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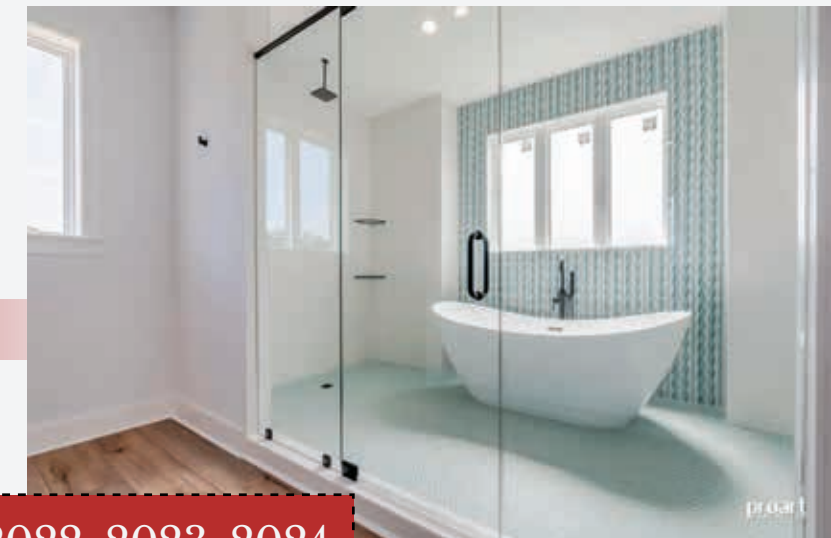
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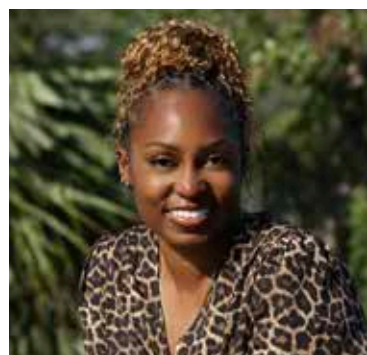


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Bristles & Broomsticks

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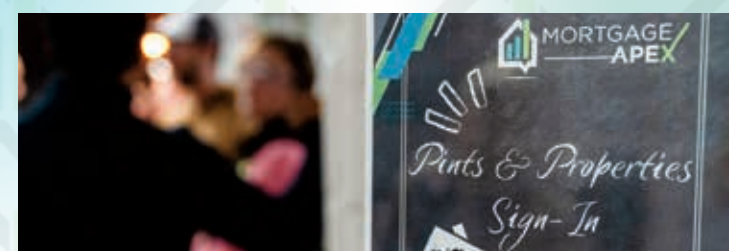
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“

See, I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs.”

— Exodus 31:3–4

instead of copying templates, and to tell stories instead of simply selling.

In today's environment, information is everywhere, but differentiation is rare.

The agents who rise above the noise aren't just executing transactions. They're building brands, producing thoughtful content, hosting intentional events, and designing listing launches that feel like campaigns. They're collaborating across industries and leveraging video, print, partnerships, and positioning strategically.

Creativity is not chaos. It's strategy with imagination.

It's the willingness to test new ideas, pivot when something isn't working, invest in presentation, refine messaging, and continually elevate standards. Entrepreneurs who cultivate creativity don't compete on price. They compete on experience.

And experience wins.

At *Emerald Coast Real Producers*, we see this firsthand. The leaders in this market don't simply follow trends. They set them. They understand that when professionalism meets originality, it creates momentum that cannot be easily replicated.

Creative advantage isn't about being flashy. It's about being intentional.

This month, I challenge you to ask yourself: Where are you blending strategy with originality?

Are you building a brand or just maintaining a presence? Are you creating something memorable or something forgettable? And what would your business look like if you leaned fully into your unique strengths?

Because here's the truth:

In a saturated market, sameness is expensive. Creativity is profitable. And the entrepreneurs who dare to think differently will always have the edge.

Let's build boldly.

With vision,



Taylor Labno
Publisher
Emerald Coast Real Producers

CREATIVE ADVANTAGE

The Entrepreneur's Unfair Edge

In a market where everyone has access to the same MLS, the same data, the same interest rates, and the same headlines, why do some agents consistently outperform?

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the income ceiling

Nobody Warns You About

A particular kind of year in this business changes how an agent sees themselves. The volume lands, the income clears a number that felt out of reach a few years earlier, and it all reads as confirmation that the approach is working. I have watched many agents have this type of year and then struggle four years later.

Here is what I know to be true. You can out-hustle your way to a great year. Given talent, work ethic, and a market with any life in it, plenty of people do. A great decade gets built on something else, and the difference has very little to do with how hard you are willing to work.

