



Meet The McCaSkills



It's The Story of a man named... McCaskill. The Southlake City Council Member and Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Shawn, along with his lovely lady Laura, manage the McCaskills by wearing a variety of hats. From working behind the scenes for the city to acting as the executive vice president at his law firm to running kids to and from their own activities, the leader of this lively bunch keeps himself busy. And as Shawn McCaskill ventures into his next term in his position, he knows that through it all, dads everywhere are doing their best to make the people around them better.

McCaskill has lived in Southlake for the past 13 years with his wife and four kids. Even though he's commuted to Dallas to Godwin Bowman & Martinez's offices for that entire spread, he felt like Southlake had given his family so much. So, he wanted to give back.

BY ASHLEY MADONNA

Laura



Maddie



caroline



“The city has been so great to us,” McCaskill says. “We want to help. We feel a sense of duty to give back.”

He ventured into city work by joining the Zoning Board of Adjustment back in 2010. Soon after, he took on roles with the Southlake 2030 Committee, the Sustainability Committee and the Planning and Zoning Commission to help build the foundation that the city could grow on.

“I’m more interested in the behind-the-scenes stuff,” McCaskill says. “They may not be headline issues, but they’re important. You have to do that to make all of the headline successes happen.”

After spending more time learning about these background matters that shape the city, McCaskill took the leap and started campaigning for city council. After a contested race, he found himself sitting amongst his peers as the deputy mayor pro tem.

Even though this position took more of his time – 40 to 50 hours a month McCaskill estimates – he still wanted to spend time working on the financial health of the city so it could continue to grow.

“Southlake is blessed because we didn’t come in and start with a big problem,” McCaskill says. “We are just maintaining and upgrading, which is better than starting from square one.”

As McCaskill continues in his position – he was uncontested for his position in this year’s election – he hopes to see the city’s financial health enhance. One of his biggest goals is to pay down all the city’s debt over the next 10 years, which he says, “is unheard of” in city governments.

He credits that work to his leader, Mayor Laura Hill, and his fellow councilmen. While they each have their own agendas and priorities, McCaskill says they are all able to shake hands at the end of their meetings because of their respect for one another.

“It’d be hard to volunteer that many hours if you didn’t enjoy working with the people you are around,” McCaskill explains.

BALANCING IT ALL

With the extra hours that come with the position alongside the work that comes with being an attorney let alone the executive vice president and a member of the executive committee, McCaskill knows that every day doesn’t result in the same structure.

“Every day is typically different,” McCaskill says. “Some days it’s all work. Some days it’s all city. It’s nice that my position offers me the flexibility to do that.”

It’s not uncommon for McCaskill to respond to citizens’ texts as a break from hours spent on a case. Or take a few moments to answer an email about the progress of a city project.

“Sometimes it’s nice to get that distraction while you are plugged into something for hours,” McCaskill says.

But when it comes to balancing his work life with his personal responsibilities that come with being a father of four, McCaskill credits his other half for keeping their family going.

“Well, my wife Laura is truly the better half in our relationship,” McCaskill laughs. “It’s shocking see-



All dads at the core are the same. We want to do the best every day. We want to do the best for everyone. And that can take various, different pathways. – Shawn McCaskill

ing how she manages to balance everything while putting our family first. She’s just as busy as I am.”

Shawn met Laura during their second year at St. Mary’s University School of Law in San Antonio. They were engaged by their third year. They then graduated together and got married the week after taking the bar.

Laura now works at Vecchio & Vecchio, her law office started by her dad in the 1960, in Arlington. As they have continued to have more kids, Laura went down to part-time to take lead with the kids. But they both continue to balance their schedules to be full-time parents.

This balancing act of keeping track of everyone’s daily responsibilities doesn’t happen by accident. The McCaskills know organization is key when working with six different schedules – so they have their all-important, color-coded dry erase calendar board hanging in their kitchen.

“That’s the schedule keeper,” McCaskill says. “That’s how we keep going. Everything goes on the calendar. You got to put it up there.”

RAISING THE FAMILY

McCaskill also credits his loving children for making it easy to raise them, which comes in handy when they are each balancing their own activities and obligations.

His oldest son, Joe, 16, is preparing for the next Dragons varsity football season and considering his next steps for college. McCaskill says while he is constantly busy, he’s a model older brother and is generous with his time when it comes to his siblings.

Maddie, 15, is enrolled in the gifted and talented program at Carroll High School and also a member of the Dragon Band. McCaskill marvels at her for being wise beyond her years and is very mature for her age – both academically and musically.



Caroline, 11, brings a can-do attitude into everything she does. Despite being diagnosed with a mild case of cerebral palsy and experiencing epileptic seizures, she's enrolled in both special and general classes at Eubanks Intermediate School and is active in Miracle League, Special Olympics and Amy's Wish With Wings. "She's the most resilient, determined child," McCaskill says. "Even though she faces challenges, she's the most compassionate kid."

The youngest son, Jack, 10, often finds himself in the same classes as his sister and is a member of the GT program at Eubanks. McCaskill says his "firecracker" personality and open heart make him an easy kid to raise.

"If you're the fourth kid, you have to make yourself known," McCaskill says. "But he's so understanding and inclusive of his sister. He makes his friends her friends. It's remarkable for a 10-year-old kid to be that kind."

While there are lots of personalities running around their house, McCaskill says there are rarely disagreements between the siblings.

"Our biggest argument in our house is what restaurant we're going to," McCaskill smiles. "Our kids have four different opinions, four different tastes, which is a good thing. It's a good problem to have."

Through it all, McCaskill does it all – run from city council meetings to band practice to football games – to spend more time with his family and help inspire them to give back to others.

"All dads at the core are the same," McCaskill says. "We want to do the best every day. We want to do the best for everyone. And that can take various, different pathways."



INSTILLING THAT VOLUNTEER SPIRIT

You can find the whole McCaskill clan out at The Miracle League, which Caroline has been involved with since the organization's inception. The organization works to remove the barriers that keep children with cognitive and physical disabilities out of the game, and work tirelessly to help them experience America's favorite pastime: baseball.

"It's a family affair for us," McCaskill says. "Her older brother and sister volunteer as buddies. And Caroline gets to be the star."

McCaskill takes pride that all of his kids know the importance of giving back. His family has benefited from the community spirit that comes with a strong base of volunteers, so he hopes to instill that importance and sense of service into his children.

"We're all volunteers, and they know you get more back than you put in," McCaskill says. "Their friends volunteer too. Everyone does it; everyone pitches in. It's important our kids understand that."

McCaskill's blend of being a parent and having a behind-the-scenes lens gives him a unique understanding of the benefit volunteerism brings to the community.

"There's such a volunteer spirit in town. Last year, there were 1,300 volunteers who donated thousands of hours to the city. That's \$700,000 worth of time," McCaskill says. "There are parents doing that. That's a big chunk."

Whether people give their time by volunteering with Miracle League or run for public office, McCaskill knows the citizens of Southlake do more when they join forces and pull together. And he's proud to be just one of the local dads giving his time to make a difference on the community.

"We have a bunch of remarkable dads in Southlake," McCaskill says. 🙌



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