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A woman with dark hair, wearing a light beige blazer and matching pants over a white collared shirt, is sitting on a black metal stool with a white seat. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a bright, modern interior with a white sofa, a round white table, and a staircase with a glass railing.

Michelle N. Cohen

A Career Built
on Connection,
Honesty, and
Integrity

Agent Spotlight
**ELAINE
PATTERSON**

Agent Spotlight
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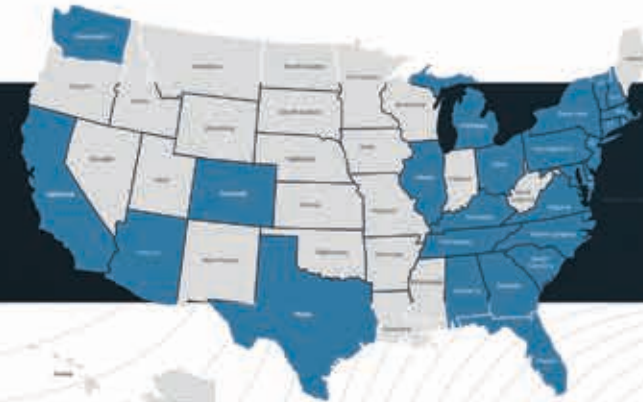
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Blaise Ingrisano



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How Elite Agents Turn Commissions Into Scalable Businesses and Lasting Assets

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Back in Rhythm

There's something about September that feels like a reset.

Summer hasn't officially left us, and on Long Island, we're certainly not ready to let it go. But the pace begins to shift. Vacations wind down, calendars fill back up, and there's a renewed sense of focus as we head into one of the most important stretches of the year.

For Long Island's top real estate professionals, that rhythm is familiar.

The most successful people in this business understand that momentum isn't built only during the busiest months. It's built by staying connected, continuing to show up, nurturing relationships, and remaining intentional about where you're headed next.

That same energy is very much alive at *Long Island Real Producers*.

Throughout this year, we've continued to grow—not simply by reaching more people, but by finding more meaningful ways to recognize the professionals who make up this extraordinary real estate community. We've introduced new editorial features, shared stories from different stages of success, welcomed new Preferred Partners, and created more opportunities for the people within our community to know one another beyond a name, a transaction, or a ranking.

Because while production may be what brings someone into the Real Producers community, it's the people behind those numbers who make it worth celebrating.

September feels like the perfect time to refocus on that.

There are still four months left in 2026—four months to finish goals, strengthen relationships, make introductions, take the meeting, follow up on the conversation, and perhaps even begin laying the groundwork for what comes next.

So enjoy these last beautiful weeks of Long Island summer. But as the rhythm changes and we turn toward fall, keep moving forward.

There's still a lot of year left—and a lot of opportunity ahead.



Blaise Ingrisano & Christine Ingrisano
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Meet **Blaise & Christine Ingrisano** of Inspecticore

BY NICK INGRISANI
PHOTOS BY CHRIS BASFORD
DYNAMIC MEDIA SOLUTIONS



Today, Inspecticore performs hundreds of home inspections each month across Long Island, Brooklyn and Manhattan, serving thousands of buyers, sellers, and real estate professionals with a reputation built on professionalism, education, and trust. But seventeen years ago, it was simply one inspector, a flashlight, marketing materials made at home, and a determination to build something meaningful.

Blaise was born in Brooklyn and raised in a close-knit Italian family. Blaise developed a deep appreciation for hard work, family, and perseverance long before entering the home inspection industry. When he was just nineteen years old, he stepped onto the floor of the New York Commodity Exchange. By twenty-five, he was a floor trader for firms like Merrill Lynch and Citigroup, a career that carried him through his thirties and early forties.

"I had a fantastic 22 year career up until 2007. That's when the floor transitioned from where you're actually physically trading to electronic platforms, so my job was replaced by electronic trading.

I tried to trade that way for a year or so, but it didn't work out, so I had to reinvent myself." — Blaise

Christine was the oldest of three kids, graduated from Fordham University in the Bronx, and later worked for schoolbook publisher, Macmillan McGraw-Hill, producing textbooks for grades K through 8.

"It was fun and exciting because everyone would use their unique talents - writers, photographers, editors, design, copyediting - and come together to create the schoolbooks. It was always a satisfying accomplishment to see the books come off the press." — Christine

She met Blaise, they dated, got married, and had four children, building a life together - and then Blaise moved through a massive career change.

"I was in my home office at the time. I had an L-shaped desk with three computer monitors for trading, and on the other side was the family computer. One day I just started plugging in small business opportunities, home inspections came up, and I figured I could do it. It was a pretty low entry point, and I could get up

and running as soon as I got licensed. As simple as that." — Blaise

The early days were more about survival than strategy. Blaise was out doing inspections during the week and marketing on weekends, showing up at real estate open houses with homemade coupons he'd printed at home. Christine baked cranberry biscotti, chocolate chip cookies or brownies to bring along.

"One of the first weekends a real estate agent called me back. Not for an inspection, but to get Christine's chocolate chip cookie recipe." — Blaise

What began as one inspector eventually grew into Long Island's largest home inspection company, with a team of approximately forty employees, twenty inspectors, hundreds of inspections each month, and a sister company, Gotham City Home Inspections serving New York City's five boroughs. Today, that foundation has evolved into Core Group, a multi-vertical organization spanning home inspections, pest management, holiday lighting, inspector and real estate agent education, and *Long Island Real Producers*—each serving a different need while remaining connected by a



shared commitment to the industries and communities they serve.