What a Great Year Proves

A record year proves you can perform, and that is a real accomplishment that most people in this industry never reach. It proves you can generate opportunity, convert it, and carry customers through a transaction, building trust and a relationship where they feel confident to send you their next one or provide you with a referral.

What it does not prove is that the year can happen again while you do less. If the income arrived because you personally took every call, ran every appointment, negotiated every contract, and solved every problem between contract and closing, then the year itself is the asset. January resets the number to zero, and the thing carrying forward is you, one year older with the same hours available to spend.

Where the Ceiling Actually Sits

Most people hear the word ceiling and think about a dollar figure. The ceiling in this business gets measured in something else, which is how much of the work only you can do.

When one person runs every part of the business, the size of the business matches that person's output.



You can push that number for a while with tighter control of your calendar, higher price points, an assistant on paperwork, and longer days through the busy stretch. Each of those buys you some room. A week holds a fixed number of hours, and a career holds a fixed number of years you are willing to spend that way.

I have built and run companies across several industries and carried payroll in months when the numbers were thin. The pattern remains the same in all of them. Growth that rests entirely on the owner runs into the same ceiling every time, and it arrives right around the time the owner is too busy to see it coming.

The Cost That Shows Up Later

The clearest sign of the ceiling is rarely financial. It shows up as the agent producing at a level most of the industry envies who has gone three years without a full week away from the phone. The money for the week is there. The business stops when they stop, and everyone involved knows it.

That is the version of success that costs the most. The income and the reputation are real, and underneath both of them sits an arrangement where the person who built the whole thing has the least freedom. Across a single year, that is a trade a lot of high performers accept on purpose. But across ten years, it is the reason people step away from work they were genuinely great at. It is also, of everything in this business, the most fixable.

A Decade Gets Built Differently

The people I have watched build a sustainable business worked just as hard, and several of them worked harder in the early years. What they changed was where a portion of that effort went: they focused on the business itself, while everyone

around them put all of their effort into the next transaction.

They built a database they actually worked, so that business came from a source they controlled. They wrote down how they do things, so that the process lived somewhere beyond their own memory. They brought in help before it felt comfortable and accepted the temporary drop in quality that comes with teaching someone, so that the task left their desk permanently. Even though none of it paid off in the quarter it happened, it compounded in a way that brought continued future benefit.

The distinction worth understanding is that hustle produces income and structure produces income that keeps producing. Only one of the two is still paying you in year ten.

The Question Underneath the Number

If you had a strong year, be proud. The work is hard, and the market doesn't hand it to just anybody.

The question worth carrying into next year sits underneath the number. You already know how to do more, and that is what got you here. What matters now is whether the year you just finished produced anything that will still be working for you in five years, or whether next January puts you back at square one.

A great year is worth having. But a business that continually produces great years is a different thing entirely, and it is the one still standing a decade from now.

One of the conversations I have with the agents I coach shows which parts of your business carry forward and which ones reset every January. Scan to download the Reset Line, which walks you through your own similar conversation.

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BY TIM WEISHEYER

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PAT Stephens

A New Way Forward

PHOTOS BY
ETHAN HAMILTON,
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After more than a decade in the Army, including his final four years as an Army Ranger, Pat Stephens found a new direction in real estate, family, and the life he has built along the Emerald Coast.

Long before Pat Stephens found his way into real estate, he spent more than 10 years serving in the Army, beginning in the regular Army before spending his final four years as an airborne Ranger with the 75th Ranger Regiment, including multiple combat deployments.

It was a career he had no plans of leaving. But after suffering a serious neck injury, his time in the military came to an unexpected end, and Pat was left trying to figure out what life outside of the military was going to look like.



“I’m not salesy. I feel like my personality and the way that I treat people sets me apart. People genuinely can see that I actually do care.” — **PAT STEPHENS**

After more than a decade in such a structured and demanding career, he knew he didn’t want to simply find another job. He wanted independence; he wanted to work with people, and whatever he did next had to actually fit his personality.

Real estate wasn’t initially on his radar.

Around 2020, Pat and his wife, Megan, were looking at a piece of land in Freeport when he called the listing agent. Pat still laughs about that first conversation because he couldn’t get over her voice, which he describes as one of the most interesting he had ever heard. The conversation eventually led

to dinner, and somewhere along the way she asked him why he didn’t get into real estate himself.

The idea stuck.

Pat enrolled in real estate school online, completed the program in two months and received his license in February 2021.

“I was just like, ‘I’m ready. This is it,’” he said.

He also learned pretty quickly that getting a real estate license and knowing how to actually be a real estate agent were two completely different things. There was plenty of trial and error in the beginning before

he eventually found his way to Realty ONE Group and started building a business that felt more like him.

