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A portrait of Bill White, an older man with grey hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a white shirt. He is leaning on a wooden railing with his right hand resting on his chin. The background shows a wooden staircase and a wall with a decorative metal railing.

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WHITE**

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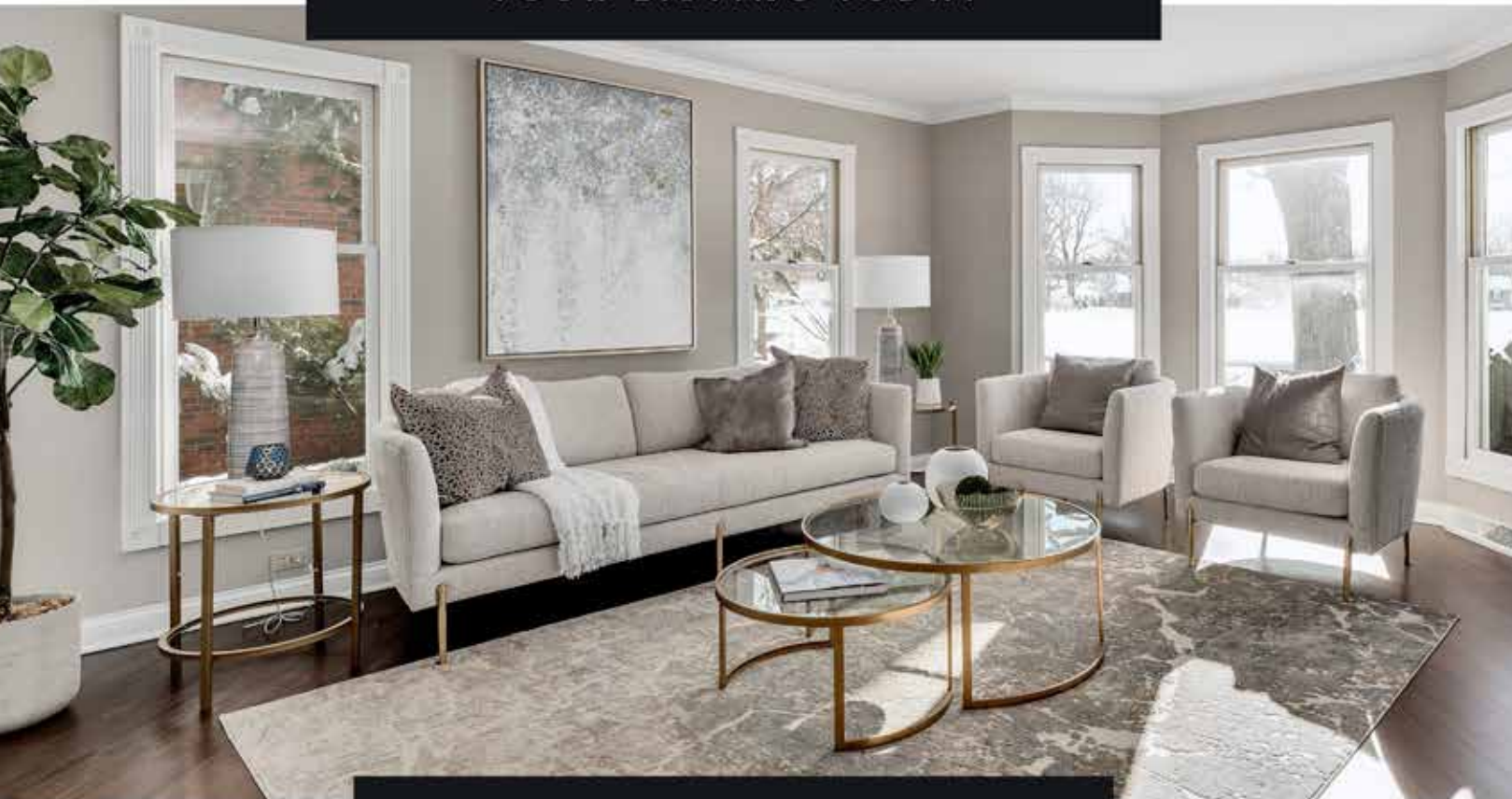
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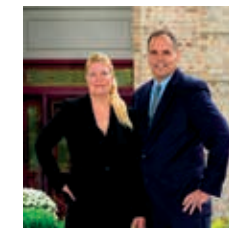
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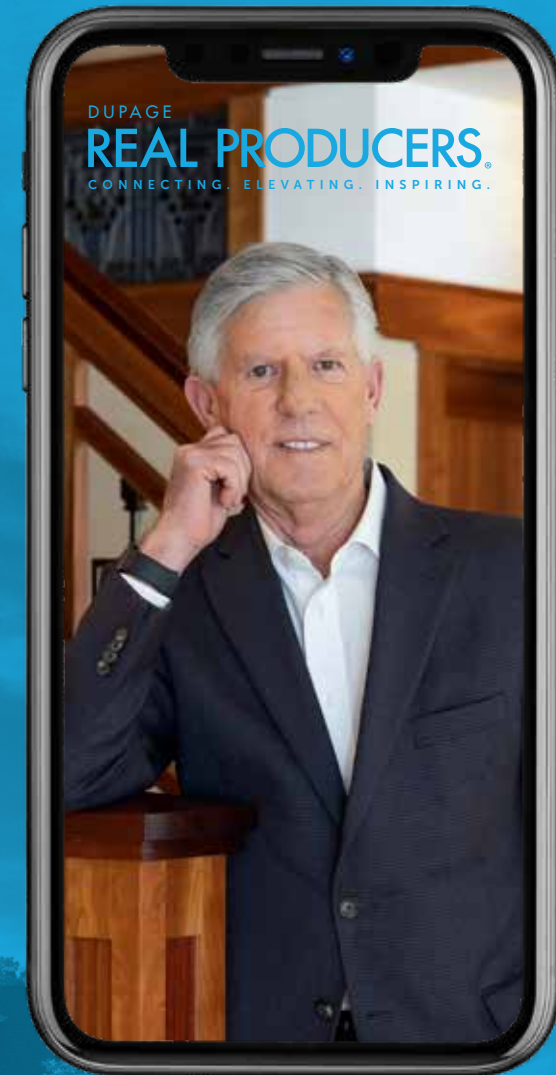
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# CREATIVELY CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY



