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Surviving Real Estate
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DOUGHERTY**

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JIM JEFFERS JR.

Partner Spotlight
**PINNACLE HOME
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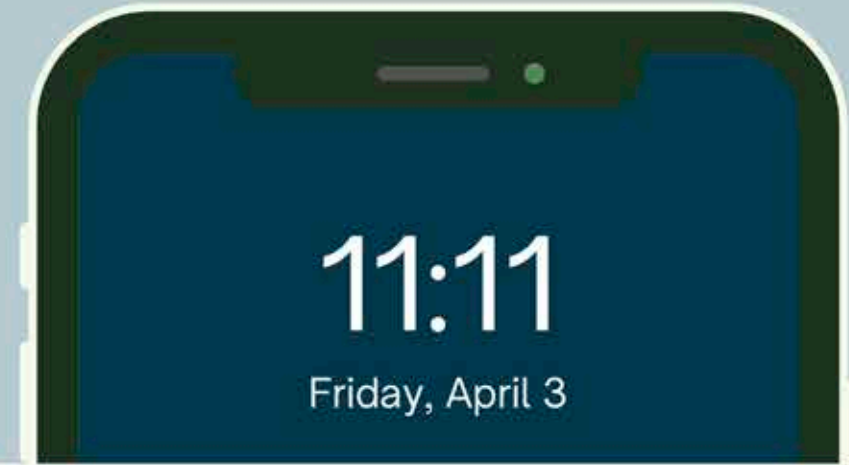


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Surviving REAL ESTATE

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For Windermere Signature Properties agent Jenna Lewis-Dougherty, real estate isn't just a profession. It's a reflection of how she lives her life: fully present, deeply intentional, and always centered around people.

Since stepping into the industry in 2015, Jenna has built a thriving business grounded in authenticity and care. With nearly \$20 million in sales volume last year, her production speaks for itself, but what truly defines her success is how she makes her clients feel throughout the process.

"I MAKE it personal," she says. "This is never just a transaction to me. It's someone's life, their memories, their next chapter."

That mindset shows up in the smallest and most meaningful ways. Jenna is known for arriving at listing appointments with thoughtful, personal touches: warm, homemade French bread paired with local honey, or a handpicked bouquet that reflects the season. It's not about the gesture itself, but what it represents: a level of care that goes far beyond the expected.

And when it comes to preparing homes for market, Jenna doesn't just coordinate the work. She often rolls up her sleeves and does it herself.

Armed with paint supplies and an audiobook, she has spent countless hours touching up baseboards, refreshing walls, and ensuring every detail is just right. She also invests in professional deep cleanings and staging enhancements, often at her own expense, because she knows presentation directly impacts outcome.

"I treat every home like it's my own," she explains. "Because for my clients, it is."

Her dedication doesn't stop at aesthetics. Jenna is equally committed to mastering the details behind the scenes. She reads everything, inspection reports,

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even when it's uncomfortable.”



disclosures, HOA documents, carefully and thoroughly, ensuring her clients are not only protected but empowered with knowledge.

“There’s always something new to learn in this business,” she says. “Every transaction is different, and I want my clients to feel confident every step of the way.”

That drive to learn and grow has been a constant throughout Jenna’s life, and it’s rooted in a story that’s anything but ordinary.

Originally from small towns in Maine and New Hampshire, Jenna’s early life was grounded in simplicity and strong values. But at 22 years old, she made a bold and unconventional decision that would forever shape her perspective.

She left her young children in the care of family and traveled across the world to compete on the hit reality show Survivor.

Stranded in Borneo, facing physical challenges and emotional extremes, Jenna was pushed far beyond her comfort zone. What she gained from that experience wasn’t just resilience. It was clarity.

“It completely changed how I see fear,” she says. “Most of it is self-imposed. That experience taught me to say yes, even when it’s uncomfortable.”

That philosophy has stayed with her ever since.

Whether it’s navigating a complex negotiation, guiding a nervous first-time buyer, or stepping into new opportunities, Jenna leads with courage and trust in the process. She embraces challenges rather than avoids them, and that energy is something her clients feel immediately.

But as much as Jenna is driven in her career, her greatest pride lies at home.

A devoted mother of four, she describes her family as the center of everything. Her days are often filled with tennis tournaments, school events, and quality time spent together, whether that’s hosting game nights, traveling, or simply enjoying a quiet moment at home.

“I’m obsessed with my family,” she says with a laugh. “That’s what matters most to me.” That deep appreciation for home and connection naturally carries over into her work. Jenna understands, on a personal level, what a home represents. It’s not just a place. It’s where life unfolds.

“I love my home. It’s my favorite place to be,” she shares. “Helping someone else find that feeling... there’s nothing better.”

Clients often describe Jenna as both approachable and fiercely dedicated, a combination that creates trust and delivers results. She brings a sense of calm and confidence to what can often be a stressful process, while also advocating strongly on behalf of those she represents.

Her ability to balance warmth with professionalism is what allows her to build lasting relationships, not just close transactions.

Looking ahead, Jenna isn’t focused on chasing numbers or titles. For her, success is much simpler and much more meaningful.