Although at first progress came slowly, Blaise put all of his energy into hitting a milestone of twenty inspections in a month. Eventually he got there, then hit 35 the next month, and 70 in the following month. Today, Inspecticore handles roughly 300 inspections a month and, together with Gotham City Home Inspections, has earned more than 4,200 five-star reviews—2,700+ for Inspecticore and 1,500+ for Gotham.

Reaching that level of growth, however, is something Blaise and Christine are quick to say they could never have accomplished on their own. Behind every inspection is a team working together—from finance, marketing,

client care, and technology support to the inspectors in the field each day. Many of Inspecticore's inspectors have been with the company for years, bringing not only experience but a shared commitment to the standards and values the company was built on.

"We could never have grown to 300 inspections a month on our own. We have an incredible team behind us, and every person plays a role. We're especially proud of our inspectors. They truly operate as one team. Some have been with us for many years, but every one of them understands that when they walk into a home, the only thing that matters in that moment is giving their very best effort to the client in front of them. That's what we ask of everyone, every single day." — Christine

Inspecticore offers residential inspections, commercial property assessments, pest inspections, environmental assessments, pools and spa inspections, mold assessments and a full suite of property evaluation services while continuing to invest heavily in inspector training and continuing education.

"It was a really hard thing to build a home inspection company out of nothing—no past experience, no association with real estate agents or anyone in the business. The amount of perseverance, tenacity, and strength it took... Blaise never quit. He had so much personal grit and intelligence. It's just truly remarkable, he never let anything stop him from moving forward." — Christine

Education has also become a significant part of Inspecticore's mission. Through continuing education classes, speaking engagements, and training programs, Blaise has helped thousands of real



estate professionals better understand homes, inspections, and the issues that matter most to their clients. For the Ingrisanos, sharing knowledge is simply another way to serve the industry they care deeply about.

Christine came on board more formally in 2012, starting with answering the phone as Blaise's schedule filled with more appointments than he could manage himself. She ran the office seven days a week for years and only recently stepped back from that daily role. However, she's still intimately tied to the business, conducting weekly meetings with the team and helping their employees through challenges, because she understands the business from the inside out.

If you ask Blaise what holds the company together, he won't start with technical details about inspections. It all begins with their beliefs and core values.

"How are we treating the people directly in front of us? Are we treating them with a servant's heart? That's what it was about from the first inspection I did. We truly believe in 'family first and foremost. Every family deserves a home that's safe and sound', so everything comes back to that. We treat our customers and referring partners like family." — Blaise

That philosophy extends beyond homeowners. Blaise and Christine have spent years building relationships with Long Island's real estate community, believing that the strongest transactions happen when inspectors, agents,

attorneys, lenders, and clients all work together with mutual respect.

Over the years, Blaise and Christine have found that the agents they have long-lasting relationships with are the ones who share their client-first approach, agents who want the best for their clients, looking for a fair and balanced report.

"Nobody wants things sugarcoated, and we do not want to make mountains out of molehills either. One thing I want real estate agents to know: we've been out there working hard every single day since 2009. We stay in our lane of expertise and allow everyone to do their process. We do our best to represent the entire real estate community in a very professional manner." — Blaise

"We genuinely see the importance of each and every inspection company-wide. This is typically our client's largest investment they'll make in their lifetime. So we make every effort to handle their emotions, fears, and stress as best we can. It takes time for agents to trust that this is how we handle every inspection. But as that trust builds, and we're serving clients together, it lets everyone move forward with confidence that we're helping people get into the right home." — Christine

Nearly two decades after printing homemade coupons and hoping the phone would ring, Blaise and Christine still approach every inspection with the same philosophy that built the company in the beginning: treat people like

family, tell the truth, and leave every client better informed than when you arrived. It's a simple approach—but one that has earned the trust of thousands of homeowners and many of Long Island's most respected real estate professionals.

Outside of work, Blaise and Christine love spending quality time with their four children, who are all in their early twenties and thirties now. When each one graduates from college, Blaise takes them away for 2 weeks anywhere they want to go. But the real prize, both of them say, is the ordinary stuff: the simple joy of having the kids in their lives, hanging out by the pool with everyone, or enjoying one of Christine and Blaise's delicious meals together.

"We are very blessed, and we are very intentional about not taking our blessings for granted." — Christine

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FROM UNEXPECTED HARDSHIP TO BUILDING A FAMILY LEGACY

BY NICK INGRISANI
PHOTOS BY CHRIS BASFORD /
DYNAMIC MEDIA SOLUTIONS

ELAINE Patterson



Elaine Patterson got her real estate license in 1989, but didn't start selling homes full-time until 1998. After graduating from the Fashion Institute of Technology, Elaine began her career as a textile designer in the fashion industry. Her talent and drive led her from design into sales and management, eventually becoming part-owner of a fully vertical mill in New Braunfels, Texas, employing more than 600 people with annual apparel and home furnishing sales exceeding \$30 million. For nearly 13 years, she traveled throughout the country and Europe, managing a sales force while staying ahead of emerging fabric and design trends.

