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Bhatia

Rising Star:
DAKOTA BRADLEY

Partner Spotlight:
**WINDSOR CUSTOM
HOMES OF GEORGIA**

Event Recap:
**TOAST TO THE
TOP-LAKE COUNTRY**

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It's my honor to bring Real Producers to the north and northeast Georgia area and to celebrate everything that makes you all an outstanding part of the Mountains, Lakes & Athens Real Estate Community. I look forward to highlighting your accomplishments, encouraging your dreams and recognizing you for your continued excellence in serving your clients.

DISTRIBUTION: This magazine will arrive in the mailboxes of the TOP 300 agents in the Mountains, Lakes & Athens communities of north and northeast Georgia each month. These 300 agents are determined through compiled MLS data from 2024. If you are receiving a hard copy of the publication, it is because you belong to an elite group and represent the best of the best in our industry!

PREFERRED PARTNERS: Anyone listed as a “Preferred Partner” in the index of this publication will also be a part of this exclusive community. You will see them advertised in every issue, attending our private events, and being a part of our online community. We do not cold call businesses off the street to join us, nor do we allow any business that approaches us to be a part. One or many of you have recommended every single one of these Preferred Partners that you see in this publication. Our goal is to give you as many resources as possible to add to your arsenal so that you always remain that trusted referral source to your clients and customers.

EVENTS: Along with our monthly publication, we will be hosting various social and educational events throughout the year. Our goal is to bring the best of the best together while supporting our local communities. And we fully intend to have a good time doing it! We will be communicating information on upcoming events through the publication, monthly emailed newsletter and social media.

CONTRIBUTION: If you are interested in contributing, nominating REALTORS® for certain features, know of additional top-notch affiliate partners who would be a great fit for our community, or would simply like to learn more, please reach out to me anytime. I look forward to meeting with every one of you in the future. I would also like to give a HUGE THANK YOU to the Preferred Partners who jumped on board with us so that we could bring Mountains, Lakes & Athens Real Producers to life. Also, a huge shout-out to my team that pulled this together without much guidance. You all are incredible and this first issue is dedicated to you!

I appreciate you all and I look forward to seeing you all at our launch party coming soon!



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The AI That Called 3,000 Dead Leads

BY STEVEN NEVILLE

This spring, one real estate team handed its brokerage's new AI a list of about 3,000 leads nobody had spoken to in over a year. In 30 days it held nearly 2,000 conversations, ran hundreds of them at the same time, and booked actual tours from a list everyone had written off. That was Real Brokerage's Leo 2.0, now in testing with thousands of agents. The direction is clear across the industry too: only 2 percent of brokerages now say they have no AI plans at all.

This Month's Tip: Revive Your Dead Leads for Free

You have a list like that. The buyers who ghosted last spring. The sellers who wanted to wait and see. Here is the free version of what that brokerage AI did.

Export every lead that went quiet. Paste three of your own past texts or emails into your AI of choice so it learns how you actually sound. Then have it write a short, no-pressure check-in sequence in your voice. Send it in batches of 50, and when someone bites, be the human who answers in minutes, not days. Even a small slice of a big dead list is real closings.

Tool Spotlight: Three Ways to Work a Dead List

- **Structurely** runs AI text conversations that qualify leads and book appointments for you. Built for teams of two and up.
- **Fello** (from \$165 a month) fits individual agents. It watches the database you already have and flags

- who is likely to sell, so you call the right people first.
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Dream it. Build it. Live it. Do you have a client with a vision for their dream home but need a builder you can trust to bring it to life? Meet Henry Darby, owner of Windsor Custom Homes of Georgia.

Building a custom home isn't just about lumber, blueprints and floor plans. It's about trust. After all, you're placing one of the largest investments you'll ever make into someone else's hands. That's not a decision most people make lightly.

Henry Darby understands that.

For more than two decades, the owner of Windsor Custom Homes of Georgia has earned a reputation for meticulous craftsmanship, uncompromising integrity and a level of attention to detail that begins long before



the foundation is poured. Creating beautiful homes is just the beginning. His goal is to create homes that stand the test of time while making the entire experience as rewarding as the finished product.

