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Event Recap

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Beth Warren
Business Coordinator



Phylicia Bova
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Nate Barnard swinging



Jamie Foreman and Lee Anne Johnson chatting



Rebecca and Robyn Ray



Nate and his mom Leza Barnard looking at scoreboard



TOPGOLF

Munch-n-Play Recap

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRUST THA BEARD MEDIA

Topgolf is always a top event sold out to allow top agents to network with each other and vetted preferred partners. Special thanks to Mike, Wendy and Dale with Flooring America; Holly with Clarkmore Lending who was taking such great care of clients wasn't present; the Corum Engineering crew; and Susan with Bentley Home Inspections.



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Wes, Brandon Phillips, Jackie Canova, and David McMahan



L to R: Sean Bradke, Susan Bentley, Rebecca, Robyn, Ken Foreman and Wes McConkey



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FIRST FINANCIAL BANK

Helping People Through Life’s Biggest Transitions

BY PHYLCIA BOVA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BETH WARREN

Some of the most important conversations Wes Clenney has ever had have had very little to do with mortgages. Sometimes they’re with excited first-time homebuyers preparing to make the biggest purchase of their lives. Other times they’re with someone navigating a divorce, grieving the loss of a loved one, or facing an unexpected life change that suddenly requires difficult financial decisions.

Those moments have taught Wes something many people don’t realize. While mortgages may be the reason people call him, they’re rarely the only thing they need. “Sometimes a phone call that’s supposed to last fifteen minutes turns into an hour,” Wes says. “People need someone to listen.”

That philosophy has shaped his career from the very beginning. Wes entered the banking industry at just 22 years old, starting in retail banking before eventually becoming a branch manager. While he enjoyed helping customers finance vehicles and meet their everyday financial needs, he found himself wanting to play a bigger role in people’s lives. “I wanted the bigger picture,” he says.

Mortgage lending gave him exactly that. Every closing became an opportunity to help someone navigate one of the biggest financial decisions of their life.

Whether working with first-time buyers or longtime homeowners, Wes found the greatest reward wasn’t simply getting to the closing table. It was helping people feel confident throughout the journey.

After spending nearly two years as an underwriter, Wes transitioned into originating home loans, where he’s spent the past six years helping families purchase first homes, forever homes, and everything in between. His underwriting background also allows him to identify potential issues early, helping transactions stay on track long before they become problems.

Today, Wes serves as a Mortgage Loan Originator with First Financial Bank, one of the country’s longest-established financial institutions and a growing presence throughout East Tennessee.

The bank offers a wide range of lending solutions, including first-time

“EVERYTHING
STARTS WITH A
CONVERSATION.
EVERY CLIENT
HAS A UNIQUE
SITUATION, AND
ASKING THE RIGHT
QUESTIONS ON
THE FRONT END
ALLOWS US TO
SERVE THEM THE
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homebuyer programs, physician loans, construction financing, refinances, portfolio products, and specialized programs that give buyers more flexibility when purchasing a new home before selling their current one. Having those options allows Wes to tailor financing to each client’s unique situation rather than forcing every borrower into the same solution.

For Wes, though, loan programs are only part of the equation.

Relationships are what truly matter.

He believes one of the most valuable things a lender can offer is simply being available. Questions don’t stop at five o’clock. Offers are written on weekends. Buyers need reassurance when emotions are high, and real estate professionals need a lending partner they can count on. “I want everyone involved to feel at ease throughout the process,” he says. “If we’re communicating and staying ahead of potential issues, everything tends to go much smoother.”

That same mindset guides his relationships with agents.

Wes believes a pre-approval should be more than a piece of paper. It should represent confidence that the buyer has been thoroughly qualified and is positioned for long-term success. “I ask a lot of questions on the front end because every client’s situation is different,” he says. “I want agents to know that when I issue a pre-approval, we’ve done our homework.”

That attention to detail protects not only the buyer, but also the reputation of the agent placing their trust in him.



Location: First Financial
lending office in Bearden



"HOMES MAY BRING PEOPLE THROUGH MY DOOR, BUT IT'S THE RELATIONSHIPS WE BUILD ALONG THE WAY THAT MAKE THIS CAREER SO REWARDING."

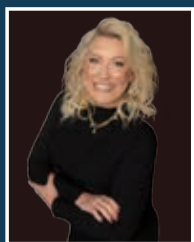
golf professional in Florida, while the other recently graduated from college and now travels the country recruiting on more than 250 college campuses.

Wes enjoys golfing, fishing with his wife, and taking weekend road trips whenever they have the chance.

Looking back, it's clear that mortgage lending has given Wes exactly what he was searching for all those years ago. Not simply a new career. A chance to make a meaningful difference in people's lives. Homes may be what bring clients through his door, but it's the relationships that keep them coming back. For Wes Clenney, that's what success has always looked like. ❏

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Ironically, some of Wes's most rewarding moments don't happen at the closing table. They happen during the conversations no one else sees. The client who simply needs someone to explain the process. The family trying to navigate a difficult season. The borrower who needs reassurance just as much as they need financing. Those conversations often become lasting friendships.