“It’s about being happy with your best effort,” she says. “If I know I showed up fully and gave everything I had, that’s success to me.”

It’s a mindset that keeps her grounded, motivated, and continually growing.

As she continues to build her business in the Sacramento market, Jenna remains committed to doing things her way, leading with heart, staying curious, and never losing sight of why she started.

Because at the end of the day, Jenna Lewis-Dougherty isn’t just helping people buy and sell homes.

She’s helping them step into the next chapter of their lives, with confidence, care, and someone truly in their corner.

And if her journey has taught her anything, it’s this: Say yes. Embrace the unknown. And always lead with heart. ▶





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JIM LOPEZ

of Pinnacle Home Services



PINNACLE



BUILDING TRUST FROM THE GROUND UP

In real estate, there are few things more important than what lies beneath the surface.

For Jim Lopez, President of Pinnacle Home Services, that truth isn't just metaphorical; it's the foundation of everything he does. With a background rooted in construction, termite inspection, and business, Jim has built a company that serves both homeowners and real

estate professionals with one clear mission: do it right the first time, and do exactly what you say you're going to do.

Pinnacle Home Services specializes in foundation repairs, inspections, crawl space moisture control, and structural repairs—services that are often critical in real estate transactions but not always fully understood. That's where Jim stands out. His approach is not just about fixing problems, but about educating clients and agents so they can make informed, confident decisions.

Jim's path into the business was a natural evolution of his early career. With experience as a remodeling contractor and termite inspector, combined

with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, he saw firsthand a gap in the market. There simply weren't enough reliable, honest service providers in the Sacramento area offering high-quality foundation and structural work.

"I saw a need," Jim shares, "and I wanted to provide an honest opinion for that need."

That mindset continues to shape how he operates today. In an industry where fear-based selling can sometimes take hold, Jim has built his reputation on transparency. He offers multiple repair options, prioritizes fast inspections, and takes the time to walk clients through exactly what's happening with their property and why.

For real estate agents, that approach is invaluable.

Deals don't fall apart because of problems—they fall apart because of uncertainty. Jim understands that. By providing clear communication and honest assessments, he helps agents navigate one of the most sensitive parts of a transaction with confidence and credibility.

"We cater to the real estate market," Jim explains, noting that his team is highly attuned to the timelines, pressures, and expectations agents face every day.

That responsiveness, paired with expertise, is what has made

For him, success isn't measured in volume or growth alone. It's measured in happy customers. That philosophy is deeply personal. Having lived in the Sacramento area for most of his adult life, Jim has built both his business and his life within the same community he serves. His work isn't transactional—it's relational. Every home he steps into represents someone's investment, security, and future.

That sense of responsibility is something he doesn't take lightly.

It's also been shaped by pivotal moments in his life, particularly becoming a father. Jim credits having two children as a defining experience that sharpened his focus and reinforced his commitment to doing the right thing, both in business and at home.

"Being a great father is what I want to be remembered for," he says—a statement that speaks volumes about the values driving his decisions every day.

When he's not working, Jim enjoys spending time with his wife and kids, often heading to Lake Tahoe to recharge and reconnect. He's also an avid cyclist, a hobby that mirrors his mindset: disciplined, steady, and always moving forward.

That same steady approach carries into his business

philosophy. One of the best pieces of advice he's ever received—"live below your means, and remember your customers are always right"—has become a guiding principle in both his personal and professional life.

It's a reminder that longevity isn't built on shortcuts. It's built on consistency, humility, and a commitment to serving others well.

Looking ahead, Jim's goals are simple but meaningful. He aims to continue growing a successful business while working toward financial independence—creating stability not just for himself, but for his family and the team he's built.

And while the future holds growth, one thing won't change: his commitment to putting the customer first.

"We run our business with the customer in mind and provide great customer service," Jim says.

In a world where speed often takes priority over substance, Jim Lopez is a reminder that doing things the right way still matters. For the agents and homeowners he serves, that means more than just a solid foundation—it means peace of mind.

And in real estate, that's everything. ▀

“
Live below
your means, and
remember **your**
customers are
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Pinnacle Home Services a trusted partner in the *Sacramento Real Producers* community.

But beyond the technical side of his business, what truly sets Jim apart is his perspective on success.



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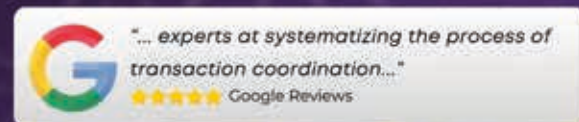


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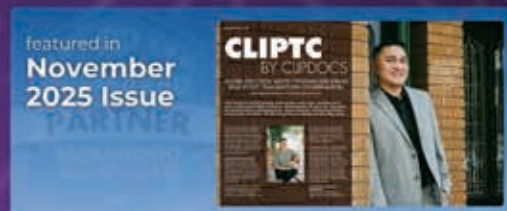


