

# WOMEN IN BUSINESS



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## A Woman in Business Tribute

### Kate Watson: Bringing Bee Tutored Home to Austin



Bee Tutored participating in the Tarrytown 4th of July Parade



Students outside of the Bee Tutored Brooklyn Classroom



Eugene and Kate Watson with sons Lawson and Fowler enjoying the parade



Bee Tutored Founder and Director, Kate Watson

An entrepreneur at heart, Kate Watson has built Bee Tutored, using her skills to identify top talent, connecting personalities for optimal results, and committing to impeccable service. What began in 2008 as a side project while teaching full-time at a large public high school in Manhattan has grown into a multi-city venture. Her boutique tutoring company, Bee Tutored, serves families in New York City, Barcelona, and now in Austin. While living in New York, Watson launched Bee Tutored in 2008 through the NYC Teaching Fellows Program, drawing tutors from her Master's in Education program to provide one-on-one academic support to students outside the classroom.

"I recruited a solid team of

tutors," she says, "and began to spread the buzz about our services to PTAs, school guidance counselors, and nonprofits." The business grew steadily and, by 2010, had become her full-time career.

Bee Tutored offers comprehensive academic support across all K-12 subjects, test preparation, college and private school admissions coaching, and executive functioning coaching, focusing on skill-building that helps students develop the organization and self-management tools they need to be successful.

Tutors are thoughtfully matched to each student based on subject expertise, learning style, and personality. Sessions are held in the home at a preferred location or remotely if desired. "We want sessions to not only be informative but also enjoyable for our students and accessible for our parents," Watson says. "A win-win all around."

The heart of the company comes from the community it serves. In New York, Bee Tutored has partnered with the National I Have a Dream Foundation, providing after-school enrichment classes to high-need students across the city. Internationally, the team worked with the Rafa Nadal Tennis Academy in Mallorca, Spain, to support student-athletes with SAT preparation.

True to its established values, Bee Tutored has already woven itself into the fabric of the West Austin

community, supporting the Tarrytown 4th of July Parade, Save Reed Park, WAYA, Friends of the Children Austin, and parent associations at many local schools.

"I am excited to bring Bee Tutored to Austin families!" she says. It is a homecoming with purpose, offering West Austin families the thoughtful, personalized academic support that has made Bee Tutored a trusted name in education for more than 15 years.

When Watson is not busy running Bee Tutored, she can be found enjoying life with her husband, Eugene, and their two young sons, Lawson, age 6, and Fowler, age 4.

To learn more about Bee Tutored and to connect with their team of educators, visit [beetutored.com](http://beetutored.com).



Kate Watson teaching in the Bee Tutored Brooklyn office classroom

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## A Woman in Business Tribute

### Laura Parsons: Bringing Design Services and a New Storefront to Westlake

For Laura Parsons, the creation of beautiful spaces has always been the business. What's new is that West Austin can now walk into her new store to buy a gift for a friend, secure a vision for their home, or meet with Parsons on-site for a design consultation.

After more than two decades running Parsons I.D., she recently expanded her business to include a storefront she calls Branch + Bird. The home furnishings store and design studio, nestled in Westlake, showcases a wide assortment of carefully curated items for every area of the home, inspiring anyone who walks through the door.

Bedroom display at Branch + Bird Home Furnishings Store

Art, rugs, furniture, and decorative accessories displayed at Branch + Bird

"I've been designing for 20 plus years," she says, "and I've been wanting to open a store for some time." The timing finally aligned when her twins headed to college, and she began looking for a space, a process that took her about a year.

The name itself has a story, a natural fit given her instinct for creating spaces that feel like home. What goes into building a nest? Branches. Birds. And just like that, Branch + Bird was named.

The store, open Tuesday

through Saturday from 10 am to 5:30 pm, is organized into room-specific spaces: living, bedroom, kitchen, bath, so that customers can visualize and be inspired. The goal, Parsons explains, is to make good design accessible to everyone, not just those who hire a designer.

"Not everybody can afford a designer because it is a luxury service," she says. "But we have a lot of beautiful things to offer." They include items such as charming dish towels, pretty olive oil containers, napkins that make the table feel special, pillows, vintage furniture pieces, rugs, linens, art, and more. Upholstery, drapery, and custom cabinetry selections are also available. Parsons and support staff, all trained in design, are on hand to aid in decision-making.

And for those who do want to take the next step to secure design help, Parsons I.D. is there, too. "If you want to see my style," she tells prospective clients, "go to the store. That's me." A gallery of past projects is available on her design website at <https://www.parsonsid.com/>.

Running two businesses simultaneously has meant building a team she trusts.

Laura Parsons at her store, Branch + Bird, at Davenport Village in Westlake

Along with her in-store support and architect, she also manages a bookkeeper, a photographer, and a social media specialist. The circle of professionals rounds out the operation; each, she says, is essential.

