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CORY WILLIAMS

Finding Her Place in Real Estate

CASA BAY PHOTOGRAPHY

Cory Williams didn't grow up envisioning a career in real estate. Her early years were shaped by a very different environment, both geographically and professionally. Like many in the industry, her path wasn't carefully mapped out. Instead, it was built through experience, service, and a steady desire to help people find something better.

Originally from Fort Morgan, Colorado, Cory describes her hometown as a small, quiet place where "there aren't very many stoplights," and life moves at a slower pace. It's the kind of community where everyone knows each other, and where opportunities can feel limited unless you're willing to leave.

Her move to Colorado Springs came in a way many can relate to, following a relationship. When that relationship ended, Cory made a decision that would shape her future. She stayed.

"I loved it here," she says. The combination of mountains,



a growing city, and a still connected community offered something she hadn't quite experienced before, a place that felt expansive, yet grounded.

A Background Built on Service

Before entering real estate, Cory spent more than a decade in healthcare, building a career rooted in helping others. Her experience spanned roles as a CNA, phlebotomist, mortician, and ultimately a physical therapist assistant.

It's an unusually diverse background, but one theme remained constant: service. "I really wanted to take care of people," she explains.

However, over time, the realities of the healthcare system began to shift her perspective. Insurance limitations, billing pressures, and administrative constraints made it increasingly difficult to focus on what mattered most: patient care.

"You're trying to help people, but there's this constant push for billing and approvals." After 12 years in the field, Cory reached a turning point. She needed something different, something that would allow her to continue serving others without those limitations.

A Leap into the Unknown

Real estate was not originally part of Cory's long term plan, but it was a field she had long been drawn to.

When the idea was introduced to her by her sister, she did not hesitate. Instead, she committed fully. She dove in headfirst while still working in healthcare. After long days at work, she attended in person classes in downtown Colorado Springs, building the foundation for her next chapter.

In 2020, one of the most unpredictable years to enter the market, Cory earned her license and stepped into an environment unlike anything most agents had experienced. "I mastered contracts immediately," she recalls.

There was little room for hesitation, but the moment offered opportunity: rapid growth, high demand, and early momentum.

Cory joined a team immediately, recognizing the value of guidance. That early support helped her navigate the steep learning curve and build confidence in a fast moving market.

Building Confidence and Independence

As her experience grew, so did her understanding, not just of real estate mechanics, but of her place within the industry.

While she valued the structure and support of a team, she also recognized the importance of independence and building something of her own.

Today, Cory operates independently while maintaining strong industry relationships, a balance that allows her to stay connected without feeling confined.

"I still value the camaraderie," she says, "but I also want to do things my way."

That clarity came with time, through experience, trial and error, and a deeper understanding of what matters most to her.

A Natural Fit

Looking back, it's clear how Cory's healthcare background prepared her for real estate, even if it wasn't obvious at the time.

While she did not come from a traditional sales background, her experience required trust, communication, and genuine human connection, skills that now define her approach with clients.

"It's really about being personable and building trust."





“I know how to sell a home,” she says, “but that doesn’t mean it’s the right home for them.” Her focus on communication, honesty, and empathy reflects the same mindset she carried in healthcare. For Cory, real estate is more than transactions, it’s about helping people navigate one of the most significant decisions of their lives.

“A home purchase can feel overwhelming,” she says. “My goal is to make it painless and straightforward.”

That perspective reflects her commitment to keeping people at the center in an industry that can sometimes lose sight of them.

Life Beyond Real Estate

Outside of her business, Cory’s life centers around family and simple, meaningful routines. As a mother, much of her time is spent with her young daughter, walking, playing outside, and enjoying everyday moments.

She also prioritizes personal time, including running a small book club where members explore everything from fantasy to romance.

When she is not working or reading, Cory enjoys staying active, often spending time playing pickleball, a hobby that brings both energy and connection into her routine. In quieter moments, she enjoys working on puzzles, an activity that mirrors the patience and focus she brings to her work.

It’s a balance that reflects her current season of life, building a career, raising a family, and continuing to grow both personally and professionally.

Moving Forward

Cory Williams’ journey into real estate may not have been planned, but it has been intentional. From a small town upbringing to a career in healthcare, and now real estate, each step has built upon the last. The common thread has always been her desire to help others, and to do so in a way that feels genuine.

She may still be early in her career, but her direction is clear: to build a business rooted in trust, stay connected to her community, and grow at a pace aligned with her values.

For Cory, success is not defined by volume alone, it is about doing the work well and ensuring the people she serves feel supported every step of the way.

And that, more than anything, is what keeps her moving forward. 📌

That trust becomes especially important when working with clients relocating from out of state or even overseas.

“Building that relationship over the phone, then meeting in person after helping them find a home, that’s a big moment.”

Those experiences remain some of the most meaningful in her career.

Values That Guide the Process

At the core of Cory’s business is a simple philosophy, listen first, guide second.

She prioritizes understanding what her clients truly want, rather than steering them toward what may be easiest or most convenient.

“**A home purchase can feel overwhelming.** MY GOAL IS TO MAKE IT PAINLESS AND STRAIGHTFORWARD.”



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Ryan grew up in the trades, helping his father run a roofing business in Texas from a young age. He learned how to manage operations, speak with homeowners, and build long-term trust—skills that would later form the foundation of his approach to photography. “Even as a teenager, I was helping with sales



and working alongside my dad,” he says. “I always knew I wanted to build something service-oriented.”

Sacha, a Texas native and trained ballet dancer, brings her own creative energy and heart for community to the business. “We’re storytellers,” she explains. “Whether it’s through dance, music, or media, we believe in the



power of story to connect people—and homes have stories, too.”

The couple met in high school—Spanish class, to be exact—where Ryan was captain of the football team and Sacha was captain of the cheer squad. Their friendship turned into a partnership that has weathered life’s changes, from planting churches to raising five children. Their mutual love for Colorado, built on years of family vacations and ministry work in the area, eventually led them to relocate to Colorado Springs—a move that would lay the groundwork for their business.