Inspired by her mother's ambition to become a licensed realtor and work alongside her, Elaine's passion for real estate was ultimately sparked. After long

days of work, they would both attend night classes together to pursue their licenses, sharing the same goal and determination.

"My mother was my driving force to become a realtor. We wanted to be in business together and make it a successful mother-daughter team. We took courses in the evenings and took our exams, but she passed away before even learning she got her license. Luckily, I had the wherewithal and drive to continue my education so my license wouldn't expire."

Eventually, the travel demands of her corporate work became too much to balance with her family life, and it was the perfect opportunity to transition into real estate. The transition was easy for her to make. And it turned out that her design and sales background had a much bigger impact than she expected.

“THAT’S WHAT’S
ALWAYS BEEN ON MY
MIND: WHAT CAN I
DO TO MAKE THIS
BETTER? HOW CAN I
IMPROVE ON WHAT
I’M DOING? NOTHING
IS PERFECT IN LIFE.
BEING AN ARTIST,
YOUR PAINTING IS
NEVER DONE.”

"Having a design background helped me see what could be in a project that wasn't clear. New construction, distressed property, resale that needed a little adjustment... when I come in, I see a vision of what's going to make it look better. My sales background taught me how to negotiate. You have to be able to understand what you're selling and know what your clients' goals are. So there's a big overlap."

Those things helped me transition into real estate. Because it's all about presence and curb appeal."

She's a self-described Type A, always moving, always asking what could be better. It's a disposition that fits the business well, as real estate rewards people who stay on top of everything. But her drive isn't just about closing deals. She talks about improving her business the way an artist talks about a canvas. There's always an adjustment, another layer, something that could be sharper. That insatiable drive to learn and grow is what keeps a long career from going stale.

"That's what's always been on my mind: what can I do to make this better? How can I improve



on what I'm doing? Nothing is perfect in life. Being an artist, your painting is never done."

Staying connected to nearly a thousand past clients is its own challenge. In the early years, it was print and mail. Now it's social media, which Elaine has embraced not as a marketing tool, but as a way to stay genuinely present in people's lives.

"You need to be there for people now. Then, 5-10 years later, when they're ready, you're right there. It's about keeping the line of communication open. My business isn't just about buying and selling. I'm here to connect you with our network of people, contractors, roofers, etc. There's a lot that happens between a sale or purchase that keeps us connected. I use social media as a way to stay connected, be a part of their growing family, and be involved in their lives."

The payoff for her patience when working with clients shows up in the strong referral business she has now. Many of her past clients now recommend her to their children when they're ready to buy their first home. Elaine is passionate about her work and

doesn't see herself retiring in a traditional sense. Her business is strong, and the work still gives her meaning and purpose the way it always has.

Now nearly 30 years into her career, Elaine has sold close to a thousand homes and has come to a sort of full-circle moment. Her son Daniel, who got his license 11 years ago straight out of college, is now her partner in the business. She didn't hand it to him on day one, but let him work his way in, offered mentorship, and gave him space to build his own clientele and instincts. Their formal

partnership came together about five years ago.

Now, their vision is to build a powerful and trusted personal brand that people immediately associate with integrity, expertise, professionalism, and exceptional results. They are truly driven to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the people they work with.

"The light at the end of the tunnel is that I ended up in business with my son. She's looking down, and it's a memory I carry every day. I had hardships and sadness, and I worked through them. I had great support from my family, and now, I truly enjoy and love what I'm doing."

Outside of Elaine's dedication to her clients and guiding them through their real estate journeys, she enjoys spending quality time with her three children. She is an active member of her community, and can often be found biking, playing pickleball, or practicing yoga.

While her mother never got to see her real estate success in person, Elaine carries her legacy forward in everything she does. 🍏



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SAL AMMIRATI

From Retail Store Owner to
REAL ESTATE SUCCESS

BY NICK INGRISANI
PHOTOS BY CHRIS BASFORD /
DYNAMIC MEDIA SOLUTIONS



SAL AMMIRATI HAS SPENT HIS ENTIRE
ADULT LIFE IN SERVICE TO OTHER PEOPLE.



He moved to Long Island from Brooklyn at nine years old and landed in Centerport, where he has lived ever since. Growing up, he was exposed to entrepreneurship, watching and helping his parents run their businesses, including a deli and a store in Huntington. He married the love of his life—they’ve been together 37 years—bought his first home in the same town where he grew up, and built a career that has outlasted entire industries. That kind of rootedness isn’t accidental. It’s a choice Sal has made, over and over again, to plant himself somewhere and make it count.

Before real estate, Sal owned a stationery shop in Centerport—a natural move for a man whose family had always been in retail. He’d already

run a deli for his father before high school. The store sold birthday cards, candy, school supplies, the things a neighborhood needed before every gas station and drugstore started selling the same things. For eighteen years, it worked. Then the market shifted, and the writing appeared on the wall.

