

CHARLOTTE

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## DANE WARREN:

SERVING CHARLOTTE  
IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

Photo by Jon Berkon



# DANE WARREN

## SERVING CHARLOTTE IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

Charlotte native and U.S. Veteran Dane Warren started his real estate business in the spare bedroom of a Highland Creek home. He simply began with a Windows '95 computer and aspirations of making a name for himself in Charlotte's real estate industry.

That was 21 years ago.

Today, Dane Warren Real Estate boasts a family of more than 60 brokers who have closed 3,000 transactions and achieved more than \$700 million in closed sales volume. And that's not all: It shows no signs of slowing down. This success is attributed in part to the agency's broker-in-charge and co-owner, Warren, who possesses the drive needed to succeed in the competitive field of real estate.

"You see it so many times in this business," says Warren. "Individuals break onto the scene with a burst of energy but are unable to sustain it – especially when they don't see immediate results. Real estate is about having that inner drive, that ambition. You can't expect things to happen in the first two months. You have to be patient and build your client base."

Warren is a master at patience. After all, his real estate career didn't happen overnight; it took years to come to fruition.

After graduating from North Gaston High School in 1981, Warren enlisted in the United States Air Force. His military career began with basic training in Lackland, Texas, followed by eight months in Pensacola, FL, where he trained to operate National Security Agency (NSA) intercept equipment, which included copying Morse code.

Remember, this was at the peak of the Cold War when tensions with coun-



Dane with his sons, Evan and Jonathan Jr.

tries located behind the Iron Curtain were at an all-time high. Warren's skills were needed overseas, so the Air Force sent him to southern Italy where he was assigned to a data collection intercept position run by the NSA, focusing on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

In 1984, following his tour of duty in Italy, he returned to the States to complete his military obligations at the NSA at Fort Meade in Maryland. Warren had top-secret clearance and was required to pass an extensive background investigation to access the departments at NSA. There he served as a signal analyst, directing his attention toward Eastern Russia and China.

"My time at the NSA was spent ensuring the intercept operators were doing their job," explains Warren. "I would regularly review their work to ensure the information was accurate and complete, and research voids or inconsistencies. It was a rewarding time in my life, and I enjoyed my service in the military."

Upon leaving the Air Force in 1986, he served a brief stint in the Florida Air National Guard at MacDill Air Force Base in Central Florida before returning to North Carolina, where he took a job working the assembly line at Freightliner's Mount Holly plant. But Warren's career thoughts weren't on truck chassis. Instead, their focus was on something bigger: real estate. After all, he'd always been told he would be good at sales, and he had a passion for helping people. So, when he wasn't working the line, he would study real estate principals, learning the ins and outs of an industry that had brought great success and security to members of his extended family.

"I started putting together the equation in my head. I looked at the industry as a whole, specifically the flexibility and the opportunity it provided. It was too good to pass up. I had to go for it," explains Warren.

And go for it he did. To get his feet wet, he joined the Coldwell Banker – University City team for four months before switching to a small brokerage for two months to gain additional hands-on experience. With just six months of experience under his belt, Warren launched Dane Warren Real Estate in 1997.

"The thing is, most people want to go into this business part-time and keep their safety net," explains Warren. "But the problem with that approach is, they will never break away. They will never understand that the magic happens when you decide to cut the cord and go all in. That's when you're able to better establish yourself and become a part of the 20 percent of brokers in the industry who make it."

This mantra has served Warren well. He's found tremendous success in Charlotte's real estate scene. Part of this is a result of his firm's commission structure which attracts many sellers through his Ballantyne office doors.



A typical pod Dane would have worked at, intercepting messages in Italy.



Playing soccer in front of the FLR-9 antenna in San Vito del Normandy, Italy.



Air National Guard Seal



NSA Seal



Air Force Seal

“Our annual closing volume enables us to reduce our client’s commission when selling and allows us to offer a large buy-side rebate at closing to our clients,” explains Warren. “Since we only ask for 1.5 percent commission at closing, our clients pay half of the average 3 percent rate. The sheer volume that we do in a year more than makes up for the lower fee we offer. Therefore, it’s a win/win for everyone at the closing table.”

It’s this strong profit margin that affords him the stress-free, fit lifestyle he’s always imagined for himself, which includes participating in half marathons, sprints and IRONMAN competitions. Other hobbies include taking his younger children, which he helps raise with wife and co-owner Marie, on annual vacations in their RV. Past trips have included visits to Port Huron, MI; Gettysburg, PA; the Chesapeake Bay area in northern Virginia; and most recently to Monticello and Washington, D.C., a family favorite.

Warren, who has seven children and five grandchildren, enjoys having his kids around him so much he has recruited sons Jonathan Jr. and Evan, who are also U.S. veterans, into the business. Both serve as brokers on his team.

“My hope is that they learn to appreciate the many challenges of real estate, just as I have over the years,” says Warren. “There is variety in every day. Each situation has a different set of parameters that need to be identified. That’s what still excites me about this business, even after 20-plus years.”

As Warren reflects on the life he’s carved out for himself and the business he’s created, he readily admits he didn’t exactly take the easiest road, but he wouldn’t want to be anyone else. “I honestly have no regrets,” he adds. “Everything I’ve gone through – the good and the bad – have led me to where I am today, and I wouldn’t trade it for the world.”

Looking at Warren – a top producer who is not only leading a highly successful real estate firm in the Charlotte metro area but who also has a beautiful family supporting him both in the field and on the sidelines – it’s hard to disagree.

**Note:** The flag Dane holds on the cover of this issue was provided by our photographer, Jonathan Berkon. Jonathan explains: “The flag was used at the funeral service of our very close family friend, Robert Proenекke. He served in the Pacific theatre of World War II and was present at the Battle of the Bulge. My



Dane and his family.



Dane receiving the Joint Service Achievement Medal from the NSA.

family had known him and his wife for over 25 years at the time of his passing. His wife gifted us with the flag after his internment at Arlington National Cemetery.” We honor and remember Robert, as well as all of those we have lost, not just Memorial Day, but always.

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### A FAMILY COMMITTED TO SERVING

A love for real estate isn’t the only thing Warren shares in common with his sons, Jonathan Jr. and Evan. All three have previously served in the U.S. military. Read his sons’ military stories below.

**Jonathan Jr.:** Jonathan served as an Army Air Traffic Controller and was a member of the historic 101st Airborne Division. He deployed to Afghanistan in December of 2013 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. There, he was assigned to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Shank and FOB Ghazni. After serving almost nine months in Afghanistan, his unit returned home. Upon returning stateside, he was ordered to Fort Riley, Kansas, home of the 1st Infantry Division, another historic Army Division.

**Evan:** Evan joined the Air Force in 2007. Like his father, he went through basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in the Longhorn State. He then transferred to the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, FL, for tech school, where he trained to become a structural maintenance apprentice. As a result, the majority of his service was spent in Tucson, Ariz., repairing aircraft, including the C-130, A-10, and HH-60 helicopter.



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