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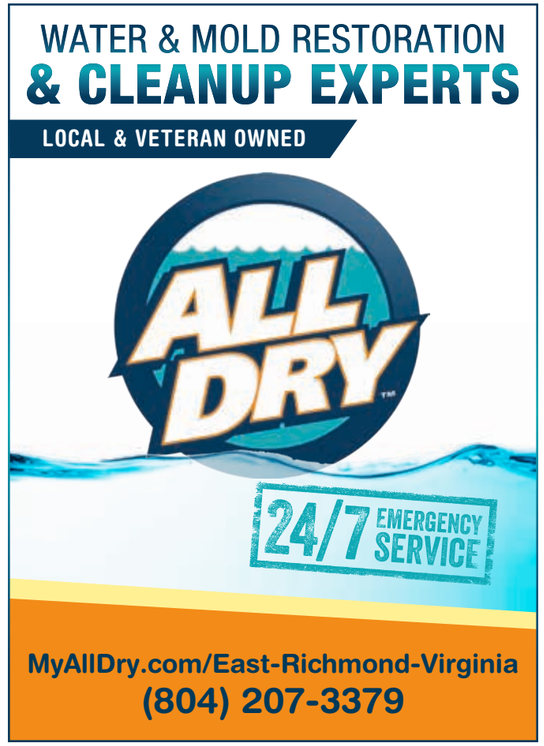
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Hello November,

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November invites us to slow down and reflect — to take stock of the people, relationships, and progress that have shaped our year. Gratitude is more than a feeling; it's a perspective that reminds us just how much there is to appreciate.

Within our *Richmond Real Producers* community, that spirit of thankfulness runs deep. We're continually inspired by the relationships we've built, the moments we've shared, and the stories that connect this incredible group of professionals. It's the people behind the success who make this community truly special.

We're especially looking forward to coming together for our **Gratitude Gala on November 5th.** It's the perfect way to celebrate the season — gathering with our Real Producers community, strengthening connections, and showing our appreciation for the agents and partners who have made this year so memorable. We can't wait to see everyone there!

As we celebrate this season, let's remember: **"Gratitude turns what we have into enough."**

Here's to reflection, appreciation, and all the bright things ahead.



Kristin Brindley
Owner/Publisher
Richmond Real Producers
313-971-8312
Kristin@kristinbrindley.com
www.richmondrealproducers.com









The Art Behind the Outcome

BY AMELIA ROSEWOOD
PHOTO BY PHILIP ANDREWS

When you meet Adila McGhee, you quickly realize her work goes far beyond arranging furniture. As the founder of Dila Design, she has built a reputation across Richmond for transforming homes into spaces that feel intentional, inviting, and impossible to forget.

For Adila, staging is not about decoration. It is about strategy. Every placement, every texture, every detail is designed to create an emotional connection the moment a buyer walks through the door. “A home should speak before anyone says a word,” she shares. “If buyers can feel themselves living there, the rest follows.”

That philosophy has made Dila Design a trusted partner for Realtors who understand that presentation is not optional. It is essential.

A Journey Across Continents

Adila’s path to entrepreneurship did not begin in real estate. Born and raised in Malaysia, she grew up with a creative mind and a disciplined foundation shaped by boarding school life. From an early age, she found herself sketching layouts and imagining interiors, long before she knew design could become a career.

Her professional journey began in corporate settings, including Citibank’s Fraud Investigation Unit and later as a secretary to the Turkish Ambassador. But life took a defining turn when she married her husband, Forrest, and moved to the United States.

Arriving in Virginia, she left behind her family, her career, and everything familiar. “I started over with nothing but faith,” she reflects. That transition required resilience, adaptability, and a willingness to embrace the unknown.

She rebuilt her confidence teaching Malay to U.S. government officials, strengthening her communication skills, and finding her footing in a new country. Still, she knew she was meant to build something of her own.

Building Dila Design from the Ground Up

In 2016, an unexpected opportunity changed everything. Her husband asked her to stage one of his investment properties. With no formal training, she said yes.

That decision became the foundation of Dila Design.

What started as a single project has grown into a full-service staging company serving the greater Richmond area. Today, Adila leads a team of seven, managing everything from client consultations and design strategy to operations and logistics.

Her approach blends artistry with precision. While many staging companies focus on aesthetics alone, Adila focuses









on results. She considers buyer psychology, market trends, and spatial flow in every project. The goal is always the same: create a space that sells.

Realtors value more than just the design. They value reliability. Dila Design is known for showing up on time, delivering consistently, and making the process seamless from start to finish. “Our clients should never have to wonder if we will deliver,” she says. “We always do.”

