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MARCH 2026

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# My Auction Addiction

ESTATE SALES

BY ELIZABETH MCCABE  
PHOTOS BY LIZ LOPEZ PHOTOGRAPHY

**This month, we caught up with Esther Swartz, owner of My Auction Addiction Estate Sales, to get the inside scoop on her business.**

**Every business has an origin story. What's yours, and what made you take the plunge?**

We started our business soon after the 2008 crash and had to reinvent ourselves due to the destruction it caused in a previous business we owned. We found that liquidating one's assets was much more difficult than we had imagined, and we were overwhelmed. The inefficiency of selling used goods was great, so we started My Auction Addiction Estate Sales and combined the in-person estate sale model with technology to conduct estate, moving, and downsizing sales.

**What do you bring to the table that no one else can, and why do clients love it?**

My Auction Addiction Estate Sales' standard practice is to conduct all business with honesty and integrity.

We don't play favorites or do off-site sales to dealers; we sell everything online for complete transparency and level the playing field for everyone, from the novice estate sale goer to the true collectors, providing families and executives with a catalog of all items inventoried and accompanying photographs. We provide a full statement of all items sold and unsold. Additionally, we work with other industry professionals, including REALTORS®, locksmiths, donation and trash services, and house cleaners, to leave the home clean, clear, and ready for the next steps, for the comfort of our clients.

**Who's your dream client, and how do you keep them coming back for more?**

We enjoy working with REALTORS®. They are usually the first point of contact when a client is

moving or downsizing, or when a full estate sale is needed. We work hand in hand with them to ensure the home is ready for staging or is completely empty for photos and the real estate listing. Providing this type of service to our clients takes a huge weight off their shoulders and requires less coordination on their part. Taking on a project from the start of organizing to the end result of the estate sale and empty home allows agents to perform their services for their clients seamlessly and helps them shine for their owners.

**Have you had an "aha!" moment that changed the game for your business?**

When we started our business 15 years ago, we started out by calling out the items for sale online via a live video stream format, "like an auctioneer," and people would bid live. In 2018, we found that the full day of auction calling was not only a lot of extra work for our staff, but also eliminated potential buyers, as most people were working during the time we closed out sales. We updated our then "glitchy" website, eliminated the live broadcast, and changed all our estate and moving sales to timed auctions closing at the end of the day. We saw an increase in buyers and better exposure and returns for our clients' possessions.

**Every business hits bumps in the road. What's been your biggest challenge, and how'd you tackle it?**

We work in an industry that involves a lot of emotion at every step. It can be challenging to work with a family who has lost a loved one, seniors downsizing from homes where they raised their families, or even someone moving for a new job or life opportunity. Working together with our clients and selling their life collections or heirlooms can

be emotionally taxing. Our goal is to lift the burden from our clients' shoulders and help find a home for their belongings, so that their collections can be loved by other families for years to come. We have a wonderful team that works especially hard to take care of our clients and their unique needs to honor them and their heirlooms.

**How do your values show up in your day-to-day work and client relationships?**

We work every day with honesty and integrity, doing our best for our clients. The Golden Rule is applied to our process, and we try to value our clients' possessions and homes as we would like our own to be valued. We do extensive research on the items we list for sale, identifying brands or special markings, and pricing them according to market values.

**If you could whisper one piece of advice to someone starting out—or even to your younger self—what would it be?**

Be willing to step out of your comfort zone. The life you want is on the other side of the things you don't want to do, so push yourself to do hard things. Failure will happen at times, but use it to learn and grow.

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# Stefani Quintana

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*“God is good. He always puts me where I need to be, and that’s often in the life of someone to help them,” says Stefani Quintana, owner of Loving Transitions, LLC. She helps transition seniors with TLC.*

BY ELIZABETH MCCABE  
PHOTOS BY LIZ LOPEZ  
PHOTOGRAPHY

“I’ve got one client who is bedridden right now and trying to move to an assisted living facility,” she adds. The only problem? They don’t have the money to go to assisted living. That’s where Stefani is a strong advocate for her clients, always eager to help. “I’m navigating that situation and doing what is best for them,” she shares. She knows about scams targeting seniors and is determined not to let them fall victim and always working to find solutions.

