



UNDER 40

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The Columbus REALTORS® Young Professionals Network recently conferred its 'Top Professionals Under 40' award, formerly known as the 'Top 10 Under 40' award. In addition to rebranding the annual award, the application process was revamped to allow affiliate members the opportunity to apply. And finally, the grading committee now reserves the right to award to as many candidates as they see fit of this honor, with a maximum of 10 winners. This year, six outstanding young professionals were bestowed this prestigious honor.

A special thank you to the Athletic Club of Columbus for allowing the In Contract staff to utilize their ballroom to photograph the award winners. Social distancing and other safety protocols were observed throughout the entire photo shoot.

When you talk with Tina Schreck, you quickly gain an understanding of how she became so successful in real estate. Every sentence from her proves both authentic and informative, with little ceremony or preamble. When asked about her start in the business, Tina explains that her first home experience put her through a whirlwind of emotions. Ultimately, it turned out so satisfying that she wanted that experience for others. Two years later and she obtained her license and from there, she hit the ground running. Tina set about educating herself in as many ways as possible. Informational meetings with everyone from title companies to lenders followed, as well as volunteering with every open house that she could find. After one year of that, she found herself with clients aplenty. The key to this success? “Just being honest and personable! You have to form a genuine connection rather than a sales pitch.”

Tina also found a mentor who would help her along as she continued her career. “Ben Calhoon was always there for me,” she emphasizes. “He taught me that ‘in this business, all you have is your reputation.’ And I’ve never forgotten that.” For Tina, having a reputation as an ethical and moral agent comes before anything else. Her voice grows heavy as she reflects on the situations that have arisen where she could have taken an easy way out or used shortcuts. But by taking the more challenging option in those situations, she preserved her reputation and achieved greater personal satisfaction.

Something else that quickly becomes apparent in conversation with Tina is her passion for helping others. She possesses great enthusiasm for her work with the REALTOR® Care Day Committee. For Tina, working on homes and parks that need that little bit of extra assistance still inspires her. Beyond her work with REALTOR® Care Day, Tina also volunteers with the Hilliard Arts Council. “Being involved in theater in any form is my passion.” Currently, she serves as the assistant director for the

children’s branch of the Hilliard Arts Council. For her, the reward lies in helping the kids express themselves and develop a greater understanding of who they are inside through the roles they play.

Looking towards the future, where does Tina see her business in ten years? “I always set goals for myself. In my first year, my goal was to hit the million dollar club, which I hit in nine months. Then I wanted to start in commercial real estate within five years of joining the business and I did that in three.

In ten years, I want a team of driven, hardworking, agents who are willing to help and support each other.” For her, this team would have to set down roots in Hilliard. “I grew up in Hilliard and I do seventy percent of my sales here.” With a track record like Tina’s, we just might see a Hilliard-based Schreck team well before the decade is over!



TINA SCHRECK



AMY DAVIS IRETON

A resident of Columbus since early childhood, Amy Davis Ireton began her career in event planning and corporate communications. She was inspired to join the real estate industry by the agent who guided her through purchasing her first home. “I wanted to play that role for others in the future,” she says. “Seeing my sister [Katie Davis Spence] succeed and watching her business grow so much that she needed a team also played a big role in making me think about getting into the industry.”

“I decided to obtain my real estate license because I liked the idea of setting goals, working hard to reach them, and being able to help people with one of the biggest decisions they may ever make,” Amy says. Luckily, working with her sister gave Amy a very real picture of what to expect – around the clock work, unexpected challenges, and lots of patience. “You never know how long it will take a person to find the perfect home,” she says. “I never want anyone to feel like they need to settle.”

Amy tries to give her clients a truly plus-one experience and make them feel like they are her sole focus. “I’ve had clients see several other social media posts for closings in the same week as theirs and say, ‘We had no idea you were working with anyone else!’ because of the amount of attention I gave to them,” she says. “I truly love what I do.”

Outside of work, Amy loves spending time with her family and friends. Though sometimes, “work takes priority and we have to reschedule family fun,” Amy says. But when she has the time, Amy enjoys adventures with her husband Andy and 2-year-old son Charlie, traveling and discovering new places and experiences, from restaurants to parks and farmer’s markets.

She has volunteered with several organizations, such as the Butterfly Guild of Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Kitchen Kapers, Magic Makers, LifeTown Columbus, the Special Olympics, and Buddy Ball. “I recognize that growing up, I was able to do many things that others may not be able to do, so I have made a concerted effort to give back to the community I live in and the communities around me,” Amy says. “Also, when you sell a home, you aren’t only selling the home, you are selling the opportunity to belong to a community. I like to be able to offer information about the community and my personal experiences.” Amy is currently serving her second year on the Columbus REALTORS® Scholarship

Committee, and she looks forward to getting more involved in the REALTOR® community in the years to come.

