

TOP PROFESSIONALS · UNDER 40 ·

The annual 'Top Professionals Under 40' awards, sponsored by the Young Professionals Network, are given to successful real estate professionals under the age of 40 who have demonstrated enthusiasm, innovation, and commitment to raising the bar in real estate. This year the stakes were high – we received nearly 30 applications and ultimately chose 6 REALTORS® and 1 Affiliate as the 2022 recipients of this award.

This year's winners have led fascinating lives, from a veteran/trained pastry chef to a successful REALTOR® working on a 12-step recovery. Their journeys into the world of real estate are proof that the path to success can be difficult, but you can accomplish whatever you put your mind to! Check out their bios on the following pages.

BY: TIFFANI KING | PHOTOGRAPHY BY: SAMUEL BRODY-BOYD & JESSICA CEA



KALEIGH CHATFIELD

Shortly after graduating high school, Kaleigh found herself enlisting in the United States Air Force and heading off to boot camp in San Antonio. She was deployed a total of 4 times within her 8 years and on her last tour in Afghanistan, she met her now-husband, Michael. After buying her first house in German Village, she learned all about renovating a quirky, historic house – which was how she fell in love with real estate and the idea of how you can really transform a space into a home. Shortly after, she and Michael moved to Austin, Texas for work and opened a Crossfit-style gym. After they welcomed their first daughter into the world, they made the decision to move back to Ohio to be closer to her family. Kaleigh reached out to her now-mentor and teammate, Jeff Krider, and they discussed real estate. She says the rest is history! Kaleigh became a licensed real estate agent in 2018 and began learning as much as possible, before the pandemic hit and changed everything as we knew it.

Her love for real estate continues to grow, as she is determined to never out-work herself – one of her largest complaints about her brief stint in corporate America. She says she feels like she has lived several lifetimes in her 35 years, making her incredibly adaptable and relatable to all kinds of people, and makes her job feel like matchmaking. Working with clients of all budgets is something she prides her business in, and considers those to be some of her most memorable transactions. Her passion: “helping others understand the ins and outs of [real estate] while matching them with their ideal space and any contractors they may need along the journey...all in the city that I know like the back of my hand.”

Volunteering and giving back to the community has always been a big part of who Kaleigh is and who she strives to be. When she and her husband Michael owned their gym in Texas, they were heavily involved with the veteran community and specifically the service-connected disabled veteran community. Volunteering efforts have taken a bit of a back seat over the past few years – with the pandemic and their oldest child who has special needs taking up a majority of her energy and attention – but Kaleigh looks forward to getting back into the volunteer life soon.

As for the future of real estate, she hopes that more affordable housing options become available as the market evolves. “There are so many folks who are being negatively impacted by the skyrocketing costs of both homes for purchase and for rent.”

Kaleigh is a veteran, a former collegiate athlete (rugby), a former trained pastry chef, a former bartender and server for years, a bonus parent to her stepdaughter, a mom, a wife, a business partner, and a lover of all things gardening, travel and food related.

Kaleigh and Michael have three kids and live in their forever home with their two kittens and sweet German shepherd, with hopes to one day own chickens and goats – the ultimate dream!





BRADLEY CLARIZIO

Columbus is all Bradley has ever known, as he was born and raised on the westside and currently lives in Grandview. He is married to his wife Spenser and has two daughters – Hudson (2 years) and Hayes (6 months). Their favorite thing to do together is to go to Disney and to participate in as many local activities as possible!

Bradly, much like other real estate professionals, says he was not built to be in corporate America. He remembers sitting at a desk all day and just staring at the clock. It was at that point he realized it was time to start investing in real estate, and quickly envisioned the potential this offered for him. After 9 years, he officially left his office job and decided to go “all in” as an investor and as a REALTOR®. “Real estate is one of the few trades that truly gives back what you put in.”

Bradley’s “secret weapon” to being successful in real estate? It’s his 10+ years as a real estate investor. Having grown his own portfolio, he has the unique knowledge to help others grow theirs. “As an investor, I’ve been fortunate enough to meet hundreds of amazing people that have given me the connectivity to grow my business at a rapid rate.”