Long after the paperwork is signed, Wes still checks in with many of the people he's helped over the years. He remembers birthdays, celebrates milestones, and reaches out simply to see how they're doing. Those relationships have become one of the greatest rewards of his career.

Outside of work, Wes and his wife are incredibly proud of their two sons, both of whom have launched successful careers of their own. One is a

"What if we look at closing gifts as the beginning of a relationship and not the end of the relationship."
- Peter Parnegg, Ninja Selling Guru

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LISA ASKEW

Askew Realty Group

BY PHYLICIA BOVA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY BETH WARREN



LIVING HER TESTIMONY

When Hurricane Helene tore through the community she lives and raises her kids in, Lisa Askew didn't stop to ask whose responsibility it was to help. She simply got in her truck. One trip became two. Two became dozens around Cocke County.

She and her daughter delivered pizzas to hundreds of police officers working around the clock before loading trucks with diapers, food, gift cards, cleaning supplies, clothing and other essentials for families who had lost nearly everything. Day after day, they drove from house to house asking one simple question:

"What do you need?"

Lisa wasn't looking for recognition. In fact, a year later, she nearly skipped the Tennessee Realtors conference where she would unexpectedly receive the prestigious President's Award for her extraordinary efforts following the disaster. She wanted to be home in Newport celebrating the one-year anniversary

with the people she'd spent months helping rebuild.

That decision says everything you need to know about Lisa Askew.

For more than 22 years, Lisa has served buyers and sellers throughout Newport and Cocke County with the same philosophy that guides every part of her life: treat people well, show up when they need you and always leave people better than you found them.

Before joining Askew Realty Group, Lisa spent nearly 18 years as a dispatcher at Walmart's distribution center. While she enjoyed the work, the demanding schedule made it difficult to be as present as she wanted for her young



Location: at Lisa's river property in Del Rio

children. Real estate offered something different. It gave her the opportunity to build a successful business while building a life centered around family.

After more than two decades in real estate, “I think it’s very important to build a relationship before you make a business deal,” she says. “Show people you actually care. Talk to them like normal people. Build that relationship first.”

That philosophy has shaped both her business and her reputation throughout the community she loves. When asked what she hopes people will remember about her someday, Lisa’s answer comes without

hesitation. — *“I hope I’m living my testimony.”*

Those words trace back to the lessons her father taught her growing up. “My daddy always taught us to help your neighbor,” she says. “Treat others the way you want to be treated.”

Those lessons have never left her. Whether she’s sponsoring breakfast for teachers on the first day of school, serving on the School Board, volunteering, participating in community events or spending an afternoon playing bingo at an assisted living facility, Lisa believes giving back isn’t something Realtors should do when it’s convenient.



She wanted to be home in Newport celebrating the one-year anniversary with the people she’d spent months helping rebuild.

THAT decision says everything you need to know about Lisa Askew.

“It’s simply what you do,” she says. “You have to be good to people every day. Just give back. It’ll come back to you.” That mindset became especially evident after Hurricane Helene devastated East Tennessee. Although Lisa’s own home wasn’t directly affected, friends, clients and neighbors suddenly found themselves without homes or basic necessities. So she did what came naturally.

“What I did, I couldn’t have done on my own,” Lisa says. “It was a group effort. I may have been the wheels on the road, but I couldn’t have done it without everybody else’s contributions.”

One of the greatest resources during the recovery was the

Realtor Relief Foundation. Through funding made possible by the foundation, Lisa helped distribute more than \$67,000 in relief assistance to families throughout Cocke County, providing critical financial support when many residents had lost everything. She says the foundation became an invaluable lifeline for her community and remains one of the most meaningful resources available to homeowners following a disaster.

Her efforts caught the attention of the Tennessee Association of Realtors, which had quietly followed her relief work through social media. Planning to

leave the annual conference early for a community celebration back home, Lisa stayed only after leaders asked her to remain for one more presentation.

Moments later, she was called to the stage as the recipient of the Tennessee Realtors President’s Award, a recognition she never expected but one that perfectly reflected the impact she had made.

That’s why, in Cocke County, Lisa Askew has become far more than a trusted Realtor.

She’s become the neighbor everyone hopes shows up when they need help. ▀

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NATHAN LEFEBVRE

Realty Executives Associates

A DIFFERENT MEASURE OF SUCCESS

BY PHYLICIA BOVA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY BETH WARREN

For Nathan Lefebvre, one statistic says more about his real estate career than almost any sales number could. More than 90 percent of his business comes from repeat clients and referrals.

Interestingly, Nathan did not even know that until recently. While working with a marketing company, he was asked to dig into the analytics behind his business and determine where his clients were coming from. Nathan admits numbers have never been the way he measures success. To him, real estate is a human business, not a numbers business.

“

HIS PHILOSOPHY

CAN BE SUMMED UP

IN THREE WORDS:

CONNECTION,

COMMUNICATION

AND COMPLIANCE.

