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Regan Grabill

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BETTING ON THE LEAP

BY CHRIS MENEZES • PHOTOS BY LOGAN BOWES

Real estate was always part of Regan Grabill's world. Her grandfather started Graber Realty in 1968 and later built homes in the Florida Keys and the mountains of North Carolina; her father owns Grabill Painting and Drywall; and her mother managed rental properties. As a kid, Regan colored old blueprints, toured job sites, and talked about what her own house might look like someday.

"I have been surrounded by real estate my entire life and have always loved the industry," she says.

But loving something and choosing it are two different things.

Regan, who was born and raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana, was heavily involved with sports growing up: swim team, tennis, dance, gymnastics, then competitive All-Star cheerleading through high school—her team was ranked thirteenth in the world. Her parents expected strong grades and made her work from the time she was fourteen, too. Discipline was normal. Being stretched was normal.

Her first real leap came when it was time for college. While most of her classmates were headed to Indiana University or Purdue, she chose Miami University in Ohio. "I wanted something different. A fresh start," Regan says. It was also the first time she intentionally walked away from what was comfortable. She double-majored in entrepreneurship and interactive media studies, volunteered weekly with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, joined Alpha Chi Omega, and stepped into leadership roles.

After graduation, she entered the corporate world working first with Terraboost Media in Indianapolis. Then came another leap when she ended her long-term relationship—a decision that created strain and distance in many of her relationships, both friends and family, at the time. She moved to Chicago alone. When COVID hit, it was isolating, but it also gave her space to heal and move forward with new energy.

Plus, her new job in corporate innovation at Pampered Chef turned out to be a great one. Her role focused on identifying opportunities, developing solutions, testing them, and scaling them with structure and strategy. She presented at national conferences, met Warren Buffett and Charlie Munger at the Berkshire Hathaway annual shareholders meeting, and even filmed a cooking segment with nutritionist Joy Bauer.

During that time, her interest in real estate resurfaced in a big way—she even admits she became "a bit of a Zillow creep"—and decided to get her license while still working full-time. She passed her exams in May 2022 and joined Second City Agents that June. She had no plans to quit her corporate job. Real estate would be something she built on the side.



Regan with her fiancé, Chuck.

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At the beginning, her business focused on renters. "When I first started, I didn't really know anyone who was buying a home," she says. Because she didn't grow up in Chicagoland, she had to build her network from the bottom up, and she did so intentionally, putting herself in new rooms weekly, meeting people, and expanding relationships. "Deals weren't falling out of the sky for me," she says. "It was a constant grind to prove myself and fight for every single deal or lead."

Slowly, her business began to compound: Renters came back to buy. Referrals started to land. The full-circle moments kept stacking. By the fall of 2023, the growth was undeniable.

Then when Eli Masud, team leader of Second City Agents, had more business than he could handle and asked her to join him full-time, she took a deep breath and decided to make her biggest leap yet, quitting her job at Pampered Chef in January 2024.

"I was overwhelmed with fear—fear of failing and of not having benefits or a salary," she says. "Looking back, the hesitation feels a little silly."

Since becoming a full-time agent with Second City Agents, Regan's work has naturally expanded.

The team's focus words this year—professionalism, value, and consistency—mirror how she approaches her business. She works most closely with Eli, and their shared corporate backgrounds bring organization and clarity to the day-to-day. "If you ever do a deal with Eli, you are doing a deal with me too," she says.

Outside of work, Regan lives in Fulton Market with her fiancé, Chuck Dickstein, and their two cats, Gus and Lani. The couple begins their days with a coffee together and ends them with long walks through the neighborhood. Regan also enjoys cooking, working out, trying new restaurants, and traveling. She says her faith remains an important part of her life and shapes how she approaches her relationships and work.

To Regan, success is happiness, satisfaction, service, and balance. "I already feel successful in those ways," she says. "I am excited to grow in all even more."

Seeing that growth and success have followed every time Regan has chosen uncertainty over comfort, the possibilities look limitless if she keeps betting on the leap.



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