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HAR's YPN '20 Under 40 Rising Stars in Real Estate Awards' recognize excellence in sales, leadership, community service

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IMAGE 1 OF 2

Winners share their industry experiences

The **Houston Association of Realtors** (HAR) has announced the winners of its seventh annual **Young Professionals Network** (YPN) 20 Under 40 Rising Stars in Real Estate Awards.

Awards will go to 20 Houston-area real estate professionals 40 years old or younger who demonstrated excellence during the past year in the areas of sales, leadership and community service. The winners, all members of HAR, represent what the selection committee considered an overall well-rounded Realtor.

Here is the list of 2016 winners:

Nancy Almodovar, Nan and Company Properties

Nancy Almodovar was inspired to get into real estate after watching her parents and, later, her husband establish successful businesses in the industry. She learned about selling, developed a strong work ethic, and put those skills to use in the fashion retail industry before applying them to real estate. Nancy didn't learn to speak English until she was six. She's been in real estate since 2003, and in less than two years, has built a luxury real estate company with a roster of philanthropic efforts, recipients of which include Houston Children Give Back and St. Anne Catholic School.

Seth Caplan, Beth Wolff Realtors

Seth Caplan grew up in a family that has been in real estate for generations. Real estate, development and the pride of owning one's own land have fascinated him forever. One of his greatest accomplishments as a Realtor has been selling an estate in Hunters Creek in seven days. After closing, the seller, whom he represented, dubbed him "The Concierge of Real Estate." Caplan serves on the **TREPAC committee** and enjoys being a part of an organization that protects the rights of property ownership in a free market.

agent," said Shanahan. "It's about simply and clearly explaining all the moving parts that comprise a real estate transaction."

Kimberly Stephens, RE/MAX 1st Source

For Kimberly Stephens, getting into real estate was the result of a lunch conversation with a Realtor friend.

"She told me she thought I would be great at it," said Stephens. "I admired her, but because of my situation, I knew it would be a struggle and laughed it off. I was a stay-at-home mom with a 1-year-old girl and a 10-year-old girl who was blind, autistic and had cerebral palsy. How could I possibly be a successful Realtor? The next day I thought, why not? The thought of doing something that could be financially rewarding and give me self-worth and independence was intriguing. I took a leap of faith and am glad my husband went along with my crazy idea."

Julie Tam, Lyn Realty

Who leaves a decade-long career in TV news to join her mother's real estate brokerage? Julie Tam. Coming up each day with stories, coordinating coverage and reporting on breaking news, writing on tight deadlines and speaking eloquently on camera prepared Tam to multitask, juggling multiple deals at once and appointments back to back.

"I've always had an interest in entrepreneurship, so continuing the family business that I had grown up in was a natural fit," said Tam. "I enjoy helping first-time buyers find a starter home and seasoned buyers build or find their dream home. It also brings me great joy to help a renter find a home to rent and later buy their first home."

Gina Tran, RE/MAX Exclusive - Sons and Daughters Team

Gina Tran owes a debt of gratitude to her brother for convincing her that real estate was her calling.

"I found my passion," said Tran. "I fell in love with the experience of finding beautiful homes for my buyers, negotiating the best price possible and found great joy in seeing families grow into the homes. My greatest challenge was opening my own brokerage in 2013 not knowing I was pregnant with my first child and, 18 months later, pregnant again with twin boys. It absolutely brought its share of challenges. I continue to overcome them by taking it one day at a time, the teamwork of an amazing and supportive husband and hiring the right talent."