But when he saw that figure, it meant something. “After you’ve experienced one of the largest transactions of your life guided by me, you trusted me enough to tell your friends about me,” Nathan says. “I’m incredibly proud of that.”

That trust has become the foundation of a career Nathan never expected to build quite this way, although his interest in real estate began long before he ever earned a license.

Growing up in Grand Haven, Michigan, Nathan loved houses. As a child, he drew homes and floor plans, and he began college as an architecture major. He eventually changed directions, earning a master’s degree in elementary education and becoming a fourth-grade teacher at Loudon Elementary School. Nathan loved teaching, especially those moments when a student suddenly understood something that had once seemed impossible.

That desire for meaningful work would follow him throughout his career. After three years in the classroom, an unexpected opportunity took Nathan into forensic science. A former colleague repeatedly encouraged him to join the National Forensic Academy, a crime scene investigator training program. Nathan initially resisted. He had no law enforcement

background, did not watch CSI and had little interest in seeing a crime scene.

Eventually, he gave it a chance. Nathan spent roughly a decade helping administer the program before later running his own nonprofit delivering crime scene investigator training around the country. Over time, investigators began contacting him with stories of cold cases reopened and crimes solved using techniques they had learned through the training.

Nathan had found that sense of purpose again.

By 2015, however, running his own organization meant spending considerable time working alone from home when he was not traveling. Nathan describes himself as professionally outgoing but personally quiet, and he realized he was missing regular interaction with people.

Then, at 8:30 one Sunday night, a thought he had carried since college suddenly returned.

Why not get his real estate license? Three weeks later, he was licensed.

His relationships from years spent in education, law enforcement, church and the local community created an immediate foundation.



Location: Kitchen Sales gallery

“

I CAN'T PROMISE
TO ALWAYS HAVE
GOOD NEWS, BUT I
CAN PROMISE THAT
YOU WILL ALWAYS
KNOW WHAT'S
GOING ON IN YOUR
TRANSACTION.”

Particularly within law enforcement, where trust is not given easily, referrals began coming quickly.

What surprised Nathan most was discovering that real estate could provide the same intrinsic reward he had found in his previous careers. Nathan's teaching background still shows up every day. Rather than telling clients what they should do, he breaks down the information, explains their options and lets them move through the process at their own pace.

“I work for you,” he says. “I’m going to help you based on information and experience, but I’m going to do it at your pace.” It was a lesson he had to learn early. Nathan entered the industry with years of personal experience buying, selling, renting and renovating

properties. He assumed clients would hear his advice and simply follow it.

He quickly realized that was not the job. Every person approaches a major financial decision differently. Nathan believes great representation means understanding that process rather than imposing his own. His philosophy can be summed up in three words: connection, communication and compliance.

Connection comes first because real estate is personal. Communication creates confidence throughout the transaction. “I can’t promise to always have good news,” Nathan says, “but I can promise that you will always know what’s going on in your transaction.” And compliance represents the knowledge required to



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protect clients through contracts, negotiations and the countless details involved in a transaction.

Away from work, Nathan loves traveling, especially a good road trip. Despite already driving 3,000 to 4,000 miles some months for real estate, he has recently driven to Colorado and Miami and returns whenever possible to Michigan, where Lake Michigan and the small-town charm of Grand Haven still feel like home.

Looking back, Nathan's career has taken him from classrooms to crime scene training to closing tables. The industries could hardly seem more different. Yet the thread connecting them is remarkably consistent. Nathan has always wanted his work to matter. 🍷

A modern kitchen with white cabinetry, gold hardware, and a large island with four bar stools. The Friedman's Appliances logo is in the top left corner.

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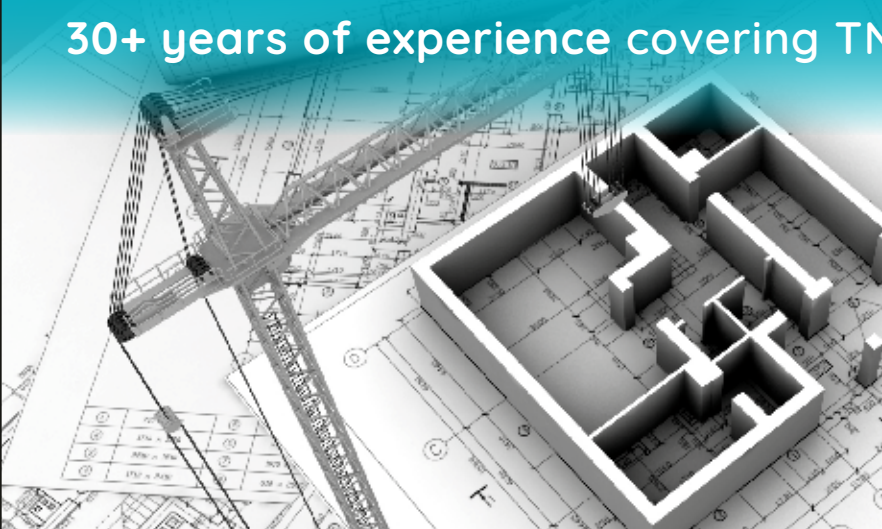


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