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ELI MASUD

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FOR SUCCESS





eli masud

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THEM UP FOR SUCCESS

Volleyball has always been a big part of Eli Masud's life. It served as his ticket to graduate school, led him to meeting his wife, and set him up for success in establishing a client base in real estate. He loved playing volleyball as a kid, but his childhood wasn't all fun and games.

Eli's parents emigrated from the Middle East to build a family in the United States. Though they didn't speak English and had little money, they both ran their own businesses.

"Growing up, we didn't have much," says Eli. "At one point, there were six of us living in a two-bedroom apartment. We had to carry our own weight in whatever way we could. For me, it was walking my sister, Christina, home from school. When I was in fifth grade, my parents saved enough to purchase their first house. At the time, I didn't think much of it. But as I've gotten older and looked back, I realized what my parents were striving to do, and I love what a home represents."

As a kid, Eli loved driving by larger homes, and he wished to be able to step inside and peek around. He adored those homes and vowed to have one someday.

After earning his undergraduate degree in business management from Purdue University, Eli was torn between going to grad school and pursuing his lifelong dream of becoming a volleyball coach. Fortunately, he was offered the opportunity to become a graduate assistant for the Lewis University men's volleyball team, giving him time to figure things out.

▶ on the rise

By Jennifer Mitchell
Photos by Heather Allison
Love Photography

Eli with his
wife, Lauren.



Eli graduated with an MBA in 2010 and took a sales job with James Hardie Building Products, where he worked for almost eight years. He was working in field sales in Denver when he was asked to move back to Chicago to lead the company's first inside sales department.

As he looked for a house in the Chicago area, Eli obtained his real estate license to save some money on the purchase. What he didn't realize was that it would be the start of his new career.

"I posted that I got my license on social media and I got a lot of responses from my volleyball friends," states Eli. "They wanted to work with me to find a home, so I started a side business while still working my full-time job. The volleyball community that I had been a part of for so long became my first network of clients. I loved the work, and even earned *Chicago Agent Magazine's* Rookie of the Year Runner-up Award [in 2015]."

For four years, Eli worked both his full-time sales job and ran his real estate business. By the end of that last year, he was working seven days a week, logging sixty to seventy hours a week—balancing his two careers became a struggle.

"The long hours took a toll on my marriage, and one day I hit a breaking point," recalls Eli. "I rolled over in a sweat and told my

wife I was quitting that day. She said, 'Do what you have to do.' That was all I needed to hear."

While seemingly abrupt, this decision wasn't an easy one, or something Eli took lightly.

"Taking a leap from [getting] a good base salary, great benefits, and a 401(k), to a job that's 100 percent commission-based was scary," notes Eli. "As you get older, your appetite for risk gets smaller, and I felt like the window of opportunity to take a risk was closing."

Fortunately for Eli, diving into real estate full time in 2019 was the right play. His total volume last year was \$18.5 million, and he's been able to fulfill his childhood dream of peeking into beautiful homes.

"Who doesn't like to look at cool houses?" expresses Eli. "But more importantly, it's rare to find a profession where you truly help someone rather than sell to them. I'm able to offer guidance and be part of an extremely important moment in people's lives. It's given me a purpose, which was previously missing in my professional life."

As for Eli's purpose in his personal life, it all comes down to his wife, Lauren. The couple has been together for ten years and married for four. They love to soak up the sun and relax together on beautiful beaches, and have set their sights on Hawaii as their next vacation destination.

When he has free time, Eli still plays volleyball—he has played competitively since middle school, and was the president of the club volleyball team at Purdue. He's even played in a few amateur beach volleyball tours and was ranked in the Top 100 on the AVP Tour in 2018.

"The way I approach everything in life is to tap every resource and talent in order to reach my full potential," says Eli. "I want to look back on my life and have no regrets."



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