What Sets Her Apart

What truly differentiates Adila is the combination of discipline, systems, and heart.

She built her business without shortcuts. No local network. No prior staging experience. No safety net. Every relationship and every opportunity was earned through consistency and results.

That same mindset carried her through one of her most difficult personal challenges: a breast cancer diagnosis. Through it all, she continued to lead her team and serve her clients with unwavering commitment.

Today, that experience fuels her mission. A portion of every staging project supports breast cancer awareness and research. She also mentors immigrant women and minority entrepreneurs, helping others navigate the same path she once walked.

“Resilience is something you build,” she says. “And once you have it, you carry it into everything you do.”

Life Beyond the Listings

Outside of work, Adila’s world is deeply rooted in family, connection, and the quiet moments that bring meaning to everything she has built. Her life spans two continents, with loved ones in both Malaysia and the United States, a reality that has shaped her appreciation for time together.

Her sons remain at the center of her world. She speaks with equal love and pride about Faris, Faiz, and Fauzan, whose lives have taken them on very different journeys. Faris, her youngest, is now a certified commercial pilot and U.S. citizen, a milestone she is especially proud to have witnessed. At the same time, she treasures the life her other sons are building, including the time she gets to spend with Faiz and Fauzan and their families in Malaysia. For her, motherhood has always been about watching her children grow into their own lives while remaining connected as a family.



> “OUR CLIENTS should never have to wonder if we will deliver. We always do.”



“Seeing your children grow into who they’re meant to be, there’s nothing more fulfilling than that,” Adila notes.

When she is not managing projects or leading her team, Adila finds peace in simple, grounding routines. Cooking is one of her favorite ways to connect, often blending flavors and traditions from her Malaysian roots with the life she has built in the U.S. Meals are not just about food. They are about creating space for conversation, laughter, and togetherness.

She also enjoys gardening, a practice that mirrors her approach to both life and business. It requires patience, consistency, and care, with the understanding that growth takes time. Reading offers another form of quiet escape, allowing her to slow down and reflect amid the fast pace of entrepreneurship.

Creativity has always been part of her identity, even beyond staging. In the past, she mastered handcrafted soapmaking, another expression of her love for building something meaningful with her hands. Whether designing a home or creating something small and personal, she finds fulfillment in the process.

International travel remains an important part of her life as well, not just as a way to explore new places, but as a way to stay connected to her roots and her family abroad. These moments, both near and far, are what keep her grounded.

Looking Ahead

As Dila Design continues to grow, Adila remains focused on scaling with intention. Her goal is to expand the business while maintaining the level of quality and care that defines her brand.

She is equally passionate about mentorship, particularly for women building businesses without a roadmap. “You do not need to have everything figured out,” she says. “You just need to keep moving forward.”

Her guiding philosophy comes from a traditional Malay proverb: the more the rice plant is filled, the more it bows. For Adila, success is not about recognition. It is about humility, consistency, and doing meaningful work.

For Richmond’s top Realtors, Dila Design offers more than staging. It offers a dependable partner committed to helping every listing reach its full potential.

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Amber VERHEUL

BY GEORGE PAUL THOMAS
PHOTOS BY JOANNA HARTSOOK PHOTOGRAPHY

TRUST OVER TRANSACTIONS

"People will forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel."

That quote is more than something Amber Verheul believes. It is the foundation of how she lives and works. Friendly, outgoing, and deeply genuine, Amber brings a quiet confidence into every interaction, one that is rooted not in being the loudest voice in the room, but in being the most present.



At River City Real Estate Co, brokered by eXp Realty in Richmond, Virginia, Amber has built her business on relationships that last far beyond the closing table. For her, real estate is not about transactions. It is about trust, connection, and making sure every client feels seen, supported, and understood.

A Life Shaped by Service

Amber's story begins in Virginia, where she was born in Alexandria and raised in Chesterfield. Her path was not a straight line into real estate. Instead, it was shaped by years of working closely with people in meaningful ways.

After graduating from high school in 2002, she pursued some college and attended nursing school. Her early career included time in both the restaurant industry and healthcare, two environments that demand patience, empathy, and the ability to connect with people from all walks of life.

Those experiences left a lasting impact. "My life experiences have made me very people-focused," she shares. "I understand how emotionally big decisions can be." Whether serving guests in a fast-paced restaurant or caring for individuals in healthcare, Amber learned how to listen, how to show up, and how to meet people where they are.

