

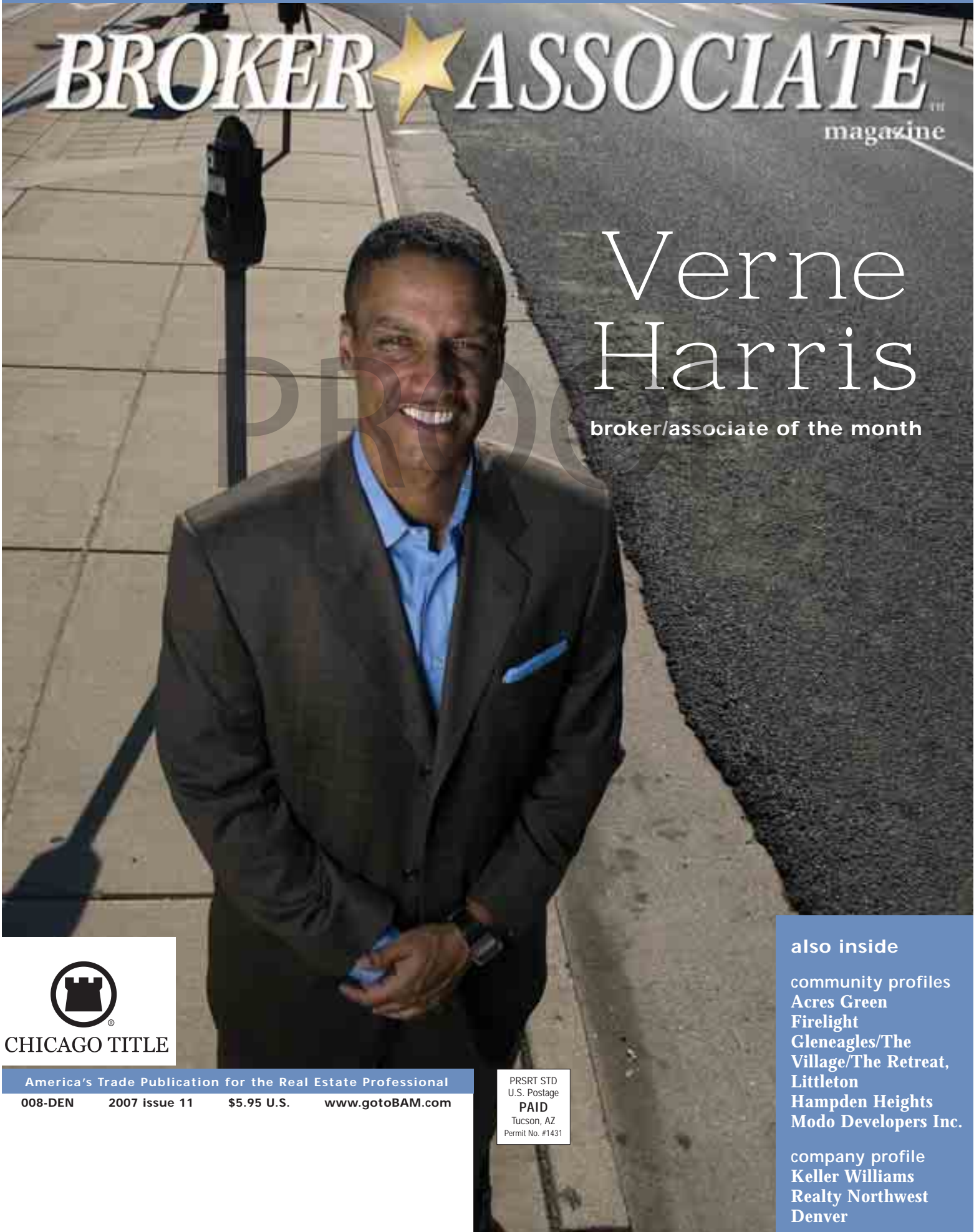
denver edition

# BROKER ASSOCIATE

magazine

## Verne Harris

broker/associate of the month



CHICAGO TITLE

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# Verne Harris

Professional in Every Arena

*by Virginia Nemmers - photography by Concept Photography*



**broker/associate  
of the month**

Back in the heyday of jazz, when Duke and Dizzy were kings, they would often hang out in the Five Points area of Denver. After playing a gig downtown, that is where they came to stay and to jam at places like the Casino Cabaret, which was just across the street from where Public Realty is located today. The agency was

there back then too, run by Al Snyder who recognized the great salesmanship of a young man, McKinley Harris, convinced him to become a real estate agent and eventually sold him the business. That man was Verne Harris' father.