“We always felt called to Colorado,” Ryan says. “It started as a dream, something we’d say to each other: ‘If we could live anywhere, we’d live in Colorado.’ And when the doors opened, it felt like a calling—not just a move.”

That calling originally pointed them toward ministry. Ryan served as a pastor in Texas, and the couple assumed they might plant a church in Colorado Springs. But in time, their shared passion for storytelling, photography, and serving others evolved into something unexpected: a full-time real estate media company.

Ryan had long pursued landscape photography as a creative outlet. During the pandemic lockdowns, he began sharing photos of Colorado’s natural beauty online—images that resonated with friends and followers during a difficult season. As interest grew, so did the realization that photography could become more than a hobby.

“We didn’t even know real estate photography was an industry,” Ryan admits. “But the more we learned, the more we realized we

could bring something different to the table—something driven by service, not just the camera.”

In 2022, Freedom Real Estate Photography was born. Today, the business is built on the motto: Our family serving yours.

That motto is more than a slogan—it’s a guiding principle. Ryan and Sacha go far beyond the scope of traditional real

“Our media is great, but it’s the care we put into each shoot that sets us apart. We want agents to know that **we’re in their corner, cheering them on.**”

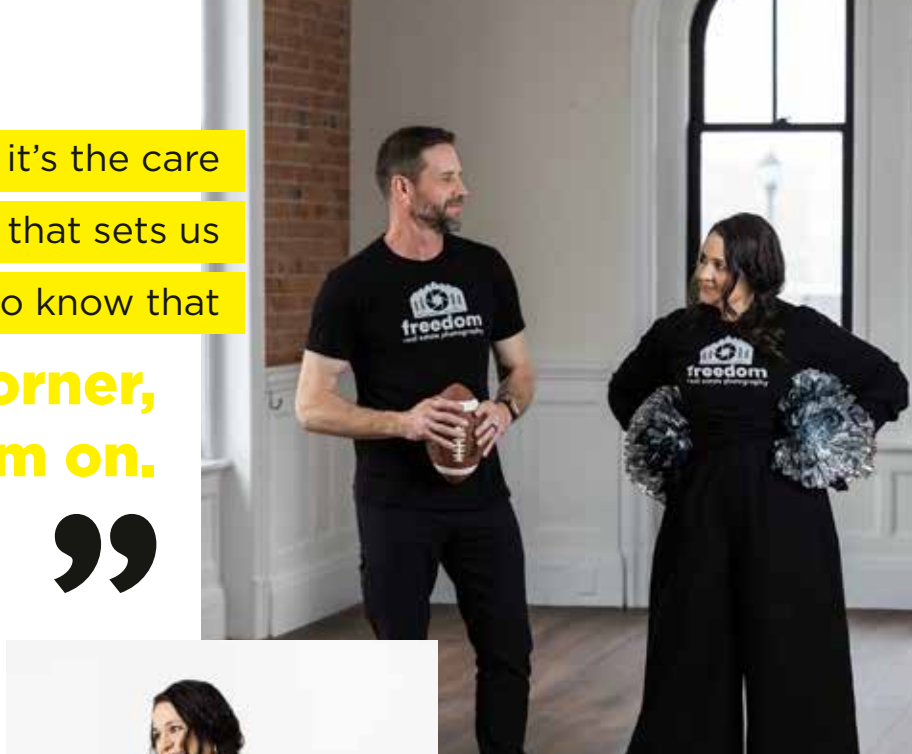
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“Our media is great,” Ryan says, “but it’s the care we put into each shoot that sets us apart. We want agents to know that we’re in their corner, cheering them on.”

Sacha agrees, highlighting the artistic difference as well. “Ryan’s videos tell a story. They don’t just showcase a property—they capture how it feels to be there. That emotional connection matters. When buyers watch our videos, they feel something—and that helps homes stand out.”

Freedom Real Estate Photography is truly a family affair. Their son Tyler works in partnership with Ryan as a current photographer and content creator, while Tyler’s wife, Carisse, assists with administration. Their daughter in law, Gianna, assists with operations and logistics. Sacha balances supporting the business with youth mentorship and teaching, and the Warrums often sing and make music together as a family. Their daughter Lexi is in a local band, and their children are involved in theater, dance and community events. Whether it’s visiting the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, celebrating at holiday parades, or hiking Colorado trails, the family thrives on shared experiences and local connection.

Their company’s name—Freedom—also reflects a broader mission. “We want to



give agents the freedom to focus on what they do best,” Sacha explains. “When they hire us, they don’t have to worry about the details—we’ve got it covered.”

That vision has earned the trust of many in the Colorado Springs real estate community. But for Ryan and Sacha, the impact goes beyond business success.

“We’re fulfilled by the relationships we’ve built,” Ryan says. “Our clients

have become our friends. Helping them win—that’s the best part of what we do.”

Outside of work, the Warrums support local nonprofits and ministries throughout Colorado, including organizations like Heart2Hand in Denver. Their focus is on supporting leaders who are already doing great work—whether through time, funding, or promotional efforts. They’ve also contributed to food drives, diaper donations, and youth outreach efforts in Colorado Springs.

When asked who they credit for their success, both immediately point to their family. Ryan acknowledges their kids and his parents, Berry and Bonnie, for speaking life into their dreams and modeling a life of generosity. Sacha credits God, their children, and their family for lifting them up and helping them push forward when things got hard.

“This wasn’t easy,” she says. “There were times we could have quit. But we kept going—and now we’re living the vision we talked about for years.”

Their story is one of grit, service, and beauty—both in the homes they capture and the community they’re helping to build. Freedom Real Estate Photography isn’t just a business—it’s a legacy in the making. ▀

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Michelle

FROM MUSIC TO MAKING MOVES

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When Michelle Gutschick looks back, the path that led her into real estate wasn't a straight line. It curved through classrooms, craft shows, commercial kitchens, and eventually landed her right where she was meant to be: serving families across Colorado Springs with a blend of creativity, practicality, and deeply rooted community connection.