In addition to helping clients with their moves, she’s also a licensed chaplain. That’s a role that comes in handy as a real estate professional

with Coldwell Banker Legacy. After all, moving is one of the most stressful times in life. As a chaplain, Stefani walks alongside clients during life’s transitions. She asks them what is best for them emotionally and financially. She’s even been there with them during life’s final moments.

“I’ve been with clients when they have passed away,” she says. “I’m not going to let them die alone. I’ve held their hands and prayed for them,” she says. “It’s really wonderful. I love it.” This caring professional regards it as a privilege.

People joke with her, “You’re just trying to get to heaven.” But as a born-again believer, Stefani rests assured of her eternal destination. “I already know I am going there,” she smiles. “Not because of anything I have done, but because of what Jesus did for me.”

**Made for Real Estate**  
Licensed for 30 years, Stefani has worked in every capacity in the real estate industry. “My Dad, Ed Wray, is a Commercial Broker. He is still working, and he’s 80,” she laughs. “We can’t keep him sitting still very long. My Mom, Sharon Wray, has been in real estate for many years as well. We both got licensed together in 1997, which was so much fun,” she recalls. “Now my nephew Timothy is on my team. He’s a Transaction Coordinator here in Albuquerque.” Real estate is a full family affair. Stefani’s husband, Randy Arnn, is on her team as well. “He helps me with all sorts of things, not simply real estate,” she smiles. “He has a servant’s heart, and I couldn’t do what I do without him. I’m so blessed that he is my partner in life.”

Stefani grew up in the industry and started answering phones at age 18.



Stefani and her mother, Sharon

“God has put it on my heart to work with seniors and their families.”

She earned her Qualifying Broker's license and was warmly welcomed into leadership at Coldwell Banker Legacy co-managing one of their offices on the west side. A talented professional, she has also been entrusted with recruiting, training, and marketing. Stefani holds an SRES® designation (Seniors Real Estate Specialist) from the National Association of REALTORS®.

As much as she loves her residential clients of all walks of life, she feels a special calling to seniors.

“God has put it on my heart to work with seniors and their families,” she comments. When she encountered several clients with no children, no spouse, and who needed to transition to assisted living, she realized that there was no one to help them. “Then it came to my

mind to start doing this. I had all the pieces to get them from one place to another,” she shares. It's been a joyful journey. “It's been wonderful, and I love it,” she raves. “I've become part of their family, and I continue to see them long after the transition is over.” She has also helped seniors with all their needs by assembling a talented team of people from senior living advisors, estate attorneys, downsizing specialists, estate liquidators, movers, and more.

Best of all, seniors go from stressed to relieved. “By the time I leave that first meeting, they are so happy,” smiles Stefani. She has a ministry in her hands. “I have helped over 50 people transition in the last couple of years,” she says. She calls it a labor of love, and it is very rewarding. “I get to meet the nicest people and their families.”

#### Relaxing + Recharging

What does Stefani do when she's not working? “When is that?” she laughs. When she does take time to relax, she loves traveling. “I also love to cook and entertain,” she adds. “I enjoy having my whole family over for dinner and playing games. We have a wonderful and crazy family, and it's great.”

#### Final Thoughts

Stefani is elevating the real estate industry by supporting seniors through her care and compassion. How? She advocates for them. She walks with them when others won't. Through Loving Transitions, Stefani demonstrates what it means to serve. She is a true servant of Christ.