It is obvious how proud Verne is of his father. "He was a great man, that's for sure," Verne says. And it is certain his father would say the same of his son. Verne is a stellar agent who is dedicated to his work.

"I just like doing it, I really do," he says of real estate. It was a business to which he felt drawn early on because of the independence and possibilities it offered. So, after graduating from Arizona State

University with his real estate degree, he returned to Five Points and has continued in his father's footsteps.

In his own words, he "knows what he's doing." And he is a firm believer in learning by doing.

"You can go out and go to a lot of classes and different education and all that," Verne says, "but boy, there's really no lesson like actually having it happen to you."

Verne has honed his expertise with 16 years of doing the work and exudes the confidence that comes from being comfortable with his knowledge. His successes are a testament to that. He is Platinum Level at the Denver Board of REALTORS®. In 2004 he was its number one agent in individual sides, and last year was number three.

Verne has racked up impressive numbers, year after year, by working an incredible number of sales. He works hard and is a master of working his niche market, which right now is REO foreclosures—those are probably close to 95 percent of his current business.



“If you’ve been in the business long enough, you kind of know everything goes in cycles,” Verne explains. “So what I try to do is basically have a steady stream of business coming at me regardless of what’s going on.”

Though he likes the foreclosures and is obviously very savvy with them, it is the first-time home buyers who really put a smile on his face.

“I love when they bring the camera and grandma and grandpa to the closing,” he says. “I absolutely love that. There’s nothing better than that. I love to see their faces light up.”

His joy in the family experience is evident in how he and his brother, Patrick, who is also an agent, run their office. “We don’t consider ourselves a team, we’re just like a big family,” Verne says. Patrick agrees, adding, “We want any agents we hire in this office to succeed, and we take pride in training them to make them succeed.”

Once someone joins the office, they rarely leave. In fact the two secretaries, Theresa Efferson and Maple Ross, have been there 35 and 23 years, respectively.

“ We don’t consider ourselves a team, we’re just like a big family. We want any agents we hire in this office to succeed, and we take pride in training them to make them succeed.”

Family is at the heart of Verne. His family, he says, is first. He and his wife, Carla, have been married 19 years. His mother, Gaylene, lives next door. His daughter, Cayla, is 12 and testing the waters of teen-dom.

But the heart and the strength of the family was his son, Verron, who died in 2003 at the age of 13. Born three months premature—



Verne with his family:  
Wife Carla and daughter Cayla.