Growing Up and Growing Into Colorado

Michelle first arrived in Colorado Springs at 13, after years of visiting family friends in the area. She remembered one early moment that shaped her impression of Colorado for good: a small neighborhood park near Cheyenne Mountain, where local kids



came over, introduced themselves, and invited her to play basketball. That simple gesture stood out. "I had a memory of loving Colorado because the people were nice," she recalled. So when her parents asked how she felt about moving, she was already sold.

She graduated from Cheyenne Mountain High School, left briefly to attend Colorado State University, earned a degree in music education, and then returned home to build a life and, eventually, a career that seemed to evolve every few years.

A Career Built in Chapters

Michelle started her professional life teaching music at the elementary and junior high levels. But entrepreneurship tugged at her early and often. "I only taught for about three years," she shared, "I'm really a serial entrepreneur."

That entrepreneurial streak led her to open a home-based cake business that grew quickly enough to require a commercial kitchen. When the pace became unsustainable, she sold the business and pivoted again, this time opening an Etsy shop and running "Shelly Homemaker," creating home décor, pillows, signs, and custom pieces. Crafting was creatively satisfying, but not financially proportional to the time she invested. Still, those years set the stage for something bigger.

As clients began asking her to help them style and reimagine spaces, she found herself dipping into light interior design. A friend jokingly pointed out that the process would have been easier "if you would have helped me buy this house in the first place." Michelle laughed it off at the time, but the comment stuck.

A Personal Turning Point

Her path to real estate wasn't instant; she was hesitant at first. She had four small children, a busy household, and plenty on her plate already. Although she was uncertain, Michelle's husband and father both encouraged her to pursue the idea.

Her personal experience with a short sale years earlier had shaped her perspective as well. That difficult chapter gave her firsthand insight into what her clients might endure. “I learned a lot about the industry by living it,” she recalled.

Michelle sought advice from trusted voices, including Realtor Dianna Doyle, who had helped her family through that short sale and later invited her to join her team. After thoughtful research and many conversations, Michelle earned her license in 2017.

Building a Business with Creativity at Its Core

Michelle spent her first two years under Dianna’s mentorship before going solo. What surprised her most was how naturally her diverse skill set fit the work.

Real estate offered the creativity she loved in past ventures, but with clearer boundaries and stronger alignment to her strengths. She found herself leaning into the same vision-building skills she had used in her décor business. She often helps clients imagine themselves in a space. Rather than simply noting room size or finishes, she asks grounding questions such as “Where does your Christmas tree go?” It’s her

way of helping people evaluate whether a house feels like home.

She also sees creativity as a key tool in navigating contracts, problem-solving logistics, and working collaboratively with lenders and agents. “You have to think outside the box and ask how we can make this work.”

The Joy of Community and Collaboration

Some of Michelle’s favorite professional moments come from the relationships built along the way. She appreciates the camaraderie with agents on the other side of the transaction. Her teaching background shows up in her approach, too. With nine years in the business, she now mentors newer agents in her office, remembering clearly how overwhelming those early months felt. “There’s always a desire of wanting to coach,” she said, and real estate gives her room to do exactly that.

A Full Life Outside the Office

Her organizational skills also play a starring role. “My calendar is my lifeblood,” she admitted. Outside of work, Michelle’s world revolves around her family. Her husband is a driver engineer with the fire department, and the family stays connected to the fire community through events, promotions, and gatherings. With four highly active kids, their schedule is a full-time operation alone.

Their oldest, age 18, plays competitive softball and will continue in college. Another daughter dances with a local studio. Their third child also plays softball, and their youngest plays both hockey and baseball. Michelle laughed as she described the pace: “They’re all overly involved,” she said. But the sidelines are exactly where she wants to be.



Real estate gives her the flexibility to show up for her kids while running a healthy business. She averages 20 to 24 transactions a year and hopes to grow into the 30–36 range. She’s clear about one thing: balance matters. “I don’t have any desire at this point to be a 50-plus kind of realtor,” adding, “Maybe someday, but right now I really like having a life.”

Supporting Her Family’s Dreams

One of the most meaningful outcomes of her career was being able to support her husband’s transition from CPA firm partner to firefighter. “It felt so good to be able to provide for him in that way so that he could be fulfilled,” she said. Their family thrives on that shared sense of work they love, life they build together, and the freedom to pursue what matters.

Advice to the Next New Agent

Michelle knows what she would say to the version of herself who was once nervously calling agents for advice: “You’re capable of it.” But she also believes success requires honesty about the workload, personal drive, and self-management the business demands. “Nobody’s telling you to get up in the morning,” she said. They have to decide if they are the type of person that will do it or not.”

Still, she remains a firm believer in possibility. “The sky’s the limit. There’s plenty of business out there for all of us. All you’ve got to do is just keep going.”



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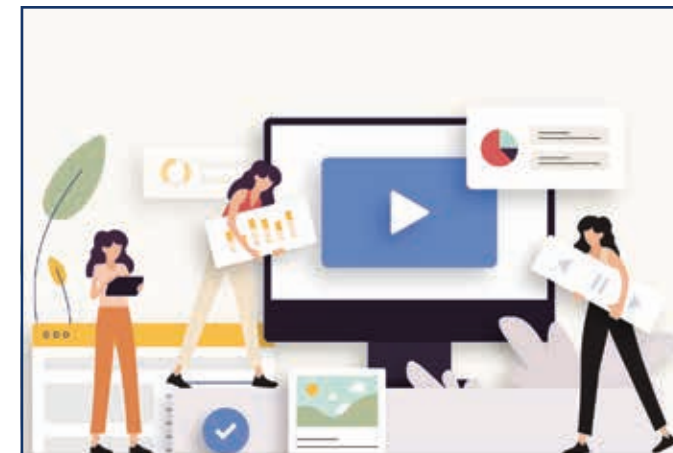
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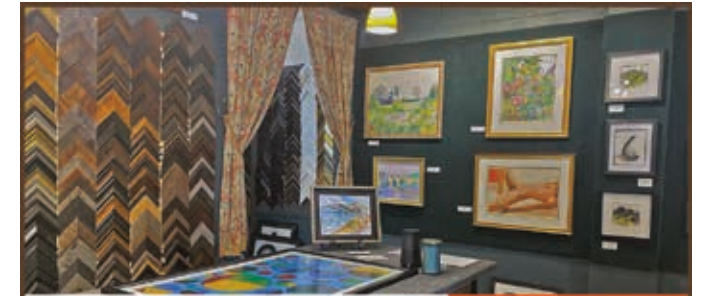
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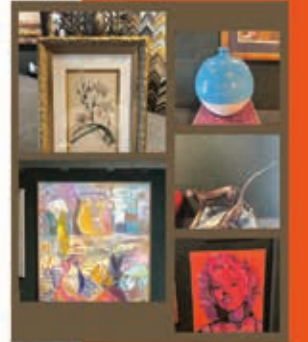
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JAVIER MAZZETTI