Her advice for women thinking about taking a leap of their own? "It all starts with a dream. You may not know how to do it, but just baby step into it." She pauses, then adds simply: "I'm one of the lucky ones. I get to do what I love."

Sitting room displays at Branch + Bird Home Furnishings Store

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## Women in Business Tributes

# 40 MORELAND PROPERTIES

— est. 1986 —

## Emily Moreland: Founder and Chairman of the Board

By Anne DeVries

When Emily Moreland opened the doors of her independent real estate company in 1986, Austin was a different city, quieter, smaller, and just beginning to feel the tremors of a complicated real estate market. She had no franchise behind her, no national brand to lean on. What she had was a base of real estate experience, the will to go out on her own, and the prospects of a growing city.

Forty years later, Moreland Properties stands as one of West Austin's most enduring independent brokerages, with offices in Tarrytown, Lake Travis, and downtown Austin, with a growing presence stretching into Dripping Springs and the broader Hill Country. It is, in every sense, a West Austin story, one built on loyalty, grit, and a deep love for central Texas.

Moreland's original plan after college was quite different. Initially working as a teacher, she pursued real estate after her husband, Bill, suggested it as the couple began considering real estate investments. She remembers thinking, "Well, that's crazy, I'm a school teacher".

Opening her mind to possibilities, she chose to follow the suggestion and begin working at JB Goodwin, which had a great training program. She followed this experience with Coldwell Banker in Houston to grow her industry knowledge.

When the couple moved to Austin in 1985, they decided together that it was time for Emily to start her own company. The following year brought a blow that would have stopped most people cold. Bill Moreland died suddenly of a heart attack at 47.

This life-changing moment could easily have derailed plans for the newly launched venture. At the time, their older son had just married, and two of their children were at Westlake High School.

"You never know what prepares you for certain things like this in life, but you take it. If you don't, you become a martyr. And that's not what I wanted to be at all."

Emily attributes the Westlake community's support during this difficult time as the defining factor in her ability to continue with her business plans.

"We were in the best place possible for that sort of grief to come on...it gave me the permission to



Emily Moreland, late 1980s

### MORELAND PROPERTIES AT A GLANCE

- ▲ **Founded in 1986:** Independently owned
- ▲ **Primary hub:** Greater Austin / Lake Travis/ Central Texas/ Hill Country
- ▲ **Offices:** Tarrytown/Lake Travis/ downtown Austin (Congress Ave.)
- ▲ **Growing focus:** Dripping Springs, Blanco, Wimberley
- ▲ **Affiliated with Leading Real Estate Companies of the World**
- ▲ **Multigenerational:** Founder Emily Moreland, daughter Jan, and son Eric

keep going and try to expand what I had just started," she shared.

Those early years required resourcefulness. The market downturn brought a wave of foreclosed properties, and Emily took listings from lending institutions, using those harder transactions to establish her firm's reputation for straight dealing. When the recovery came in the late eighties and nineties, Moreland Properties was well-positioned to grow with it.

"Several more wonderful people joined me as agents," she says, "and then it was about that time that I decided to go ahead and open the office out at Lake Travis. I always loved that community — we came up there with our boat, when we lived in Houston." That Lake Travis expansion proved a defining move, deepening the firm's footprint across West Austin.

Today, the firm also maintains a boutique downtown presence inside



Sarah Railey and Emily Moreland at Moreland's Annual Awards Event in 2024

the Austonian building on Congress Avenue and is actively expanding into the Dripping Springs corridor, where Emily's daughter, Jan Moreland, is carving out a specialty market.

"The Dripping Springs market is amazing," Emily says. "Beautiful subdivisions, some with more affordable homes, and then some with lovely five to ten acres per house — it just looks like heaven."

The Eric Moreland Group (EMgroup), operating under the Moreland umbrella, was founded by Emily's son, Eric, in 2003. EMgroup functions as a private advisory for Austin's most exceptional properties. Working with her children has been a joyful part of Moreland's experience. She smiles when she shares, "It's worked out beautifully."

Emily has weathered every cycle the Austin market has thrown at her: the savings-and-loan collapse, sky-high interest rates, the COVID-era buying frenzy, and today's rate-constrained pause.

Her advice for new agents. "You need to know what's going on in your area, about the schools, about parking, about businesses, health care, all of that plays into where somebody wants to buy a house," she says. And it has to be about service first: "It has to be more about your feeling of the service you're giving rather than your commission."

Beyond her work life, Emily loves the arts. "If I could come back in my next life, I'd like to be a prima ballerina," she shared. She believes that a city's art community benefits



Eric, Jan and Emily Moreland at Austin Country Club for Moreland Annual Awards-2026

economic development and has served on the Board of Directors of the Long Center and Ballet Austin. It is not unusual for her to sit in on rehearsals at Ballet Austin and enjoy the athleticism of the ballerinas and the choreography of Stephen Mills, Ballet Austin's artistic director for the past 25 years.