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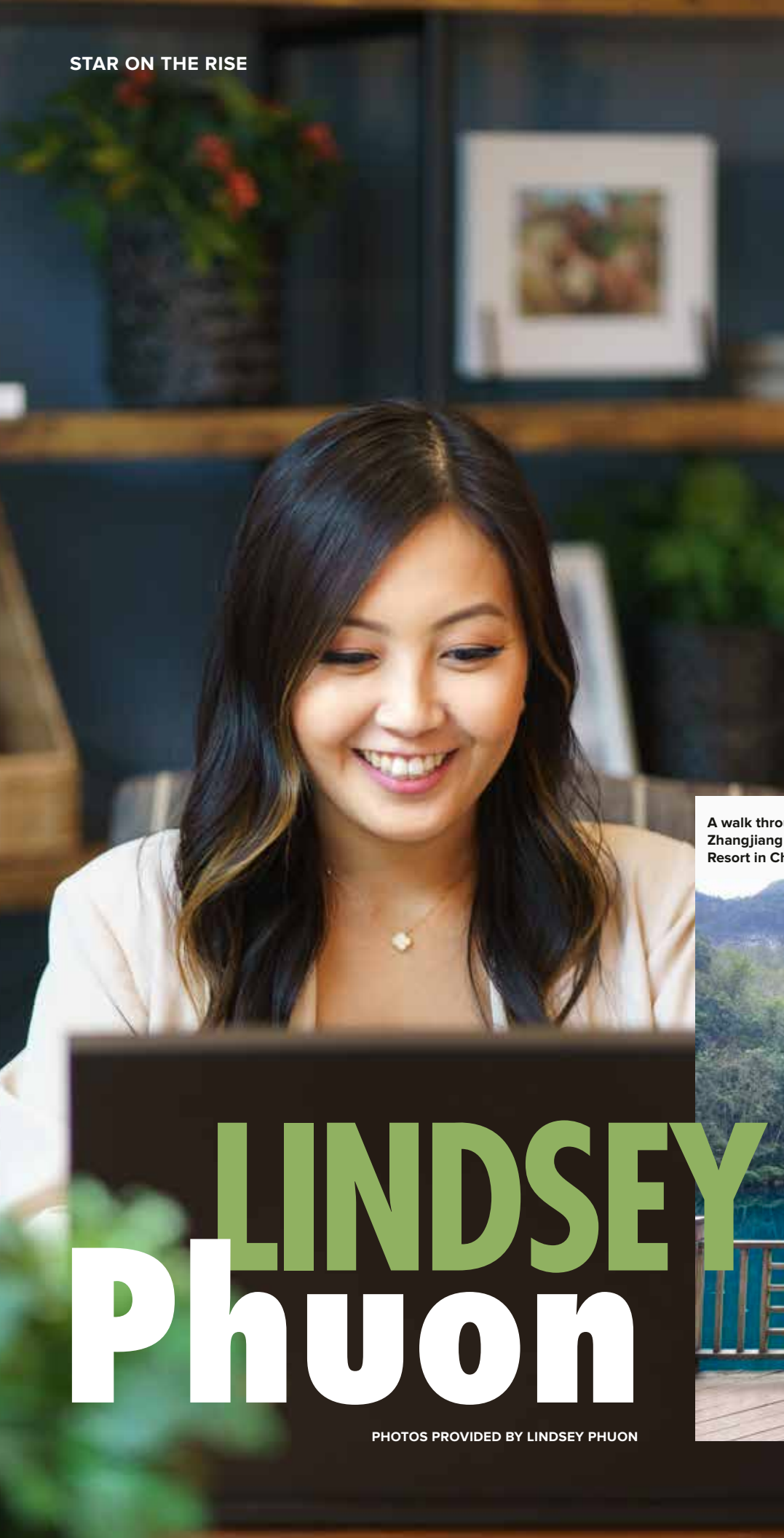
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LINDSEY Phuon

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PORTFOLIO REAL ESTATE

We sat down with Lindsey Phuon, a standout in the Sacramento real estate scene who has quickly made a name for herself through authenticity, grit, and a people-first approach. In just six years, she has built an impressive \$63 million career, all while navigating the early doubts of entering the industry at a young age. Today, she's known not just for her production but for the way she shows up for her clients, guiding first-time buyers, building meaningful relationships, and creating a business rooted in trust, communication, and consistency.

A walk through Libo Zhangjiang Scenic Resort in China.



How many years have you been a real estate agent? How did you enter the field?
I've been in real estate for 6 years. I always had a feeling that becoming a REALTOR® would be part of my future, but when I first started, I honestly thought of it as a career people entered later in life. Fresh out of college, I worried that I looked too young and inexperienced and wondered who would trust me to help them buy a home. Despite those doubts, I decided to take the leap. Over time, I realized that what matters most isn't age — it's the level of care, knowledge, and dedication you bring to your clients. That mindset helped me grow into the career and professional I am today.

What did you do before you became a REALTOR®?
I graduated from UC Davis with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and a minor in Technology Management. After college, I worked in the financial industry, where I was exposed to many different types of businesses and entrepreneurs. Being around people who were building their own



businesses helped me reflect on what I was truly passionate about. I realized I had always been drawn to homes and real estate, and those conversations ultimately encouraged me to pursue a career in the industry. My background in communications has also been incredibly valuable in real estate. Whether I'm negotiating a deal, guiding first-time homebuyers through the process, or collaborating with other professionals, it's helped me communicate clearly and make sure my clients feel confident and informed every step of the way.