"We just do the right thing," Henry says. "If you do that, you don't have to worry about yesterday, and it doesn't matter what comes your way tomorrow. We do the right thing and let the chips fall where they fall."

This commitment to integrity has guided Windsor Custom Homes of Georgia since Henry founded the company in 2001.

A Passion That Started Early
Growing up in historic Charleston, South Carolina, Henry developed an appreciation for timeless architecture, expert craftsmanship and beautifully constructed homes. He found himself fascinated not only by the finished product but by the process of creating exceptional homes from the ground up.

That passion eventually led him to Atlanta, where he

joined one of the city's premier homebuilders. During his first year, an experienced mentor took him under her wing and introduced him to every aspect of the business, from developing neighborhoods to building and selling luxury homes. It proved to be an education that would shape the rest of his career.

Uncompromising Quality: Behind the Walls
What sets a Windsor Custom Homes of Georgia apart is the craftsmanship embedded where few ever look: in the dirt and within the walls.

"All of our foundations are designed and inspected by engineers, not just the county," Henry explains. "I like to have an engineer involved in designing all the structural elements, not just to meet code, but to meet my standard. Zero deflection is unrealistic, but it's still the goal. That's a Henry Darby thing."

Rather than aiming to merely pass minimum building codes, Henry partnered early on with structural engineers to ensure every home is built to last. "I





wanted to make sure that I had a set of eyes looking at it from a longevity standpoint,” he notes. “They really genuinely taught me the details of how to do things that last and reduce warranty issues. I didn’t start this just to be another builder—I wanted to be an expert in all aspects of my profession.”

Structural systems are designed to Henry’s own demanding standards because he doesn’t want floors that flex or shortcuts that become expensive problems years later. Windows should operate flawlessly, plumbing should

function exactly as intended and every component should perform the way it was designed.

It’s an obsessive commitment to quality, and Henry readily admits that’s simply how he’s wired.

“If it’s not right, we’ll do it again until it is,” he says.

More Than a Custom Home
Every Windsor Custom Homes of Georgia project is unique because every homeowner is unique.

Some clients arrive with magazine clippings, Pinterest boards and detailed sketches. Others know they want to build but need guidance every step of the way. Windsor Custom Homes of Georgia accommodates both.

Clients can modify one of the company’s previous designs, customize an existing floor plan or begin with a blank sheet of paper and work alongside architects to create something completely original. Henry emphasizes that Windsor Custom

Homes of Georgia doesn’t simply build custom homes; it provides a custom process tailored to each client’s comfort level and vision.

The process begins with a face-to-face conversation.

Rather than automatically accepting every project, Henry believes it’s important to determine whether both builder and client are the right fit for one another. Honest communication and realistic expectations create the foundation for a successful year-long partnership.

“We set realistic expectations, and then we try to exceed them,” he explains.

Relationships That Last
Henry estimates he has built well over 100 custom homes throughout his career, but surprisingly, his proudest professional accomplishment isn’t a particular house.

It’s the friendships. Many clients become lifelong friends after spending roughly a year building together. Others return again and again. One family is preparing to build its fifth home with Henry.

To Henry, repeat business is the greatest compliment a builder can receive. That relationship-first approach extends to the area’s REALTORS® as well.

Windsor Custom Homes of Georgia frequently partners with real estate professionals long before construction begins, helping evaluate lots, identify grading concerns, assess building potential and uncover expensive surprises before buyers ever close on a property.

“The more you do on the front end, the smoother it’s going to go on the back end,” Henry explains. By helping agents



protect their clients, Henry believes everyone wins.

Building a Legacy
Although Henry has built luxury homes throughout Atlanta and now throughout the Lake Oconee area, he’ll quickly tell you that his proudest achievement has nothing to do with construction.

It’s his family. Henry and his wife, Caitlin, have raised two accomplished daughters, Ella and Katherine, and he beams with pride when talking about the women they’ve become. One recently began dental school, while the other graduated early from the University of Georgia and launched her corporate career.

“My wife and my two daughters are my proudest accomplishment,” he says.