We are fully immersed in the spring market and one could make the case that we have been since February (with the exception of those three weeks when we received nearly 40" of snow). Many of the conversations I have had with our REALTORS® and Preferred Partners have revolved around when we can gather again for in-person events. There seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel as to when in-person events can resume. Although we have no idea what this will look like, we are optimistic that there is potential toward the end of the year.

Until then, we are becoming more intentional about connecting people virtually. We just kicked off our first few *DuPage Real Producers* jam sessions. What is a jam session? Well, I'm so glad you asked! It is an organic conversation about DuPage real estate. The participants are all members of the DRP community which generally consists of five REALTORS® and three of our Preferred Partners from different industries. It is streamed via Facebook Live and naturally the participants share the feed to their own page creating a social media buzz. There is no set topic, agenda, or theme. We have found that bringing industry professionals together to glean insights from one another, genuinely solidifies relationships and helps create a culture in which we all strive to view business

obstacles from the other person's perspective. The more we engage in these types of activities, the more we can anticipate the needs of everyone involved in navigating the nuances of a real estate transaction.

This is one of the positive innovations that was born from the pandemic. Nothing will replace human contact and face-to-face interactions, but these jam sessions are another layer of connectivity that wouldn't have happened otherwise. If you are interested in participating in a future session, don't hesitate to reach out and turn to page 36 for more details.



Fighting the good fight,

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» REALTOR®  
feature  
By Lauren Young

# Lee Ernst

Drumming REALTOR® Moves to His Own Beat



Lee showing his 71 Road Runner 4400 at a car show.

**“Being self-employed in previous careers taught me how to wake up every morning with the realization that there is no paycheck unless I get up and make it happen,” says Lee Ernst from eXp Realty in Naperville. As a teenager, Lee discovered that the freedom and personal responsibility of being a business owner was his ideal career situation. When he became a REALTOR®, he found that real estate gave him that and more.**

Lee was raised on the north side of Chicago and learned how to remodel houses starting at age sixteen, when he would practice on his parents’ house. He quickly developed a passion for beautiful architecture and a desire to hone his renovation skills. (He still employs those skills, but only on his own homes.) As a teenager, the young entrepreneur started a painting service and then a delivery

business. He also seriously considered becoming a professional architect, a drummer, and even a BMX racer. “You would have to see my photo albums from when I was into racing,” says Lee. “I was pretty serious about it from ages thirteen to seventeen. I also played drumming gigs back then. You should have seen my hair in my band days!”

Through his entrepreneurial endeavors, though, Lee discovered a love for owning his own company and the unique satisfaction that comes from serving your own clients. But as time went on, he realized that he wanted to have more face time with his clients than his business’s structure allowed. So he started searching for the business that would allow him to do that. In 2005, Lee obtained his real estate license.

“Being a REALTOR® has really offered me the ability to help people one-on-one,” he explains. “I found that my other roles relied too much on other employees, and I wasn’t able to intimately interact with customers like I wanted.”

Lee began his career at Coldwell Banker. “During my first few years in real estate I still had my delivery business, and [so I] considered myself part-time,” says Lee. “I did not have a mentor. I learned what I could from asking questions. Somehow, I was able to become the Rookie of the Year at the Lombard Coldwell Banker.” ...





• • •

After working two years at Coldwell Banker, Lee worked at RE/MAX before moving to eXp last year. Along with receiving numerous recognitions over the years—the eXp Icon Agent award (2020); the RE/MAX Platinum Club award (2013–2019), 100 Percent Club award (2010–2012), Executive Club award (2008 and 2009), and the Hall of Fame award (2016); and Lee is among the less than one percent of Five Star Professional Real Estate Agent Award winners to have won the honor ten years in a row—he earned a degree in business administration and management from Robert Morris University in 2014.

It may come as no surprise that when Lee is not managing his real estate business, he enjoys mountain biking in Arizona and playing the drums. He also enjoys attending car shows. In addition, Lee has served on the board of the Lisle Chamber of Commerce for several years and is stepping into an executive board member role this year.

Lee and his wife, Carrie, who will obtain her license and join Lee in the industry this year, are active supporters of many local and international charities.