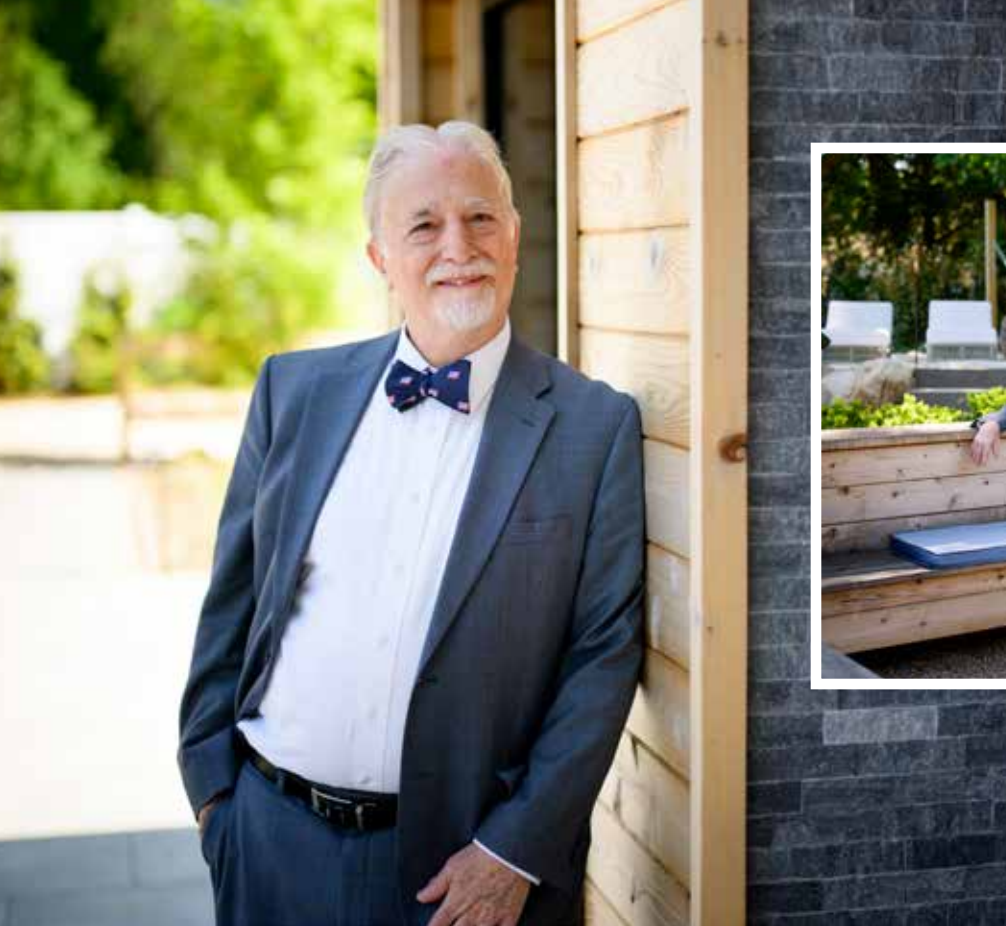
“When I started in the 1980s, it was the only place you could buy a birthday card. Candy, Christmas, school supplies... 18 years later, you could find those things at every supermarket, gas station, drug store, etc., so the business fell off enough that I had to close the doors.”

Closing the store was hard, but Sal took it in stride. And in some ways, those eighteen years behind the counter were the best preparation imaginable for what

came next. Every day, Sal had stood at the center of his community, talking with hundreds of people, learning their names, earning their trust.

“Coming from retail, I spoke with hundreds of people every day. You could say I had the gift of gab. I was in the public, center stage, for 18 years. People came to me constantly, and I had personal interactions with them. That helped in my real estate career. It was easy for me to make those personal connections and deal with people.”

Still, the early years were slow. It took six months before he cashed his first check. His goal was straightforward: close 26 deals a year, roughly one every two weeks. Getting there required patience and persistence, but thankfully, Sal had



a unique advantage that allowed him to put all his energy into the business. From his time running the stationery store, his wife already understood what it meant to be married to someone who worked seven days a week.

“I make sure my time is available for my clients, and my wife is just as understanding as she’s always been. God bless my wife; she’s a wonderful woman, and she’s been key to my success in growing my business.”

Starting in 2002 with a small local firm, by 2005, he was already their top salesman. Sal made the move to Douglas Elliman, where he has now spent nearly eighteen consecutive years. Since 2010, he has received an award from Elliman every year. It’s a consistent streak of recognition that reflects his deliberate and disciplined approach to the business.

“Since joining Douglas Elliman it just clicked. They provide us with a lot of tools to succeed.”

Sal’s approach centers on relationships, but he’s careful to note that not all relationships look the same. Buyers

require frequency and personal chemistry; you’re with them constantly, navigating one of the most emotional decisions of their lives. Sellers are a more transactional engagement, focused on strategy and results. Knowing the difference and adjusting accordingly is part of what separates a good agent from a great one.

Eventually, Sal decided to expand his business and form a team. Coached by Tom Ferry, he has cycled through various configurations—up to five members at peak—and holds his people to high standards. Today, the core of the team is Lindsey, a trusted colleague who shows up reliably even while raising young twins, particularly on weekends when open houses are in full swing.

“My expectations are high, and I’m always on the lookout for new recruits who are a good fit. I have no plans to retire.”

Last month, Sal was honored by Long Island Business News as an Icon—a distinction reserved for professionals over 60 who are still excelling in their industries and communities. He was the only real estate agent to receive the honor this year.

“
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is available for my
clients, and my wife is
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as she’s always been.
God bless my wife;
she’s a wonderful
woman, and she’s been
key to my success in
growing my business.”

“I was honored to be selected as an Icon. Being over 60 and still working successfully, that’s a terrific achievement for me.”

When he does step away from work, Sal and his wife love to travel. Their most recent big trip was to Australia earlier in the year.