What is your career volume as a REALTOR®?
\$63M

What was your total volume last year?
\$12,357,907.50

What awards have you achieved as a REALTOR®?
I was honored to be selected for the National Association of REALTORS® 30 Under 30 class of 2025, which recognizes rising leaders in the real estate industry across the country. Within my brokerage, Portfolio Real Estate, I have consistently ranked among the Top 5 Producers since 2020.

I've also been recognized as part of the Sacramento Association of REALTORS® Top 1% of Producers and have been a Masters Club member every year from 2020–2024.

In addition, I was named an AREAA A-List Top Producer in both 2023 and 2024, was a finalist for the Sacramento



Sedona, Arizona - one of Lindsey's favorite places to hike and recharge.

Association of REALTORS® Rising Star Award in November 2024, and was recognized by PropertySpark as the #1 among the Top 15 Elk Grove Real Estate Agents on Social Media.

What are you most passionate about right now in your business?
Right now, I'm most passionate about helping first-time homebuyers, giving back through community involvement, and continuing to build stronger systems within my business.

Being in a similar age group as many of my clients has been really special because I get to walk alongside people who are reaching huge milestones in their lives. I've helped individuals purchase their very first home after years of saving, couples buy their first home together, and growing families find a space that fits their next chapter. Being trusted to guide someone through such an important moment in their life is incredibly fulfilling.

“
Entering the industry at a young age taught me a lot about **CONFIDENCE, PERSEVERANCE, and FINDING MY VOICE.**”

I'm also passionate about staying involved in the community and in the real estate industry. Through organizations like YPN and AREAA, I've been able to contribute to events, service initiatives, and leadership opportunities that support both our local community and fellow professionals.

On the business side, I've developed a strong appreciation for systems.



Cruising through the Bahamas

Early in my career, I focused mostly on learning the day-to-day of real estate, but over time, I realized how important it is to build strong processes behind the scenes. Having those systems in place allows me to operate more efficiently and ultimately provide a better experience for my clients.

What has been the most rewarding aspect of your business?

Without a doubt — my clients.

The individuals and families I've had the opportunity to work with have made this career incredibly meaningful. Being trusted to guide someone through such an important life decision is something I never take lightly.

What has been your biggest challenge as a REALTOR®? In entering the industry?

Early in my career, my biggest challenge was confidence. There was so

much to learn all at once. At first, I thought real estate was mostly about showing homes, but I quickly realized how much more goes into it — reviewing contracts, negotiating deals, managing timelines, and navigating a lot of legal documentation.

As I've grown in the industry, the challenges have evolved. Now it's about constantly adapting to changes in the market, keeping up with advancements in technology, and finding a healthy balance between work and personal life.

How does real estate fit into your dreams and goals?

Real estate ended up being an unexpected but perfect fit for my personality and goals. I've always had an entrepreneurial mindset and loved the idea of building something of my own. In many ways, real estate feels like project management — guiding a process from start to finish, coordinating people, solving problems, and making sure everything moves forward. I also love the marketing side of the business, so it allows me to combine creativity with strategy while building my personal brand.

It's also a very humbling career because every transaction is different, and there is always something new to learn.

What is your favorite part of being a REALTOR®?

The relationships.

Sometimes I start working with clients I've never met before, and along the way,

I get to learn their story and what led them to this moment. It's incredibly rewarding to help someone purchase a home, sell a home, or transition into a new stage of life.

I've had the privilege of working with family members, old high school and college friends, referrals from past clients, and people who eventually became friends along the way. Having a front-row seat to these life moments is something I truly value.

How do you define success?

To me, success is having both time freedom and financial stability at a relatively young age. It's the ability to spend time with the people you love, pursue the things that bring you joy, and help others accomplish their goals along the way. Living with purpose and passion every day is what success looks like to me.

Did you see yourself becoming this successful when you first began your career?

Absolutely not.

Starting a business is already challenging, and on top of that, I was learning an entirely new industry. In the beginning, I had to figure out who I could trust, where to find guidance, and how to build my confidence. I also struggled with the perception of looking young in an industry where many people have decades of experience.

What I didn't realize at the time was how much real estate would shape and change my life. The growth that can happen in this

career over a short period of time is incredible.

To what would you attribute your rapid success in the industry?

Perseverance and grit have played a big role. I've also been fortunate to learn from great mentors and come from a family with a strong work ethic and entrepreneurial mindset.

But honestly, a big part of my success comes from my sphere — the people who believed in me and trusted me early on in my career. Getting that first client is often the hardest part, and I'm incredibly grateful to the people who gave me that opportunity.

What sets you apart?

My authenticity, integrity, transparency, communication, organization, and knowledge of the process. I believe in being honest with my clients, keeping them informed, and guiding them through each step with clarity.

What are your future goals and plans for achieving them?

One of my long-term goals is to continue investing in real estate myself. I feel fortunate that my career allows me to help others buy, sell, and invest in property while also learning how to build my own portfolio.

My goal is to continue saving and purchasing investment properties over time so I can build long-term financial stability and potentially create opportunities for future generations of my family.

What advice or recommendations would you give to agents just starting out?