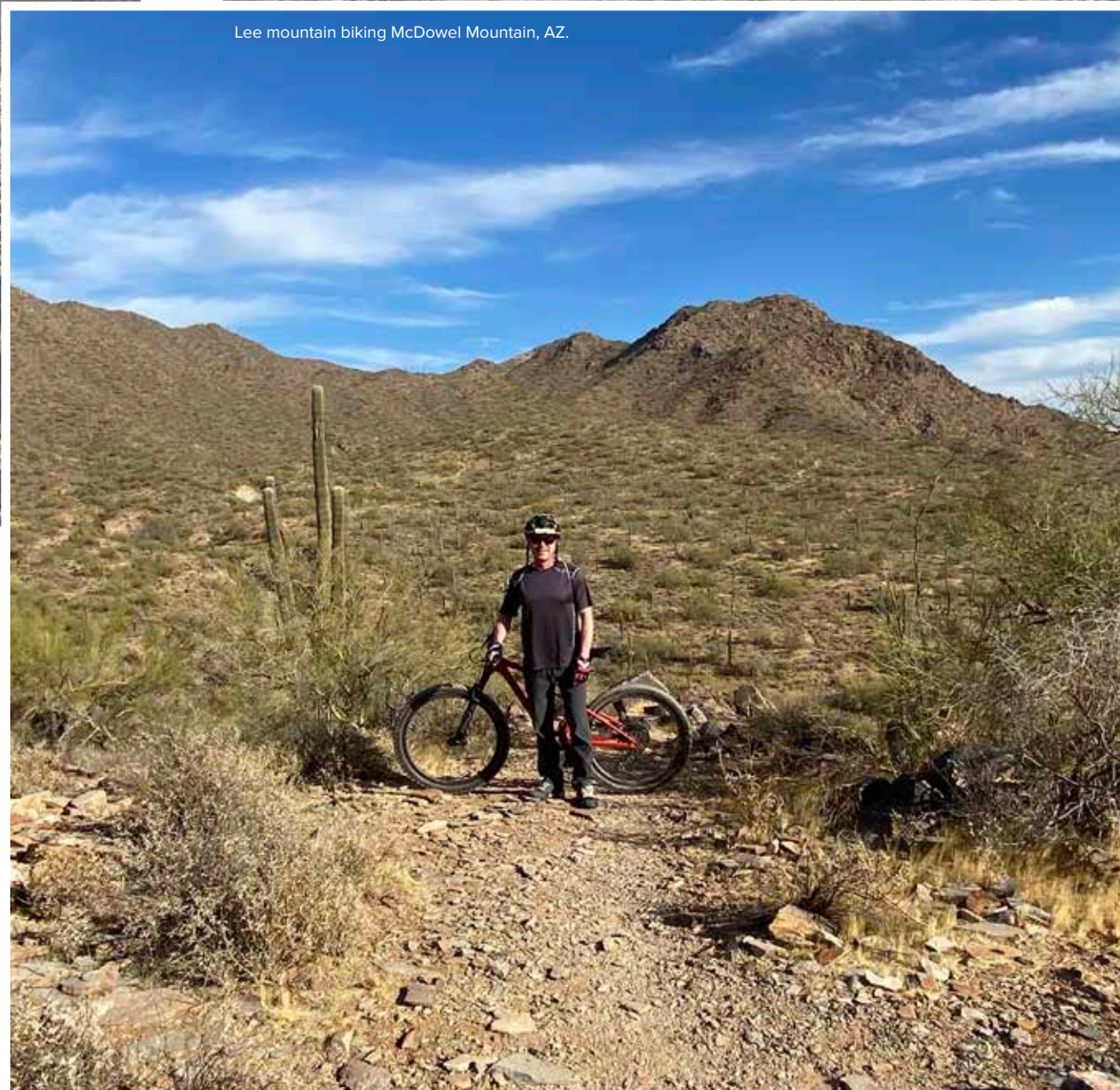
“The organizations we support are close to our hearts,” says Lee. “I started out supporting The Children’s Network when I first became a REALTOR® and have grown to appreciate all they do in Chicago. We help the Hephzibah Children’s Association because they make sure that children brought home from the hospital are given stability, counseling, and structure so they can heal. The Humane Society and the Elephant Sanctuary are important to us since Carrie has visited Africa many times and helped wildlife sanctuaries there in person.”

Looking forward, Lee is encouraged by the future growth and expansion of his business. While that does

Rafting on a family vacation in Moab, Utah.



Lee mountain biking McDowell Mountain, AZ.



“Being a REALTOR® has really offered me the ability to help people one-on-one. I found that my other roles relied too much on other employees, and I wasn’t able to intimately interact with customers like I wanted.”

mean he must again rely more on others to assure their combined successes, he is excited about mentoring a new group of young agents.

“For ten years I managed all the responsibilities of my business,” he says. “In 2016, I finally hired a buyer’s agent and part-time admin to help continue our growth. We are now adding a Chicago agent, a full-time admin, and a runner, and I am taking on a few more new agents that need to get up and running. It is so rewarding to help these new REALTORS® so they can, someday, break out on their own.”

