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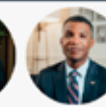
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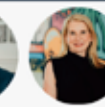
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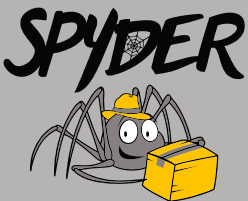
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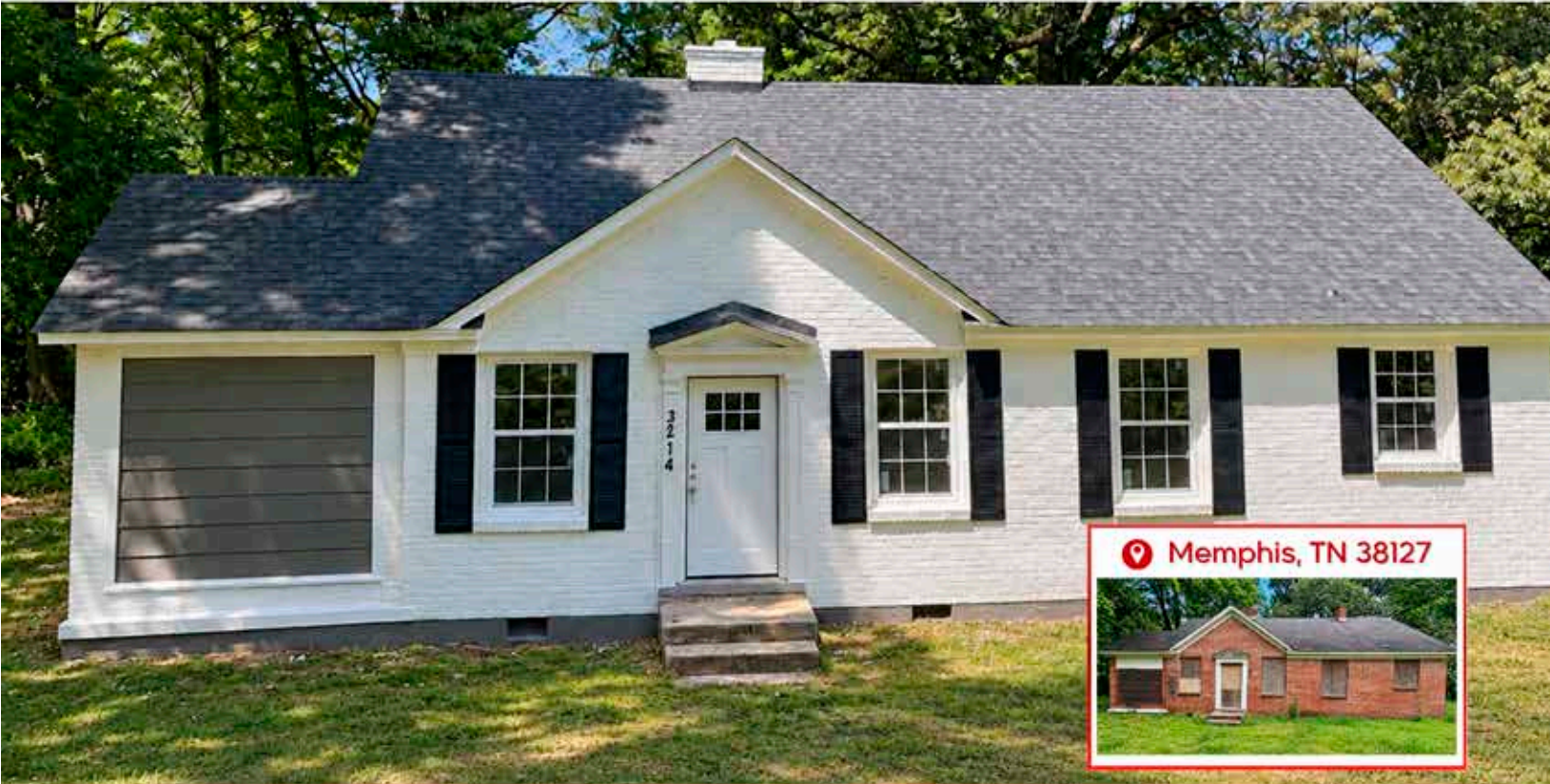


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You Don't Have to See the Destination

BY JEFF WHITE
PHOTOS BY CALEB NELSON

The paperwork was ready. The closing was scheduled. But the woman sitting across from Ronni Harris had something far more important on her mind.