Find a mentor you truly respect and want to learn from.

Stay focused, try different things, and explore niches that interest you — whether that's hosting open houses, door knocking, networking, or community events. Once you find what works for you, commit to it and stay consistent.

Most importantly, stay humble, stay authentic, and be intentional with your efforts. Real estate takes patience, and success doesn't happen overnight. If you continue to show up, do the work, and genuinely care about the people you serve, the results will follow.



Tell us about your family.

My family is incredibly important to me. We're lucky to have a big family, and we make it a priority to spend time together, especially during holidays and major life milestones.

Because we have multiple generations and so many different personalities and career paths, there's always someone you can talk to, learn from, or lean on for advice. I would describe my family as grounded, supportive, and caring.

Are there any charities or organizations you support? Please tell us about them and your involvement.

Since joining the Sacramento Association of REALTORS® (SAR) in 2020, I've embraced opportunities to contribute to

the REALTOR® community and give back locally.

I served as Vice Chair of the Young Professionals Network (YPN) in 2025 and currently serve as the 2026 Chair. Through YPN and AREAA, I've helped organize and participate in events such as charity galas, food drives, and women's empowerment panels.

I've also volunteered with the Sacramento Food Bank, Elk Grove Food Bank, and supported initiatives like Run4Hunger and the Shamrock Shuffle.

Through YPN leadership, I've also had the opportunity to attend CAR Legislative Day in Sacramento to advocate for our industry and homeowners.

What are your hobbies and interests outside of the business?

I love being outdoors and staying active. Exercise and movement are really important to me.

I enjoy hiking, camping, biking, water activities, and anything that allows me to spend time in nature. Strength training is also something I enjoy because it helps me feel mentally and physically strong.

I try to stay mindful about taking care of my health — how I move, what I eat, and how I treat my body. I'm not perfect at it, but it's something I try to prioritize.

Outside of being in nature, I've also been learning how to cook. One of my personal goals is to get better at cooking so I can host and

“

Stay **HUMBLE**, stay **AUTHENTIC**, and be **INTENTIONAL** with your efforts.

”

cook meals for friends and family, because I believe food has a special way of bringing people together. I'm definitely still learning, but it's something I've really been enjoying.

In closing, is there anything else you would like to share?

I'm incredibly grateful for the people who have supported me along the way — my family, mentors, partner, and the clients who have trusted me with such important moments in their lives. Being able to serve my community and help others achieve their goals through real estate is something I never take for granted.

Entering the industry at a young age taught me a lot about confidence, perseverance, and finding my voice. Over time, I've learned that authenticity and consistency matter far more than trying to fit a certain mold. Real estate is a career that constantly challenges you to grow, and I try to approach every experience — both successes and challenges — as an opportunity to keep learning and becoming better for the people I serve ▀

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Cassidy Hutton | Escrow Officer

Escrow is in Cassidy's blood. Her mom is and has been an escrow officer for many years, so this industry has always felt like home. She's a lifelong Rocklin/Roseville local, a mom of two, and the unofficial office stylist. She has loved redecorating the space to make it feel bright, relaxing, and somewhere people truly enjoy walking into every day.



Kristen Lerch | Branch Manager, Escrow Officer

With 23 years in escrow, Kristen Lerch serves as Branch Manager of Highland Pointe, bringing expertise, efficiency, and a client-first approach to every transaction. Known for her calm presence and problem-solving mindset, she helps make even the most complex deals feel seamless. Outside of work, she enjoys escaping to Hawaii and unwinding with a glass of champagne in hand.



Missy McNabb | Senior Escrow Officer

Missy McNabb brings over 40 years of industry experience to every transaction. Her extensive knowledge includes handling a wide range of escrow types such as resales, construction loans, 1031 exchanges, REO and HUD -owned properties, short sales, probate and trust sales, new construction, subdivisions, lot splits, and development escrows. Known for her attention to detail and calm, solutions-oriented approach, Missy is a trusted resource for clients and industry partners alike. A resident of Loomis, CA for 36 years, she proudly serves the greater Placer County community with professionalism and care.



Heather Bierwirth | Sales Executive

Heather Bierwirth has nearly 6 years of experience as a Sales Executive. She is known for her relationship-first approach and strategic mindset. Heather finds great importance in providing thoughtful support and authentic followup. Her style is approachable, responsive, and solutions-oriented, making her a trusted resource for her clients and teammates. She is married with two children who are very active in school and sports. Supporting and cheering her children on, traveling, and reading are amongst her favorite things. With a busy home life, she brings intention with each day and above all values connection, consistency, and delivering exceptional experience from start to finish.



Heather Durborough | Sales Executive

Heather Durborough has been with Chicago Title for 10 years and has earned Top Producer status, ranking in the top 5% nationwide for the past eight years. She's known for building strong, lasting relationships, lightning-fast followup, and a communication style that's best described as enthusiastic - inside voice not included. Heather and her husband spend their off-hours chauffeuring their two kids around town and traveling the world. She's an avid baker (especially pies), a devoted reader (whose biggest stress is when all her library holds become available at once), and a proud yacht rock enthusiast.