Three Decades of Doing the Right Thing, ONE CLIENT AT A TIME



CASA BAY PHOTOGRAPHY

When Joe Cuchiara nominated Javier Mazzetti for this feature, he did it with a simple point: staying in this business for 30+ years isn't just about selling—it's about stewardship. Spend an hour with Javier and you see why. He's built a career on the unfashionable habits of listening carefully, telling hard truths, and measuring success by the quality of a single outcome, not the length of a production sheet.

From Peru to Pikes Peak

Javier was born in Peru and moved to Colorado Springs at age nine in 1971, the youngest of six. His father was an engineer—an entrepreneur who ran a mining-equipment company in Lima before bringing the family north during a turbulent period in South America. The transition demanded sacrifice: the professional standing he'd held in Peru didn't transfer easily to the United States. That family story—ambition tempered by responsibility—left a mark on Javier.

He graduated from Air Academy High School, then, after a gap year flipping burgers and realizing how quickly an idle mind dulls, he rediscovered discipline through a biography of Douglas MacArthur (American Caesar). He enrolled at UCCS, earned an accounting degree magna cum laude, and left for California. Within a couple of years he was controller of a fast-growing record label—"a position I thought I wouldn't reach until my mid-



thirties," he says. Hitting the milestone early forced an honest question: Is this really what I want to do?

He tested the Foreign Service, made it through every analytic and knowledge domain with top marks, and then bombed a practical "in-basket" exercise designed to simulate leading a remote post. "It wasn't an intellectual test," he says, "and it showed me I was great on content and weak on that specific scenario." He returned to Colorado with his wife, Diana, and their four boys; Dean, Brian, Andrew and Daniel, and continued to commute to California as a consultant while considering the career that would carry him for the next three decades: real estate.

The Misfit Who Found His Lane

Javier earned his license in 1993, passing the exam less than four weeks after he walked into a local learning center. He calls himself a "misfit" in the industry—not for lack of care, but because he refuses to organize his business around the usual status markers. He doesn't chase personal branding, completely avoids social media, and doesn't keep score by unit count. His business is entirely referral-based.

His core framework is disarmingly simple: Be an educator. "On day one, I show you the universe—neighborhoods, eras of construction, tradeoffs. The first two days might be frustrating because you'll see a lot you don't want. But by day three, you'll know enough to recognize the right house the moment it appears."

Earn trust, don't lock it in. He asks buyers to sign a one-week agency agreement; never longer and renewable only if they want to continue. "It's unfair to put six months in front of someone who doesn't know me. If I've done my job, you'll choose to stay."

Choose "good" over "busy." To newer agents, he frames the crossroads plainly: "Decide whether you want to be successful or good. Being good is about how you serve each individual client. Being successful is about how many sales you make. You can be both, but you have to decide which will be your guiding standard each and every day.

That philosophy carries consequences. During the frenzy of 2020–2022, Javier had his most productive year—and calls it miserable. The pace was punishing, and two clients in particular were hardwired to buy the wrong homes. “It took everything I had to stop them from making decisions they’d regret,” he says. They ended up in the right properties because he refused to trade long-term outcomes for short-term wins. “That,” he says, “not the income, was the way I could think of that year as a success.”

Market Memory—And a Clearer Compass

Javier’s long view sharpens his counsel. He spotted the early 2005–06 stress signals—exotic loans, buyers “renting” with teaser rates—and forecast a slow bottoming out into 2012. He watched the Waldo Canyon Fire that year displace hundreds (including his own family), injecting insurance dollars and sudden demand back into a sluggish market. Those experiences left him wary of narratives that move faster than fundamentals. “Don’t assume the good times last,” he tells newer agents. “Build a sensible personal P&L. Have the reserves and the habits to weather a year that makes you question everything.”

Professional Spine, Personal Roots

Javier’s values come from the kitchen table, not a script. When his mother needed to sell the family home, he attempted to decline the listing to avoid conflict with his brother, also an agent. Asked later if he’d work harder for his mother than for a client, he answered: “I don’t know how to do it any other way. I do the same job for everyone. The difference is the emotion, not the effort.”

That consistency is also why he resists using advertising to “sell” a listing. “Most advertising sells the agent,” he

“**THERE’S YOUR LESSON. If you don’t do the right thing now, it rarely turns into the right thing later.**”

says. “A good price, good preparation, and proper market exposure are what sell a house. My job is to advise and execute, not to star in a campaign.”

He’s frank about the moments he’s yielded to fatigue, too. A couple of times, worn down by resistance, he let clients buy homes he didn’t believe fit their lives. Both sold within just a few years. Neither called him back. “There’s your lesson,” he says. “If you don’t do the right thing now, it rarely turns into the right thing later.”

A Different Kind of Leadership

Javier has always been civically engaged and plain-spoken. Early in his career he served on the District 20 school board for a four year term, finishing as board president after two reform-minded years. He’s never been shy about difficult conversations—inside the industry or out—but he prefers forums where ideas can be explained, not reduced to soundbites. That preference echoes his real-estate style: slow down, think clearly, tell the truth, then act.

What He Teaches Newer Agents

- Choose your axis. When “good” and “busy” conflict, pick good. Clients feel the difference, and your career compounds on that trust.
- Guard your finances. Assume volatility. Build reserves in the good months to carry you through the quiet ones.
- Educate first. Show the whole market so clients can make informed tradeoffs. The most powerful close is understanding.
- Short leash, high accountability. Earn each extension of the relationship. Freedom creates trust; trust creates cooperation; cooperation creates outcomes.