Her husband.

Just two months earlier, the woman had lost the man with whom she'd shared her life. Now, sitting in her home in Eads, she was preparing to sell the place that held so many of their memories.

"She didn't want to talk about the closing," Ronni remembers. "She wanted to talk about her husband."

So Ronni listened.

There were documents to sign and a transaction to complete, but none of that seemed quite as important as being present for someone who was hurting.

For Ronni, moments like this have become some of the most meaningful parts of her work. But that wasn't always the case.

Earlier in her career, she preferred staying behind the scenes, avoiding interruptions, and processing as many files as possible. She loved the work, but her understanding of what made it meaningful was still evolving.

Today, Ronni and her husband, Ty, own EDCO Title & Closing Services. And the journey that took her from receptionist to owner has transformed more than her career.

It has changed the way she sees the people she serves, the team she leads, and the purpose behind it all.

Finding Her Lane

Long before Ronni began her own career, she had an example of what it meant to work hard and care for a family. Her mother maintained a career while helping raise their family and managing the books for her father's business. Ronni remembers watching her mother give her full attention to whatever responsibility was in front of her.

"If I'm at work, I'm at work," her mother would say.

And when she was home, she was present there, too.

That example left a lasting impression. Ronni grew up knowing she wanted a career of her own, even if she wasn't sure what it would look like.

Her introduction to real estate came through her parents. While earning her real estate license, she volunteered in Mary Forrester King's office to learn the business hands-on. Mary eventually hired her, and Ronni discovered something important about herself.

She loved the work.

Ronni also spent time working with her mother at The Austin Group Realtors before beginning her career in the title industry with EDCO in 2002.

Starting as a receptionist, she became a pre-closer, then a post-closer, and eventually a closer.

"I guess I felt like I wasn't good at anything," Ronni remembers, "but I'm really good at this."

The title business became a place where she could thrive. She loved learning, taking on responsibility, and understanding how everything fit together.

There was no master plan. She simply kept showing up and growing into each new opportunity.

The Road to Ownership

Then came 2008.

The real estate downturn forced EDCO to consolidate locations and dramatically reduce staff. Ronni watched coworkers and friends lose their jobs as the company fought to survive.

She stayed.

The years that followed brought difficult seasons and even a brief period when Ronni left EDCO altogether.

Eventually, an opportunity emerged that she had never wanted.

Ownership.

Ty remembers Ronni had been adamant about not owning a business. Then something changed.

"Something flipped," Ty remembers. "She said, 'I can do this. I can do this better than anybody else that I know. What's stopping me?'"

Ronni knew the operations, the people, and the business.



Even when it's hard, I love it."

"I know this. I've got this," she says. "Even when it's hard, I love it."

In 2022, Ronni and two partners purchased EDCO. Subsequent ownership transitions eventually opened the door for Ronni and Ty to lead the company's next chapter together.

Better Together

Ronni and Ty's partnership began long before EDCO.

They met as teenagers through a church youth group. They became parents young, navigated lean years

and demanding careers, and raised their family together.

Now, with their children grown, they've entered a season neither could have imagined as teenagers: building a business together.

Ronni laughs that working side by side probably wouldn't have worked when they were younger. Today, their differences are among their greatest strengths.

Ronni thrives in operations, while Ty enjoys building relationships and connecting with people throughout the community. Together, they've found a balance that allows each to contribute in meaningful ways.