Amy plans to continue giving her clients a personalized, boutique real estate experience as she continues to grow her business. “I want to make sure the clients I am helping today are still some of the people reaching out tomorrow because they had such a positive experience...I never want to lose sight of what built my initial success,” she says. “I also see myself and our team staying involved and helping to make positive impacts in all the communities that we serve.”



ALLISON GAVIN

After 10 years in the retail industry, Allison Gavin decided to make a change and join the real estate world. Three and a half years later, she says, “Honestly, it’s by far one of the best decisions I’ve ever made!”

During Allison’s first six months of being licensed, she took as many training classes as she could, reached out to her sphere of influence, and tried to gain as much experience as possible via open houses, phone duty, and helping other agents. “Once I got the ball rolling,” she says, “I really started to focus on social media and making sure that my sphere knew what I was up to in my real estate career. As of right now, my sales have been 41% referrals and 46% from friends and family. Bringing awareness to my sphere of influence and creating a memorable experience for my past clients is what has brought me the success I’ve had so far.”

“There was a social media class I took that really stressed the idea that people do business with people they know, like and trust. That really resonated with me and since then I have focused a lot of my marketing efforts toward this philosophy,” Allison says. However, she’s still learning some things as she goes along. “Being a people pleaser can be a good thing in this industry, but it also has its downfalls,” Allison says. “I’m still working on getting thicker skin so that I can be more aggressive and not take things personally when certain situations arise.”

Allison has always enjoyed helping others whenever she can, but since getting into real estate, she’s become more involved than ever before. Recently she’s volunteered with Ronald McDonald House, Habitat for Humanity, and a local turkey drive that her father helps organize. “However,” she says, “my new passion is volunteering with Dress for Success! Dress for Success is a non-profit organization that empowers women to achieve their goals through free-of-charge Suiting, Career Center, and Employment Retention programs. My first event was a suiting session where I assisted a woman who was trying to enter the workforce and needed help picking out professional attire and accessories. This was such a rewarding experience, and I was beyond excited to be able to contribute to our Columbus community in such a hands-on way.”

In her free time, Allison is all about new experiences: “I really love trying out different restaurants or shops and traveling to places I’ve never been before, and as I’m sure most of us in the real estate industry are, I’m very much a people person,” she says. “That being said, getting to experience these new things with friends or family makes it so much more enjoyable.”

In the next 10 years, Allison hopes to bring her referrals up to at least 80%. “Creating more events and activities for my clients is also in my 10-year plan,” she says. “I’ve formed some really great relationships with my clients and would love to have more opportunities to see them throughout the year.”

Jill Saunders did not set out with the dream of becoming a business development officer. Originally, she worked as a high school science teacher. Only after she began dating her now-husband, Brent, did Jill find herself drawn to the world of real estate. One week after they got married, Jill officially started working with Brent at PM Title.

From there, the teacher became the student. Jill threw herself into committees and education courses so that she could learn all she could about the industry. After months of intensive training, Jill found a place in the competitive central Ohio market. Today, she pays that education forward by teaching continuing education classes and working one-on-one, tutoring agents on the best use of social media.

Education comes up again when asked about the best advice Jill has ever received. She cites her husband as her best source of advice. “He told me to be myself and stay true to who I am. It is about giving value and educating, and that’s what I focus on.” Though she does run into the occasional challenge, Jill has always overcome these with the help of her team. “I love coming up with new creative marketing strategies. But to always be aiming for the cutting edge, I’ll sometimes get creative blocks and rely on my team to help get me out of them. It’s a struggle, but it is a challenge I also love!”

Jill doesn’t just love a good creative challenge. She also loves dogs. “I am the crazy dog lady! I train, show, and judge dogs.” Her own dogs, Hosley and Clementine, help her market her business and are also certified therapy dogs. “They visit colleges, elementary schools, libraries, and nursing homes,” she explains. “They bring me so much joy and I love sharing them with everyone!”

When about her work as a volunteer in the community, Jill provides a detailed breakdown of the organization she’s most involved in: Project Memories. Jill serves them by helping provide school supplies, Christmas gifts for children, and meals for Thanksgiving dinner. As an organization, Project Memories provided 93 families with meals and gifts in the past year, including presents for 325 children last Christmas. “If I can help strengthen those who need help, I’m all over it,” she says matter-of-factly. “Our community, and world, needs more kindness.”