“My plan also includes getting licensed in the Phoenix and Scottsdale areas, as [I’m seeing] Illinois residents make an exodus from the state,” he adds. “It all takes a lot of work and hours, but it lets me get to the part I like, which is the interaction and stories my clients share with me.”



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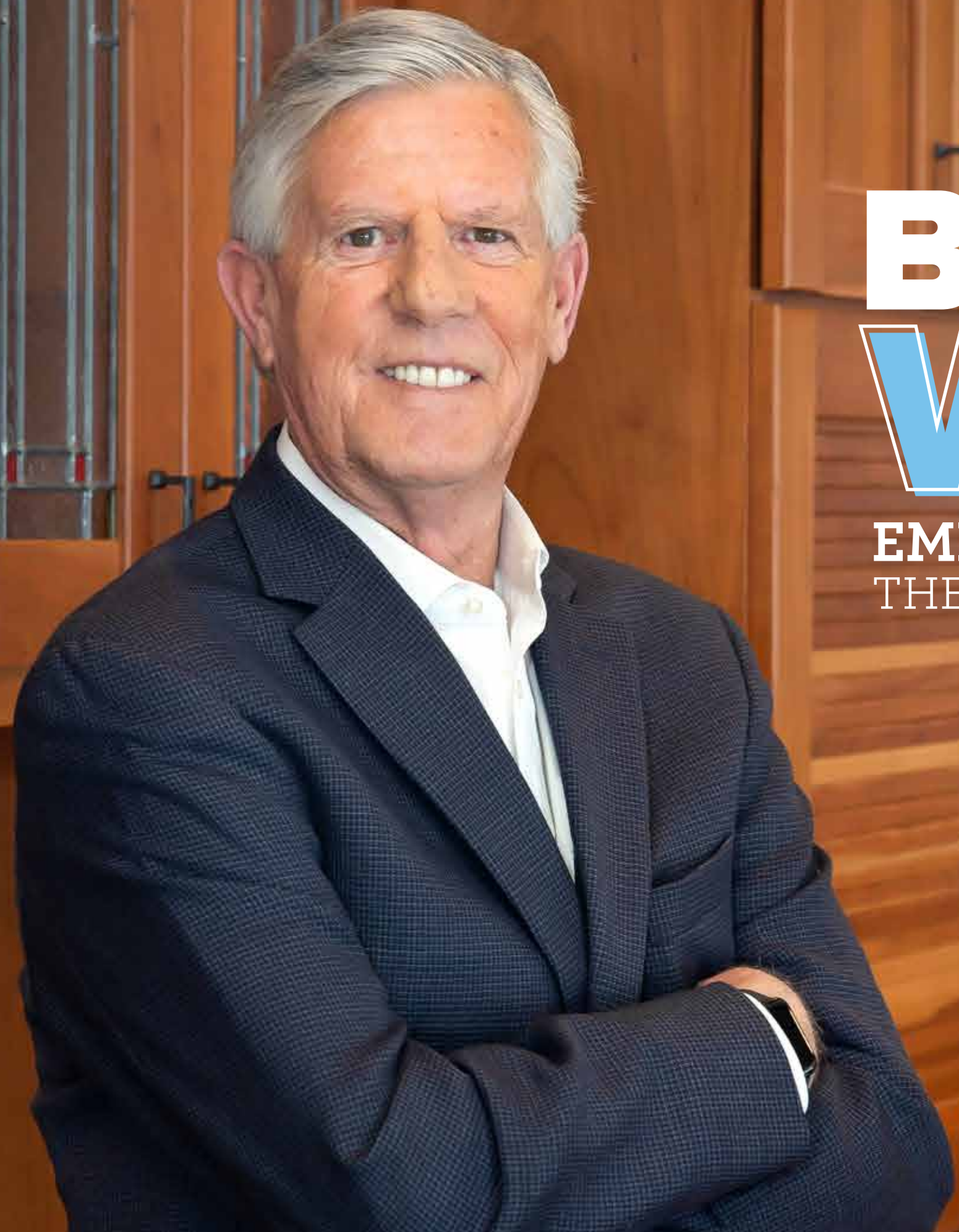


