

## The Boss: Hard hats, blueprints reeled in Laura Cloud

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*On July 7, Laura Cloud had her first client dinner since March. The next morning, she toured an office building with a client, masked and socially distanced. They were two hints of something like normalcy for Cloud, who for the past year has led the Nashville office of Atlanta-based Patterson Real Estate Advisory Group, which helps developers and investors round up money for their deals. In the past, that's included new office buildings and apartments in SoBro, Cool Springs and the Gulch, among other places in the region. You might be surprised at her current workload.*



MARTIN B. CHERRY | NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL  
Laura Cloud, Director of Patterson Real Estate Advisory Group

**What did your parents do for a living?** My dad is in commercial real estate; he has his own development and investment firm in Atlanta. My mom was a nurse for years before they had kids. I've got a brother in commercial real estate in Atlanta as well. My husband's in commercial real estate. There's a lot of dinner talk about it. We probably all talk about it too much.

**Growing up, did you feel as if you'd just follow the family into that line of work?** No, actually. In high school I worked for a veterinarian. I was convinced I would be a vet. Then the blood and guts of it came out and I can't do that. I'm very squeamish.

**Do you have pets today?** We have a chocolate lab; her name is Sally. We have a German shorthaired pointer named Murphy. And we have constant debates about

getting a third one. We'll probably go with one of those two again.

**How did you get into real estate?** Vandy does a fellowship with Lloyd's of London, and I did that for a year after graduating. I came back to Atlanta and worked for basically the same company, in aviation insurance — very bizarre, but that's what I ended up doing. I had other opportunities to work in aviation insurance. In business school, I did an internship with an old-guard real estate company in Atlanta. I just loved it. Walking around with hard hats and blueprints, I thought it was so cool.

**What did your dad say?** "You do know real estate is probably the least recession-proof job you can take, right?" He's right: You can have serious ups and downs along the way. Today's climate is very bizarre. We've actually been very busy; as a company, we've gotten 23 new assignments since March. Pretty much all that activity is new construction. The thought process ... is that it takes a long time to develop a project. It takes 18 months, 24 months and then a year to go lease it up. People feel comfort in that long life cycle. This pandemic is not going to be as short as we thought it was, but you can look two or three years from now and feel comfortable it'll be normalized by then.

**What's the best celebrity sighting you've had in Nashville?** I saw Reba [McEntire] at Pancake Pantry. Our neighbor is [Nashville Predators winger] Viktor Arvidsson, so that's kind of cool. He travels a lot, so we don't see him often.

**How about the best concert?** We saw Maren Morris a couple of years ago. She's such a clever songwriter. I'd probably put Kacey Musgraves in the same bucket. ... I think the first year we moved here, we saw 35 concerts.

**What's a habit you've picked up in the pandemic that you hope to sustain when it's over?** We've gotten in this habit of walking every afternoon at 5:30 with a glass of wine and the kids. We'd love to try to continue doing that. It's that hour that is usually high-stress, because I'm a working mom.

**Is that your favorite drink?** I do love cabernet. We went to Napa last year and joined all these wine clubs, and we thought, "Oh my gosh, we have so much wine at this house." But it's like we foreshadowed what we would encounter this year.

**Where do your football allegiances lie, and will they play this fall?** This is a topic of constant debate in my house. So I went to Vandy undergrad and Georgia for

business school; my husband went to Alabama. We have not watched a number of football games together in the past two years. It'll be devastating if they don't play. I adore that time of year. But I just don't see how they do it.

**What's next on your bucket list?** I have two stepsons, 16 and 12. Two years ago, the lightbulb went off that they were growing up too fast. We had planned for Montana and an Alaskan cruise. All that got shelved. Our big bucket list as a family before they go to college is to take them to Africa. At this point, we'd settle for something other than the beach.

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