That same sense of stewardship carries over into every home Windsor Custom Homes of Georgia builds. A home is a place where memories are made. He’s creating the place where birthdays will be celebrated, grandchildren will visit, holidays will be remembered and families will build their own legacies.

“I feel very lucky and blessed to do what I do,” Henry says. “People trust me to execute their vision, and I take that very seriously.”

For Henry, that’s what custom home building has always been about. Not just building exceptional homes. Building trust that lasts long after the keys are handed over. 🏡



CONTACT US!

For more information on Windsor Custom Homes of Georgia, check out their website, www.windsorcustomhomesga.com.



WRITTEN BY BETH MCCABE
PHOTOS BY AUSTIN POFFENBERGER
OF STANLEY REAL ESTATE MEDIA
PHOTOS TAKEN AT 133 ARBORS LN,
EATONTON GA



Dakota Bradley

“I got into real estate by complete accident,” says Dakota Bradley. “I’ve never had a friend, family member, cousin, Mom, or Dad in real estate.” That barrier didn’t stop him from getting into the business, earning his license at the young age of 20 in 2024.

“I kind of went in blind,” he admits. At the time, his father was buying a house and had been working with a REALTOR®. His father introduced him to her. “At that point, I didn’t even know what Keller Williams was,” he laughs. “I didn’t know what a buying agent was or a selling agent.”

What did Dakota have? Drive and determination. This go-getter followed the advice of his team leader who told him, “Just show up. If you keep showing up, You’ll keep learning.” With ample time on his hands, Dakota gave real estate his all, hanging his license with Keller Williams Greater Athens.

“For the next six months, I came in every day, made phone calls, and try to get one percent better,” he explains. It paid off. With one call, he got a For Sale By Owner. “I was lucky enough because I listed and sold it.” That sale gave him the motivation to succeed. “I realized I could sell a house and get paid for it. Everything started clicking for me after that point. Ever since then, it’s been nonstop.”

No Ceiling, No Floor

For Dakota, the sky is the limit in real estate. What excites him most about the industry is its unlimited potential.

“There is truly no ceiling and no floor,” Dakota shares. “When I say

freedom, I don’t mean being able to work on your own schedule, because if you’re in real estate, you work on everybody else’s schedule most of the time! But I love knowing that whatever I do with my career, there’s no limit. I can sell as much as I want, live any lifestyle I want, or be as small as I want.”

That mindset has propelled his production at a remarkable pace. In his first year, he closed 17 or 18 properties. By his second year, that number jumped to 32. Now approaching the end of his third year in February, he has 31 closed properties under his belt, three more closing in the coming weeks, and a bold goal to reach 55 closings by the end of the year.

To keep up with that volume, Dakota operates with lean efficiency. While he spent his first year and a half working entirely solo, taking on a transaction coordinator (TC) and executive assistant was a calculated risk that paid off. “I took a gamble that I was going to fill my pipeline with enough business to make it worth it,” he says.

Welcoming the Growth Spurts

Scaling a business rapidly brings special challenges, but Dakota views every obstacle as an opportunity to sharpen his skills.

“Real estate is a constant cycle,” Dakota notes. “Navigating the ups and downs is where most agents struggle. You learn how to get business, but then you don’t know how to manage it. Then you learn how to manage it, but forget how to keep prospecting at the same time. It’s a constant wavelength.”

Success
Doesn’t
Happen by
Accident.
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Up Does.

Rather than getting overwhelmed, even during months like a recent peak where he had 15 properties under contract at once, Dakota keeps a positive perspective. “In hindsight, it was the best nightmare possible. Every time there’s a challenge, it’s really just a growth spurt. If I’m going to have problems, I’d rather have those kinds of problems.”

When it comes to real estate advice, Dakota relies on his athletic background, keeping things simple and execution-focused. Growing up playing competitive sports, culminating in a commitment to basketball through high school, he learned the value of fundamentals.



“ JUST SHOW UP. IF YOU KEEP SHOWING UP, YOU’LL KEEP LEARNING.”

“The best advice I got is that real estate isn’t complicated; people just like to reinvent the wheel,” he says. “All you have to do is rinse and duplicate. Copy the scripts, copy the systems, and be really dedicated to doing the same boring tasks every single day.”