“Travel is one of the reasons I work. My budget is not only for retirement, but I also have a travel budget, because we like to get up and go.”

After four decades of showing up for other people—as a shopkeeper, a neighbor, an agent, a husband—Sal Ammirati is showing no signs of slowing down. 📌



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3 years

CELEBRATING
of Long Island
Real Producers!

Three Years Later: Still Building Something Bigger. Barry Paley

When Long Island Real Producers first featured Barry Paley on the cover in 2023, he had already earned a reputation as “The Builder”—a former fashion industry executive who reinvented himself in real estate and built one of Long Island’s most respected organizations through disciplined leadership and an unwavering commitment to people.

Since then, his story has become even more compelling.

In 2024, Barry shared one of the most difficult chapters of his life in our Cancer Awareness issue, opening up about his battle with Stage III tonsil cancer. Thirty-five rounds of radiation, six rounds of chemotherapy, and a 41-pound weight loss tested him physically and emotionally. Yet through it all, Team Paley continued to thrive as Hope Paley, Luke Paley, and the leadership team stepped forward—proving that Barry had built far more than a successful sales team. He had built an organization.

Today, while successfully leading the company remotely from Florida, Barry continues to demonstrate that great businesses are not defined by where the leader sits, but by the strength of the people, systems, and culture that support them. The results speak for themselves.

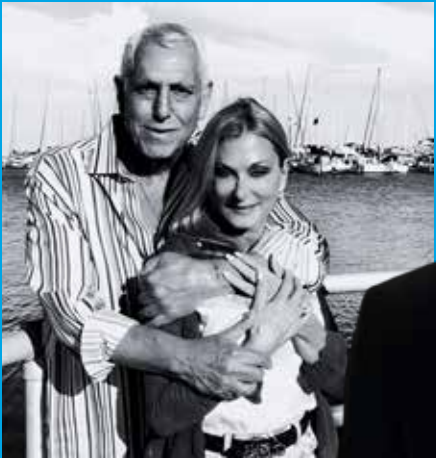
In 2025, Team Paley celebrated its strongest year ever, surpassing **\$100 million in closed sales** while guiding **165 families** through one of the most significant



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Barry Paley

What is new with...
SEPTEMBER 2023
COVER STORY

financial and emotional transitions of their lives. Today, the organization is ranked **No. 14 in New York State** and **No. 319 in the nation**, while remaining on pace for another record-setting year.

Behind those numbers is a business intentionally built for excellence. Specialized leadership, expanded client care and administrative support, documented systems, and standardized operating procedures

allow Team Paley to deliver an exceptional client experience while providing agents with the coaching, leverage, and operational support needed to grow extraordinary businesses of their own.

Along the way, Barry has expanded into Florida, continued mentoring the next generation of real estate professionals, received recognition from industry leaders including Tony Robbins, and been honored among **New York’s Top 100 Most Influential Real Estate Agents**.

Three years after our original cover story, Barry Paley is still building—but today his greatest accomplishment isn’t measured by production alone. It’s measured by the people he has developed, the lives he has impacted, and the legacy of leadership that continues to grow through the organization he built.



“Success is no longer measured by what one person can accomplish. It’s measured by how many people you empower to accomplish extraordinary things together.”



What is new with...

Zehava Friedman

SEPTEMBER 2023
RISING STAR

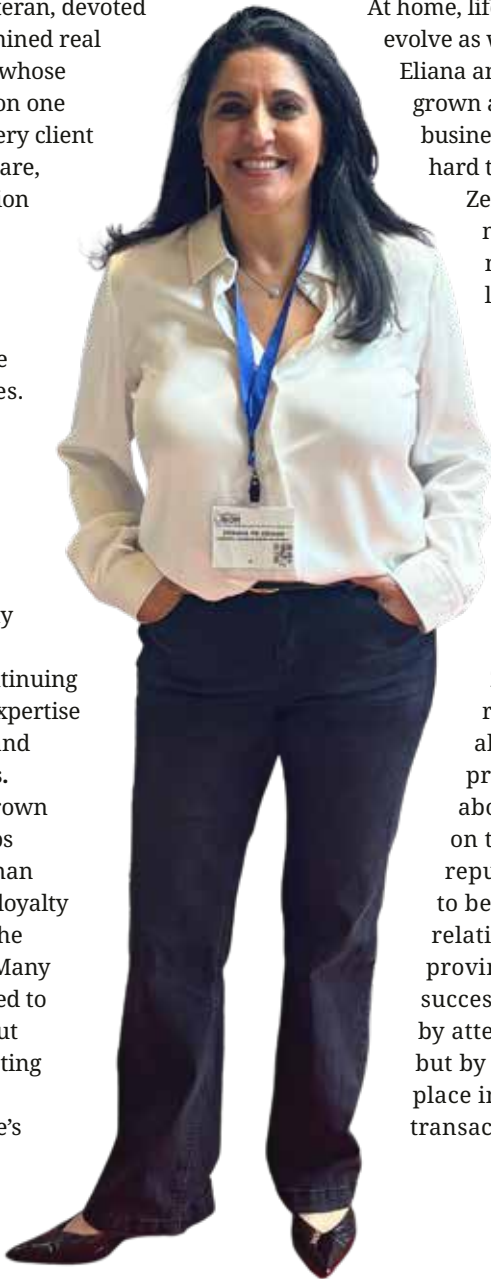
Relationships That Stand the Test of Time: Zehava Friedman

When **Long Island Real Producers** introduced Zehava Friedman as a Rising Star in 2023, readers met an Israeli Air Force veteran, devoted mother, and determined real estate professional whose business was built on one simple promise: every client would receive the care, honesty, and attention they deserved.