Outside the Office

Away from contracts and comps, Javier is a history buff with a soft spot for America’s early national and Constitutional history. He’s a cyclist who’s completed the Pikes Peak Cycling



Hill Climb eleven straight years but also knows how to slow down the pace and, these days, prefers a long tandem ride with Diana over almost anything else. In the shop, he’s a committed woodworker—ready to graduate from utilitarian cabinet runs and kitchen refaces to “building beautiful things.” And more recently, you might find him on a ballroom dance floor with his Diana—yet another practice where rhythm, restraint, and clear communication make all the difference.

The Quiet Rule That Lasts

Thirty years in, Javier’s brand hasn’t changed because his premise hasn’t: be honest, be patient, be thorough—then let the results speak. That doesn’t make the loudest noise in a crowded market. But it does something rarer: it earns you a second call from the same family, even after the market has reinvented itself twice.

“People can feel whether you’re solving their problem or yours,” he says. “My job is to help them make the right decision today—and still feel great about it ten years from now.” For a profession that often celebrates speed, Javier Mazzetti’s career reads like a counter-melody: slower, surer, anchored to the client in front of him. It’s an old-school line that has aged remarkably well. ▀



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Empire Title

APRIL SALLADAY

April Salladay serves as a Senior Sales Representative with Empire Title, bringing 19 years of experience and a steady, service-driven approach to REALTORS® across the Pikes Peak region. Known for her consistency and follow-through, April plays a key role in supporting agents through strong communication, relationship-building, and a genuine desire to help others succeed.

Originally born in Denison, Texas, April's path into the title industry came through a pivotal life decision. Early in her career, she worked in hospitals while her husband was in the mortgage industry. After a serious workplace exposure to multiple illnesses in a single day, she and her husband decided it was time for a change—one that would better align with their plans to start a family. That moment marked the beginning of her transition into title, where she found an opportunity to continue helping people while building a long-term, sustainable career.

April joined Empire Title during the blending of two companies, a move that was less about choice and more about timing—but one that ultimately proved to be the right fit. Over the years, she has built credibility through dedication, adaptability, and a willingness to put in the work. Her day-to-day is fast-paced and relationship-focused, filled with calls, texts, emails, meetings, and plenty of time on the road connecting with clients and partners.

What drives April is simple: helping people. She takes pride in finishing what she starts and giving her best effort in everything she does—a mindset shaped by being told early on that she couldn't or wouldn't succeed. With the constant encouragement



CASA BAY PHOTOGRAPHY

of her supportive husband, that challenge became motivation.

Outside of work, April enjoys time in Westcliffe, supporting her adult children, relaxing in the hot tub,

remodeling a new home, and keeping up with her huskies' daily demands for walks, playtime, and treats. REALTORS® who work with April gain a reliable partner who values perseverance, service, and relationships built on trust.

WANDA ABRAMSON



Wanda Abramson serves as Senior Business Development Officer with Empire Title, bringing nearly four decades of experience, perspective, and steady leadership to the real estate community. Having started in the title industry in 1987, Wanda has built a career defined by longevity, adaptability, and a genuine commitment to helping REALTORS® succeed. Her depth of knowledge and approachable style make her a trusted resource for agents at every stage of their careers.

A self-described military brat, Wanda was born in Lawton, Oklahoma and spent her early years traveling across the country before her family settled in Colorado Springs when she was thirteen. That early exposure to change and structure shaped her resilience and people-first mindset. She entered the title business at the encouragement of her sister, who worked as a closer, and quickly found a profession that aligned with her strengths. Nine years ago, Wanda made the move to Empire Title alongside two closers she respected—a decision she considers one of the best of her career. Today, Empire is also a family affair, as her daughter has joined the company as a closer.

Wanda's day-to-day work centers on supporting REALTORS®, lenders, bankers, and attorneys by connecting them with the right title and escrow teams, providing marketing guidance, and helping navigate title issues and closings. She trains agents on industry changes, technology, AI, and social media, attends office sales meetings, and regularly conducts closings herself to support her team. She is especially passionate about working with newer agents, many of whom she has guided from their first transaction into successful, established careers.

Beyond her professional role, Wanda is also a dedicated caregiver to her special-needs sister, Cindy, a responsibility she assumed after her mother's passing. Outside of work, she treasures time with her daughters, son-in-law, grandchildren, and extended family, enjoying camping, traveling, and quiet moments in the mountains. REALTORS® who partner with Wanda gain not only her experience, but a steadfast advocate committed to education, service, and long-term success.

BRENTON BATTISTA



Brenton Battista serves in Business Development with Empire Title, where his role is building relationships and supporting REALTORS® across Colorado Springs. A Peyton native, Brenton brings a local perspective, strong work ethic, and natural people skills to a role centered on connection and service within the real estate community.

His entry into the title industry was not part of a long-laid plan, but rather the result of a timely opportunity and a willingness to learn. Before graduating from college, Brenton was working at a local golf club, when he met Ashley Bush, Empire Title's Division President. Brenton was eager for a professional path that offered growth, challenge, and long-term potential. That openness made the transition not only possible, but exciting. From the start, Empire Title stood out to him for its team culture and genuine care for both clients and colleagues. The company's connection with Stewart Title further reinforced that fit, offering the balance of a close-knit local office backed by national strength and resources.

In his day-to-day role, Brenton thrives in variety. His schedule is fast-paced and constantly changing—meeting with agents, attending events, driving across town, and staying connected with his internal team. No two days look the same, which keeps the work engaging and rewarding. At the core of his role is collaboration: helping agents think through strategies, make connections, and move their businesses forward in meaningful ways.

Brenton credits much of his progress to the support of his family, whose encouragement and values shaped his work ethic and goal-driven mindset, as well as to the Empire Title team that continues to support his growth. What he finds most fulfilling is helping others succeed and building genuine, long-term relationships along the way.