For Pat, that means keeping things pretty simple.

“I’m not salesy,” he said. “I feel like my personality and the way that I treat people sets me apart. People genuinely can see that I actually do care.”

A lot of his business has grown through something he was already doing anyway: playing golf.

He has played since he was seven years old and later attended the Golf Academy of America in Myrtle Beach.

Over the years, he has played around the world, competed in tournaments and programs, and even spent time caddying professionally.

When he first got into real estate, Pat started going to the course and joining random groups. He would spend nine holes with three people he had never met, get to know them, hand out a business card, and see where it went.

Those rounds turned into friendships, connections, and eventually referrals. More importantly, golf gave Pat a way to grow his business without feeling like he was constantly trying to sell something.

“I feel like it’s so easy to talk to people about real estate on a golf course,” he said. “We’re out here playing a game. We’re doing something we enjoy doing.”

That’s still how he approaches his clients today. Pat isn’t interested in convincing someone they need to buy or sell a house. But if they do need him, that’s a different story.

“If you want to buy a house or sell a house, I will work my tail off to make sure that it goes your way completely,” he said.

His connection to the Emerald Coast has become another important part of the job. Pat genuinely loves living here, particularly being close to the water, and he likes being able to share that lifestyle with the people he works with.

“I know water brings me peace,” Pat said. “It just makes me still. It makes me slow down.”

He especially enjoys sharing that with other veterans. Pat knows firsthand that leaving the military means adjusting to a very different way of life, and helping another veteran find a home and a community where they can settle in means something to him.

“I want to help you live a good life in general,” he said. “Moving here, living here, doing business here, it’s brought me so much comfort, joy, and just stillness.”

Five years into real estate, Pat has found a career that

I want to help you live a good life in general. Moving here, living here, doing business here, it’s brought me so much comfort, joy, and just stillness.” — **PAT STEPHENS**



allows him to do things his own way. He gets to meet people, build genuine relationships, and introduce others to a place that has become an important part of his own life.

But as much as he enjoys the business, the life he has

built outside of it matters even more.

Pat and Megan have been together for seven years and married for four, and family is a huge part of his life today. Golf is too, but some of his favorite rounds now have nothing

to do with networking or real estate. His son, Conrad, plays with him on Wednesdays at Bluewater Bay, where the two usually fit in nine holes together before calling it a night.

It’s a simple part of his week, but one Pat clearly loves.

His life today looks very different from the one he once pictured for himself. He didn’t plan on leaving the military when he did, and he certainly didn’t know real estate would eventually be where he landed.

But somewhere between the golf course, the water, his clients, and the family waiting for him at home, Pat has built a life that fits. And these days, that feels like a pretty good place to be. ➡





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BRISTLES & BROOMSTICKS

Beyond the Clean

Long before Melissa Raulerson built Bristles & Broomsticks, service was already a defining part of her life.



Melissa entered the military as a 98J electronic intelligence analyst. While stationed at Fort Huachuca in Arizona, she met her future husband. Her career later took her to Wiesbaden, Germany, where she worked mission before a serious car accident on the Autobahn led to an honorable medical discharge.

Leaving the military changed Melissa's role, but it didn't take her away from the community.

As her husband pursued his career as a Green Beret, Melissa became a military spouse and found new ways to serve. At Fort Bragg in North Carolina, she led Wives of Warriors through Manna Church, bringing together nearly 100 women and working with families across military branches.

Later, when hundreds of families connected to the 7th Special Forces Group relocated from North Carolina to the Emerald Coast, Melissa became the Family Readiness Support Assistant (FRSA), a GS position, for 1st Battalion. Working alongside command, she helped families navigate the move, connect with resources, and settle into a new community.

After another assignment took the family to Yuma, Arizona, where Melissa worked at the CDC with children and families on base, they returned to the Emerald Coast in 2019. Her husband would eventually retire from the military, while Melissa found herself building a career in an entirely different world: real estate.

Melissa managed offices for a local Century 21 brokerage, helped open another local brokerage, and later helped Jacqui Luberto open One Family Property Services, where she remains Field Director and property manager.

That experience ultimately gave her the idea for Bristles & Broomsticks.

Melissa had always loved to clean. Years earlier in Germany, she had cleaned homes for other military members. But working in property management showed her just how important the right cleaning company could be, especially when a property needed to be turned over, prepared for the market, or handed off to a new owner.

She also knew firsthand how difficult it could be to find cleaners who consistently met the standards she expected.

So three years ago, she created the company she had been looking for.



"People are not numbers. People are not boxes. Your business is the people. This is a true community."