Those lessons would later become the cornerstone of her real estate career.

Finding Purpose in Real Estate

Amber entered the real estate industry in 2021, drawn by a natural love for homes and an even stronger desire to help people. It quickly became clear that she had found the right fit.

"Real estate felt like the perfect way to combine both," she says.

What started as a new chapter soon grew into a meaningful career. In her first years, Amber built momentum through consistency and care, closing 14 transactions and reaching over 5.7 million in volume, with a goal of continuing that growth in the years ahead.

More important than the numbers, however, is the role she plays in her clients' lives. "Getting to walk alongside my clients





during such a big moment in their lives and knowing they trust me to guide them, that’s everything to me,” she says.

Relationships Over Transactions

Amber’s approach to business is simple, but powerful. She treats every client like family.

“I don’t treat this like a transaction,” she explains. “I treat it like a relationship.”

That mindset shows up in the way she communicates, stays accessible, and remains fully present throughout the process. She is hands-on, honest, and real with her clients, never shying away from hard conversations when they are needed. Her goal is not just a successful closing, but a positive experience from beginning to end.

Life at the Center of It All

While Amber is dedicated to her work, her life outside of real estate is where her heart truly shines.

She has been married to her husband, Chris, since 2017, and together they are raising four children, Emma, Aliyah, Samuel, and Benjamin. Their home is full, busy, and filled with moments that matter, from board games and video games to walks in the park and time spent outdoors.



Family time is not something Amber squeezes in. It is a priority. Whether it is a simple evening at home or a shared activity, those moments are what keep her grounded and motivated.

Their household also includes a lively group of pets. Toby the dachshund, Gracie the Weimaraner, Charlie the shih tzu poodle mix, and even Harley the crested gecko all add their own personality to the mix.

Outside of family life, Amber finds joy in the details of home. She enjoys redecorating her home, baking, and creating spaces that feel warm and inviting. She is also deeply committed to her health, attending Burn Boot Camp four to five times a week, a routine that reflects her discipline and dedication.

Her connection to the community is equally important. Amber volunteers regularly with the Chesterfield Food Bank and the Richmond SPCA, always looking for ways to give back and make a difference.

Even with her outgoing nature, Amber admits there is more beneath the surface. “I am naturally a little quieter than people expect at first,” she says. “But once I am comfortable, I love connecting deeply with people.” That depth is what makes her relationships so meaningful, both personally and professionally.

Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, Amber’s goals are centered on growth without losing authenticity. She wants to continue building a successful business while staying true to who she is, someone who leads with care and puts people first. Creating long-term stability for her family and helping more clients achieve their goals remain at the forefront of her vision.

For those entering the industry, Amber offers advice that reflects her own journey. “Be consistent, be genuine, and focus on relationships over transactions,” she says. “Success in real estate isn’t about being the loudest, it’s about being the most trusted.”











Jess McLaughlin

BUILT FOR THE LONG GAME

BY AMELIA ROSEWOOD
PHOTOS BY PHILIP ANDREWS

Jess McLaughlin has spent most of his life around people who build things. Long before houses became listings on a screen, they were job sites. Masonry was the family trade. Later came septic fields and wells for new construction, then kitchens and interior renovations, each one giving Jess another view into how a home comes together and how much thought, coordination, and trust sit behind the finished product.



It makes sense, then, that the career he eventually chose would still involve building. The materials are simply different now.

Today, Jess is building relationships, businesses, opportunities, and what he hopes will become generational wealth for the people around him.

“I learned to work hard, show up with a plan, and do what I say I am going to do,” he says.

That philosophy has followed him from the trades to football fields, from his first days in real estate to the launch of McLaughlin Seibert Real Estate, where he is now thinking not only about what he can accomplish himself, but what can happen when the right people build together.



A Richmond Foundation

Richmond has always been home for Jess. He graduated from Goochland High School before attending Randolph-Macon College, where he earned a degree in Environmental Studies with a minor in Communications and played football.

The combination suited him. Football reinforced the discipline he had already learned growing up in the trades, while college gave him another way to think about people, planning, and the environments they create around themselves.

There was always a practical streak to Jess. After graduation, his professional life began with designing septic fields and wells for new construction before he transitioned into kitchen and interior renovations. He understood the mechanics of a house well before he ever represented someone buying one.



But while working in the trades, another question started occupying his attention: how could he create wealth for his family in a different way?

Jess began researching, and real estate kept surfacing as an answer.

“I felt led to get my real estate license,” he says.

In October 2019, at the same time he was beginning another major chapter by marrying his wife, Breanna, Jess entered the industry.