Outside of work, Brenton enjoys time with his fiancée, Izzy, and their dog, Winston. He stays active in the gym and enjoys disc golf, golf, pickleball, and cheering on Denver sports teams. REALTORS® who work with Brenton can expect consistency, energy, and a genuine commitment to partnership built on trust and follow-through.

TRINITY BECHT

Trinity Becht serves as a Business Strategist with Empire Title, where she supports REALTORS® through education, strategy, and forward-thinking business guidance. A proud fifth-generation Colorado Springs native, Trinity brings both deep local roots and a fresh, modern perspective to the real estate community. She grew up immersed in real estate through her mother, a longtime agent in the Pikes Peak region, making the industry feel familiar long before it became her career.

Trinity's path to Empire Title came at a meaningful moment. While completing her business marketing degree at UCCS, she learned of the opportunity through Brenton Battista, who previously held her role before moving into business development. Balancing full-time school with hands-on training, she stepped into the position already equipped with industry context, academic grounding, and a genuine appreciation for Empire's culture. Having spent years attending closings there with her mother, Trinity associated the company with trust, relationships, and consistency—values that ultimately drew her in.

In her day-to-day role, Trinity works closely with agents through one-on-one strategy sessions, helping them clarify goals and implement marketing and business systems that support growth. She regularly teaches classes on topics such as ChatGPT, Canva, SEO, Google Business Profiles, LinkedIn, farming strategies, print marketing, and Answer Engine Optimization (AEO), the latest initiative launched with her national network of Business Strategists through Stewart Title. She is also an active presence at real estate events across Colorado Springs, Pueblo, and Canon City.

Trinity credits her mother, Tanya Stevenson, as her greatest influence, along with mentors who shaped her



perspective, work ethic, and resilience. What she finds most fulfilling is the opportunity to connect with people from all backgrounds and help them translate their individuality into business success. Outside of work,

she enjoys time with family, outdoor adventures, art, music, and growing her vinyl record collection. REALTORS® who work with Trinity gain a thoughtful partner committed to insight, creativity, and long-term growth built on trust.

BRENDA GANN



Brenda Gann serves as Operations Manager and Sales Manager with Empire Title, where she plays a central role in keeping both people and processes aligned for REALTORS® and clients alike. A Colorado native born and raised in Cañon City, Brenda brings a steady presence, deep local understanding, and more than a decade of industry experience to a role that requires adaptability, leadership, and care.

Before entering the title industry, Brenda built a career in healthcare, working in pediatric cardiology. While deeply meaningful, the work carried an emotional weight that eventually led her to consider a new path. Thirteen years ago, an opportunity emerged through relationships that felt familiar and trustworthy. Her son had grown up playing football with the children of several Empire Title team members, and when Brenda began looking for a career change, those connections pointed her toward a company known for its culture. She was told Empire's leadership—Bill and Ronda—truly cared about their people and operated like a family. That promise proved true, and Brenda joined a team where relationships mattered as much as results.

In her current role, no two days are the same. Brenda shifts seamlessly between supporting the sales team, coordinating classes and marketing efforts, stepping in on IT-related needs, and ensuring every closing is properly staffed and supported. Her focus is always on making sure both the team and the transaction are set up for success. She is quick to credit her coworkers for the organization's strength, describing them as some of the hardest-working professionals she has ever known.

What Brenda finds most fulfilling is the teamwork that defines Empire Title's offices. Every transaction is treated as a shared responsibility, with everyone contributing to create a smooth, memorable experience for clients. Outside of work, Brenda enjoys remodeling her home, kayaking on quiet lakes, painting, reading, and attending concerts. REALTORS® who partner with Brenda can count on consistency, collaboration, and a leader who genuinely cares about both people and outcomes.

BILL MCAFEE

Bill McAfee currently serves in Training and Business Development at Empire Title, continuing a 35-year career devoted to strengthening the real estate community. A Colorado Springs native, Bill has been deeply woven into the fabric of the local title industry for decades and remains a trusted resource for REALTORS® navigating both business growth and personal development.

Bill's path into title began with a desire for change and independence. Early in his career, he explored opportunities in banking, but a pivotal conversation with mentor Mike Edgar introduced him to title insurance instead—a suggestion that would ultimately define his professional life. In 2003, Bill and his wife, Ronda, took a leap of faith and founded Empire Title with the goal of building a company grounded in service, relationships, and long-term vision. Their entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to doing business the right way helped shape Empire into a respected and enduring presence in the market.

In 2023, Bill entered semi-retirement, thoughtfully transitioning leadership to Ashley Bush while shifting his own focus to training and business development. In this role, he works closely with agents and team members, sharing hard-earned insight and helping others build confidence and capability. What Bill finds most fulfilling is supporting people during moments of uncertainty—helping them see potential in themselves when they are not yet sure it exists. Outside of work, Bill values time with his family and enjoys traveling together, creating memories that last far beyond any transaction. Something most people don't know about Bill is that he has participated in the Pikes Peak Ascent nine times!

REALTORS® who work with Bill gain a steady, experienced partner whose career reflects resilience, mentorship, and a genuine desire to see others succeed.



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Ashley Candler

THE AGENT REWRITING WHAT REAL ESTATE CAN FEEL LIKE

When Ashley Candler talked about where she grew up, she spoke of Paradise, California, where she had lived since she was three years old, with a mixture of affection and loss. It was the kind of town where everyone knew everyone. In 2018, the Camp Fire destroyed the entire community. Her family had moved in 2014, but nearly everyone she knew and loved was still there when the fire hit, including her parents, cousins, aunts, uncles, and best friends. Ashley and her husband David still owned their very first home there, and the tenants had to flee during the fire. Even from across state lines, the devastation hit close.

By the time Paradise burned, Ashley and David were already building a life in Colorado Springs. Their



move wasn't planned far in advance; Ashley never dreamed of leaving the only home she'd known, all her family, and the friendships she had built. The move was driven by necessity. David served full-time with the Department of Defense as well as in the Reserves as a weekend warrior, and his unit at Beale Air Force Base was being shut down for the second time. Promises of a new position kept falling through. The commute of 130 miles a day, layered over nine-hour shifts weighed heavy. "We were just two passing ships," she said, describing her own night shifts at the restaurant and the exhaustion that defined that season with two kids under age four. When her husband fell asleep at the wheel on more than one occasion, the urgency became impossible to ignore. She remembered wrestling with the idea of leaving home until she reached a stark clarity: "Do you want to be close to family, or do you want to have a husband?"