The most memorable transaction for Bradley was his final deal of 2021, facing every hurdle imaginable along the way. His buyers had relocated from Texas and were desperate to be in their new home for the holidays. This was the first time Bradley had experienced a major hurdle at all four points before a closing – inspection, remedy, appraisal, and lending. Using his contractor resources and working diligently with the listing agent, he was able to close the deal just in time for the holidays – a huge win!

Bradley thinks real estate will continue to trend towards ‘virtual reality’ with walkthroughs, open houses, etc. all being conducted remotely through the power of digital technology. “While the technology already exists, continued improvement will allow listing agents to be able to provide a truly immersive experience for buyer agents, and their clients, all over the country at a moment’s notice.”

His passion is being able to mentor his fellow REALTORS® and investors in the Columbus area. He says the knowledge he’s gained over the past 10 years can help others in their journey as well. “Real estate in general is not for the faint of heart! Being able to tell my story and encourage others to blaze their own path has been one of the most rewarding things I could ask for.”

PAUL GRAVES

After moving around a lot growing up, Paul found himself back in Columbus and has called it home for nearly 20 years. He has two daughters, ages 2 and 13, and two cats. His time outside of being a REALTOR® consists of hanging out with his girls, praying, and doing his best to live a recovery-focused lifestyle.

Paul found real estate when he realized he was stuck in his family business and saw no way out. He needed a job that could quickly give him good income potential. His therapist gave him an old-school 1970s Scantron test (used to help guide people on a career path) and the results pointed to a REALTOR® as the top recommendation. At first, he did not believe the results, but the more he researched and observed other agents and the market, the more potential he saw within the industry. He saw clients not being served as they should be and properties woefully being prepared for market, and realized there was space for him to grow in real estate.

Paul's most memorable transaction was that of a listing that specifically said "No FHA Offers." He went in with an FHA offer anyway and still came out on top. Paul promised the owner of the property that he would help his client fix the problem areas – "whatever it takes is how I operate." This transaction made him realize he truly can change lives in real estate, and that "if you go all out and have faith, incredible things can happen."

Paul is involved in 12-step recovery meetings and attributes his continued success to God and His guidance, along with

his sobriety. "Every day I ask that God's will be done, not my own. I believe it's by grace that I am here today, blessed with opportunities."

Paul is honest about the career path of a REALTOR®. "This career is not easy... work-life balance is extremely difficult, and I still deal with anxiety and fear just like anyone else. But I keep moving forward in faith and trust," says Paul. "When I first started in this business, arrogance and bluster were my defense against those feelings of fear and inferiority. Today, I embrace humility. Humility, to me, doesn't mean being submissive and small. It means realizing that we are *all* small and in control of so little. If anyone else can do it, so can you. We are all equals, and we all have the opportunity to achieve greatness."

One of Paul's secrets to succeeding in real estate is realizing that it is a direct sales business and to be successful, you must risk rejection as often as possible. "Many times, this will leave you feeling deflated and your ego bruised." But he insists that rejection is a pathway to growth – not pain – and says the more "no's" he gets, the better his family lives.

He hopes in the next 10 years real estate will consist of lower fees for buyers *and* sellers, with less agents overall. Paul says this will take more work with automation, reducing expenses, and embracing technology as well as the big players and iBuyers. "[We've got to learn] to work *with* them, in innovative ways, instead of against them."





TROY MARSH

Troy is originally from northern Ohio, but now lives in central Ohio with his wife and 2 boys, ages 9 and 11, and their Australian Cattle dog. In between waiting tables in college, he obtained his real estate license for an opportunity to continue his customer service focus. Troy found himself continuing that focus for a multitude of reasons, one being that real estate provides him an opportunity that exists in very few other fields – the ability to become licensed for a relatively low cost and earn money based on effort given. Other reasons include his strong passion for building wealth; his love of teaching; and his willingness to help others achieve similar goals in their own lives. When asked ‘Why Columbus?’ Troy says it’s easy. “It’s a growing city with tons to do and I’ve built my business on repeat and referral business, and that’s hard to do in a city that you don’t have any past clients in!”

Hard work and stubbornness have gotten him to where he is today. He says the key to business success is often being stubborn and unwilling to quit, until success is reached. His goal is to always be better tomorrow than he was today and says, “as long as you have the philosophy and courage to never give up, it is more difficult to fail than to succeed.”