Rooted in Routine
Dakota’s entrepreneurial work ethic runs in the family. His father built Bradley Transportation, a local Athens trucking company, starting at just 16 years old.

“Watching my dad work as hard as he did to grow his company made it a no-brainer for me,” Dakota reflects. “I wanted to do something where I could take pride in building my own business from the ground up.”

Today, Dakota’s routine is anchored by discipline. Every morning is strictly dedicated to lead generation and future business to ensure his pipeline stays full. Beyond the daily grind, he stays driven by keeping his goals front and center—literally.

“I used to think vision boards were completely stupid, but now I have 15 different pages taped to my wall that I look at every day,” Dakota laughs. “When I don’t feel like doing the work, it’s hard to stare at what I envision for my life and not stay motivated.”

When he isn’t prospecting or closing deals, Dakota enjoys spending quality time with his fiancé, friends, and family. The couple, who got engaged in July, are planning their summer wedding. He also loves traveling to relax and recharge, whether taking trips to Florida and Charleston or enjoying his first international trip to Aruba.

Dakota also makes a point to show gratitude to the people who backed him early on. Through his “MVP list,” he hosts private giveaways, like a recent \$500 UGA game-day basket, for the clients and supporters who have been his biggest cheerleaders since day one.

With a proven track record, a clear vision, and a solid work ethic, Dakota Bradley is well on his way to making his name synonymous with real estate excellence in Greater Athens and outranking any famous names on Google along the way! 🏡



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At Lake Oconee

PHOTOS BY AUSTIN POFFENBERGER

We have a blast at our Toast To The Top-Lake Oconee event, held for our Greater Athens to Lake Country agents. Thank you so much to all agents and partners in attendance, especially Brown Haven Homes and Pella Windows as our event sponsors. Also, we enjoyed the atmosphere and great food provided by Italian Chophouse, one of Lake Oconee's newest and hottest restaurants!

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MARLENA BHATIA

Intentional Service On Every Level

PHOTOS BY AUSTIN POFFENBERGER POWERED BY STANLEY REAL ESTATE MEDIA
WRITTEN BY JESS WELLAR

“I want people to say that because our paths crossed, they believed in themselves a little more,” Marlena Bhatia begins. “That’s what success looks like to me — not a destination, but a life lived with purpose, intention, growth, gratitude, and service.”

Seven years into her real estate career, this top REALTOR® and dynamic sales manager is helping intentionally shape the culture of Titan Realty Advisors, a fledgling brokerage that recently celebrated its second anniversary.

While celebrating over 40 transactions and over \$9 million in sales last year, Marlena has remained just as focused on mentoring fellow agents, strengthening her community, and proving that lasting success is measured by the people you lift along the way, not simply the numbers you put up.

Homegrown Purpose

Raised in Jackson County and deeply rooted in the Athens community, Marlena started working at just 14 years old, pushing shopping carts at Winn-Dixie before taking a second job as a bank teller at 18. Over the next several years, she worked her way up to collections officer at Synovus before spending nearly a decade as a sales manager for Tena’s Fine Diamonds & Jewelry.

When her daughter approached her senior year of high school, Marlena began preparing for a new career that would allow her to continue supporting her family.

“I didn’t want to choose between a school function and someone needing me for real estate,” she explains. “So my plan was to get licensed after my daughter graduated high school.”

Although her timeline changed unexpectedly after losing her job when her request to go part-time to study for her real estate exam was denied, she decided to trust the opportunity in front of her instead of waiting for the perfect moment. She took an accelerated real estate course after receiving encouragement from her daughter.



“On February 14th I was fired; and on February 19th I joined my first brokerage, Coldwell Banker Upchurch Realty,” Marlena recalls. “I went full time from day one and I was very self-driven. I also knew the time I was committing would eventually grow the business I wanted.”

Growing While Giving

Even with years of sales experience behind her, those first months required determination. Rather than waiting for business to find her, she embraced open houses, Zillow leads, and cold calling, while steadily building both confidence and credibility.