California offered few viable options. Every potential relocation still meant four to twelve hours' distance from family, higher living costs, and similar instability.



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David had always loved Colorado Springs for the snowboarding, mountains, and the feel of the city, having visited in his younger years. He traveled for a short TDY (temporary additional duty) to meet a team here, liked the unit, and was offered a position.

While David was getting acquainted with his new unit, Ashley made a quick

48-hour trip out to explore the area with him. They toured several homes with a local REALTOR® named Tim Coen to get a feel for what they could afford, quite literally comparing the price of bread, eggs, milk, and everyday staples to determine whether they could make it work on a single income, while also absorbing a \$6/hour pay cut for David. That trip sealed the deal and the family made the move in September 2014.

Real estate hadn't been on Ashley's mind yet, though the seeds were there. Years earlier, when she and David bought their first home in California, the experience was chaotic and impactful enough to leave an imprint. "Everything bad that could happen happened during the process," she recalled. The

bank-owned home flooded during the transaction, the walls sprouted mold, and the bank refused to fix it... so the deal fell through. When sharing the story with Sunday School partners at church, an amazing gift was offered. Ashley explained, "These friends, a retired contractor and his wife, decided to buy the property with generous terms to help us fix it and buy it back with very minimal mark up. They offered their expertise and labor to teach us everything we wanted (and didn't want) to know about home renovations and helped us strip the home to rebuild it from the inside out. It was a stressful 18 months while the couple lived with Ashley's parents and worked on the house on nights and weekends, but she remembered being captivated by the process: renovations, lending, and the way everything came together. Sales, however, felt like a barrier, which made her certain that real estate would never be an option for her.

Everything shifted after their move to Colorado Springs. Their REALTOR®, Tim Coen with Priority Home Realty Group, reshaped her understanding of the profession. "He loved us so well through our process," she remembered. There was no pressure and no sales pitch; just genuine care and compassion. The experience surprised her and she realized that real estate was really just customer service. Her background at that point was 15 years in the restaurant industry, where she thrived on building relationships and providing memorable experiences for

her patrons. The idea that real estate could operate the same way stayed with her.

A few years later, some friends wanted to buy a new build, and Ashley referred them to Tim. Ashley walked alongside them informally throughout the process and found herself falling in love with real estate. After the closing, she asked Tim if he would mentor her. "I want to learn from someone who loves people, not just sales," she told him. He agreed. She earned her license in 2016, completing all her hours during her second trimester while pregnant with her fourth child. "I finished it in 10 weeks," she said.

Her first year, she took on two personal transactions and helped the team in an assisting role. The following year, she closed two more. Then she began building a niche with military clients largely through social media, and the momentum grew.

Ashley's initial hope was simple: serve a few families a year and help supplement her income as a stay-at-home mom. But what started as a modest goal quietly grew into something far greater. After several years of consistently closing 40+ transactions annually — supported only by a transaction coordinator — Ashley and David faced a defining crossroads.

Through much prayer and honest conversation, they made a bold and intentional decision: David would step away from Civil Service, take over the household, and become the steady anchor their family needed. "David wasn't loving his



position anymore, and I was completely on fire for mine," Ashley shared. "He had always been the provider, quietly breaking himself for our family, but I could see it wearing on him. Between his back-to-back Civil Service and Reserve duty, he was working twelve days straight once a month. Add four kids and two demanding schedules, and we were living like passing ships again. That wasn't the life we moved here for."

The solution wasn't to do more — it was to do less, more intentionally. In June 2021, David retired from his full-time position and officially became what the family lovingly calls the "Chaos Coordinator" of their Family Circus. Today, their time is truly and unapologetically theirs...with the exception of whatever their kids' Cheer schedules demand.

When asked how she viewed herself as an agent, Ashley paused and answered with characteristic humility: "I feel like I don't do anything that special." But her clients told a very different story. Those who had worked with multiple agents before Ashley repetitively used a word for what she did to them — she ruined them...

for anyone else, that is. She never saw her approach as extraordinary; to her, it was simply how things should be done. But somewhere between the exceptional communication, the genuine care, and the seamless experience, Ashley was quietly setting a standard most people didn't even know was possible.

It started early in her career, when she noticed the subtle grimace people made the moment she mentioned she was a REALTOR®. Rather than accepting it, she took it personally, in the best way. "I made it my mission to change the way people feel about real estate agents, one happy client at a time."

She accomplished that mission and then some. Her clients eventually gave her a title no marketing team could have dreamed up: The Unicorn. She had made the impossible possible by finding them "unicorn" houses. The nickname began as a lighthearted joke, but it had legs, and apparently, a horn. Even fellow agents started using it. Unicorn-themed gifts appeared at her door and unicorn memes flooded her DMs (direct messages). The universe, it seemed, had voted.



Eventually, Ashley stopped resisting and leaned all the way in, building her entire brand around the identity her clients had given her. At the heart of it is her simple mission statement that says everything: unique, impactful, personal. Because at the end of the day, that's exactly what her clients felt. Once you've experienced that kind of real estate journey, there's simply no going back.

For newer agents or those who shy away from the sales side, she offers straightforward advice: "The more you focus on the client and doing what's right for the client, it comes back to you tenfold," she said. Her business is almost entirely repeat clients and referrals. She centers around service and chooses to work in a way that makes other agents want to partner with her. "We can be bulldogs for our clients without bulldozing everybody else," she added.