Away from work, Ronni enjoys sitting on the patio while Ty tinkers in his garage. They follow their nephews to baseball games and go-kart races, and when they can get away, they head to the Tennessee River.

For Ronni, being on the boat at sunset is where the stress seems to disappear and she feels especially close to God.

The People Behind the Purpose

While Ronni and Ty provide leadership, they recognize that EDCO's success depends on the people who serve their clients every day.

For Ronni, the team is more than employees completing transactions. They're people with families, responsibilities, and aspirations of their own.

Having navigated difficult professional seasons herself, she understands the importance of feeling valued and supported. She wants EDCO to be a place where employees take pride in their work, care for their families, and know their contributions matter.

That commitment extends to their clients.

The EDCO staff regularly discusses the "why" behind each transaction. A closing may be routine for someone preparing paperwork, but it's rarely routine for the person sitting across the table.

Someone is buying a first home. Someone is selling the place where they raised their children. Someone is beginning again.

Ronni wants every team member to recognize the person behind the paperwork.

She sees employees taking the initiative to check on clients, offer encouragement, and find thoughtful ways to make difficult situations easier. Those gestures aren't simply instructions from management. They're expressions of genuine care.

"It's not just the owner that feels that way," Ronni says. "The staff feels that way. You feel it from everyone."



Watching her team embrace that purpose has become one of the most rewarding parts of ownership.

"The staff and the clients are the purpose," she says.

For REALTORS®, that philosophy matters too. When EDCO takes exceptional care of a client, they're also caring for the agent who entrusted that relationship to them.

Ronni and Ty want EDCO to grow, but they believe growth begins with protecting their culture and investing in their people.

What Got Her Here

Three words hang on the wall of Ronni's office.

Loyalty. Integrity. Respect.

They aren't there for customers or marketing. They're reminders to Ronni of the principles that have guided her career.

"They're for me," she says, "because that's what's gotten me here."

When Ronni answered EDCO's phones in 2002, she couldn't have imagined the challenges and opportunities ahead. She simply kept learning, working hard, and doing what she believed was right.

Today, the woman who once preferred staying behind the scenes finds fulfillment in caring for clients and creating opportunities for her team.

The career she built one responsibility at a time has become an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others.

And those three words on her wall continue to guide her.

"When you do the right thing," she says, "it's gonna be okay." 🏡



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A LEGACY OF LIFTING OTHERS

Audrey DAVIS

BY JEFF WHITE
PHOTOS BY BECKY MITCHELL WITH
LENSMAN REAL ESTATE PHOTOGRAPHY

Audrey Davis never imagined that one of the most difficult seasons of her life would lead her to become the owner of RE/MAX Experts.

After years as a corporate engineer and stay-at-home mother, she found herself facing an uncertain future, responsible for raising two daughters, one with significant medical challenges. What followed was a journey of faith, resilience, and determination that would transform her career and shape the way she serves others.

Through it all, Audrey leaned on the lessons instilled by her father, a man who overcame extraordinary poverty to become a dentist. His greatest gift wasn't the success he achieved, but the values he passed along.

"You don't just work hard to make money. You work hard to make the world a better place," Audrey recalls.

Today, that philosophy is reflected in the way she leads her agents, serves her community, and approaches every opportunity to make a difference.

Finding a New Direction

Born and raised in Memphis, Audrey attended Georgia Tech and Christian Brothers University, studying computer engineering. Her career included technology positions with Coca-Cola Enterprises and GE Appliances before she stepped away to raise her daughters, Jenny and Courtney.

For eight years, motherhood was her focus. Being present was especially important because Courtney was born with sickle cell disease and required ongoing care at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Then, during the financial downturn, everything changed.

Her marriage ended, her financial circumstances unraveled, and she suddenly faced the responsibility of providing for her daughters.

Returning to corporate America seemed obvious, but extensive travel would mean sacrificing precious time with her children.

Overwhelmed, Audrey turned to her father.