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# BILL WHITE

► cover story  
By Lauren Young  
Photos by Katherin Frankovic

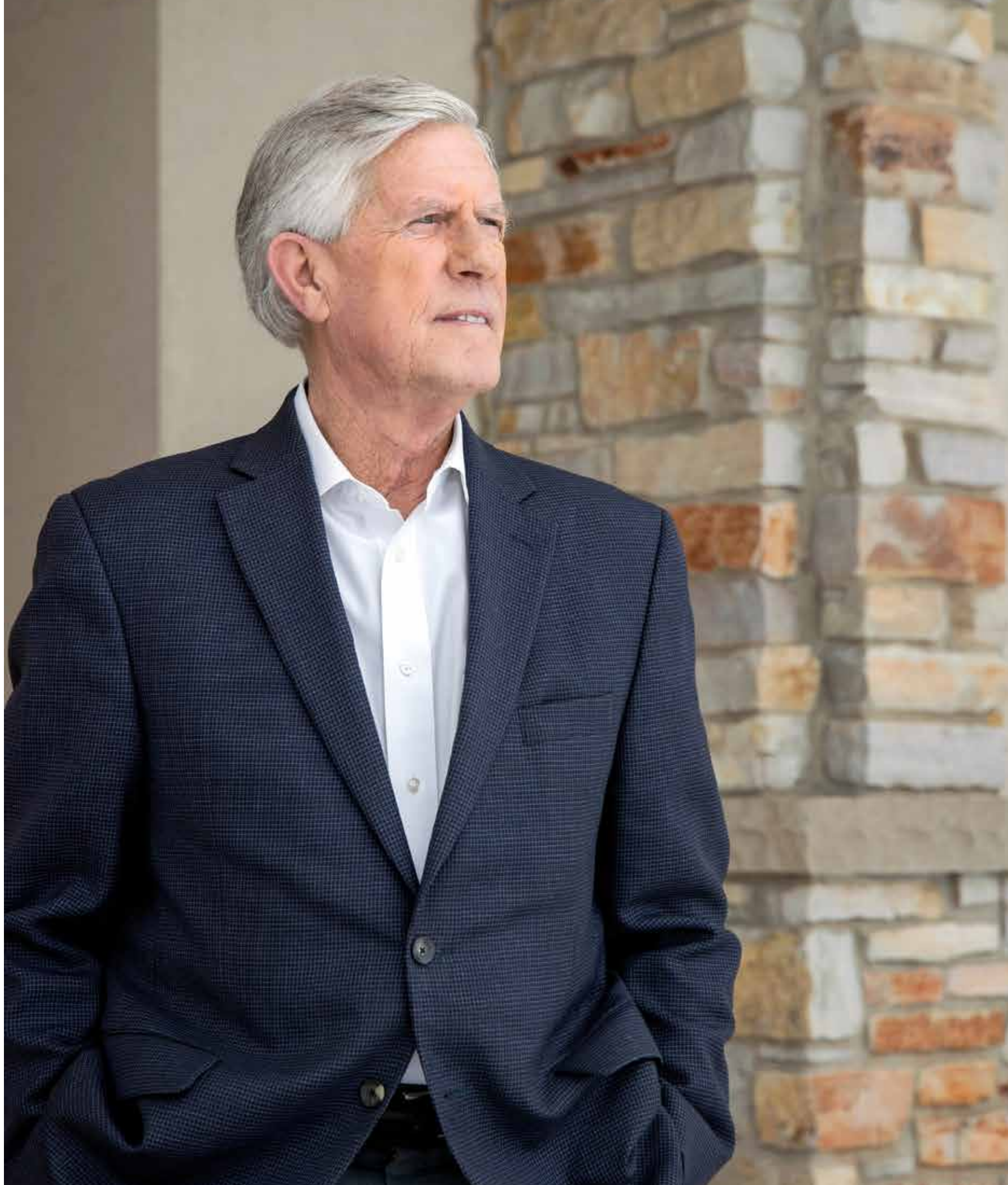
EMBRACING CHANGE:  
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...

## YOU MAY NOT THINK THE LEATHER GOODS INDUSTRY WOULD BE THE IDEAL TRAINING GROUND FOR A FUTURE THRIVING REALTOR®. BUT BILL WHITE, OF BAIRD & WARNER NAPERVILLE, HAS THE STORY TO PROVE YOU WRONG.

Bill was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, but grew up with his four siblings in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. He learned at an early age the importance of teamwork, honesty, a robust work ethic, and that practice makes perfect. Bill graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a degree in finance, intent on following in his investment banker father's footsteps. But an unexpected sales opportunity came along.



Bill's uncle was in the Peace Corps and joined two others to found a leather goods and fashion business in South America. The company's leather goods were manufactured there and then imported to the United States and sold to stores across the nation. After graduation, Bill joined the business, traveling across the United States selling the goods and managing a busy sales force.

Eight years later, the constant but successful sales trips began to wear him down. Eager to be closer to his wife and three young children, Bill chose to move into real estate.

"Working part-time that first year, I was fortunate enough to participate in nineteen home sales," says Bill of his fast-paced entry into his new career. "I learned so much, and it set me up for success going forward."

"My first managing broker, Jill Steward, gave me my starting chance," Bill adds. "Ed Hall, my second managing broker, encouraged me to just keep doing what I was doing. I owe them both so much credit for my achievements."

Over his thirty-nine years of being a REALTOR®, Bill has worked with First United, RE/MAX Affiliates, RE/MAX of Naperville, and now Baird & Warner. During that time, he's been named in the RE/MAX Hall of Fame and has received the Founders Award from Baird & Warner.

When asked about the keys to his success, Bill replied, "I've learned to embrace change as the business has evolved; my wife and business partner, Mary (who has been my rock for almost fifty years), has been instrumental in connecting me with marketing technology and social media, which she does on a daily basis."

"The ability to pivot quickly is key—driving resources into the categories that are working best for our listings in terms of exposure," he notes.

For Bill, the most rewarding part of working in real estate is working again with past clients and their families. "We are even working with the grandchildren of some of our first clients or even a third generation!" he says.

Along with the success of their business, Bill and Mary also make it a goal to support local organizations that positively impact the lives of those who live in the community. "Mary and I have had the privilege of supporting 360 Youth Services, which is an organization that helps youth get back on the right path," says Bill. "We silently support a number of other great causes, and are sponsors of the Cress Creek Country Club swim team as well as the Cress Creek Commons Bath & Racquet Club."