That commitment has helped Marlena establish herself as one of the Athens area’s respected professionals, earning recognition as the 2024 Athens Area REALTOR® of the Year, the Women’s Council of Athens Rising Star Award in 2023, and the Women’s Council of Georgia Community Service Award. A longtime supporter of RPAC since becoming an investor in 2021, she also received the RPAC Crystal R Major Investor Award in 2025.

Yet today, one of her greatest sources of fulfillment comes from helping grow Titan Realty Advisors, where she serves as associate broker,

sales manager, and recruiter while continuing to build her own thriving business and supporting her clients.

Rather than pursuing rapid expansion for expansion's sake, Marlena and her colleagues are focused on creating a brokerage culture where agents genuinely support one another while continually improving their craft.

“For me, I think what sets me apart is the fact that I have been able to maintain a pure and honest reputation in the industry,” she shares. “And now, in my position at Titan, I am trying to instill those same values to our agents here. You have to be true to yourself or the client will see right through you.”

That culture of authenticity reflects exactly what attracted Marlena to real estate in the first place. While helping clients buy and sell homes remains a central part of her business, she's equally passionate about developing professionals who will continue raising the standard throughout the industry.

“Our brokerage does not strive to have the greatest number of agents,” she elaborates. “We are creating an environment of educated, honest individuals that want to collaborate. We are cumulative and we all have to work together, which can be hard sometimes.”

Leading By Example

Whether she's guiding first-time buyers through one of life's biggest financial decisions or mentoring newer agents inside Titan, Marlena approaches every interaction with the same philosophy: people always come first. It's a mindset that has helped her build a business where approximately 75 to 80 percent of her clients now come from repeat business and referrals.

“My business has never been about selling houses, it has always been about serving people, being honest, and always following up.” Marlena emphasizes. “Real estate is simply the vehicle I use to make an impact.”

That perspective influences every aspect of her business and it's the same approach she brings to the agents she mentors.

“I believe relationships matter more than transactions, education is more valuable than sales tactics, and collaboration will always accomplish more than competition,” she notes. “I want my clients to feel informed and supported, not pressured.”

Clients consistently mention her communication, responsiveness, and local knowledge, while fellow professionals know her as someone

willing to share ideas and help strengthen the industry as a whole.

Loving Home

When the workday ends, Marlena finds her greatest joy on the homefront. Her daughter, Omeka, recently began her third year at Mercer University in Savannah pursuing her doctorate, while her mother, Judy, has been “an amazing pillar of support” throughout her career, stepping in whenever she was needed most.

At home, her seven-year-old yellow Labrador, Nevada, and rescued Siamese cat, Frankie, provide constant



“I want my clients to feel informed and supported, not pressured.”



companionship while being “the best of friends,” and Marlena treasures the quiet satisfaction of returning to the beautifully restored 102-year-old home she bought off-market and renovated into what she affectionately describes as her “little country house in an old city.”

Outside of work, she enjoys exploring North Georgia, hiking, camping, golfing, and browsing small-town vintage and antique stores, and she loves creating and cooking in the kitchen.

“If I could ever do anything after real estate, I would be a consignment dealer or open a coffee shop!” she declares with a chuckle.

Giving back to Marlena is a joy, not an obligation. She looks forward to volunteering each Sunday in the Pre-K ministry at Athens Church. She also serves as chair of Sleep in Heavenly Peace in Jackson County, chairs her local RPAC Committee, member of the Athens Area Realtors Education Committee, and is a member of the Athens Area Realtors Board, and represents the area as a state director.

Looking to the horizon, as Titan Realty Advisors continues to grow, Marlena hopes to help cultivate a brokerage where ethics remain at the center of every decision, while also pursuing personal goals that include building passive income and traveling internationally.

Next up? A 22-day trip to Morocco with two local agents, one of whom attended a CE class led by Marlena and offered her a spot to join the trip spontaneously.

“If people think of me as someone who listens, follows through, shares knowledge freely, and genuinely cares about helping others succeed, then I've accomplished what I set out to do,” Marlena concludes. “I want the agents I work with to feel encouraged, challenged, and confident enough to build businesses they can be proud of.”

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