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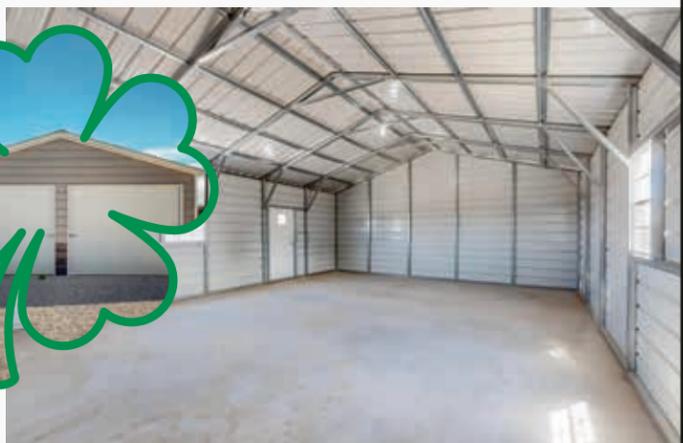
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# President's Address

Greater Albuquerque Association of REALTORS®

BY CHRIS VENEGAS

**S**erving as President of the Greater Albuquerque Association of REALTORS® is both an honor and a responsibility I take seriously. Our Association exists to serve you, the REALTORS® working every day in our communities, and to protect the foundation of property ownership across the Greater Albuquerque metro. As we move forward together, I want to share where we are headed, what we've accomplished, and why the next few years matter for our Association.

One of the most important milestones we reached this past year was the completion of GAAR's new three-year Strategic Plan. This plan is more than a vision document. It is a practical roadmap that will guide our decisions, priorities, and investments as we continue to grow and evolve.

What makes this strategic plan especially impactful is its focus on measurable outcomes and clear direction. GAAR now has defined goals tied directly to our mission, allowing us to track progress, adapt when needed, and bring consistency to the work being done by our committees, leadership, and staff. Every committee has a clearer understanding of how their efforts support the broader success of the Association. This alignment positions us to build on past efforts while reaching new levels of effectiveness.

While our strategic plan looks ahead, it is also worth recognizing the strength of our local market over the past year. Without diving into deep analysis, a few key statistics from 2025 help paint a clear picture.

Closed sales of single-family detached homes increased just over two percent, reaching 9,820 transactions across the Greater Albuquerque area. Even in a shifting market, buyer activity remained steady. At the same time, inventory decreased by more than seven percent, highlighting the continued demand for housing throughout our metro.

Home values remained strong and stable. The median sales price increased to \$370,000, while price per square foot rose to \$213.81. Several areas, including the East Mountains, Corrales, and Placitas, saw notable growth, while others experienced more modest changes. Together, these numbers reflect a market supported by long-term fundamentals and the importance of local knowledge and professional guidance.



Beyond market performance, one of the most exciting developments within GAAR has been the momentum of our Government Affairs Committee.

In a short period of time, the committee has already helped secure the passage of two bills that protect homeowners' rights in the Albuquerque metro area. These early wins demonstrate the power of REALTOR® advocacy and the impact we can have when we come together with a unified voice. Advocacy is not simply a function of our Association; it is a core responsibility, and these successes set the tone for the work ahead.

Looking forward, our focus is on execution. The strategic plan provides direction. Our committees provide action. Our members provide purpose.

We are committed to transparency, measurable progress, and ensuring that every REALTOR®, regardless of career stage, sees real value in being part of GAAR. The next three years will be about strengthening systems, developing leadership, and positioning our Association to serve this community for generations to come.

I am proud to serve alongside all our members and excited about what we will accomplish together in 2026. Don't ever be shy to reach out directly to me if you have any questions.

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# Chris & Carmen Cavnar

ERA Summit

BY ELIZABETH MCCABE  
PHOTOS BY PONIC PHOTOGRAPHY

Chris Cavnar spent thirty-six hours waiting in an emergency room for a hospital bed, unable to turn his head, unsure whether the surgery that awaited him would succeed—or whether his career, marriage, and livelihood would survive what his body was enduring. Nine days later, his wife, Carmen, underwent neurosurgery of her own. In a season when their business was thriving and their pace relentless, everything stopped. What followed dismantled not only their health, but the foundation on which they had built success—and forced them to rebuild their work, leadership, and marriage on faith rather than momentum.