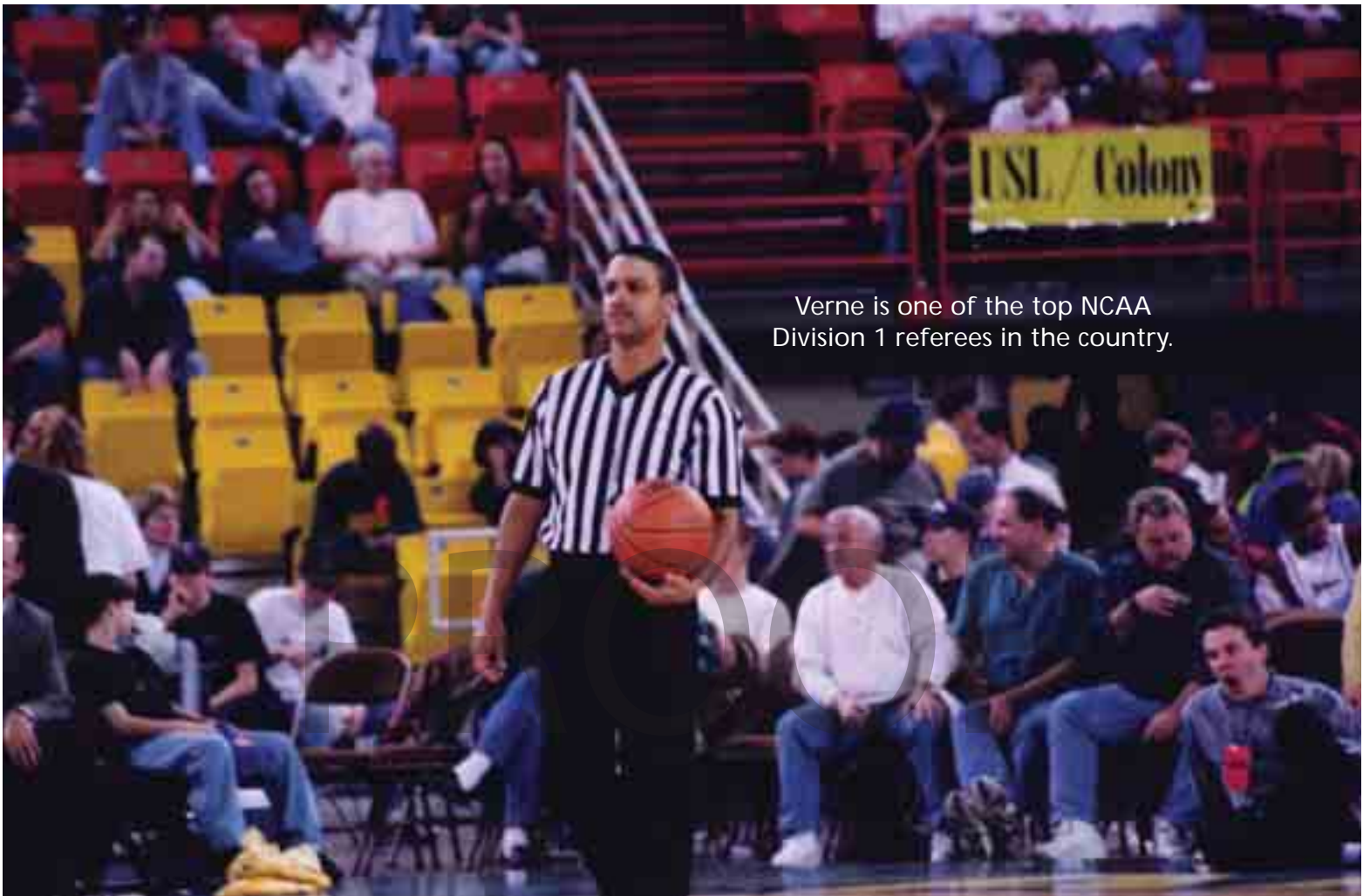
Vern stresses three things: the need for each one to find his or her niche and to get really good at it; the importance of staying balanced; and the absolute necessity to get a handle on finances.

a mere two pounds, four ounces—little Verron beat the odds and lived. Though he was never able to walk or talk, he could smile and interact with others.

“[Verron] has a lot to do with who we are as people,” Verne reflects. “He made us so much stronger. He was our heart. He taught us so much about patience. I think any person around who has difficulty, it is amazing what you can learn from them and then take that into your life.”

The pain of Verron’s passing is still close, and the inspiration drawn from his memories is evident. “I will always care about my son a lot,” Verne says.

In the sometimes crazy world of real estate, Verne exudes a calm that is refreshing. This demeanor also comes in handy on the basketball court where Verne referees during the college season. While at Arizona State, he started refereeing intramural basketball games. Today he is one of the top NCAA Division 1 referees in the country. He enjoys the camaraderie with the other refs and says being around the college kids keeps him young. During the five-month season, he officiates an average of three games a week, traveling from the Mississippi River to as far away as Hawaii. He



Verne is one of the top NCAA Division 1 referees in the country.

*Photo provided by Verne Harris*

has worked three out of the last Final Four tournaments, including the 2004 and 2005 national championship games. Every now and then, Carla joins him, enjoying a mini vacation while her husband works.

“I think there are a lot of parallels within the two industries that most people wouldn’t see, but I really do,” Verne says of real estate and basketball. “It’s always a challenge every game, it’s always something new, you always continue to learn.”

Verne also says dealing with irate million-dollar coaches and getting them to calm down is not that far different from keeping a buyer or seller on track. “I love that,” he says. “I like staying focused. I naturally like the competition.”

Keeping a cool head is just something that seems to come natural to Verne. “He’s always been that way,” Patrick says. “There’s a self-confidence there and I think that relates to how he sells real estate and with his family as well as with basketball.”