"Wipe 50% of those tears away because you're going to pray about it. God's going to show you a direction, and you're going to get up, and you're gonna go do it."

And that's exactly what she did.

From a Fresh Start to Brokerage Ownership

The opportunity came through Peter Ritten, a longtime RE/MAX broker whose daughter was Audrey's close friend.

Recognizing her business background, Peter invited Audrey to help establish better operational processes while learning to sell real estate. He believed she could build a career

that provided for her family without sacrificing flexibility.

"Real estate was like the perfect solution," Audrey reflects.

Audrey embraced the opportunity, bringing her analytical thinking and corporate experience into her new profession. She built a successful sales career, becoming a lifetime member of the Multi Million Dollar Club, but her contributions soon extended beyond helping buyers and sellers.

Over the years, she assumed increasing leadership responsibilities, helping guide RE/MAX through multiple ownership transitions. She worked alongside respected professionals, including the late Bill Stewart, with whom she shared principal broker responsibilities.

As ownership changed hands, Audrey remained a steady presence, maintaining operations, relationships, and the brokerage's culture.

After years of helping other owners lead RE/MAX, Audrey finally became the owner herself, with full ownership taking effect January 1, 2026.





Today, RE/MAX Experts is home to some of the Mid-South's most accomplished real estate professionals. And in a remarkable full-circle moment, Peter, the man who introduced her to the industry, remains an active agent.

"He's still giving me direction," she says with a laugh.

A Different Kind of Brokerage Culture

Having experienced the potential of real estate firsthand, Audrey approaches leadership with a perspective extending beyond production numbers.

When agents join RE/MAX Experts, she doesn't dictate their sales goals. Instead, she asks them to establish goals in four areas of their lives and identify their personal motivations.

"Real estate can be anything you want it to be," she explains.

Walk into RE/MAX Experts and you won't find a leaderboard ranking agents against one another. Audrey believes an agent still building a business deserves just as much encouragement as a top producer.

"We want our top 10 helping the bottom 20," she says.

She leads by example, answering her phone seven days a week. Her agents call about transactions, business decisions, family concerns, and sometimes matters having nothing to do with real estate.

"We're kind of like a big family," she says.

A Story of Faith and Possibility

While Audrey was rebuilding her professional life, her family was navigating another extraordinary journey.

Before Courtney was born, Audrey learned her daughter might have sickle cell disease. Determined to prepare, she connected with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital while still pregnant.

It began a relationship that would span Courtney's childhood.

Among the challenges was Courtney's struggle to learn to read. Audrey remembers labeling objects throughout their home, trying different techniques, and seeking help from educators.

By third grade, Courtney was still struggling, and Audrey feared she might have to leave her school.

"I was just crying and praying," Audrey remembers.

“

STAY POSITIVE IN THE MIDST OF ALL SEASONS BECAUSE YOUR ATTITUDE DICTATES YOUR *outcome.*”



Then Courtney began reading, and her academic progress accelerated. By middle school, educators were amazed by her transformation.

Years later, Courtney graduated from Cornell University and began a career in private equity in New York City.

For Audrey, that accomplishment represents far more than an Ivy League diploma.

"I love to give St. Jude a lot of credit," she says. "But this is really talking about a God story."

Her older daughter, Jenny, recently earned her medical degree and Master of Public

Health from Quillen College of Medicine and is now a resident physician.

"My two daughters, Jenny and Courtney, are truly the greatest blessings of my life."

Giving Back Is Part of the Responsibility

Audrey's gratitude has translated into a deep commitment to community service.

She serves as President of the Shelby County (TN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, and holds board positions with the Benjamin Hooks Institute and the Sickle Cell Foundation of Tennessee.

But St. Jude remains especially close to her heart.

Today, Audrey serves through patient and family advisory roles and speaks at fundraising events supporting the hospital.

"They not only saved her life; moreover, they helped her have a quality of life that we never expected," she says of Courtney's experience.