Success came quickly for Chris and Carmen Cavnar. What began in 2016 as a real estate investment strategy soon became a growing business as people repeatedly asked for their help. Within a year, they were closing deals, building momentum, and moving at full speed. Then everything stopped.

In July 2022, Chris suffered a traumatic neck injury that led to multiple neurosurgeries. Complications followed, sending him back to the emergency room for a thirty-six-hour wait and an eight-day hospital stay before another surgery that stretched late into the night. There were countless moments of fear and uncertainty. Then, days after he returned home, Carmen faced neurosurgery of her own.

“The hardest lesson,” Carmen says, “was realizing that if you don’t have your physical health, you’re stuck.”

For months, Chris was unable to turn his head. Between them, the couple attended more than 120 physical therapy appointments in a single year. The simple tasks of daily life—getting into a car, brushing hair, sitting still—became reminders of how quickly strength can disappear.

As constant achievers, slowing down felt unnatural. Yet in that forced stillness, their faith deepened.



“**God used our hardest season for growth—not just for us, but for everyone it now touches.**”

“God was slowing us down completely,” Chris reflects. “I had to learn how to operate my life—and my work—differently.”

The crisis touched every area of their lives. Their marriage strained under pressure. Their real estate team felt the impact. Financial stress mounted until they made the difficult decision to file for bankruptcy. It felt as though a dark cloud hung over every area of their lives.

“We crashed and burned,” Carmen says plainly.

But rather than rebuilding out of fear or pride, the Cavnars chose recalibration. They reassessed their needs, their pace, and their purpose. Success, they decided, could no longer be measured solely by volume or income.

Chris explains, “We serve people, not money. That has always been our focus, but after everything we went through, it took on new meaning and purpose. We start with God, family, and community.

Now more than ever, our focus is on the relationships we build.”

That shift reshaped how they lead. Decisions slowed. Boundaries strengthened. Family time became non-negotiable. Faith moved from the background to the foundation.

Gone were the days of constant travel and relentless hustle. Their home became a place of peace—marked by quiet mornings, prayer, and intentional presence. They began weekly masterminds, prioritized dating each other again, and re-centered their marriage around God. “We realized we had built our house on a weak foundation,” Carmen says. “When it all came down, we had the chance to rebuild it stronger.”

Professionally, the results followed—steadily, not explosively. By focusing on relationships rather than transactions, the Cavnars re-established themselves and now rank among the top real estate professionals in

their market. More importantly, their leadership carries clarity and conviction shaped by suffering.

They are still healing. Chris faces additional surgeries ahead, a reality they meet with humor, patience, and faith. Their words for the coming year are resilience and alignment.

Looking back, Carmen reflects on the deeper purpose behind their trial.

“I didn’t understand why this was happening to us,” she says. “In time, God revealed the purpose behind what we had to endure. So many people feel alone in tragedy, and this experience has allowed us to walk alongside others facing similar struggles. God used our hardest season for growth—not just for us, but for everyone it now touches.”

For faith-driven business leaders, their story offers a quiet but powerful reminder: success built without surrender is fragile—but work rebuilt on faith can endure.

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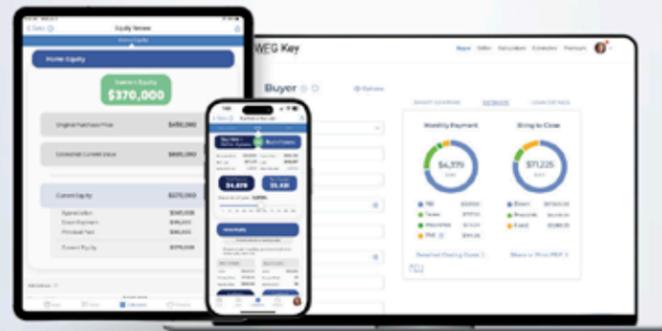


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# Cassandra Morrison

## REAL Broker

### From Managing Badges to Brokers

BY ELIZABETH MCCABE • PHOTOS BY PONIC PHOTOGRAPHY

"I was born hyperactive. My parents didn't know what to do. So they put me into sports," laughs Cassandra Morrison at Real Broker. "Now that I'm old," she jokes, "I put it into business." Energy is her superpower. People have noticed through the years.