Moreland has been a philanthropist not only to the art community. She served on the Board of the Red Cross and supports Foundation Housing and Breakthrough, among other non-profits in the city. "There are so many beautiful charities to help out and be a part of here in Austin. It is just easier than a great

big city. And you make your good friends within those...that's very rewarding".

In recent times, Emily has pulled back from day-to-day operations and plans to retire to the beloved Moreland Ranch, where she has a small cattle herd, some horses, and a house large enough for the entire family. One can almost picture her, relaxing for a change, with a smile on her face, reminiscing about her legacy. One of twists and turns, loss and reinvention, and the building of a legacy that speaks to human perseverance, giving back, and, first and foremost, family.

## Sarah Railey: President & Broker of Record

By Anne DeVries

If Emily Moreland built the house, Sarah Railey has spent more than two decades making sure the foundation holds. Railey joined Moreland Properties in 2002 as Emily's assistant, fresh from college and a brief stint teaching middle school computer and PE. She has been there ever since.

"I'm honored to have been a part of over half of the company's history," she says, "and to have been a part of the growth. It's just fun to sit back and go, oh my gosh, here we are, but also where we're going."

Her path from assistant to president is its own West Austin story. Early on, Railey earned her real estate license and helped support both Emily and Eric Moreland with administrative and sales tasks, but she quickly realized that her real passion lay in developing the business itself. When a choice arose between expanding into Eric Moreland's growing operation and deepening her role at the firm, she chose to remain Emily's assistant.

"I really gravitated towards the service side, taking care of everyone and growing the business side of it. It really was more my speed."

Railey's chosen focus has helped shape how Moreland Properties



Emily Moreland and Sarah Railey at a 2002 client party — Sarah's first year with Moreland Properties

operates today. As president and broker of record, Railey oversees the full organizational structure, managing staff, resources, and day-to-day operations. "Every deal is a unicorn," she says. "Something will happen, and we've got to make sure all the deals close and all the clients are taken care of."

What sets Moreland Properties apart from Railey's vantage point is a deliberate choice to stay true to its West Austin roots even as the city has grown. The firm's core territory, she says, runs "inside that 360 corridor running through Westlake and past Lake Travis." The hyper-focus in these areas has developed the intimacy that only decades of working a market can produce.

That local depth, she believes, is precisely what separates Moreland



Sarah and Emily at Lake Travis Sunset Soiree in 2007

from the national players moving into the Austin market. "This is a quiet, discretionary business we have in Austin," she says, "and with the city's growth, we've grown as well, but we still are kind of a small boutique of top tier with our service." The philosophy shows up in how the firm thinks about client relationships, too. "We want to be people's lifetime real estate advisor," Railey explains. "Like you've got your banker, you've got your attorney, anything real estate related, you call your Moreland agent."

"Part of what we do is hold on to what we think is so special about

Austin, and our agents feel the same way."

The family dimension of the business runs deep beyond the Moreland Family involvement. Railey, a mother of three daughters, sees that generational continuity as central to the culture. "I've got agents whose moms sold real estate here, and now their kids do," she says. "It feels like a family business, that's the only way I can describe it."

Loyalty, she adds, runs deep. The firm sees little turnover. "We all love what we have going on," Railey says. "It either works out in, or it doesn't. Anybody who is excited about some-

thing local and has skin in the game ends up being more of a magnet. And so people tend to stick around a long time."

For a young woman considering real estate, Railey offers practical wisdom. "You really have to love every aspect," she says, "because it will be a round-the-clock focus." But passion alone is not enough. "You really have to know your market and research everything about what you love, so you can be just as knowledgeable as you are excited. Because it takes both."

As for what's next for Moreland Properties, Railey continues to forge ahead, pursuing new opportunities for Moreland, its agents, and clients, preparing for the inevitable changes companies face. With Emily easing into an advisory role and the next generation of agents stepping up, the transition has been, in her words, "a very fluid process." The goal, she says, remains what it has always been: to be the local experts that clients in Central Texas trust implicitly, in a city that keeps changing around them.

"When I think about Moreland, I think about all the amazing people that make it what it is," Railey reflects. "It is not about just one person or one idea. It's how we've all grown the company together over the last 40 years."

# A Woman in Business Tribute



Mrs. Lynch awards certificate to St. Michael's Prep student at the quarterly Core Values recognition.



Mrs. Lynch smiles as St. Michael's Prep students proudly display their artwork.

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school through a comprehensive accreditation, all while strengthening a culture where challenging academics, joyful learning, faith formation, and enduring values go hand in hand.

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In Mrs. Lynch, St. Michael's Prep has a leader of incredible steadiness, vision, and heart. And, in St. Michael's Prep, families continue to find a school defined by purpose, momentum, and excellence.



Colleen Lynch, joined by school Chaplain Fr. Bud Roland and the St. Michael's Prep community, celebrates the opening of the outdoor classroom.

## WOMEN IN BUSINESS: THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR LASTING LEGACY

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