The timing feels fitting in retrospect. Both decisions were rooted in commitment, family, and the idea of creating something that could grow over time.

Seeing More Than the Property

Jess’s background still shapes the way he sees real estate.

Where one person might walk into a home and see finishes, square footage, or a list price, Jess often sees the layers beneath it. Years spent around construction gave him an understanding of how properties function, but just as importantly, they trained him to think strategically.

That is the part of the business he enjoys most.

Whether he is helping someone purchase a home, sell an asset, or evaluate an opportunity, Jess is drawn to figuring out how people can make the best use of what they have, whether that means time, money, property, or relationships.

He describes the work simply as “strategic thinking and helping people maximize their investments.”

That approach has translated into significant production. In 2025, Jess closed 53 transactions totaling more than $27.7 million in volume. He was named to Real Producers’ 40 Under 40 and, while at Long & Foster, was part of Richmond’s No. 1 small team in the Masters Club for 2024.

Still, the larger vision has never been limited to his own production.

For Jess, real estate becomes more interesting when it starts creating opportunities for other people.

“Real estate is the best way to help clients and agents create generational wealth,” he says. “My long-term dreams and goals are to have an impact on the people around me.”

Building Better Together

That idea sits at the heart of McLaughlin Seibert Real Estate, the new group Jess founded with Dave Seibert at Real Broker.

Dave, a founding partner and team lead alongside Jess, brings his own strengths in construction and development, historic properties, and luxury real estate. Away from business, he enjoys coaching soccer. Executive Assistant and Operations Manager Amy Hartman adds another perspective, including relocation expertise shaped in part by the decade she spent living in Europe and raising her children there.

Jess sees those differences as an advantage.

“There is no one perfect person,” he says. “It takes a team of people to create a good atmosphere and a great, fulfilling career.”

There is something revealing in the way he frames it. Jess is not interested in building a group of people who all operate exactly as he does. He is interested in putting complementary strengths in the same room and creating an environment where each person has space to contribute.

It is a philosophy that reaches back to football, to job sites, and even to the way a home itself gets built. The strongest result rarely comes from one person doing everything. It comes from people understanding their role, trusting one another, and working toward something shared.



Over the next five to ten years, Jess hopes to help 40 agents create long-lasting businesses in Richmond.

The goal is not simply growth for growth’s sake. He wants to help create careers that have staying power.

The Life Around the Business

If Jess thinks frequently about building businesses, he thinks just as seriously about building a life around them.

He and Breanna are raising three children, ages 5, 4, and 2, along with their dog, Samson, and a horse named Cowgirl. Family time tends to involve being outside, cooking, or traveling, all things that naturally pull Jess away from a phone or computer and back toward the people in front of him.

His own interests follow a similar pattern. He enjoys hunting, fishing, golfing, and cooking, and if real estate had taken a different turn, he suspects he might have ended up running a fishing charter.

There is also a strong community thread running through his life. Jess serves as chair for Goochland Young Life, a role that gives him another opportunity to invest in relationships and in people who are still figuring out what their own futures might look like.

That relational instinct is difficult to separate from the way Jess conducts business. He likes connecting people, sharing advice, helping someone think through a decision, and seeing what can happen when the right introduction or strategy opens a new door.

What He Wants to Build Next

Jess’s ambitions for the next decade are both expansive and remarkably grounded. Professionally, he wants to help dozens of agents create businesses with longevity. Personally, he wants to remain a present husband and father while doing it.

The two goals are not competing visions of success. In his mind, they are part of the same one.

Jess has spent enough of his life around construction to understand that what lasts is usually the result of many elements working together. The right materials matter. So does the plan. So do the people.

Real estate has simply given him a larger canvas.

What began as a search for another way to build wealth for his own family has grown into something broader: helping clients invest wisely, helping agents build careers, creating opportunities through relationships, and developing a business where success can be shared.

For Jess, that may be the most satisfying kind of building there is.



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Disclaimer: Information based on MLS closed data as of October 5, 2026, for residential sales from January 1, 2026, to September 30, 2026, in Greater Richmond, Virginia, by agents licensed in our service area, which includes Hanover, New Kent, Henrico, Charles City, Chesterfield, Powhatan, Goochland, and King William Counties. Numbers not reported to the MLS by the date the information is retrieved are not included. MLS is not responsible for submitting this data. Some teams may report each agent individually.



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TOP 200 STANDINGS

Individual Closed Data as reported by MLS from Jan. 1 to Sep. 30, 2026

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