out directly, and trusted her enough to move forward with the transaction remotely. Within her first year in real estate, Jennifer closed five to six transactions,



building momentum almost immediately. But while many agents focus heavily on scaling production, Jennifer’s success was rooted in relationships from the start.

“A top-performing agent is somebody who can make conversation with just about anybody,” she explains. “Someone who genuinely cares about the people they’re talking to, not somebody that’s just focused on making money.”

That mindset eventually became the foundation for the office culture she leads today. Interestingly enough, Jennifer never originally planned to move into management. For years, leadership within Coldwell Banker encouraged her to take over one of the offices, but the timing never felt right. At the time, she was focused on raising her children and balancing



family life alongside her growing career.

But there was one person who never stopped asking: longtime leader Denis McKinnon. “I told him jokingly, ‘When my daughter starts school, I’ll give you a call,’” Jennifer laughs. Sure enough, once her daughter started school, he came back to collect on that promise. Now, Jennifer oversees the Fort Walton Beach office as the designated agent while continuing to work toward obtaining her broker’s license in the near future. Looking back, she understands exactly why leadership saw potential in her long before she fully saw it herself.

“I genuinely care about my agents and the relationships,” she says.

That care extends far beyond day-to-day business operations. Jennifer remains deeply invested in helping agents succeed, matching clients with agents who fit their personalities, and creating an environment where people feel supported rather than simply managed. Prior to stepping into leadership, Jennifer also led the number one small duo team across the Northwest Florida Panhandle for five consecutive years alongside her longtime business partner and best friend. To her, that consistency mattered. It represented loyalty, trust, and the ability to grow alongside someone over time, qualities she believes are essential in both business and life.

Beyond her success in real estate leadership, Jennifer



is equally passionate about giving back to the community she calls home. She proudly serves as Co-Chair of Building Homes for Heroes, an organization dedicated to supporting injured veterans through housing assistance and fundraising initiatives. Through years of involvement, she has helped lead events, raise awareness, and bring people together for a cause that remains close to her heart. Jennifer also serves as a committee member of the CAMO Committee, where she continues to advocate for community outreach, collaboration, and service-driven leadership. Her commitment to helping others extends far beyond the workplace and reflects her belief that true success is measured not only by professional achievement but by the impact made in the lives of others.

Outside of real estate, Jennifer’s world revolves around family. She and her husband have been together for more than twenty years and recently celebrated fifteen years of marriage. Together, they are raising two children who keep life busy with baseball, football, dance, and countless family adventures. Ironically, Jennifer admits she never originally pictured herself becoming a mother.

“Now my whole life revolves around the three of them,” she says.

Whether they are spending weekends at the ballfield, traveling to national parks, or taking family trips to amusement parks, creating memories together remains one of her biggest priorities. Jennifer also credits her close-knit Greek family and strong circle of lifelong friends for helping shape the person she is today.

At the core of everything she does, both personally and professionally, is the desire to create a healthy, grounded environment for the people she loves most. That same energy carries directly into the office she leads. In an industry often driven by competition, Jennifer has built a culture centered around kindness, collaboration, and authenticity. And perhaps that is exactly why people continue to gravitate toward her leadership. Because while systems, markets, and technology may continue to evolve, people never forget how someone made them feel. And Jennifer Wolff has built an entire career around making people feel valued.

# WHAT'S A PROMO?

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# LORI OGLES

OF RELI TITLE

## WHERE RELATIONSHIPS CLOSE DEALS BEFORE THE PAPERWORK DOES

Some careers are carefully mapped out from the beginning. Others take shape through opportunity, timing, and the kind of reputation that opens doors when the right moment comes along.

For Lori Ogles, Branch Manager at RELI Title, it has always been the second path.

Raised in an Air Force family, Lori's story started far from the closing table. Born in Japan, she spent her early years moving from place to place before eventually landing at Eglin Air Force Base in the late 1960s. After a period of time in North Dakota, her family returned when her father retired, and she went on to graduate from Niceville High School, class of 1982. She later earned her Bachelor of Science in Management from Troy University, followed by her MBA from the University of West Florida.

That early exposure to change, adaptability, and new environments would quietly shape the way she approaches both life and business.

She began her career in banking, spending ten years building a strong foundation in financial systems and client service. During a major transition in the banking world, a connection through a



closing attorney introduced her to the title side of the business. It was not something she had planned, but it was something she immediately took to. What started as a new opportunity quickly became a long-term career.

After a decade in that role, another unexpected call led her to RELI Title. More than twenty years later, she is still there, now leading the Alys Beach office and playing an integral role in the company's continued growth.

In her position today, Lori is involved in every part of the process. From the earliest stages of a transaction to the final moments

at the closing table, she ensures that each detail is handled with care and precision. Her role is hands-on, and her presence is felt throughout every step of the experience.

While RELI Title has a strong footprint across multiple states, Lori's reach extends throughout Florida. Whether working locally or coordinating closings across a wider region, she and her team are committed to making the process seamless for both clients and agents. Through mobile notary services and a flexible approach, they meet people where they are and make it work.