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BUILT ON GRIT, DRIVEN BY RELATIONSHIPS

THE STORY OF **JIM JEFFERS JR.**

For Jim Jeffers Jr., real estate has never just been about transactions. It has always been about people, relationships, and showing up when it matters most.

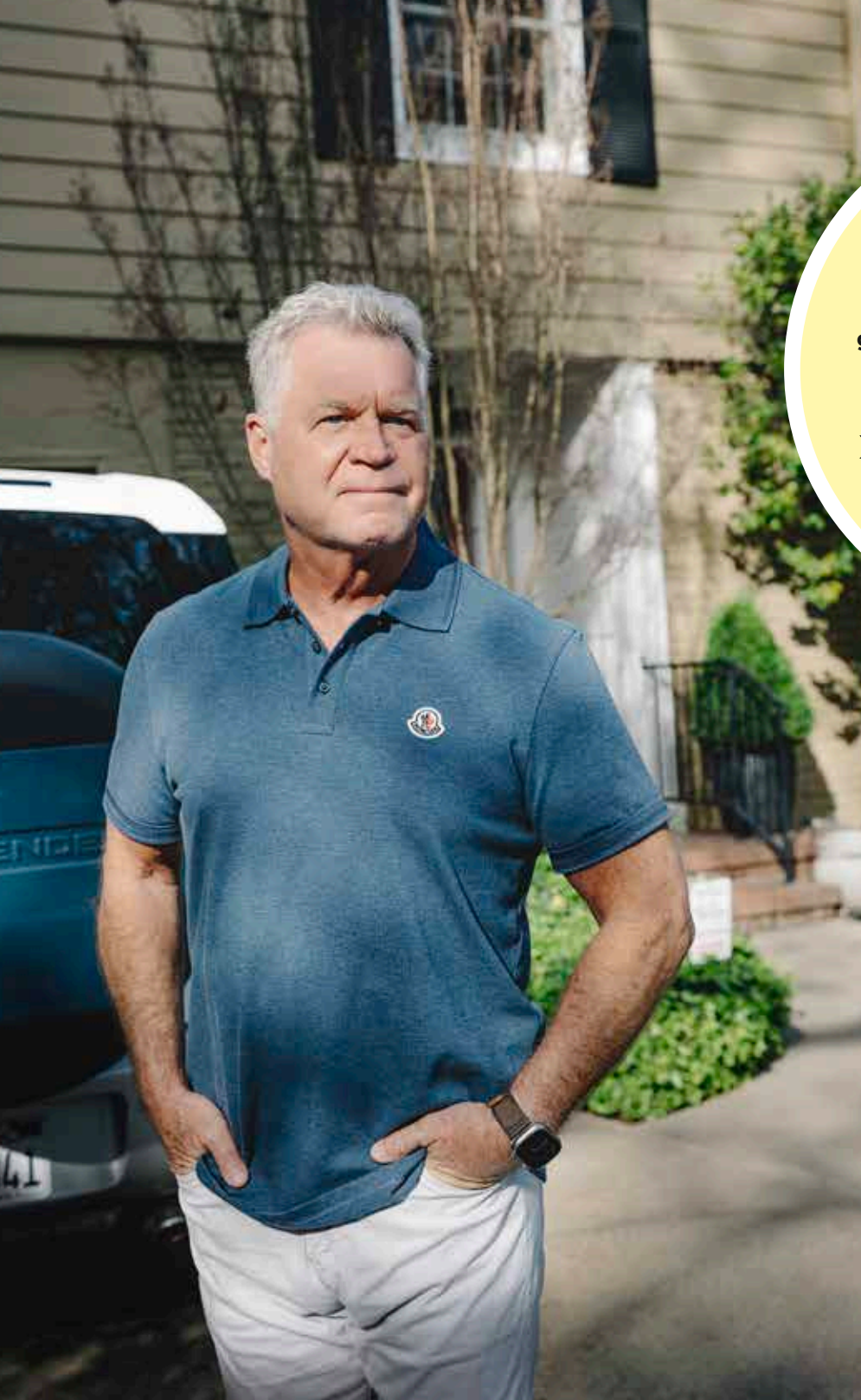
BY CHRISTINA KITCHEN
PHOTOS BY SARAH NELSON PHOTOGRAPHY

A Sacramento native, Jim's story begins long before his career in real estate. Although he was born in Napa, his family moved to Sacramento when he was just one year old. He grew up deeply rooted in the community, attending local schools and stepping into leadership roles early in life. From serving as Student Body President to leading the marching band as Drum Major and playing varsity basketball, Jim developed a strong foundation in responsibility, discipline, and teamwork.

But the defining chapter of his life came at just ten years old.

After a devastating car accident left his father paralyzed from the neck down, Jim witnessed firsthand what resilience, faith, and determination truly look like. His father returned to teaching after years of rehabilitation and went on to coach basketball, leading teams to incredible success. Watching him refuse to give up shaped Jim's mindset for life.

No excuses. Keep going.



Jim entered the real estate industry in 1984, bringing with him a background in finance as a loan company manager. Early in his career, he was surrounded by strong influences who helped shape the way he would approach the business.