— MELISSA RAULERSON

Today, Bristles & Broomsticks serves clients from Pensacola to Panama City, handling residential, commercial, construction, move-in, and move-out cleaning. Managing supervisor Sara Jackson, whom Melissa calls the "face of the company," brings her own background in property management and cleaning to the team.

While the company handles a wide range of cleaning needs, Melissa says their specialty is often the work other people don't want to touch.

Difficult move-outs, trash-outs, and properties left in rough condition are all familiar territory. For Melissa, those jobs are very different from a traditional residential clean, and her team's experience allows them to understand what it takes to get a property ready for whatever comes next.

That knowledge has made Bristles & Broomsticks particularly valuable to Realtors and property managers.

The company offers pre-showing cleans, move-in cleans that agents can give as closing gifts, free consultations, and à la carte services when an entire home doesn't need attention. They have also established a referral program specifically designed to reward agents and others who continue sending business their way.

But Melissa believes their value goes beyond leaving behind a clean house.

Because of her own real estate and property management background, she knows what agents need from the people working inside their listings. The Bristles & Broomsticks team follows an extensive checklist, getting into the details that can easily be overlooked. If appliances

can be moved, they move them. Blinds get cleaned. And while they work, they're also paying attention.

If the team notices a loose sink or another potential issue, they don't simply clean around it and leave. They report it back to the agent or property manager so it can be addressed.

That extra set of eyes can matter when a property is approaching a showing, closing, or turnover.

And if something isn't up to standard, the team comes back to make it right, even if a buyer or tenant has already moved in.

Melissa readily admits her expectations are high, and she

wants the people who hire Bristles & Broomsticks to know the same level of care will be there whether they are an agent preparing a listing, a property manager dealing with a difficult turnover, or a homeowner simply needing help.

There is also a little personality behind the company's name and branding.

Melissa and Sara met through Stage Crafters Community Theatre in Fort Walton Beach while appearing in Clue. Melissa serves on the board and remains active in local theater, including Mosaic Community Theatre, Emerald Coast Theatre Company (ECTC), and supporting Story House. That shared love of theater helped bring some of the fun and "magic" into Bristles

& Broomsticks, including the red incorporated into its logo.

For Melissa, relationships like those have become one of the most meaningful threads connecting her business and personal life.

Today, she and her family are adjusting to another new chapter as her husband settles into civilian life after retirement. Melissa continues doing outreach and helping connect military families with people and resources through relationships built during her own years of service and as a military spouse.

But community has taken on an even deeper meaning for Melissa and her family in recent years.

Melissa is the mother of Payton Raulerson, her 13-year-old daughter who took her life after experiencing bullying.

For Melissa, saying Payton's name, sharing her story, and continuing the message of #PaytonStrong is important.

"Anytime that I can use Payton's name to incite change and keep her alive, I am completely okay with it," she says.

Melissa describes her family as "forever five." Their oldest is 20, while their youngest is now a freshman at Crestview High School. Together, they continue learning how to put one foot in front of the other while finding ways to help others along the way.



That includes connecting with families who have lost children, those experiencing bullying, or people who simply don't know where to turn.

It has reinforced something Melissa believes applies just as much to business as it does to life.

"People are not numbers. People are not boxes," she says. "Your business is the people. This is a true community."

That belief has followed Melissa through every chapter, from her years in the military community to real estate,

"Anytime that I can use Payton's name to incite *change* and keep her alive, I am completely okay with it."

— MELISSA RAULERSON



property management, and now Bristles & Broomsticks. The work may have changed, but the importance she places on relationships has not.

For Melissa, building a successful company means doing the job well, holding herself and her team to a high standard, and being someone people know they can count on. But just as importantly, it means remembering the people behind every home, every transaction, and every relationship.

And that, more than anything, is what Melissa hopes to continue building. ▀



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Nikita CHAPMAN

BEYOND THE UNIFORM

PHOTOS BY JACQUELINE LUCILLE

After two decades of service in the U.S. Air Force, Nikita Chapman is bringing the adaptability, integrity, and determination that shaped her military career into a real estate business she began building long before retirement.

For Nikita Chapman, retirement from the United States Air Force wasn't the beginning of a search for what came next.

She had already found it.

When Nikita officially retired on June 1, 2025, she closed out a remarkable 20-year military career that included three deployments, three duty stations, and a rise from Airman Basic to Master Sergeant. But three years before hanging up her uniform, she had already begun laying the foundation for an entirely different career.

In 2022, while still serving on active duty, Nikita earned her real estate license.

Her interest in the industry had started with her own investment. After purchasing her first property, fixing it up, and flipping it, Nikita discovered an excitement for real estate that went well beyond the project itself.

She was drawn to the business, the people, and the possibilities.

So she decided not to wait.

