

## Allen and James

BUSINESS REAL ESTATE

# ADDING REALTOR TO THE RESUME

**JULIE GOLDMAN** of *J. Latter Design* and **NICOLE BAXTER** of *N Baxter Design* were interior designers before they were realtors. Noticing that their design clients repeatedly tapped them for advice on renovations, investment and other matters of real estate, but that they weren't getting compensated for their sage help, Baxter and Goldman—based in Durham, North Carolina, and Los Angeles, respectively—were incentivized to get officially educated and licensed.

"The real estate-designer combination is powerful," says Baxter. Her expertise in creating emotionally and functionally appropriate spaces coupled with having the tools and education to advise a client and answer authoritatively about what their house will be worth after they remodel commands respect. "My goal is to help people find houses to make their own and to give clients a realistic budget so they can finance design decisions and not go out of pocket," she says.

Goldman also looks at homeownership through a holistic lens, one that blends investment and attachment, and she has the knowledge and resources to hustle both ends. Comparing the



Julie Goldman



Nicole Baxter



A kitchen designed by Goldman.  
Photo: Bethany Nauert

two, she says real estate is less flexible, less forgiving and more stressful. "As a mom, design is easier, you can take on as much or as little as you can handle.

With real estate, when duty calls, you've got to go, there's a lot of competition, and you're out of pocket a lot, banking that it'll all pay off."

Baxter concurs about competition, adding, "No realtor is ever going to refer design work to you again."

When asked to choose between designer or realtor, Goldman responds, "Owner — the one who gets to work on my own properties with talented designers and savvy agents."



## A 1950S REHAB

**STEPHANIE JAMES**, serial idea generator and managing partner in the High Point, North Carolina-based design firm *Allen and James*, recently purchased an iconic midcentury home as an investment property as well as a company marketing tool. Located in the tony enclave of Emerywood where James lives, the intent with business partner **PATTI ALLEN** is to use the house to promote the capabilities of their design firm.

"We are not only about the interiors and furnishing and fabric selections," says James. "We're also about business possibilities within our category. We can think from both sides." Plans are to renovate in keeping with the original essence of the home and maybe to create a showhouse. Stay tuned!

Stephanie James (left) and Patti Allen (right); an exterior rendering of the 1950s house.