Three years later, that promise continues to define everything she does.

Still serving clients from Coldwell Banker American Homes' Syosset office, Zehava remains a nationally recognized top producer while continuing to strengthen her expertise through her **SRES** and **CCIM** designations. Her business has grown steadily, but perhaps more meaningful than the numbers is the loyalty she's earned from the people she serves. Many clients have returned to her not just once, but multiple times, trusting her to guide them through some of life's

biggest decisions and often describing her as much more than an agent—as someone who genuinely becomes part of their journey.



At home, life has continued to evolve as well. Her daughters, Eliana and Nadia, have grown alongside the business she worked so hard to build, allowing Zehava to enjoy many of the family milestones she once looked forward to while balancing a thriving career.

Although much has changed over the past three years, her priorities have not.

Back in 2023, Zehava told us that real estate wasn't about making promises—it was about delivering on them. Today, her reputation continues to be built one relationship at a time, proving that lasting success isn't measured by attention or accolades, but by the trust clients place in you long after the transaction has ended.

What is new with...

David Goldklang

Citizens Bank

SEPTEMBER 2023 PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

A Reputation Built on Trust: David Goldklang

When *Long Island Real Producers* first introduced David Goldklang in 2023, readers met a mortgage professional who believed the most important part of the lending process wasn't the product—it was the relationship behind it.

After more than 25 years in the industry, David's philosophy was refreshingly simple: people do business with people they know, like, and trust.

Three years later, that philosophy continues to guide a career marked by remarkable consistency.

David has now surpassed an extraordinary milestone, personally closing more than **\$1 billion in loans** while continuing to serve homebuyers, homeowners, investors, and REALTORS® from Citizens Bank's office in Melville, New York. His commitment to communication, preparation, and reliability has earned him widespread respect throughout the real estate community, with colleagues frequently recognizing him for his professionalism, responsiveness, and customer-first approach.

As market conditions continue to evolve, David remains focused on helping clients prepare well before they need financing, providing thoughtful guidance that allows buyers and borrowers to make informed decisions with confidence.

Looking back, it's clear that while the numbers have grown, the foundation has remained the same.

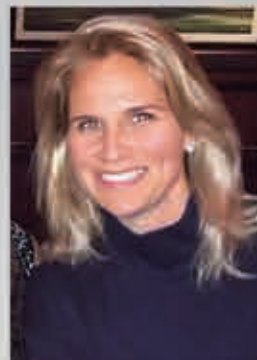
"I do what I say I'm going to do when I say I'm going to do it."

It's a promise David shared with readers in 2023, and one that continues to define his reputation today. More than a billion dollars in closed loans later, trust remains the cornerstone of everything he builds. ▀



“I do what I say I’m going to do when I say I’m going to do it.”

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“

- Elaine



A CAREER
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CONNECTION,
HONESTY, AND
INTEGRITY.

Michelle N. COHEN

BY NICK INGRISANI
PHOTOS BY CHRIS BASFORD /
DYNAMIC MEDIA SOLUTIONS

“The most important thing for me is to do my job with honesty and integrity. It makes me feel good to be of assistance to others at this stage in my career. I continue to work because I enjoy what I do, and I feel that in some way it’s making a difference.”

Michelle grew up in Brooklyn and attended Brooklyn College, where she earned a degree in education and a minor in speech pathology. She built an early career shaped by purpose. After marrying and following her husband, David, to Durham, North Carolina, so he could attend Duke Law School, she landed a job as a speech pathologist in the Durham city schools.

When the couple returned to New York, she quickly found a teaching position at a special service school in Manhattan, then went on to have a distinguished career in the White Plains public school system. Teaching third grade, she discovered something essential about herself: she was wired to connect with people, to listen, to communicate.

At a time when expectant mothers were asked to leave the classroom, Michelle stepped away from teaching when she became pregnant. And when her family eventually settled on Long Island with two young daughters, the cultural expectations

of the moment tugged at her again — a husband doing well as a securities attorney in Manhattan, two children at home, and an unspoken assumption that this was enough. For Michelle, it wasn’t.

“I searched for something to do that would be meaningful, and felt I had more to give to people. As an educator, I always felt my skills were transferable: the ability to listen, to have patience, and to be able to communicate effectively. I was encouraged by my husband to go into real estate.”

Her first real estate client was a young couple from Whitestone, Queens. She took them seriously, drove them to properties for three weeks, and sold them a home. That transaction sparked her excitement about this career path, which for her was less

about the commission and more about the potential of building something of her own. Michelle became a broker as quickly as the licensing rules allowed.

Over the course of her 40-year career, Michelle built a name that precedes her wherever she goes. Long before personal branding was a concept in the industry, she was placing her photo in supermarkets and writing The Michelle N. Cohen Gazette — a newsletter mailed to local homes that covered real estate, travel, her grandchildren, and her life. David helped edit it. The goal was simple: become a household name.

“I met someone in town who was with a 3-year-old child, the kid saw my picture on the shopping cart and said, ‘Oh, that’s the Pathmark lady’.