Some of the most meaningful moments of her career come from seeing the long-term impact homeownership can have on a family. She recalled working with a young Air Force captain moving from Korea who believed homeownership was out of reach. "She had over \$100,000 in student loan debt," Ashley said. The rental options that allowed pets didn't feel safe for a single

woman, so Ashley guided her through exploring the option to purchase. When the lender approved the client, she bought a small home with a great yard for her dogs. Years later, at the closing on the sale of that home, the young Captain looked down at her settlement sheet and quietly reached over for Ashley's hand. With excitement, gratitude and tears in her eyes she shared with Ashley, "This is almost the exact dollar amount of my student loans." That was an incredible moment shared at the closing table early in Ashley's career. About six months later, after settling at her new duty station, that client called Ashley to thank her again and to share that she had just received her "paid in full" letter from her student loan debtor. That was the first taste of the true impact Ashley got to have in the lives of others.

Not every story has that kind of ending, Ashley acknowledged. Some families face appreciation challenges or even bring cash to closing when selling, but treating people with compassion and respect can make even the hard transactions impactful. It is not the sales, but the moments that positively impact someone's life, that keep her going. She keeps every thank-you card on a board in her office and rereads them on tough days. The same goes for her reviews. "I have over 155 reviews, all of which are 5 stars; there are so many in there that remind me that this is where God has called me to be."

Ashley also serves the community through Peak

Producers. She first earned a member slot in 2020 and later put her name in for the board multiple times before being selected in 2024. She served as vice president that year and stepped into the role of president the following year and has been asked to continue her role as President for 2026. She values the collaboration, the masterminds, and the chance to connect with high-performing agents facing similar challenges. She also cares deeply about the ministries the organization supports, like Reclaiming Hope, where she and her daughter have volunteered. She hopes to encourage other agents to get involved beyond the collaboration and charitable giving aspect of membership.

Outside of work, Ashley's world revolves around the people she loves most, as well as her admittedly unhealthy obsession with dachshunds. Her husband and four kids are her everything, and when life gets loud (which, with four kids, is often), there's nothing a good "cuddle puddle" with her dogs can't help. She'll also take any excuse to escape to the family's cabin in Hartsel, where the pace slows down, the mountains do the talking and her biggest worry is having enough peanuts to feed the local birds.

And then there's cheer. If you had told Ashley years ago that she'd become a full-fledged Cheer Mom, she probably would have laughed. But her oldest child, who is her only son, had other plans. After transitioning from tumbling, a friend extended the most

persuasive recruiting pitch imaginable: "We need guys who can tumble and throw girls and you'd be a great fit." That was all it took for him to try out. "I have three girls," Ashley laughed, "and it was my son who made me a Cheer Mom."

He didn't just join — he committed. Earning a spot on the Varsity team as a freshman, he set the tone, and his oldest sister Rachel followed suit the very next year, also landing on the varsity comp team as a freshman. Both have since been invited to train with Front Range Elite Cheer, an elite level 5 competitive program that keeps the family calendar gloriously chaotic. And if the youngest two girls have anything to say about it, the family's cheer era is just getting started.

"Nothing gives me more joy than watching my son throw my daughter in the air," Ashley said with a grin, "and carefully and protectively bring her back to the ground."

From the devastation of losing her hometown to planting deep roots in Colorado Springs, Ashley's journey has been shaped by unexpected turns, quiet resilience, and an unwavering commitment to people. What began as a fear of sales became a career defined by service, loyalty, and genuine human connection. Her clients may call her the Unicorn, but the story behind the name is beautifully simple: she built a business by doing what she believes everyone should: she puts people first. ❖

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Long before lending, Mike Lindsay spent 20 years in the United States Army as a Green Beret in the 10th Special Forces Group, operating in combat environments where clarity and leadership meant the difference between life and death. During combat operations in Iraq, he was awarded the Silver Star – one of the nation's highest military honors – after being severely wounded under direct enemy fire and continuing to lead and engage until the mission was complete. That level of composure, clarity & execution under pressure is not something that turns on and off ... *It becomes who you are.*

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In this market, the difference between winning and losing a deal often comes down to **execution**. Clear communication. Clean structure. No surprises at the closing table. Mike approaches every experience with that understanding. Because for agents, it's never just about one deal... *it's about reputation, relationships and long-term branding.*

One of the biggest risks in a transaction isn't always the offer. It's what's behind the financing. Misleading rates. Poorly structured loans. Incomplete understanding of the loan estimate. These are the things that create friction, delays and lost deals. Mike built his business on eliminating those risks. No inflated expectations. No last-minute surprises. No numbers that don't hold up under scrutiny: just **clarity**, from the first conversation to the closing table. Because when agents **trust** the structure, they can move with **confidence**.

Every deal starts the same way: Understand the client. Structure the loan correctly. Communicate clearly at every step. Whether it's a first-time buyer needing guidance or an investor analyzing return, the approach doesn't change. The goal is simple: **make the deal stronger before it ever hits the table.**

Based in Colorado Springs, Mike is deeply **experienced** in the VA Home Loan Benefit – helping agents across the nation navigate military transactions with clarity & confidence. For many agents, VA-offers can feel uncertain. With the right structure and communication, they don't have to be.

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AGENT & VENDOR SNAPSHOTS



1. Dawn Marie Beaver's journey into real estate was shaped by resilience, service, and a decision to do things differently. After experiencing firsthand how transactional the process can feel, Dawn built her business around connection, care, and creating meaningful experiences for her clients. From a military lifestyle to building a nationwide referral network, her path has been anything but conventional. At its core, her work is about people—and making sure they feel seen every step of the way.

2. Mikaelle Towns' story is one of adaptability. From an off-grid upbringing in Alaska to building a real estate business in Colorado Springs, each chapter has required her to adjust, learn, and move forward without losing sight of what matters most.

3. Ashley Candler: The Agent Who Ruined Her Clients — and They Couldn't Be More Grateful... She left

everything she'd ever known, moved her family to a city where she knew no one, and stumbled into real estate simply to help make ends meet. What happened next would change everything for her family, and for every client lucky enough to find her. Ashley is a wife, mom of four, proud dachshund wrangler, and Cheer Mom who turned a fear of sales into a career so distinctive, her clients gave her a title she never saw coming. Her story is one of resilience, reinvention, and the remarkable things that happen when you simply put people first.



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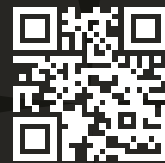
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