One of those was his friend Jerry Bringham, who got licensed at the same time. While Jerry went into land development, Jim worked closely with custom home builders, helping clients move from raw land to completed homes. It was a hands-on,

“
I still love seeing the look on my clients’ faces when they get the keys to their new home. That moment never gets old.”
”

foundational experience that gave him a deep understanding of the process from start to finish.

Another key influence came from his mentor, Geoff Zimmerman at Dunnigan Realtors. Jim’s desk sat right in front of hers, giving him a front-row seat to how she handled clients and challenges. He paid close attention.

What stood out most was her approach: never bring a problem without also bringing a solution. That lesson stayed with him and continues to define how he does business today.

More than four decades later, Jim is still going strong. In the past year alone, he closed 19 transactions totaling \$23 million in volume. But for Jim, numbers have never been the true measure of success.

What drives him is much simpler.

“I still love seeing the look on my clients’ faces when they get the keys to their new home,” he says. “That moment never gets old.”

Over time, many of those clients have become lifelong friends. In a city Jim describes as a

“small big town,” relationships are everything. His business has been built almost entirely through referrals, often spanning generations.

That relationship-first approach is what truly sets Jim apart.

He doesn’t run a large team. He doesn’t pass clients off to assistants. When you work with Jim, you get Jim. He answers his phone. He stays involved from start to finish. And he holds everyone in the transaction to a high standard, from inspectors to contractors, ensuring his clients are always protected.

“I’ve seen just about every situation you can encounter in real estate,” Jim says. “What matters most is how you handle it.”

Outside of work, Jim’s greatest pride is his family. He and his wife, Jennifer, have two adult children and recently welcomed their first grandchild, a new chapter that has brought even more joy into their lives. Whether traveling, cooking, or simply spending time together, family remains at the center of everything he does.

When asked how he defines success, Jim doesn’t hesitate.

“I think success is having your kids want to vacation with you.”

After more than 42 years in the business, his legacy is clear. It is not just about being one of Sacramento’s top agents. It is about consistency, integrity, and doing things the right way, every single time.

Because for Jim Jeffers Jr., success was never about shortcuts. It was always about showing up, working hard, and never giving up. ▀



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BULENT OZEL

**MATI MODERN
GREEK CUISINE**

PHOTOS BY SARAH NELSON PHOTOGRAPHY

We sat down with Bulent Ozel, owner of MATI Modern Greek Cuisine, to talk about the journey behind his growing restaurant brand and the passion that fuels it. From humble beginnings after moving to the United States to building multiple successful restaurants, Bulent's story is rooted in hard work, consistency, and a deep belief that food is about more than what's on the plate. It's about connection, experience, and creating a place where people feel welcomed like family.

What is your business, and what does your business do?
Restaurant.

For events specifically, what services does your business offer?
Food & Beverage.

What work (school, etc.) did you do before your current business?
Rose Park Bistro.

What were the life events that led you to your current business?
My journey into the restaurant business was shaped by a combination of passion, life experience, and a desire to create something meaningful for the community. Food has always played a big role in my life, whether through family gatherings, learning recipes from loved ones, or simply enjoying the experience of bringing people together around a meal.



Tell us more about that. Why did you get into your business?
My decision to get into the restaurant business really grew out of a lifelong passion for food and bringing people together. Some of my best memories growing up revolved around meals with family and friends, where food was the center of conversation, connection, and celebration. Those experiences made me realize how powerful a

simple meal can be in creating community and lasting memories.

What do you find most fulfilling about your work?
Creating a great experience for every guest who walks through the door. It is not just about the food, it is about the atmosphere, the service, and making people feel welcome and taken care of.



“I focus on people, not just food, and aim to create a place where everyone feels **WELCOME AND VALUED.**”



Share 3 specific things that you do in your business that others in your line of work don't do.

We focus heavily on personalized service, remembering guests' favorite dishes, dietary preferences, and special occasions.

We emphasize transparency and storytelling around our food, explaining ingredients, preparation, and what makes dishes unique.

We prioritize consistency in the overall experience, from service timing to atmosphere and presentation.

Tell us about your personal background.

I am originally Kurdish from Turkey and moved to the United States in 2009. I started working as a valet, then transitioned into the restaurant industry as a busser. I worked my way up learning every aspect of the business. After gaining experience, I opened my first restaurant in 2017, expanded to Roseville and Folsom, and most recently opened Mati. Everything I have achieved has come from hard work and persistence.

How has your past shaped who you are today?

It taught me hard work, resilience, and humility. Starting from the ground up helped me understand every role in a business and built the work ethic needed to succeed.

Can you share the story of one pivotal moment or time in your life?

Around 2011, I decided to fully commit to the restaurant industry. That shift changed my mindset from just having a job to building a



career and eventually owning restaurants.

How did that event shape you into the person you are today?

It taught me ownership, attention to detail, discipline, and patience. It also shaped how I treat people, understanding that customers are the reason the business exists.

Tell us about your family and what you enjoy doing together.

I am married and have a son who just turned 10. My family means everything to me. My son has autism and works very hard, and I am very proud of him. We focus on giving him the best life possible.

When you aren't working, what's your favorite way to spend time?

Spending time with my family, biking, relaxing, and being present together.