Nikita completed the coursework, passed her licensing exam, and began actively working in real estate while simultaneously fulfilling the demands of military service. During her first year as an agent, she closed five properties, all while still on active duty.

By the time retirement arrived, Nikita wasn't stepping into the unknown. She had spent three

years intentionally creating a bridge between two careers.

"I think sometimes we join the military and that becomes our external focus," she says. "But it's life outside the military, so it's very important to prepare yourself for that life outside. And you can do that while being active duty."

Today, Nikita is building that second career with Sage Council Realty.

What initially attracted her to real estate remains what she enjoys most about it: no two transactions are the same.

"I love the thrill of negotiating and working with different people," she says. "Every transaction is different. You just never know what that transaction is going to bring, what you're going to learn from it, or what you're going to take from it."

After two decades in the Air Force, unpredictability doesn't intimidate Nikita.

It feels familiar.

During her military career, she learned to adapt quickly, assess changing circumstances, and remain focused on the mission regardless of what appeared along the way. Today, the setting is different, but she sees those same skills at work every time a real estate transaction takes an unexpected turn.

"You have to adapt and adjust quickly, fast, and in a hurry because you just never know what that mission is," she says. "That translates into real estate. You don't know what the transaction may bring, just like you don't know what the mission may bring."

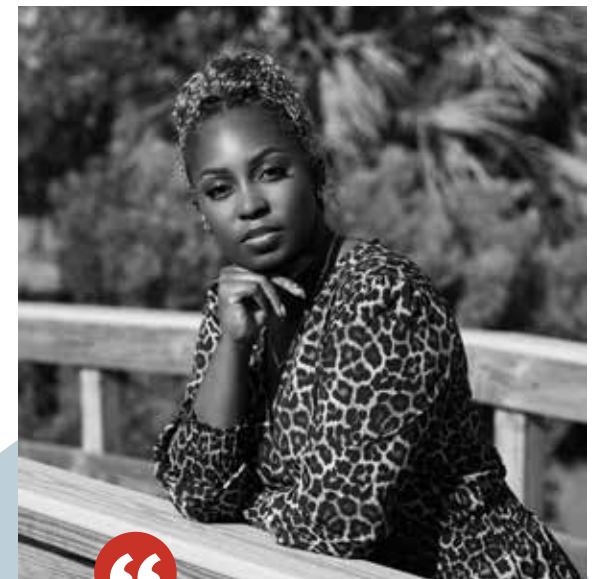
Perhaps even more important than adaptability is the sense of

integrity Nikita brings to her relationships.

She doesn't believe building a successful business requires becoming someone different in front of clients. Her approach is straightforward: be authentic, be honest, communicate clearly, and genuinely care about the person on the other side of the transaction.

Those relationships don't end at closing.

Nikita makes an effort to stay connected to former clients because she wants them to know her interest in their lives was never limited to a sale. That authenticity has become one of the foundations of her business and a natural way for her to continue growing it.



“

You have to adapt and adjust quickly, fast, and in a hurry because you just never know what that mission is. That translates into real estate.”

— NIKITA CHAPMAN

For Nikita, however, relationships are only one piece of becoming an exceptional agent.

“It’s about connection,” she says. “Also education, how knowledgeable you are with the market, what’s changing with the market, what’s new, just being on top of that.”

It is an approach that combines the personal and professional: know your clients well enough to understand what they need, and know your business well enough to help them get there.

Outside of real estate, Nikita’s biggest role is being a mom.

She has four sons, three currently in college and one in middle school, and much of her life away from work centers on making sure they are prepared for their own futures. After navigating major transitions herself, she understands the importance of thinking beyond what is immediately in front of you.

When she does carve out time for herself, Nikita can often be found on a pickleball court. She discovered the sport about two years ago and quickly fell in love with it.

“Pickleball is my thing,” she says.

It is a lighter side of a woman who spent much of her adult life serving her country, raising four sons, and, eventually, building a second career at the same time.

Looking back, Nikita’s transition into real estate carries a message that extends beyond her own success.

A military career can become an enormous part of a person’s identity, particularly after 20 years of service. But Nikita believes



service members can honor that commitment while still thinking intentionally about who they want to become afterward.

She didn’t wait for retirement to ask herself what was next.

She started answering that question years earlier.

Today, Nikita has traded military missions for negotiations, deployments for closings, and one demanding career for another she genuinely loves. Yet the qualities behind her success remain much the same: adaptability, integrity, preparation, and connection.

After 20 years of serving her country, Nikita Chapman stepped beyond the uniform with a second career already in motion.

She didn’t have to start over.

She had already started building. ▀



“

It’s about connection. Also education, how knowledgeable you are with the market, what’s changing with the market, what’s new, just being on top of that.”