...



When not managing his business, Bill enjoys spending time with his children and grandchildren. Increasingly, the family's shared passion for real estate is a topic of conversation. Bill and Mary's son, Bill White Jr., is a managing broker, and their two daughters, both educators, are now in the process of getting their real estate licenses. For relaxation, Bill enjoys playing golf and, when he can, spending time at the beach in Ft. Lauderdale. The family's beloved Goldendoodle, Cleo, sometimes gets to vacation with them too.

As Bill looks forward to the future, he thinks about all the families and individuals who have referred business to him over the past year.

"I am most excited that our referral business continues to grow, [and did so] even through such a difficult year for the world," says Bill. "My goal continues to be to strive to give my best to my clients. A daily goal," he quips, "is to wake up each day on the 'right side of the sod' and hit the ground running!"



Bill and his wife, Mary.



Bill with his family.



Bill tailgating at Notre Dame game.



**“THE ABILITY TO PIVOT QUICKLY IS KEY—DRIVING RESOURCES INTO THE CATEGORIES THAT ARE WORKING BEST FOR OUR LISTINGS IN TERMS OF EXPOSURE.”**



# KEVIN P. CAMDEN

Camden Law Office, LLC



►► partner spotlight  
By Lauren Young  
Photos by Katherin Frankovic

## COOKING UP DEALS

**“I wanted to do something different for my clients,” says Kevin P. Camden of Camden Law Office, LLC, in Willowbrook. “My office only makes money if a real estate transaction deal closes. This underscores the focus and work we put into the negotiation and transitions at closing. I want our clients to find real value in the results we bring.”**

Kevin was born and raised on the southwest side of Chicago near Midway Airport. He grew up in a family of four; Kevin has one sister. His father was a Chicago police officer and his mother worked at the mortgage company, Freddie Mac. Both his parents put in long days and worked tirelessly at their professions. His father even had a second job doing construction and remodeling bathrooms and kitchens.

“I learned the value of hard work from my parents,” says Kevin. “It’s something I think about every day and is part of the commitment I make to my clients.”

Kevin attended Northern Illinois University, majored in economics, graduated with honors, and then attended the John Marshall Law School in Chicago.

“There is no real ‘unicorn’ story as to why I gravitated toward real estate law,” says Kevin. “I wasn’t fond of the hard sciences,

but, having a passion for history, I enjoyed researching and learning about the founding of the nation.”

Early in his career, Kevin practiced law at a small firm downstate where he was able to gain experience in a little bit of everything, including real estate. Though he ultimately went on to practice labor and employment law, he maintained a small residential real estate practice. It was work he found he really enjoyed.

“Since the beginning of my career I’ve had a hand in real estate, in the sense that I’d help out with transactions for family and friends,” says Kevin. “Then I had the opportunity in 2007 to go out on my own. While I was establishing my own practice, I worked part-time as a property manager/developer’s general counsel.”

When the economy rebounded in 2017, Kevin ramped up his private practice, focusing on developing his brand and reputation in real estate. He’s been in the industry now for over thirteen years and he is proud of how his business has grown.

“A good real estate lawyer looks out for the important things and helps their clients move forward to the goal of that closed transaction,” he says. “I’ve tried to not lose sight of that shared goal and it has treated me well.”

...





Kevin and his wife, Shelly.

••• When he's not working, you'll likely find Kevin outdoors: he's an amateur nature photographer. He also loves grilling, smoking meats, and sharing a feast with his family—his wife, Shelly, and their three children, Liam, Makena, and Claire—and friends. If you find yourself lucky enough to be invited to one of his cookouts, you might be treated to one of his competition-quality, smoked beef briskets.

Kevin also makes it a goal to give back to organizations that support the community, including the Roman Catholic Diocese of Joliet, Feed My Starving Children, Lurie Children's Hospital, and the Alpha Kappa Lambda Education Foundation.

"I've been giving to these organizations for a couple decades now. They are near to my heart because of the opportunities [they provide] to really get involved," says Kevin. "In addition to what financial support they can offer, I appreciate how they focus on providing food, education, and character development. I want to continue their missions for years to come." •••

“

A good real estate lawyer looks out for the important things and helps their clients move forward to the goal of that closed transaction...I've tried to not lose sight of that shared goal and it has treated me well.”



Kevin with his family.





As Kevin looks forward, he reflects on the strength of all those who have been contributing and working to make real estate successful in the Chicagoland area, both in the past twelve months and beyond.

“I am excited that the Chicagoland area real estate market is strong,” he says. “I believe it will stay that way for the calendar year. I think the pandemic has provided an opportunity for growth in the further western suburbs too.” He explains, “I see people expanding to buy larger homes and more land, moving further away from the city. If homeowners no longer need to be in the Loop every day, the commute will no longer be a daily issue. [As such] I believe western DuPage, Kendall, and Kane counties are going to see expansive growth.” Kevin is looking forward to how that growth will allow him to better serve his clients and make a difference in their transactions.



Kevin's competition-quality, smoked beef briskets from a cookout.



When Kevin is not working, he enjoys the outdoors where he can be an amateur nature photographer. Here is a photo that Kevin recently captured.