And in ten years, where does Jill see the community of real estate? For her, the rising technological changes will not prove fundamental changes to how real estate has always functioned. “I think our industry will continue to be a business of relationships. We will be finding new and different ways to make connections.” It seems as though Jill Saunders undoubtedly has all the skills and tools to continue making those connections!



JILL SAUNDERS

Cortnie Horvath's path as a real estate agent began with frustration. When shopping for her first home years ago, Cortnie found herself unsatisfied and annoyed with the entire process. She vowed that this would not happen again in the field of real estate and immediately began pursuing her license. "I wanted to be my own boss," she says. "But primarily, I wanted to educate both buyers and sellers on the process." Over a decade later and Cortnie now finds herself leading the Horvath Group, a team of ten agents who work primarily in central Ohio.

When asked about the famously daunting process of becoming a new REALTOR®, Cortnie quickly and enthusiastically credits her mentors for helping her through those early days. Al Coughlin, Tom Trigg, and Sue Parrish are the names she mentions most frequently. "They taught me how to implement a successful business plan and how to run a successful team." However, Cortnie still remains cognizant of her weaknesses and readily admits that she struggles with delegation. "Letting go of responsibility is the most challenging aspect of leadership for me," she says.

Fortunately for the community, Cortnie doesn't let anyone else take over when it comes to her volunteer work. A host of organizations throughout central Ohio have received her consistent support for several years now. Cortnie has lent her efforts to Fighterfighters for Kids since 2007, donating toys

and helping out wherever needed. Beyond that, she also stays involved with the Mid-Ohio Foodbank and KW Cares. Over the course of our conversation, her motivation for this work becomes apparent. "A single moment of kindness can make the difference in someone's life. Just the act of showing them that there is someone out there willing to help can be vital."

That lesson is one of many Cortnie is passing on to her two teenage children, Scott and Madelyn. Outside of their regular vacations to Florida as a family and a shared love of Disney franchises, Scott and Madelyn also assist Cortnie in various home renovation projects. Apparently, conversations between Madelyn and her mother have already occurred regarding a potential future in real estate!

When asked about Cortnie's own plans and hopes for the future, she confirms that expanding her team comes first. Does that include maybe adding family members? "Of course! I'd love for my children to join the business. They're already so involved from just being around me all the time. In some ways, it wouldn't even be that much of a change!" With a strong foundation already in place and a keen focus on the future, Cortnie Horvath seems destined for even bigger things. If everything goes the way



CORTNIE HORVATH

Cortnie hopes, it seems entirely possible that a similar column for her daughter, Madelyn Horvath, might find itself into the pages of *In Contract* in just a few years!



ANDREW HURSH

For Andrew Hursh, success starts by showing up every day. After leaving his sales job in 2014 and getting his real estate license, Andrew noticed a few other agents taking advantage of the open-ended hours of the business. "If you treat real estate like a regular job, you're always going to be busy," he says as he drives through the snow-covered roads of Columbus. From his first day at Coldwell Banker to his current place at Cutler Real Estate, Andrew has always treated real estate as a full-time job.

His dedication to real estate does have pitfalls, though. When asked about challenges in the industry, Andrew confesses to sometimes getting in his own way. He talks about drafting out ideas on the whiteboard in his office and then realizing that he can only actually enact a few of them. "There are so many things you want to do and finding time to follow through is my biggest struggle." As he considers this issue, he makes sure to shout out The Hursh Group as a team and especially his assistant, Amie Clark. Andrew professes that the team works well together and that they're all true partners in the business.

This focus on teamwork proves a reoccurring theme with Andrew. When asked about his work in the community, he talks about coaching basketball for the flex team at Hilliard Memorial Middle School. Having played basketball himself in college, Andrew relishes the opportunity to take the knowledge he has and pass it on to a new generation of competitors. But just seeing the young men on his team grow up is gratifying enough, he says.

As the conversation continues, Andrew fondly mentions his wife, Jessica, and their two children, Ezra and Kennedy. Ezra, the eldest at five years of age, already loves playing hockey and Andrew describes the active role he takes in encouraging his son's interest in the sport. When Andrew admits that he holds season tickets to the Blue Jackets, it's easy to see where Ezra might get his enthusiasm for hockey! Even though the pandemic has put a stop to their usual attendance, the family still watches the Blue Jackets on television together.

The focus on the future in his personal life is apparent. So where does Andrew aspire to be with his real estate business in ten years? For him, his aspirations lie in becoming one of the top agents of all of central Ohio. He places special emphasis on expanding his existing team so that he can develop successful partnerships with even more agents and help even more people experience the kind of success in real estate that he has. With his business experience and his history of fostering talent outside the industry, all of this seems eminently possible.