In her days in law enforcement, people used to call her the "Energizer Bunny." She excelled in her career, retiring as a Sergeant from the Albuquerque Police Department in 2013. Why the Albuquerque Police Department? Cassandra had to choose between a corrections officer, a sheriff's deputy, and a police officer. "I looked better in navy blue," she says. "One wore beige, which would have washed me out. The other was olive green and looked like guacamole."

#### Ready for Anything

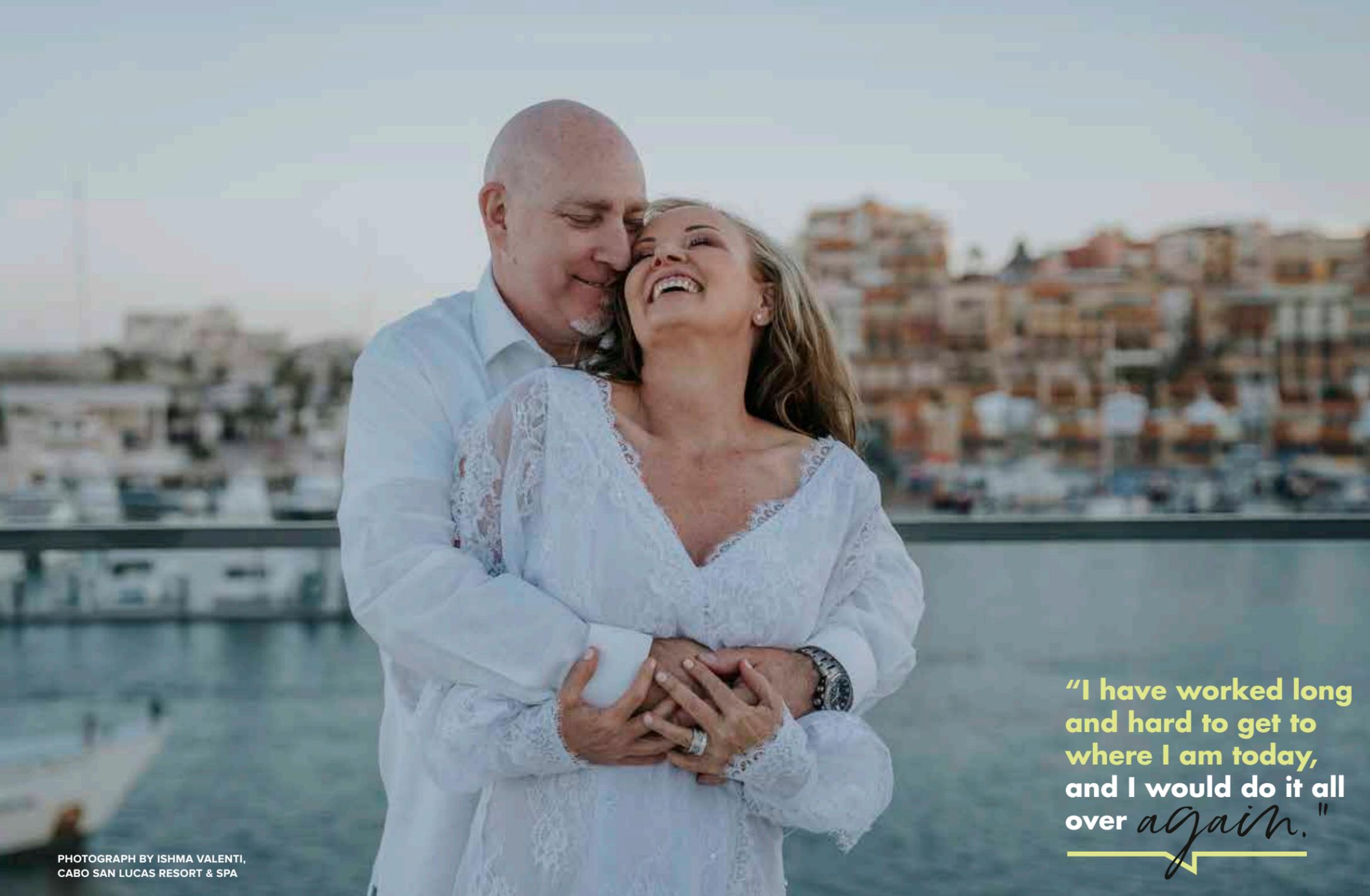
Cassandra puts her heart and soul into everything that she does. Fiercely devoted to her clients, she tackles negotiations with ease and can overcome any obstacle to the closing table. Why? One strength of coming from a law enforcement background is that Cassandra is prepared for anything.