— NIKITA CHAPMAN



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SAVED

JON HOWARD'S MISSION TO SERVE

For Jon Howard, SAVED began with a simple question: If you have the ability to help, how can you not?

Long before the nonprofit had a name, Jon had spent much of his life answering that question through action.

Before real estate, he served 12 years on active duty in the military as a special operator. After leaving the military in 2017, he turned his attention to business, building a real estate brokerage and property management company in the Destin area before selling the operation in 2022.

He could have stopped there. Instead, when Florida established its State Guard, and Jon was invited to try out for its special missions unit, he saw an opportunity to serve again.

That decision eventually took him to North Carolina in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

What he found there was devastation, isolation, and people who needed help immediately. Roads had been washed away, communication was limited, and entire areas were difficult to reach. Jon and those working alongside him moved from one mission to the next, doing whatever they could.

One of those missions involved a premature baby who had been born



before the hurricane and was stranded with its mother.

As Jon's helicopter team made its way toward them, he sent the address to members of his State Guard team to see if anyone was nearby. Against incredible odds, one of their paramedics happened to be just down the road.

When he reached the baby, the infant was blue and struggling to breathe. The paramedic secured oxygen from a nearby fire department and stabilized the baby before Jon's team arrived.

“It restored a lot of faith in humanity. It was just mission after mission.” — JON HOWARD

They then transported the infant by helicopter to a hospital, where doctors met them on the roof.

Days later, they learned the baby was doing well.

There was little time to process it. Jon remembers that within minutes, they were onto another rescue.

“It was just mission after mission,” he says.

The experience changed him.

During the response, Jon posted a video calling attention to the need for more help in North Carolina. The video spread far beyond anything he expected. Civilian helicopter pilots began arriving to help, people reached out asking what they could do, and money poured into relief efforts.



What stayed with Jon wasn't the attention. It was watching ordinary people respond when they realized they were needed.

“It restored a lot of faith in humanity,” he says.

It also eventually helped lead him to SAVED.

The name carries two meanings that are deeply personal to Jon. SAVED is about physically saving people through disaster response and rescue work, but as a Christian, he also sees the organization as an opportunity to bring faith, comfort, and hope to people facing some of the hardest moments of their lives.

When disaster response isn't needed, his vision is to use the organization for mission work.

“It's all about saving people physically and spiritually,” he says.

Just as important as what SAVED does is how Jon wants it done.

After working alongside nonprofits through disaster relief efforts, he became increasingly passionate about transparency and making sure that when people give to a specific mission, their support actually reaches that mission. It ultimately became one of the driving forces behind creating an organization of his own.

“It's all about saving people physically and spiritually. I'll never pay myself a dollar for this.” — JON HOWARD



He doesn't want SAVED to arrive at a disaster simply because cameras are there or attention can be gained. Before showing up, he asks whether he can actually provide something useful.

“There's always a way to provide value,” he says.

Sometimes that may mean flying rescue missions. Other times, it could mean bringing supplies, raising awareness, or supporting the people already doing the work. Jon points to something as simple as volunteers making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for first responders as proof that helping doesn't require specialized equipment or extraordinary resources.

His philosophy for SAVED is equally straightforward. Jon will not take a salary for running the organization, and he wants the people involved to come with the same spirit of service. When money is raised for a specific disaster or mission, his commitment is that it all goes toward that mission.

“I'll never pay myself a dollar for this,” he says.

Even fundraising reflects that mindset.

An amateur bird photographer, Jon has used his photography to raise money for charitable causes, selling prints and other items and directing the proceeds toward people who need help. That idea has now expanded into SAVED Coffee



Company, with coffee and apparel helping support the nonprofit.

For Jon, it's a way to let people participate without simply asking them to hand over money. Buy a bag of coffee, wear a SAVED shirt, or find another way to contribute.

Because if his experiences have taught him anything, it's that everyone has something to offer.

A helicopter can save a life. A pilot can carry supplies. A volunteer can make sandwiches. A bag of coffee can help fund the next mission.

SAVED may be Jon's organization, but the mission behind it is much bigger.

See a need. Find a way to help. And when the opportunity comes, show up.

SUPPORT THE MISSION

Support SAVED through coffee and apparel at [savedmovement.com](https://www.savedmovement.com), or purchase Jon's photography at [jonhowardart.com](https://www.jonhowardart.com).

See a need.
Find a way to help.
Show up.

When Selling Isn't the Only Strategy

BY DANIELLE FAYE KING



Sometimes, the best way to serve a seller is to recognize when selling may not be the best move right now.

A home can be priced appropriately, professionally marketed, beautifully photographed, and consistently shown and still sit longer than expected. Interest rates, buyer demand, inventory, and seasonal changes can all affect how quickly a property sells. When that happens, the conversation with the seller shouldn't feel like a failure. It should feel like options.