Troy’s most memorable transaction was difficult to pick because so many of them have undoubtedly changed his clients’ lives. However, the one that stands out to him the most is a \$65,000 property he sold a few years ago. The client did not have a job, but had a brother that was willing to purchase a home for him – a transaction Troy says most agents would have blown off. The client was beyond appreciative of his willingness to help and grateful for the attention Troy gave him in finding a home.

Troy’s passion for helping others does not stop with real estate. He has a passion for working with others who are dedicated to what they do. He is heavily involved with charities at his church – whether it’s leading people off the street and into recovery (COMO), leading people to a better relationship with God (Polaris Church), or helping high-functioning, developmentally disabled adults find a way to grow in the community past their school years (Beyond Communities). All these organizations have truly been life changing for Troy and they so often end up changing his own life in the process, just by being a part of it.

The future of real estate for Troy looks different, as it does for many others agents. He can’t imagine that technology *won’t* have a large impact over the next 10 years, but believes relationships will remain a vital component of the industry. “I think value through relationships will be the way that the best agents will continue to succeed. I think it will get more difficult to be transactional and not bring any sort of personalized service/experience,” says Troy. “I think real estate will become even more bundled into two camps – lowest cost combined with low service, and high value/experience with a larger cost. I think tech will cause this division in all aspects of life at a greater rate than we have seen due simply to the availability of information and data.”

SUSIE PATTISON

Susie has lived in Ohio her entire life, which has allowed her to build in-depth knowledge of the central Ohio communities and all that the area has to offer. Susie lives in Upper Arlington with her husband George, and their twin daughters, Kennedy and Layne. They enjoy traveling as often as possible, visiting her husband's family in Kansas City, watching their girls participate in activities, and spending as much time as they can outside.

After college, Susie joined the Finance team at Abercrombie & Fitch where her responsibilities were centered on budgets and fixed assets of the company's home office capital projects and new store construction. She worked closely with the real estate, store design and construction departments.

She thrives on meeting new people and connecting others that could have a positive impact on one another. It was during her prior careers that she learned she is not meant for a desk job. "My genuine desire to help others and my authentic care for those I interact with motivates me to work hard each and every day. Becoming a REALTOR® felt like the perfect career choice when I was looking for my next challenge."

Susie holds herself to the highest of standards in order to positively represent the REALTOR® community. She strives to continuously improve herself through continuing education and learning from mentors within the industry. She also cares deeply about the community in which she lives and tries to give back in a variety of ways. Susie always places her clients before the commission, with the hope of creating long-lasting relationships. "Not only do I feel it is the smartest way to build a customer-facing business, but it is also the most fun way! I love being able to turn clients into friends during the home buying process," says Susie. "A relationship-based business is undoubtedly a longer-term strategy than a transaction-based strategy, but I lead with what fits my lifestyle, and know it will benefit my business in the long run."



Her most memorable transactions are the ones that consist of going the extra mile for her clients to find their perfect home. Still to this day, she has clients continue to thank her for the hard-work and dedication she provided.

Susie's parents taught her the importance of volunteering at a young age, and she hopes to model those same important lessons to her daughters. "Not only does volunteering help others, but it also provides unique experiences and exposure to situations that my family may not encounter regularly, which can be a great way to learn about the world around us." She also cares deeply about the community in which she lives and tries to give back whenever possible. Her involvement with many organizations – Pelotonia, the Upper Arlington Civic Association, being a Certified Tourism Ambassador, and being a Spanish Teachers Aide for a local elementary school – is fueled by her long-standing passion to help others.

"There is no question that technology will continue to play a larger role in the way consumers search for homes or attempt to sell homes. Data is readily available and tools help equip consumers with the starting point for a sale or purchase," says Susie. "What I do *not* think will change is the benefit that REALTORS® can provide to the transactions. The average consumer does not have the experience to navigate multiple-offer situations, work through challenging remedy requests, or understand how to best prepare their home, among many other skills." Susie maintains that the human touch is essential to making transactions smooth from start to finish.

ANDREW ROBERTS



After growing up in rural Southern Ohio, Andrew found himself graduating from Miami University of Ohio with a degree in Political Science. He moved to North Carolina for a few years and eventually made his way back to Ohio in 2016, and has called Columbus home ever since. He lives here with his wife, Hannah, and their six-year-old, Emma Kate. They are avid travelers, hiking and camping enthusiasts, and are die-hard Blue Jackets fans!

