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*Laurel*  
McGarel

JULY 2023

By **Zachary Cohen**  
Photos by **New Frame Photography**

## *Thriving in the Florida Sun*



**Laurel McGarel's real estate career began in Cleveland, Ohio, in the early 2000s. She graduated from college in 2002 amid the refinance boom and jumped on board with a friend's mortgage company to lend a helping hand. Laurel soon rose to become the company's CFO, got her real estate license, and led one of the fastest-growing real estate companies in northeast Ohio.**

"We went from a mom-and-pop shop to five real estate offices with 250 agents, three mortgage companies, and two title companies," Laurel explains. "And I'm managing this right out of college. There was no such thing as nine-to-five working. We all worked around the clock. It was career boot camp. Everyone was all hands on deck all the time. It was wild, in the best way, of learning every step of how to get from the idea of buying and selling to close."

Over the following years, Laurel's career continued to progress. She became an operations manager for a billion-dollar international commercial real estate portfolio, got her CPA license, and later became the CFO of an aerospace repair and overhaul station company. She moved to Chicago after meeting her husband, Jack, where she took over the books for his HVAC company.

Laurel was thriving professionally but had slowly drifted away from the real estate space. Through the years, however, real estate remained in the back of her mind. She wondered when she might return to the business that had kicked off her professional journey.

### **Heading South**

Laurel and Jack began vacationing in Naples, eventually purchasing a home in the area. Laurel reignited her real estate career in Florida,

getting her license and selling real estate part-time. She flew back and forth from Chicago for two years to build her business.

When COVID struck in 2020, Laurel and Jack determined the time was right to make Naples their permanent home.

"COVID hit, and we were trapped at home in Chicago. I said, 'I'm not living like this.' We already had a house here, so we moved down. We wanted some space in the sunshine," Laurel explains.

Laurel immediately made real estate her full-time work, and her business took off quickly.

"I never stopped loving real estate," she beams. "I've always had real estate in my life, and Naples had such a different viewpoint than I was used



to. Real estate in the midwest suburbs was good but typical. Naples offered something different, a completely different perspective. I never know what someone will be asking me for. It is such a variety that I'm never shocked. I love going on a treasure hunt with people to find them the peace and happiness they are looking for."

#### Thriving in the Florida Sun

Three years later, Laurel couldn't be happier with her move to Florida and her transition back into selling real estate full-time. She's able to leverage her experience in mortgage lending, title, and accounting to the benefit of her clients.

"It has exploded and grown much quicker than I ever anticipated. I have people from coast to coast that I work with, and I am truly busy seven days a week. My calendar is always full

with clients," she says. "The good news is, I love what I'm doing."

As a solo agent with MVP Realty, Laurel closed nine transactions for \$16.8 million in 2022, putting her in the company's top 1 percent of REALTORS® for the second year in a row. She was recently recognized as a 2022 Top Producer (Titanium) by the Women's Council of REALTORS® – Naples on the Gulf.

"I'm thrilled with where I am at. I'm blessed and grateful," Laurel continues. "This year, I am already on track to blow out of the water what I did last year. I'm not trying to hit any magical numbers, just make sure this year, I maintain the highest quality of service to my clientele while bringing in a little more of a focus on my health and work-life balance."

So what has been the secret to Laurel's success?

She starts by sticking to the basics.

"It starts with answering your phone. It amazes me that people won't answer their phone if they're at dinner with family or at a soccer game. The benchmark for answering your calls is huge. So step one is to stick to the fundamentals."

After that, Laurel encourages agents to master the art of relationship building and follow-up. She encourages others to use social media daily.

"The other part is to lead with kindness. Be the one bringing positivity in all conversations. Even when things come up or go wrong, how you handled it matters and will be remembered," she adds. "Lastly, it's a lot of hard work. Real estate is not easy, and it's not for everybody. I thrive on it, but you have to be in the trenches. If you want to make it, you have to get dirty... Never let anyone outwork you."





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*I’m  
thrilled  
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at. I’m  
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