With a wealth of real life experience, Verne has much to offer the new agents hired into his office. He stresses three things: the need for each one to find his or her niche and to get really good at it; the

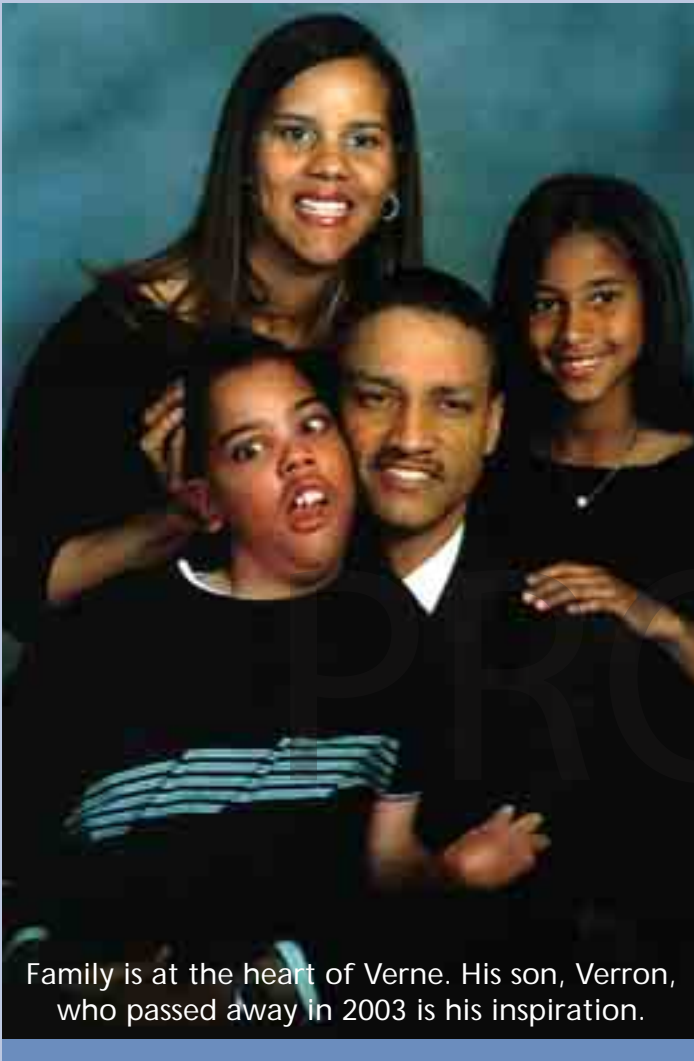
“ Verne is a very good person and a bright businessman first and foremost,”

—Michael Hancock

importance of staying balanced; and the absolute necessity to get a handle on finances.

“My father taught me early on, if you cash the check in your hand, you better save some up for a rainy day because the tax man comes every year,” he says, adding, “I think if you can keep that nest egg, you’re not going to make a bad decision at the end of a deal just so you can get the deal closed and get the fee. The agents I think who are doing better have a better sense of their money.”

“Verne is a very good person and a bright businessman first and foremost,” says Michael Hancock, a Denver City Councilman. He



Family is at the heart of Verne. His son, Verron, who passed away in 2003 is his inspiration.

Verne brings integrity and a strong sense of fairness. And for it, he has gained the respect of everyone from neighbors and agents to clients and players and even those million-dollar coaches.

has known Verne for years and respects his commitment to the community, often seeking his advice on what is going on in the community or what issues are on people's minds.

Being involved just seems to be part of Verne's nature. He was president of the Board of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers for 10 years and now serves as its treasurer. He also has been active in the Urban League, the YMCA Youth Program and was on the board of the Red Shield.

Verne's latest passion? Power yoga. He and Carla started doing it, and now that he no longer has backaches, he is a firm believer. You might even catch him taking off early from his normal 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. schedule to catch a class. He is also an avid golfer, trying to keep a Sunday game with his buddies when he can. And every morning, especially during the off season, Verne gets up around 4 a.m. to work out so he can stay in shape for the basketball season.

He seems to be a man who is in perpetual motion. And indeed, Michael Hancock reflects, "I don't think you'll ever find anyone who works harder than Verne Harris."

In everything he does, Verne brings integrity and a strong sense of fairness. And for it, he has gained the respect of everyone from neighbors and agents to clients and players and even those million-dollar coaches. "I just really, really think that you need to treat people good," he says. "And I kind of like to go by that. I really like to treat people with respect and I want to treat them fairly. That's kind of what I do." ★

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