What truly defines Lori's approach is the way she builds relationships.

In an industry that often moves quickly and focuses heavily on transactions, Lori has built her business on something deeper. She takes the time to get to know the people she works with. Clients become familiar faces. Agents become trusted partners. Many of the professionals she works with today have been with her for years, a reflection of the consistency and care she brings to every interaction.

That relationship-driven mindset extends directly into how she supports agents. Lori and her

team show up in ways that go beyond expectations. They assist with open houses, support community initiatives, and take part in events that matter to the people they work with. It is not just about closing deals. It is about being present and contributing to the success of others.

Her long-standing involvement with the Women's Council of Realtors has helped strengthen those connections even further. Over the years, she has built a network rooted in trust, shared experiences, and a genuine sense of community.

Although RELI Title is supported by large-scale partnerships and has a broad reach, Lori is intentional about maintaining a local, relationship-focused approach. She is quick to emphasize that their services are for everyone. While certain partnerships are a valued part of their business, their commitment extends to the entire community. Every client matters, and every relationship is treated with the same level of importance.

Outside of her work, Lori's life reflects the same values that guide her career. She has been married to her high school sweetheart, Rick, for forty years, a testament to her loyalty and commitment. Together, they have built a close-knit family, including their son Eric, who has stayed local and built his own career as a chef.

When she steps away from the office, Lori embraces a completely different pace. She plays the bass drum in the Emerald Coast Pipes and Drums, performing in parades and community events throughout the area. It is a creative outlet that allows her to



connect with others in a new way while enjoying something purely for the experience.

She also enjoys spending time outdoors, whether camping, four-wheeling, or simply enjoying time with family and friends. Those moments provide balance and serve as a reminder of what matters most.

At its core, Lori Ogles' story is about consistency, relationships, and showing up for people in meaningful ways. In a business where timelines are tight and details matter, she has built a reputation not only for getting deals to the closing table but for making the process feel smooth, personal, and dependable.

Because long after the paperwork is signed, it is the experience that people remember. And that is exactly where Lori continues to stand out. ❏



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# JULIE LABELLE



WE DO LIFE  
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PHOTOS BY ETHAN HAMILTON, MADHOUSE MEDIA

**M**ost people would have waited for life to calm down before starting over in a brand-new career. Julie LaBelle did the opposite.

Just one year ago, Julie stepped into real estate as a newly licensed agent in an entirely new market with no local sphere of influence, no established client base, and no roadmap for what was ahead. At the same time, she was quietly walking through one of the most physically and emotionally demanding seasons of her life.

While building her business with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida and the Anderson Group 30A team, Julie was also navigating serious health challenges, extended hospital stays, treatments, and ultimately a major emergency neck surgery after doctors discovered severe spinal damage that dramatically changed her life overnight.

Most people looking at her today would never know any of that — and that is exactly how Julie prefers it.

“I never want my story to come from a place of victimhood,” she says. “The story is not the struggle. The story is what God continues to do through it.”

That perspective defines everything about her.

Long before real estate entered the picture, Julie had already built a life rooted in resilience, leadership, faith, and service. In Georgia, she worked as a development

director for a private Christian school, sold resort development properties, invested in real estate herself, and spent years deeply involved in community outreach, fundraising efforts, advocacy work, and volunteer leadership throughout her community.

But behind every role was a woman carrying tremendous responsibility personally and professionally while raising two sons through seasons filled with unexpected hardship, difficult relationships, financial pressure, and health battles.

Still, she kept moving forward.

“There were seasons where life felt unbelievably heavy,” she says, “but I’ve learned that struggle builds character, faith builds endurance, and God wastes nothing.”

That belief became even more real over the last year.

During her first year in real estate, Julie balanced



client needs alongside treatments, recovery, medical appointments, and surgery. Yet even in the middle of recovery, she refused to disappear.

Just weeks after surgery, she was already filming real estate videos while wearing a neck brace and pushing herself outside of every comfort zone she once clung to. Social media had never been something Julie naturally gravitated toward. Before real estate, she did not even have an Instagram account. But she understood that growth often requires stepping into spaces that feel uncomfortable — and showing up anyway.

“You have to get comfortable with the uncomfortable,” she says.

That mentality now shapes the way she approaches both life and business.

Despite everything happening behind the scenes, Julie quietly built an incredibly successful first year in real estate, closing nearly \$10 million in sales volume while navigating some of the most demanding experiences of her life.

To Julie, however, success has never been about transactions or dollar signs.

“It’s always going to be about people for me,” she says.

That mindset is exactly why her clients quickly become more like family. Julie is known for her relentless work ethic, fierce loyalty, and the way she loves people deeply and wholeheartedly. During some of her hardest



moments, many of those same clients showed up in person to pray over her, sit beside her, encourage her family, and support her recovery.

“I don’t even like calling them clients,” she says. “We do life together.”

Outside of real estate, Julie’s greatest pride is her role as a mother. Her two sons remain at the center of her world and the foundation of her strength. She describes them as loyal, hardworking, compassionate young men who have stood beside her through every difficult chapter.