Although recognized for her community involvement, Audrey redirects the attention.

"I don't think anybody should ever be awarded for community service. That's the price we pay for the gifts we've been blessed with."

It's a perspective that echoes her father's lessons: Work hard. Build something meaningful. And give back.

Helping Others Find Their Way

As Audrey leads RE/MAX Experts through a challenging real estate market, she feels a deep responsibility for the



professionals who have placed their trust in her.

"I feel the weight of making sure every agent in our RE/MAX family has what they need to be successful no matter the circumstances."

She remembers standing at a crossroads, uncertain about her future, hoping someone would help her find a way forward.

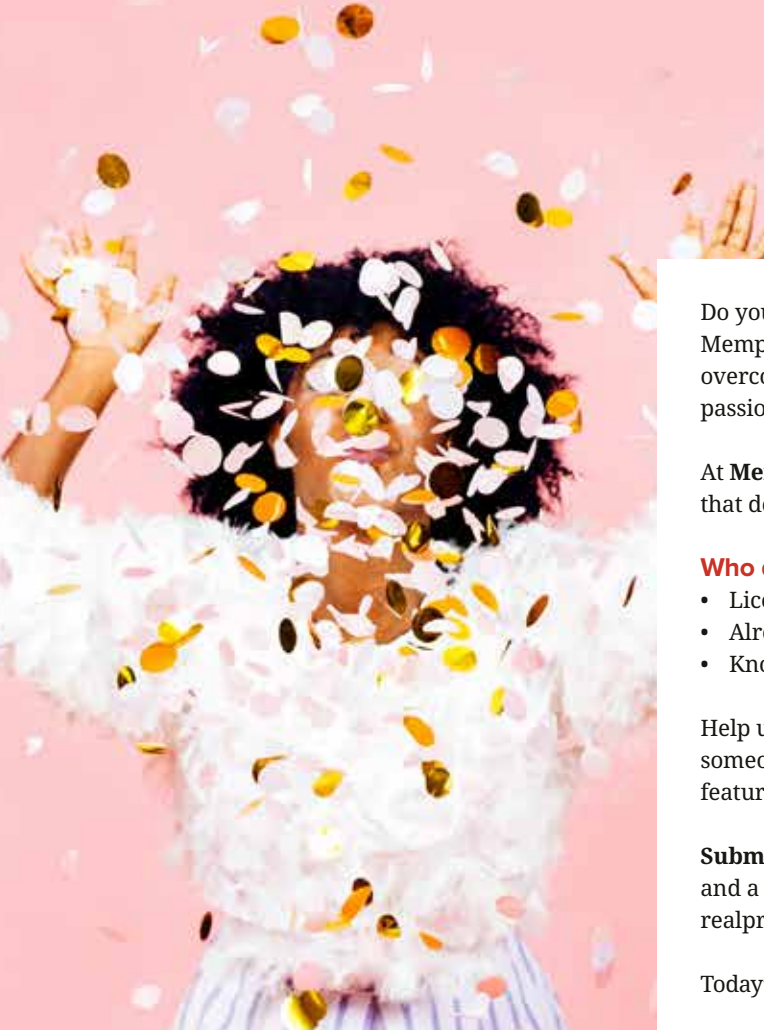
Someone did.

Now she has the privilege of doing the same for others.

Her advice to fellow REALTORS® is simple: "Stay positive in the midst of all seasons because your attitude dictates your outcome."

For Audrey Davis, perhaps the greatest success isn't that she now owns the brokerage that once gave her a fresh start.

It's that she gets to spend each day helping someone else discover theirs. ▀



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The Market Is Tough.

You Don't Have to Go Through It Alone.



BY REAL PRODUCERS BUSINESS PARTNER, RYAN GUESS WITH NORTHPOINTE BANK

Let's just say it: real estate has been tough.

For Realtors who entered the business when rates were historically low, homes received multiple offers in a weekend, and buyers were lined up at the door, today's market probably feels like an entirely different career.