One of those options may be temporarily turning the home into a rental.

That's why having a trusted property management professional in your network can be valuable. Instead of simply recommending another price reduction or allowing a listing to expire without a plan, an agent can introduce renting as a potential strategy. A qualified property manager can provide a rental analysis, explain anticipated expenses, market the home, screen applicants, prepare the lease, coordinate maintenance, and manage the property on the owner's behalf.

For a homeowner who has already relocated, is carrying two mortgages, or simply feels exhausted by the selling process,

this can provide real relief. Rental income may help offset the mortgage, taxes, insurance, and other ownership costs while giving the seller time to evaluate their next move.

Timing is important. Ideally, this conversation happens before a seller reaches the point of frustration. If a property has been sitting for some time or a listing agreement is approaching expiration, introducing alternative strategies early gives homeowners time to understand their choices.

It can also strengthen the agent's relationship with the client. You're showing the homeowner that your concern goes beyond simply completing a sale. You're helping them protect their asset and make the decision that best fits their financial situation.

The relationship between an agent and property manager should also be collaborative. A trusted property manager respects the agent's relationship with the client and serves as a resource during the rental period.

When the homeowner is ready to sell again, the agent remains part of that relationship.

Property management doesn't have to replace the sale. In the right situation, it can simply provide a practical bridge between today's market and tomorrow's opportunity.

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NICO

Camargo



PHOTOS BY
JACQUELINE LUCILLE

A New Mission

The military gave Nico Camargo a foundation of discipline, persistence, and service. Real estate gave him a new place to put it all to work. Today, as team leader of the Camargo Group at Real Broker, he is building something of his own while never losing sight of the people behind every transaction.

For Nico Camargo, the hardest part about leaving the military wasn't simply figuring out what job would come next. It was figuring out what would come next for him.

The transition marked the end of a chapter that hadn't unfolded exactly as he had hoped. Still ambitious and deeply driven, Nico suddenly found himself without a clear target for that ambition.

"I didn't achieve what I wanted to achieve in the military," he says. "I was still very much driven to do something. I just wasn't sure what that was going to be."

So, Nico gave himself some time to figure it out.

He returned to school, eventually earning his MBA from Grand Canyon University. Somewhere along the way, however, he noticed something about himself. While studying companies, strategy, and business growth, Nico wasn't

imagining himself climbing the ladder inside someone else's organization.

He wanted to build his own.

"I was thinking, how can I start my own company?" he said. "How can I start a business and make it successful?"

He just didn't know what that business would be.

His wife remained on active duty, keeping their family closely connected to the military community. Nico had also experienced real estate from the other side of the table. He and his wife had bought and sold a home while on active duty, giving him a firsthand look at both the process and the business behind it.

Something clicked.

"I just kind of looked at the business side of the transaction," he remembers. "I was like, man, I feel like I could do this."

Before Nico ever took his licensing exam, he began talking to people he knew. He asked friends and members of his military circle a simple question: If he became a REALTOR®, would they trust him to help them?

Those conversations planted the first seeds of what would eventually become a career.

Nico earned his license in 2021. Within approximately two months, he had his first closed transaction.

From there, the business grew largely through the people who already knew and trusted him. Friends became clients. Members of the military community called when they needed to buy or sell. Past connections recommended him to neighbors and others in their circles.

But Nico never wanted that trust to end at the closing table.

"I approach every single client that I meet as a potential friend," he says.

For him, that means knowing more than a client's budget and preferred number of bedrooms. He wants to know their children's names, what they do on the weekends, what matters to them, and what they hope life will look like after the move.

If someone loves fishing or kayaking, proximity to the water matters. If a military family is navigating a PCS, their priorities may look entirely different from those of a family searching for a forever home.

Real estate, Nico quickly learned, is rarely just about real estate.

Some clients are celebrating. Others are relocating because they have to. Some are navigating divorce or another difficult transition. Each situation requires something different from the person guiding them through it.

"I approach every single client that I meet as a potential friend."

— NICO CAMARGO

“You have to approach every single situation differently and center it around the people instead of just the transaction checklist,” Nico says.

That willingness to stay focused on the people also shows up when a deal becomes difficult.

Nico is quick to say he doesn’t believe being a top agent means knowing everything or being the smartest person in the room. What matters more to him is being willing to keep going after an easier path disappears.



Nico sees a similar lesson in jiu-jitsu: starting something difficult means allowing yourself to be bad at it before you can get better. That willingness to be a beginner, stay consistent, and improve over time is a mindset he sees reflected in real estate as well.