What is your favorite quote? And why?

“Success doesn't come overnight; it is built step by step.” It reflects my journey and reminds me that dedication and persistence pay off.

If there is one thing you want to be sure the article captures about you or how you run your business, what would that be?

Everything I have built comes from hard work, passion, and care for people. I focus on people, not just food, and aim to create a place where everyone feels welcome and valued.

Define Success.

Success is seeing progress from nothing and growing step by step through dedication, learning, and consistency.

What is the best advice you have ever received?

Treat the business like it is your own, no matter your position.

What has been your greatest achievement?

Building a successful life and business from the ground up, and most importantly, my family.

What do you want to be remembered for?

Creating places where people feel welcome, customers are treated like family, and employees are valued.

What does the future hold for you, personally and professionally?

Personally, continuing to support my family and son. Professionally, expanding my restaurants, building strong teams, and improving the customer experience.

Anything else you wish to say or highlight?

Everything I have achieved is for my family, my team, and the community. I am proud of how far I have come and motivated for what is ahead.





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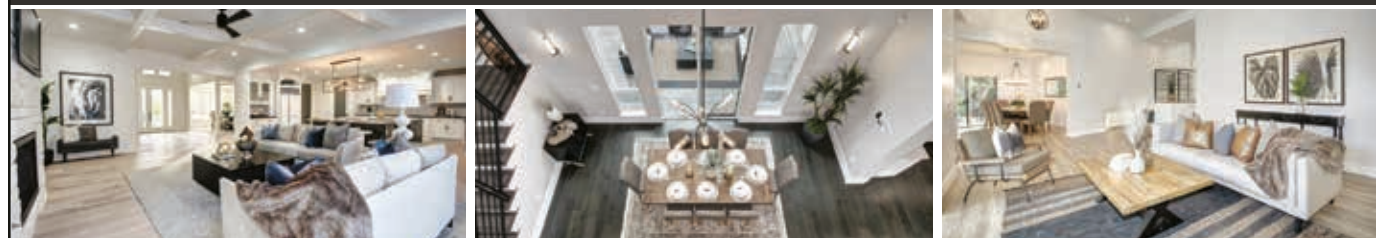
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Gina Kidd

Relationships First, Always

BY CHRISTINA KITCHEN
PHOTOS BY OLHA MELOKHINA PHOTOGRAPHY

For Gina Kidd of Windermere Signature Properties, real estate has never been about sales. It's about people.

"I don't consider myself in sales," Gina says. "I'm a people person. I care about what people want in life."

That perspective has shaped not only her business, but the experience her clients have come to know and trust. Since entering real estate in 2019, Gina has built a thriving career rooted in relationships, closing \$21 million in sales last year alone. But for her, success isn't measured in volume. It's measured in connection.

Gina's path to real estate was anything but traditional. A graduate of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where she was a collegiate tennis player, she

went on to work in education, becoming a teacher and then a principal. She also spent time in marketing and sales for New York Yankees affiliates while supporting her husband's professional baseball journey. Later, she dedicated years to raising her three daughters as a stay-at-home mom.

It was a season of life that prepared her in ways she couldn't have predicted.

When her husband faced a life-threatening health crisis and needed a heart transplant, everything changed. "He died on my birthday and got a new heart on his," she shares. "After that, I stopped sweating the small stuff."



“

I take the time to really get to know people, their story, their goals.”

That experience reshaped her outlook on life and business. Today, Gina approaches every client relationship with a deeper sense of purpose, patience, and perspective.

“I treat my clients like family,” she says. “We only get so many trips around the sun. I want to make the most of every interaction.”



That mindset shows up in the way she works. Gina is known for creating authentic, meaningful connections rather than leading with data or sales tactics. At open houses, you won't find her pushing flyers or statistics. Instead, she focuses on conversation.

“I listen,” she explains. “I take the time to really get to know people, their story, their goals. Sometimes what should be a 15-minute meeting turns into an hour. That's the part I love.”

For Gina, the most fulfilling part of the job is simple: connection. “I don't see clients. I see friends,” she says. “Being invited into someone's life during such an important moment is incredibly rewarding.”

Her clients know that when they work with Gina, they're getting more than a transaction. They're getting someone who will advocate fiercely on their behalf and care deeply about the outcome.

Outside of real estate, Gina's life revolves around family and the outdoors. After moving to Folsom more than 15 years ago, she found the lifestyle she had always dreamed of. Whether it's fishing at the lake, camping in Yosemite, or spending time at Lake Almanor, her happiest moments are often the simplest ones.

“Give me a fishing pole, a tennis court, or time with my family, and I'm happy,” she says. Family remains her definition of success. Married for 26 years, she and her husband have raised three daughters, whom she considers her greatest achievement. Even now, with two away at college, she cherishes the everyday moments.



“

You can't get time back. So I try to soak it all in.”

“You can't get time back,” Gina says. “So I try to soak it all in.”

Looking ahead, Gina plans to continue doing what she loves: building relationships, helping people, and showing up fully for those around her.

“I'm just Gina,” she says with a smile. “Nothing flashy. I just want to help people and make their lives better. If I can do that, then my job is done.”



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