Even experienced agents are feeling it.

Buyers hesitate. Sellers have expectations based on what their neighbor got three years ago. Deals take longer. Transactions fall apart. And

sometimes you can work incredibly hard for weeks and have absolutely nothing show up on a closing statement.

That can wear on you.

Because in real estate, business isn't always just business. Your production affects your income. Your income affects your family. Eventually, if you're not careful, a difficult market can start affecting how you see yourself.

That's why one of the biggest challenges in this market isn't simply generating more business.

It's maintaining the right mindset while you do it.

Control What You Can Control

You can't control interest rates. You can't control inventory. You can't control what the news says about housing tomorrow. But you can control whether you pick up the phone.

Call five past clients. Follow up with the buyer who wasn't ready six months ago. Hold the open house. Take someone to coffee. Attend the event. Post the video. Ask for the appointment.

Your clients don't need another person telling them how terrible the market is. They need someone who can calmly say, "Here's where we are, here are our options, and here's how we're going to move forward."

That's leadership.

Measure the Seeds, Not Just the Closings

If closings are your only measurement of success, this market can beat you up mentally.

Instead, measure the activities you can control.

How many conversations did you have? How many people did you follow up with? How many appointments did you schedule? How many people did you genuinely help?

Those are seeds. You don't plant a seed Monday and dig it up Wednesday because nothing has grown. You water it. You keep working. You trust the process. Eventually, the harvest comes.

Don't Go Through It Alone

This may be the part we overlook the most. Real estate can be an incredibly social business and, at the same time, an incredibly lonely profession. Everybody asks, "How's business?" How often do we actually answer honestly?

That realization was part of the reason I started **Brotherhood, Business & Bourbon**.

It wasn't about creating another networking event or collecting business cards. It was about creating a place for men to build genuine relationships, talk about business, talk about life and occasionally admit that things aren't always going great.

Sometimes the most important conversation isn't, "How many houses did you sell this month?"

It's simply: "**How are you doing?**"

And then sticking around long enough to hear the answer.

You don't need Brotherhood, Business & Bourbon to do that. You just need people.

Find your group. Find Realtors, lenders, title partners, friends, mentors, or coaches who push you forward instead of feeding the negativity.

And when you're doing well, be that person for somebody else. Success is easier to celebrate together. Hard seasons are easier to carry together, too.

Keep Showing Up

Markets change. They always have.

Rates will change. Inventory will change. Buyer confidence will change. The headlines will change.

The Realtors who keep building relationships, improving their skills, staying visible, and serving people will be positioned for whatever comes next.

So make the call. Hold the open house. Take the meeting. Check on your past clients. But also check on the Realtor sitting next to you.

You don't have to pretend every day is a great day. You just can't allow a bad season to convince you there's nothing good ahead.

Keep working. Keep connecting. Keep showing up. And don't try to do it alone.



EDITOR'S NOTE: With over 20 years in the industry, Ryan Guess has become a trusted name in the Memphis mortgage scene and is a trusted Memphis Real Producers Preferred Partner. He's guided more than 2,000 families home by simplifying the mortgage process with expert advice and genuine care.

A proud father of three girls, he finds his greatest joy off the clock, whether watching his girls' lacrosse games, taking spontaneous road trips, or exploring the beauty of America's National Parks. His love for the outdoors runs deep, and he's always planning the next adventure, whether it's hiking through the Smokies or going ziplining in Montana.

The BUSINESS OF SHOWING UP

Michelle CREAMER

Ask Michelle Creamer to tell her story, and she will politely insist she doesn't have one. "We're not typical," she says with a laugh. Her husband, Chuck, is even quicker to dodge the spotlight, jokingly introducing himself as the team's "eye candy," its "sign boy" and its "inspection boy."