When a transaction looks dead, he keeps making calls. When an obstacle appears, he looks for another solution. When a family is counting on him, walking away is the last option.

“I’ll fight until there’s really just no way out,” he says. “I keep running into these crazy scenarios, but I keep clawing my way out of them.”

It is a mentality that connects his two professional chapters more than they may initially appear. The military and real estate are vastly different worlds, but Nico carried something important from one into the other: the ability to adapt, keep moving, and stay committed to the people depending on him.

Today, he is taking that mindset into another new role as team leader of the Camargo Group at Real Broker.

Starting a team represents more than production growth. For Nico, it is an opportunity to finally build the kind of business he found himself imagining years earlier while working toward his MBA. The Camargo Group allows him to create something bigger than his own individual career, step into leadership, and build around the same values that earned the trust of his earliest clients.

Outside of real estate, Nico’s wife and children remain at the center of his world. Their family has created a life that reflects what matters to them, from homeschooling their children to sharing an interest in jiu-jitsu and even caring for chickens at home. His wife, Lyna, also works alongside him in the industry as a full-time mortgage officer with United Direct Lending, and for Nico, building careers in real estate while having more time together as a family feels like a dream come true. Those everyday experiences give Nico a perspective

that carries naturally into his work. He understands that a home isn’t simply an investment or an address. It’s where families build routines, pursue interests, raise their children, and create a life that feels like their own.

In many ways, that understanding brings Nico’s story full circle.

When he left the military, he didn’t know exactly what his next chapter would look like. He simply knew he still had the drive to build something meaningful.

In 2021, real estate was an idea he was willing to take a chance on. Today, Nico is building the Camargo Group, serving families through some of their biggest transitions, and creating a business rooted in relationships, persistence, and genuine connection.

The path wasn’t one he could have mapped out when he left the military.

But perhaps that’s what makes it meaningful.

Nico wasn’t finished building, serving, or

pushing himself toward something more.

Real estate simply gave him a new mission. 🏠

“You have to approach every single situation differently and center it around the *people* instead of just the transaction checklist.”
— NICO CAMARGO



All About *Emerald Coast* Real Producers

foster a shared space for sharing stories, celebrating successes, discussing market trends, and highlighting upcoming events. Our monthly publication is dedicated to connecting, informing, and inspiring, encompassing anything that contributes to the enrichment of our community.

Q: DOES REAL PRODUCERS HAVE EVENTS?

A: Yes! We have specific networking events throughout the year.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The process for getting featured in our magazine is straightforward. To be eligible, you need to be on the top 300 list, and we value nominations highly. Whether you're a real estate agent, business, broker, owner, or someone who admires the work of others, you can nominate individuals, including yourself. Even office leaders have the opportunity to nominate outstanding real estate agents. We take every nomination seriously and consider anyone from the top 300 list who is brought to our attention. While we cannot guarantee a feature, we strongly encourage you to connect with one of our team members, show support for Real Producers, and participate in our private events. These steps can enhance your chances of being featured in our publication.

Q: WHAT DOES IT COST A REAL ESTATE AGENT/TEAM TO BE FEATURED?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing to agents, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share **REAL** stories of **Real Producers**.

Q: WHO ARE THE RP-VETTED BUSINESSES?

A: The RP-vetted businesses featured in our publication represent some of the best in the business in their respective categories within the Emerald Coast. You can easily locate them in our index. We do not randomly select businesses, nor do we collaborate with every business that approaches us. We prioritize businesses that have received your stamp of approval through recommendations, and each business showcased has been personally recommended by many of the top agents featured in our publication. Before featuring any business, our team conducts additional vetting to ensure they align with our community's values and bring substantial value. Our aim is to build a robust network that not only includes the best real estate agents but also features top-tier businesses, fostering collective growth and strength within our community.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A BUSINESS?

A: If you want to recommend a business that works with top real estate agents, please email or message us.

Email: taylor.labno@n2co.com

The first Real Producers magazine started in Indianapolis in 2015. Real Producers is now in over 130 markets across the nation and is continuing to grow nationwide.

Q: WHO RECEIVES REAL PRODUCERS MAGAZINES?

A: The top 300 real estate agents across the Emerald Coast and our preferred partners.

Q: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS MAGAZINE?

A: We believe that we are better together. When we surround ourselves with other successful, like-minded people, we grow to new heights. Real Producers is a platform that brings together the most accomplished individuals in the Emerald Coast real estate sector.

By curating an exclusive community comprised of the top 300 real estate agents and RP-vetted businesses in each market, we

Built to Build. Backed to Manage.

Your trusted Emerald Coast partner for full-service property management, construction coordination, and real estate expertise.



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Vacation Rental & Property Management: Turnkey owner care and revenue optimization

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