It was a significant thing in my career to have people associate me with real estate. It didn’t matter if I was at my temple, in town, or at a charitable function. People would come to me asking about the real estate market.”

She’s since added Instagram and social media to the mix, because she knows people have preferences for engaging; some clients want print in hand, others want a tap on a screen.

Five years ago, Michelle was recruited by Compass, which was a significant move after years as a top producer at her previous firm. She was drawn to their technology and, more importantly, the energy of the firm. She found herself energized by working alongside younger colleagues, staying close to what’s current rather than coasting on what’s worked.



When she's not working, Michelle and David love to travel. They've been to Africa, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, all over Europe, Israel, the UAE, and China. She also works out four times a week, belongs to a book club, and treats meeting new people as a practice rather than a perk.

"I have a tremendous passion for travel. It's what helped me become very open to people of all faiths, religions, and different parts of the world. We may look different, but in our hearts, everybody wants to have a good life for themselves and their families. With each granddaughter, once they turned 12 to 13 years old, we took them on a trip alone without their parents. It's very important



to us and has helped us make stronger bonds with our grandchildren."

Her mother, a first-generation immigrant and exceptional salesperson, was a significant positive influence on her. Watching her mother work with

people of various ethnicities taught Michelle something she never forgot: good instincts about people aren't accidental, they're earned.

"My mother was a phenomenal salesperson, very open to people, and I learned a great deal from her. She had



a great sense of humor and was always willing to deal. She was a big influence in my life. If I became a good real estate agent, it was because I saw her at a young age working with people, and working effectively."

At this stage of her career, Michelle is continuing to work because she loves it, remains among the most selected listing brokers, efficient and productive, continuing to model integrity for younger colleagues.

Michelle's career is a testament to the fruits of discipline, humor, and the quiet confidence of someone who figured out that meaningful work and a vibrant life aren't in competition with each other. In fact, they go hand in hand. 🍷

"I searched for something to do that would be meaningful, and felt I had more to give to people. As an educator, I always felt my skills were transferable: the ability to listen, to have patience, and to be able to communicate effectively. I was encouraged by my husband to go into real estate."



FIRST DEAL, BIG LESSON

What’s one lesson from your first deal that still sticks with you today?

Welcome to our “We Ask... You Tell!” feature in *Long Island Real Producers*!

This is a fun, personality-forward feature where we ask agents lighthearted lifestyle and success questions — things like:

- What books are on your nightstand?
- Favorite vacation spot?
- Go-to coffee order?
- How do you use AI?

...and more. It’s a great way for the community to get to know the person behind the business. Look for the participation link in our monthly newsletter. Be a part of the fun!



Anthony Perrotta
Signature Premier Properties

To stay calm when the pressure starts to heat up. Almost always there is a speed bump in a deal and staying calm is the best thing you can do for your client. I love this business because some deals are like puzzles and you have to figure out the best way to solve it and give your client a great experience without them ever knowing there was an issue.



Belinda Caspi Wiseman
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Laffey International Realty

Talk less, listen more. And work those open houses like a pro— don’t just sit back expecting the deal to come to you.



Nancy Giannone
Howard Hanna Coach Realtors

Time is not a friend in real estate!



Stephen Gaon
Serhant.

Not to sweat every little detail in the back and forth of the negotiation or contract. Solve the big problems and the smaller ones will fix themselves.



George Gatt
Stephen Joseph Properties

My first deal was a co-op listing in Queens—slightly outside my comfort zone and at a lower price point. But I leaned on my broker’s advice and showed up professional, prepared, and full of energy.



Stephanie Calinoff
Signature Premier Properties

It’s hard to remember after 41 years what my first deal was, but I remember being a young Agent and finding it hard for me to compete with the seasoned agents at the time. So I made a promise to whoever was hiring me that I could give them my full attention where others couldn’t and the truth is I still live by that today even being busy I always make people feel like I’m never too busy for them.



Kathleen Evangelista
The Evangelista Team at Douglas Elliman

Don’t spend your commission until the money is in the bank



Abhishek Sethi
Voro Real Estate

Most importantly I have learned: no deal is a deal until it closes, I need patience to hear what the client asks, and answer all the questions they have to make it more transparent



Dee Dee Brix
The Dee Dee Brix Team at Compass

That when I tell a long-time

homeowner the buyers met her counter, she may CRY!



Lisa Lauricella
Signature Premier Properties

My first listing 23 years ago came from knocking on someone’s door just after a blizzard, with nearly two feet of snow on the ground. I was determined to earn that first opportunity, and that experience taught me a lesson that still guides me today: perseverance, hard work, and the willingness to put yourself out there truly pay off. In real estate, consistent effort and determination often open the first door.



Liza Bendett
The Scout Residential Team at Compass

My first deal was a close friend purchasing in the Hamptons. It was a big transaction and one of the most educational experiences of my career. What stuck with me most was the importance of staying professional no matter who is sitting across from you. I never let the friendship change how I handled that transaction. It was buttoned up from start to finish. And that is something I carry into every deal today. The care I put into this work is why my clients become my friends, not the other way around



Michele Sanchez
Signature Premier Properties

Reverify Everything you discuss & agree on with another agent and put it in writing so there is proof of reference of the agreement in case it comes into question later.