Literally and figuratively, Andrew grew up in credit unions. His mother is the CEO of a very small credit union near their hometown, so he grew up with the stories of the amazing things they do for their members. After spending some time in business development for Wright-Patt, Andrew realized he wanted to work more directly with the individual consumer. The switch to mortgages put him on the cutting edge of the superior products and services offered by credit unions, helping people with the biggest purchase they will ever make.

As for memorable transactions, Andrew admits those happen a few times a year for him. "Every transaction is unique, but there are some that really bring us back to why we chose real estate." One of his earliest transactions was a \$37,650 purchase that included down payment assistance and an FHA loan. The home needed repairs, and the seller was a faceless business with the bottom line in mind. "I was compelled to fight so hard for this buyer because he was an extremely hard worker, this was a house he could afford, and he had plans to make it a home." The home made it to the closing table after calling in a favor with a contractor to do a next-day job, for less than what they should have charged, and an extension the seller did not want to give,

and plenty of underwriting hurdles. "Best part? My client still lives there, and the house is probably worth double what he paid for it!"

Andrew's secret to being successful and being named a Top Professional is that "success and recognition has a fairly simple formula: hard work, a positive outlook, and a genuine spirit." He says doing something you love helps a lot too, and that he is very lucky to have met some wonderful people in the real estate community who have put their trust in him and brought him to where he is today.

Andrew takes pride in being involved and says volunteering is an opportunity to give back to the community that has given so much to him. He volunteers his time to Columbus REALTORS® by serving on multiple committees, including CORPAC Fundraising and REALTOR® Care Day. "Those activities give me the opportunity to protect and advocate for our industry while also working to strengthen the neighborhoods of our city."

He is hoping the industry continues to build more over the next 10 years and for housing to become more affordable. "Real estate will undoubtedly look different in 2032 than it does today. Technology will continue to advance, FinTech's with weird names will threaten us with obsolescence, and we will continue to adapt," says Andrew. "That being said, I truly believe our business is about people first. The core of what we do: shaking hands, building trust, providing advice and support, solving problems creatively, and celebrating at the finish line can't be done by machine alone. Whatever comes, that core will remain unchanged."

IAN THICKSTUN



Ian has always been a Columbus local, having graduated high school from Upper Arlington and then attended The Ohio State University. Some years later, he got married in Savannah, Georgia and encourages others to visit this great place that means so much to him. He now has a wonderful son who just turned one in February and a dachshund named Hux who he says is incredibly jealous of the new baby. Living in beautiful Olde Towne East, near Franklin Park, has allowed his family to enjoy what their neighborhood has to offer and has them excited for the future.

Ian says real estate found him. It started out as a hobby, and then it turned into his true passion – helping people through challenging situations and making their dreams a reality. He also found he has a strong desire for the industry. Even with all the ups and downs and challenges real estate brings daily, he still loves it, over and over again.

“My secret to success is finding what makes you tick and brings you joy. Working hard for the things you love is the key to never working a day in your life!” He says being diligent, honest, and keeping your word are very important characteristics in the world of real estate. “I am honored to be part of the special club of Top Professionals.”

As most agents know, giving back is very important in any industry, and volunteering at Columbus and Ohio REALTORS® has given Ian the ability to help guide him and have a seat at the table for changes that have already been seen, and for changes in the future. He has experienced this impact in his everyday life and in the growth of his business. Ian has been involved with the Columbus REALTORS® Grievance Committee, CORPAC, Ohio RPAC, REALTOR® Party, Ohio REALTORS® DEI Committee, as well as the Columbus and Ohio REALTORS® YPN.

Ian’s most meaningful transaction happened when he was working with a client who grew up underprivileged. The client worked very hard to purchase a home, and now has provided a consistent, safe place for their family. “REALTORS® can truly change lives in major ways” and this is what keeps Ian and many other agents going.

“Real Estate is changing quickly. I see growth,” says Ian. “I see more diversity in real estate as our population and city demographics change.” He also sees the changes in the Columbus market, not just in population, but in the heights of buildings, job growth, housing prices, zoning and building changes, mass transit adjustments, more rentals, small homes, large homes, and in the culture of the Columbus area. “Everything we touch in our daily lives plays a role in real estate. How we invest as a community directly impacts where people live and *how* they live in our amazing city.”