BY JEFF WHITE
PHOTOS BY
ELIZABETH
LOONEY
PHOTOGRAPHY

Spend an hour with them, though, and a different picture emerges: two Memphis natives who have built a thriving, referral-driven business by showing up, telling the truth, and caring more about the client than the commission. It is the kind of story that reminds all of us what this business is supposed to look like.

It Started With "The Book"

Michelle's career began in 2002, almost by accident. Her mother was a part-time agent with a small brokerage, back when listings arrived every two weeks in a printed book from the association, thick as a phone book. Michelle would sit beside her poring over the tiny print.

When the industry went digital, her mother wanted no part of it, so Michelle stepped in. Before long she had her own license and was

selling a handful of homes a year part time.

Her mother handed down something more lasting than a business model. "You can't outgive God" was the phrase she drilled into her daughter, and it still shapes how Michelle and Chuck work today. Michelle jokes that her mom also taught her "everything wrong": she thought listings were too much trouble. Today Michelle handles the couple's listings, pricing and negotiations.

Finding Her Own Footing

When Michelle went full time, she joined a top local team at Keller Williams led by friends from high school. "I didn't know what a team was," she admits. The team leader had her write down everyone she knew and began marketing to them, something she had never done. By the end of her second year, her own sphere was producing so well that she struck out on her own. They parted as friends, and she still listens closely whenever he calls.

After roughly ten years at Keller Williams, she moved to Groome & Co. Realtors, the brokerage

of Jeanna Groome, Chuck Creamer's cousin who, in Michelle's words, is more like a sister. She admires Jeanna's rare combination of off-the-charts business sense and genuine artistic talent. The boutique brokerage feels like home and family to the Creamers – faith based and centered on ethical principles.

From Trophies to Real Estate

Before real estate, Michelle earned a marketing degree and worked in administration. She also kept the books for the family business, an awards and engraving shop Chuck purchased from his family shortly after the couple married.

By 2016, Michelle's real estate business was growing faster than she could keep up with, and she decided it was time to recruit some help. Fortunately, she knew just the guy. Chuck sold the family business, got his real estate license, and traded trophies for houses.

Naturally, Chuck found a way to make a joke of it. "Well, you're coming with me, so I'm the boss," Michelle told him.



Behind the teasing is a partnership built on complementary strengths. Chuck is the primary point of contact for many of their buyers, handling most showings and guiding clients through the process of finding the right home. Michelle focuses on listings, pricing strategies, contracts and negotiations. They collaborate on decisions, and one of them personally attends every home inspection.

After years of attending inspections, Chuck has developed a particularly sharp eye for potential problems, often spotting concerns before anyone else points them out. More importantly, he has a gift for putting buyers at ease and earning their trust.

Sometimes the Best Advice Is “Don’t”

“I recommend more people not buy a house than buy a

house,” Chuck says, only half joking. Roughly 95 percent of the Creamers’ business comes from repeat clients and referrals. So when a young couple recently found them through Google reviews, it stood out. The pair had fired a previous agent who pressured them, and their budget was around \$215,000.

Chuck showed them more than 50 houses, heading out evening after evening once the couple got off work. Because they trusted him completely, he felt more responsible, not less. “If I tell these people wrong, they’re going to do what I say,” he explains.

Michelle brings the same honesty to listing appointments. More than once she has told a homeowner not to sell, but to rent the house and build wealth instead.

Flipping fixer-uppers during COVID also sharpened her eye, so she often lays out options: sell as-is, do a little, or do it all.

Their approach is deeply rooted in faith. Michelle has attended Bartlett Woods Church of Christ, formerly the Raleigh congregation, since she was born, and she calls faith the couple’s number one priority. Chuck has seen a \$200,000 deal fall apart after 60 days of work, and a million-dollar listing land in their lap. “We didn’t deserve either one,” he says. “You just do your job, and the rest of it works out.”

160 Pies and Counting

Nothing shows the Creamers’ gratitude better than Pie Day. Every Tuesday before Thanksgiving, they open their home for an all-day open house with a huge spread. Guests leave with a homemade

pie in one of four flavors, baked by a local caterer who happens to be one of Michelle’s best friends.