Rebecca Zinn
Compass

One of the biggest lessons from my first deal was realizing how much presentation matters. Even though I was completely new to the business, I had a strong feeling the house needed staging. I hired a friend who was just starting out in interior design to help me, and the house ended up selling over asking and went under contract in a week. That experience stuck with me. Since then, I’ve staged every home I’ve sold, whether it needs small tweaks or more heavy lifting. Over time, I’ve really developed an eye for it myself, and it’s become a huge part of how I market homes today.



Brian Connor
Realty Connect USA

One lesson from my first deal that still sticks with me today is realizing that a home is much more than just a transaction to many people. A lot of houses carry deep sentimental value, memories, and emotional attachment for the families involved. That experience taught me the importance of being patient, understanding, and delicate throughout the process. While the business side is important, I learned early on that treating people with empathy and respect during such a major life transition matters just as much.



Jared Sarney
Corcoran SRG Residential

You never know what’s going to happen! My first deal (that wasn’t one of my own builds) was actually one of my best friends. We were at the final walkthrough and all of a sudden we saw his father in law fall. An ambulance came and rushed him to the hospital with multiple leg injuries. I thought that was a sign for this to not be my calling. But instead it taught me nothing comes easy and keep going if you want to succeed.



Mike Furino
The Furino Team at Signature Premier Properties

Always follow up when people have questions at an open house. I met a buyer at an open house and she asked a question that I did not have the answer to. I found the answer for her and called her about 30 mins after she left. She told me she had been to about 35 open houses and none of the agents had ever followed up to answer any of her questions. She told me she had a house to sell and wanted me to represent her. My first listing ended up being a million dollar waterfront property and I also helped her buy the home I met her at.



Dana Teresa Palmer
Buying and Selling LI - Signature Premier Properties

Always educate on the entire process prior to it happening, not as it happens.



Zehava Friedman
Coldwell Banker American Homes

My first deal, at the final walkthrough, the buyer asked to go in the attic. We allowed him, he walked on the sheet rock, and while we were all in the living room, he came

falling down. I don't let buyers walk in the attic since, only with the inspector.

Roy Lebel
Serhant.

My first deal was an estate sale, and I helped run the actual estate sale with the items in the person's home. Including a helicopter, amphibious tank-boat, Harley Davidson motorcycle, and many more items.

Elaine Richheimer
Douglas Elliman

My first deal was with an amazing Douglas Elliman agent. I got buyers from an open house that my current team leader Louise Pitlake had me host. They had a home to sell which I got to list that week, sold it pretty quickly and then found them a bigger home in their neighborhood. The agent who had the listing was so helpful and had patience, he knew it was my first deal, and I learned so much with his guidance and my team leaders were available to guide me as well.

Connie Intranova
Compass

My first deal was truly a memorable experience and taught me one of the biggest lessons I still carry with me today: always focus on providing value first. The transaction involved a divorcing couple whose children originally had no interest in the home. We signed the listing at a competitive price, prepared the property for market, hosted a very successful open house, and received multiple over asking offers. Everything was moving quickly until, unexpectedly, their son and daughter in law, who lived out of state, decided they wanted to purchase the home themselves. At that point, there were understandable questions surrounding the commission structure, especially since the buyers were family members and my clients likely would not have listed the home publicly had they known their son would change his mind. Being my very first deal, it easily could have become an uncomfortable or discouraging situation. Instead, my clients chose to pay my full commission without hesitation because they respected the amount of work, strategy, communication, and professionalism

I brought to the transaction from start to finish. That experience taught me very early in my career that clients will respect and appreciate your value, no matter the circumstance, as long as you consistently reciprocate that value with hard work, honesty, and professionalism.

Carleigh Minton
Douglas Elliman

It was from my sphere of influence. It's never the people that you think will support you in your life. People you never thought, will show you support and trust. Put yourself out there because you never know who you're going to touch.

Joe Maselli
Joe Maselli Real Estate Group

I failed to have a buyer agency agreement signed with my first set of open house clients - they came back to me after falling in love with a home they saw at an open house without me, and I almost lost my part in the deal.

Molly Deegan
Branch Real Estate Group

Have confidence from the very beginning. Everyone has to start from somewhere.

Paula Lescano
Exit Realty United

My first deal was baptism by fire. I signed my first listing solo — no hand-holding from my broker. I had to price it fast, pull a CMA, get paperwork ready, and keep it together while I was terrified inside.

The client was tough. The house took months to sell. But I didn't quit.

We sold it for the highest price that type of home had seen in that area at the time.

The lesson that still sticks with me today? Pressure doesn't break you — it builds you. That deal taught me that confidence isn't about knowing everything. It's about showing up, doing the work, and refusing to let fear or a tough client dictate the outcome.

I carry that into every listing now. Tough doesn't scare me. It sharpens me.

That first deal taught me: you don't need to be fearless, you just need to be relentless. ▀



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Exterminicore uncovers hidden threats before they become your client's concerns. That means smoother inspections, stronger client trust, and closings you can count on.

Why It Matters:

-  Nearly 1 in 2 homes on Long Island (49%) have had termite activity.
-  Homeowners spend over \$5 billion each year repairing termite damage.
-  The average treatment cost for Long Island homes is \$2,800.

The Threat Is Real:

-  Termites never sleep — they eat 24/7.
-  A queen can live 30 years and produce up to 30,000 eggs.
-  Termites are NOT a matter of if... they're a matter of when.

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