To reach Kevin and find out more about the services at Camden Law Office, LLC, you can email him at [kevin@camdenlawoffice.com](mailto:kevin@camdenlawoffice.com) or call 630-568-6656.

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▶▶ REALTOR® feature  
By Lauren Young  
Photos by Scarlet Cardinal Studios, Inc.

# Samantha Bauman

## DEEP ROOTS: TREASURING LOVE, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY

“Before becoming a REALTOR®, I was in hospitality for ten years where I managed catering and event planning for hotels and restaurants,” says Samantha Baumen of Berkshire

Hathaway HomeServices (BHHS) in Wheaton. “It’s where my passion for customer service took off.”

Samantha is a sixth-generation resident of Wheaton, and her entire family—including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins—still lives there. Her father, John, had a career in sales and hospitality and passed on skills in relationship building, networking, communication, and negotiation to his kids.

Her mother, Sue, worked in real estate for almost thirty years in the very office where Samantha now works. In fact, when she was growing up, Samantha often helped out in the office on weekends, which gave her a unique and early insight into the inner-workings of real estate.

...



Samantha with her husband, Mike, and their two children, Lily and Will



• • •

After spending time at Eastern Illinois University where she studied hospitality management, she started her career at Phil Stefani Restaurants, then branched out into the hotel industry. She worked as a wedding catering manager at the Westin Hotel in Itasca, Illinois, before moving on to become the director of catering and marketing at the Bon Appétit at Wheaton College.

But with a newborn at home, Samantha began to think about making a career change. She was nervous to approach her supervisor at Bon Appétit, Raul Delagdo, with her decision, but he encouraged and supported her and helped her balance the increased workload. She earned her real estate license while working full-time, eventually doing both jobs.

“In that first year, I was very lucky to already know my office of REALTORS®,” says Samantha. “Knowing the managing broker since I was in sixth grade made the process not as overwhelming. The best thing that happened for me was having a support system within an office—one that wasn’t just co-workers, but family.”

Eventually, her old supervisor, Raul, also saw the benefits of the REALTOR® life and has since joined Samantha at the Wheaton Berkshire Hathaway office as an agent, where she has also recruited another past hospitality-teammate-turned-REALTOR®, Kate Samuelson.

“I’m loving being able to give support back to them and help them be successful,” she says.



Since she started, Samantha has received recognition for her many achievements. She has been named a top producer by *Chicago* magazine and one of Homesnap’s top 15 percent of agents nationwide. She has received BHHS’s 2020 Chairman’s Circle Award, 2019 President’s Circle Award, 2018 Honor Society Award, and in 2017, she won their Rising Star Award.

“For me, the most rewarding part of my job is working with first-time homebuyers,” says Samantha. “I have helped several of the brides from previous weddings I planned. I love being able to help them learn about the home buying process, and put them at ease while finding their dream home. This is an experience they will always remember,” she notes. “I want to make sure that it’s one of the best memories they’ll ever have.”

When Samantha is not managing her business, she and her husband, Mike, love spending time with their

six-year-old daughter, Lily, and two-year-old son, Will. The children even sometimes lend their REALTOR® mom a helping hand.

“My kids have gotten used to mommy being a REALTOR®,” Samantha says. “They have joined me at open houses and home inspections, and even deliver client gifts. I’m still trying to convince my daughter to become a REALTOR® too. Her favorite thing to say to me is, ‘Mom, sell more houses!’”

Samantha and Mike share a love for old houses. They have chased two Victorian houses—they rent one and are in the process of restoring the other. “If he could,” Samantha laughs, “Mike would save every old house in Wheaton because he hates to see them torn down.” The family also recently purchased a vacation home on Lake Como in Lake Geneva, which has turned into “our COVID getaway.”

• • •





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Samantha actively gives back to her beloved Wheaton through community organizations. She is a member of the DuPage County Historical Museum and the Wheaton Chamber of Commerce. When the pandemic hit in March 2020, Samantha organized the Meal for Heroes campaign to provide meals for the frontline workers at Northwestern Central DuPage Hospital. She was able to donate over 325 meals and raise over \$6,400, and for her work, she was nominated for the 2020 Charitable Service Award given by *Chicago Agent Magazine*.

“Being in the hospitality industry for so long, I learned the importance of relationships, patience, and hard work,” says Samantha. “I am honored to have helped so many amazing families through my work and through giving back.”

“Buying or selling a home is one of the most important milestones in life,” she states. “Being able to guide people through that and ensure that they have a great experience with positive results is something truly amazing.”

“The most rewarding part of my job is working with first-time homebuyers...I want to make sure that it’s one of the best memories they’ll ever have.”

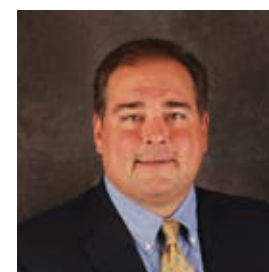
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# COVID-19

## Hasn't Prevented Us From CONNECTING!



**DUPAGE RP REAL PRODUCERS.**

*Women's History Month*

**Jam Session #1** **f LIVE**

An organic conversation about DuPage real estate

Alice Chin, Dawn McKenna, Eva Burns, Gail Niermeyer, Kim Dalaskey, Kelly Bennett, Jina Boerman, Carol Fisher

**\*HOSTED BY ANDY BURTON**

DuPage Real Producers invites you to tune in via Facebook Live

**Thursday March 4th 10:15 am CST**

\*The feed will stream live from Andy Burton's Facebook page (technology permitting).