"I went from managing badges to managing brokers," she laughs.

"I was a criminal negotiator for many years and worked in crisis intervention. Nothing is going to faze me," says Cassandra. "No one is going to die in real estate." Now she uses her negotiation skills for her clients.

"Negotiating is something I thoroughly enjoy. I love it. I want people to win," says Cassandra. A natural leader, Cassandra took over Real Broker on December 2, 2024, a date she remembers fondly. "I started managing 150 brokers back then. Now I am over 223." Ranked in the top 2 percent in Albuquerque, she enjoys managing brokers and excels in her own production.

"I knew 2025 was going to be a great year," she raves. "They say you manifest what you think about. I wanted to be a great manager and a great leader." That switch occurred with a critical shift. "When I stopped managing the people I had and started leading them, that was a change for me. Instead of having a mindset of 'you work for me,' I turned it around, 'let



PHOTOGRAPH BY ISHMA VALENTI,  
CABO SAN LUCAS RESORT & SPA

**"I have worked long  
and hard to get to  
where I am today,  
and I would do it all  
over *again.*"**



me work hard for you." Her motto at Real Broker is simple: "Work hard. Be kind."

### Finding Love

Since last being featured in Real Producers, Cassandra is thrilled to announce that she has gotten married to her husband, Jason. "We have the best marriage on the planet," she gushes. Interestingly, they met in 2004 in law enforcement. Cassandra was his training officer. "I trained him for two months, sent him on his way, and there was no attraction. It was 100 percent professional," she recalls. It wasn't until 2020 that their paths crossed again. When Cassandra was concerned about a sketchy plumber, she called her friend Mike, who recommended that Jason stop by.

"He literally lived 1100 feet away from me," says Cassandra. "I never knew he lived in the area."

Another fun twist? "My friend Mike is Jason's ex-brother-in-law. That's how small this city is." However, it wasn't until February the following year, at a sales meeting at Cassandra's previous brokerage, that a connection was made. "My brother is getting a divorce," said a staff employee. "Who is your brother?" When she discovered it was Jason, Cassandra was flabbergasted. "That's your brother!" she exclaimed. "I have been sitting next to you for seven years, and you never told me?"

When the staff employee asked if Cassandra was seeing anyone, her refusal was priceless. "No, and I don't want to," she said.

Instead, the staff employee started texting her brother swiftly. Weeks later, Jason texted Cassandra. "Do you want to go to dinner and catch up?" Cassandra said, "Sure." After a night out at Scarpas, which is one of Cassandra's favorite restaurants, the rest was history. Three years after their first date, they got married in Cabo San Lucas. "Just the two of us," says Cassandra.

"Jason is the best person on the planet for me," she raves. "The absolute best."

The best part? She wasn't even looking for love. "I didn't want to date anybody. I wanted to be on the stage of Coldwell Banker Legacy as one of the top 25 producers in

the company." She made it. "And I also found love," she smiles.

### Leading the Way

"I have worked long and hard to get to where I am today, and I would do it all over again," says Cassandra.

Now she leads the way for others, getting involved in committees and networking groups, and serving on the Board of Personalities Plus ABQ. She is also President-Elect of the High Standards Qualifying Broker Association. With hundreds of brokers underneath her and a bright future ahead of her, nothing is impossible for this natural-born leader and driven entrepreneur.