When Julie recently found herself unable to care for herself during a medical emergency, her sons immediately drove hours to bring her to Atlanta for treatment and remained by her side through surgery and recovery.

“They are the greatest blessings of my life,” she says.

Today, Julie continues building her business the



same way she has rebuilt her life: with faith, grit, resilience, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to people.

She is not interested in presenting a perfect version of herself to the world. What matters most to her is showing up fully — for her clients, for her family, and for the life she has fought hard to rebuild.

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# Desiree KEEBAUGH



## Built on Authenticity

PHOTOS BY ETHAN HAMILTON, MADHOUSE MEDIA

*In an industry filled with sales tactics, polished personas, and constant competition, Desiree Keebaugh has built her business a different way: by simply being herself.*

“I remember one of my trainers telling me, ‘You be you,’” Desiree says. “That stuck with me from the very beginning.”

Today, that mindset has become the foundation of her success throughout the Emerald Coast market. Known for her honesty, warmth, and deeply relationship-driven approach, Desiree has



quickly become one of the area’s rising stars in real estate, earning the trust of clients not by trying to impress them, but by showing up authentically every single time.

Desiree grew up in Navarre as the daughter of a military family after her father retired from nearby Hurlburt Field. She was part of just the fifth graduating class at Navarre High School and, by her own admission, college was never really part of the conversation growing up.

Instead, she found herself immersed in the local service industry scene throughout Destin and the surrounding area, working in restaurants and bars for years while building relationships with people across the community.

“At the time, I didn’t realize how much that experience would help

me later,” Desiree reflects. “But in the service industry, you learn how to communicate with all kinds of people, solve problems quickly, and make connections. Looking back now, it really prepared me for real estate.”

Still, despite her outgoing personality, Desiree admits she spent years questioning whether she was capable of building a successful real estate career. “I’ve always struggled with self-doubt,” she says honestly. “I’d ask myself, ‘Can I really do this? Would I actually be successful at it?’”

Eventually, someone encouraged her to stop overthinking and simply give it a shot. In 2018, Desiree earned her real estate license and joined Keller Williams Realty as part of a team, a decision she still believes was instrumental to her early success.

“I think joining a team is one of the best things a new agent can do,” she says. “It gave me structure, mentorship, and taught me the discipline this business requires.”

During those early months, Desiree immersed herself fully in the industry. She cold-called daily, attended every networking event possible, and focused heavily on building relationships with other agents throughout the market.

“My trainer used to say, ‘If business ever slows down, you know exactly where to start again,’” she says. “That training became ingrained in me.”

The hard work paid off quickly. In her very first year in real estate, Desiree earned Rookie of the Year honors, validating the leap she had taken into an entirely new career.

Not long afterward, she made another important decision: leaving team life behind to build a business independently.

“I learned what I needed to learn,” she says. “Then it was time to spread my wings and figure out who I wanted to be as an agent.”

That authenticity became her greatest strength.

Desiree recalls competing for a major listing against several highly established agents in the area. Despite feeling intimidated, she stayed true to herself throughout the presentation. “I remember the seller telling me afterward, ‘You got this listing because you were just you,’” she says. “I’m not overly salesy. I’m honest. If I don’t know something, I’ll tell you I don’t know, but I’ll figure it out.”

That genuine approach has resonated deeply with clients, helping her build a largely referral-based business fueled by trust and relationships rather than aggressive marketing tactics. “Real estate is such a personal business,” Desiree says. “People can tell when you’re being authentic and when you’re trying too hard.”

Her ability to connect with people extends beyond transactions themselves. Much of Desiree’s business has come from lifelong local relationships, something she credits to both her upbringing in



the area and the years she spent working in hospitality before entering real estate.

“Growing up here gives me a completely different perspective,”



“*I’m not overly salesy. I’m honest. If I don’t know something, I’ll tell you I don’t know, but I’ll figure it out.*”

“*Growing up here gives me a completely different perspective.*”

she says. “I know these communities personally. I know the people, the neighborhoods, the schools, and what makes each area unique.”

One of the moments that gave Desiree the greatest confidence came during her third year in real estate when she successfully closed the sale of a \$6.7 million property, something she admits initially felt intimidating.

“I remember thinking, ‘Am I experienced enough for this?’” she says. “But my client trusted me, and that meant everything.”

That transaction became a turning point, reinforcing her



belief that growth often comes from stepping outside of your comfort zone.

Outside of real estate, Desiree describes herself as a true homebody. She recently celebrated her first wedding anniversary and spends most of her free time with her husband, her 12-year-old son, and their dogs.

“I honestly just love being home with my family,” she says with a laugh. “I love cooking, going

to the gym, taking walks, and just being together.”

It’s a grounded perspective that mirrors the way she approaches her career: focused on relationships, gratitude, and building a life she genuinely loves.

“I’m incredibly thankful for this career,” Desiree says. “It’s given me opportunities I never imagined, but more importantly, it’s allowed me to help people in a meaningful way while staying true to who I am.”

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