#DuPageRealProducers

### virtual events

#### *Top REALTORS® and Preferred Partners Engaging Virtually*

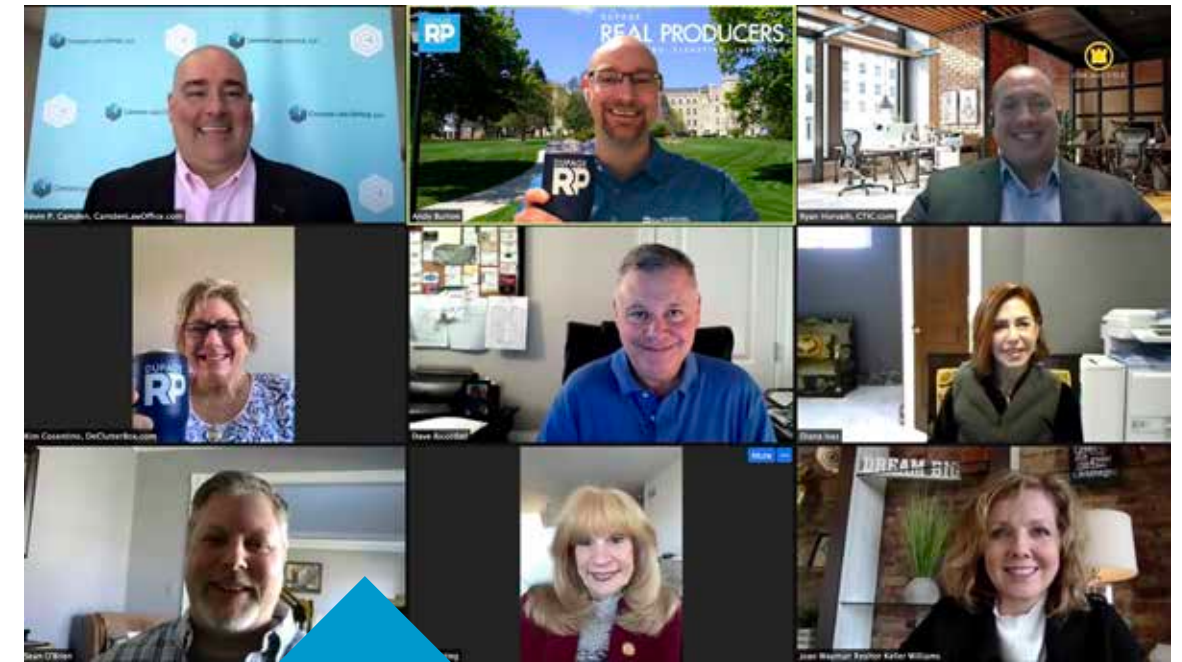
As an organization, we are fully aware of the need to continue to connect, inspire, elevate, and add value to both our REALTORS® and Preferred Partners during a time when we are unable to host in-person events. In a response to this need, we have begun hosting jam sessions in the DuPage Real Producers community.

Jam sessions are small group Zoom calls designed to get a handful of experts on a call (both REALTORS® and Preferred Partners) to discuss what they are seeing in their industry and to help add value to the individuals who are able to attend. This is a great way to meet people on a more personal level and to get to know what's happening in different industries in the real estate community.

Jam sessions have been filled with creative ways to encourage our DuPage Real Producers community to continue to engage and serve as a way to build relationships. Plus, it has been great seeing even more engagement as we have recently been hosting sessions on Facebook Live!

We are excited to share a handful of screenshots from some of our recent virtual jam sessions.

A huge thank you to all our amazing REALTORS® and Preferred Partners for your willingness to join together as a community and maintain our human connection!



**DUPAGE RP REAL PRODUCERS.**

*Women's History Month*

**Jam Session #2** **f LIVE**

An organic conversation about DuPage real estate

Dave Riccardi, Diana Ives, Joan Wayman, Sean O'Brien, Lisa Keating, Kevin Camden, Kim Cosentino, Ryan Hrvath

**HOSTED BY ANDY BURTON**

DuPage Real Producers invites you to tune in via Facebook Live

**Thursday March 11th 9:15 am CST**

\*The feed will stream live from Andy Burton's Facebook page (technology permitting).

#DuPageRealProducers

**DUPAGE RP REAL PRODUCERS.**

*Women's History Month*

**Jam Session #3** **f LIVE**

An organic conversation about DuPage real estate

Betta Kolpek, Sara Kolpek, Elizabeth Kenna Burke, Sheena Baker, Samantha Bauman, Tracie Rasmussen, Liane Luckett, Margaret Gehr

**\*HOSTED BY ANDY BURTON**

DuPage Real Producers invites you to tune in via Facebook Live

**Thursday March 18th 9:15 am CST**

\*The feed will stream live from Andy Burton's Facebook page (technology permitting).

#DuPageRealProducers



We have received great feedback about these events so we are continuing to schedule them for the summer! Want to join one? Let us know by emailing us at [andy.burton@realproducersmag.com](mailto:andy.burton@realproducersmag.com).



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