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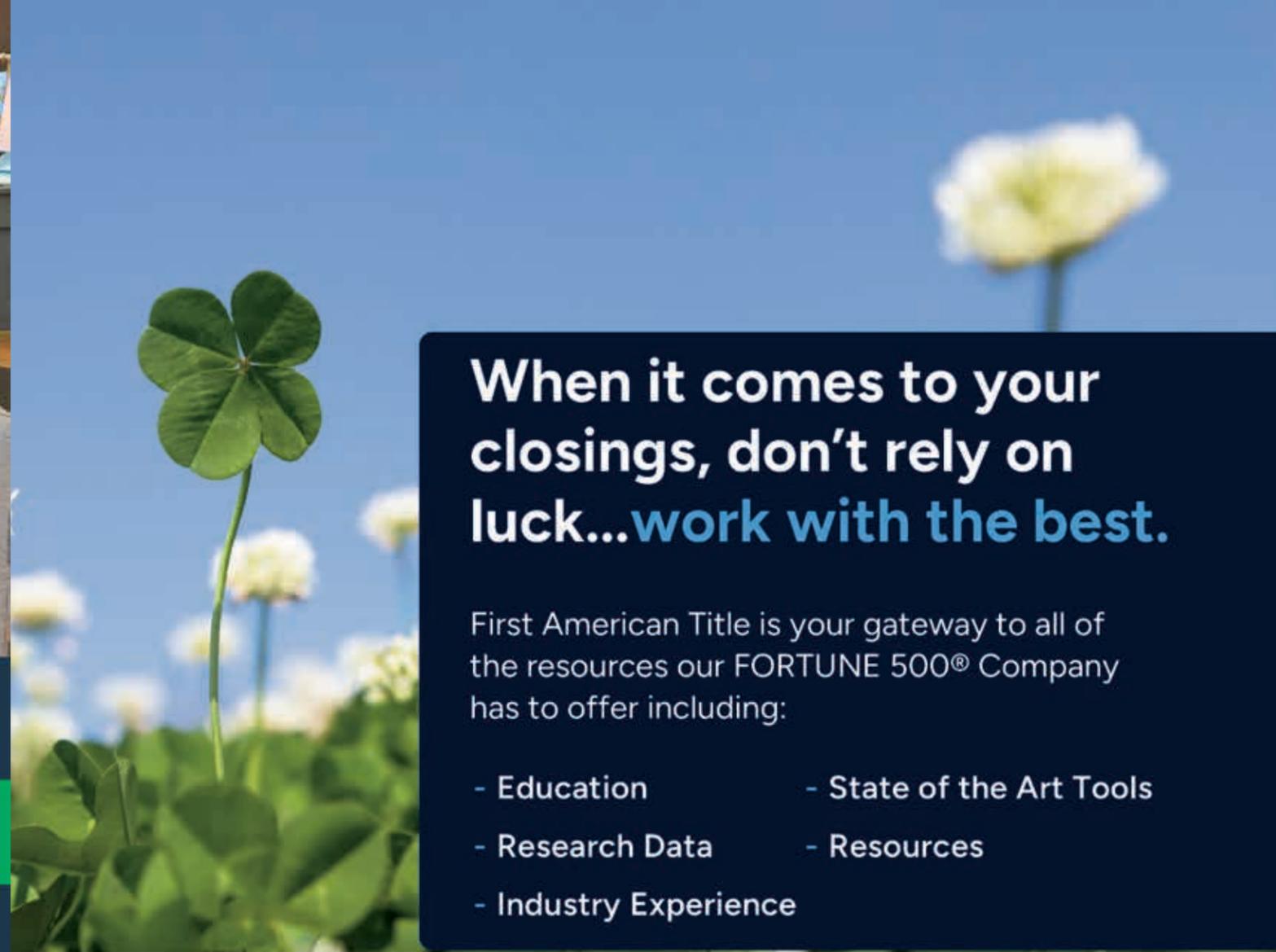
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