Last year she baked 160 of them, and this year marks the event’s 10th anniversary. All past clients are on the list, along with friends who send referrals. “That’s our highlight of the year,” Michelle says.

Iron Sharpens Iron

Every Friday morning at 7:30, Michelle meets with five fellow female real estate agents for breakfast. Affectionately known as “The Early Birds,” the group has been gathering for years. Though they originally worked at the same brokerage and now represent four different firms, their friendship and weekly tradition have never wavered. And their group text thread? It’s probably a mile long.

“
REAL ESTATE IS ANYTHING BUT *predictable.*”





“Real estate is anything but predictable,” Michelle explains. “Every transaction seems to bring something you’ve never encountered before. Having a group of experienced agents who may have already dealt with that exact situation is invaluable.”

The Early Birds regularly bounce ideas off one another, share trusted contractors, and help navigate the unusual challenges that come with the business. But their bond goes far beyond real estate. They’ve supported one another through health issues, family struggles, and life’s unexpected turns. Sometimes that means lending an ear or offering advice. Other times it means stepping in to show homes, cover appointments, or keep things moving when someone needs to be away.

“There’s enough business to go around, and we genuinely want to see each other succeed,” Michelle says. “These ladies are so much more than colleagues. They’re my tribe, and I don’t know what I’d do without them. Everybody needs a tribe like that.”



Life Beyond the Closing Table

Both Creamers are Memphis born and raised. Michelle grew up in Raleigh, and Chuck is a proud Frayser native. Both are avid Ole Miss fans and travel to all home and many away games in Oxford. Now empty nesters, they bring their little Shih Tzu almost everywhere. Michelle grooms him herself and admits he isn’t the most photogenic dog, but he is the most lovable.

With a nudge from Jeanna, they invested in vacation rentals in Panama City Beach and Hot Springs. Michelle’s favorite destinations always involve water, and after two trips to Italy in the past three years, she says she would live there if she could. Chuck, a teetotaler, has one admitted vice: sweet tea.

Michelle may still say they don’t have a story. But a couple who will show a first-time buyer 50 houses, advise a seller to keep their home, and bake 160 pies to say thank you is writing one every day. It is a story about showing up, doing the right thing, and trusting that it all comes back around. As her mother taught her, you can’t outgive God. 🍷

“THEY’RE MY *tribe*, AND I DON’T KNOW WHAT I’D DO WITHOUT THEM.”

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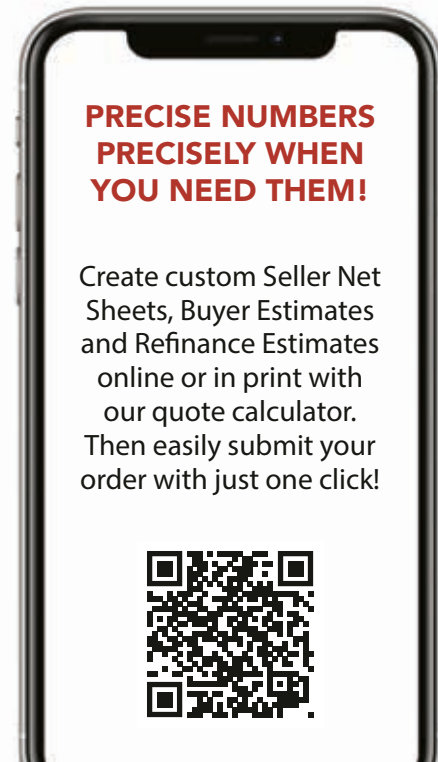
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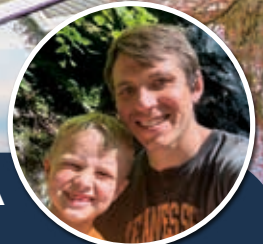
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