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November 2007

ALL IN THE Family

For many Northern Nevadans, the prospect of spending nearly 24 hours a day, seven days a week with a significant other or close family member can prove — well — daunting, to put it kindly. But for others, such a schedule is a reality and, in fact, an integral part of the relationship. In this feature, *RENO Magazine* explores the nuances of locals who give “family ties” a whole new meaning.

SHELBY SHEEHAN CAME TO RENO'S KRN
V NEWS 4 IN 1998, shortly after earning a degree in broadcast journalism from the University of Colorado. Bill Frankmore came one month later, also a Colorado college graduate — but he was from Colorado State. Coincidental timing and college states aside, they spent the first year as good friends — in part because, as Frankmore jokes, “She had, like, six inches on me. I didn't think I had a chance.”

“Four,” Sheehan counters.

“More like three, actually,” Frankmore concedes.

Such playful banter seems emblematic of the natural cadence underlying their relationship. And when Sheehan answers the door this late summer afternoon, hair in Velcro rollers and face fresh without makeup, that naturalness transcends the confines of their relationship.

“I figured you'd understand about my appearance,” Sheehan explains, referring to the fact that the anchor is a multi-tasking mom of two boys — one child is a toddling 2, the other, at just 9 months, consumes the majority of his time blowing raspberries and bouncing wildly in his Exersaucer.

Sheehan and Frankmore exude a balanced combination of

playfulness and practical planning. Even their relationship had to be somewhat planned, as Frankmore recalls. While tradition prescribes that a prospective husband asks for his future father-in-law's blessing, Frankmore had to do one better: He had to ask his boss as well.

“I was planning to ask Shelby on the air if she'd marry me,” he explains. “But first, I had to ask (KRN
V News 4 president) Ralph Toddre if I could. His response: ‘Are you sure she's going to say yes?’”

Of course she did, which the station's viewers watched firsthand as Sheehan concluded a live broadcast. And seven years into their marriage, the couple still calls KRN
V News 4 their employment home. While they spent the first four years of their relationship co-anchoring the morning news (“We were together 24/7,” Frankmore says), they now have a more sequential schedule, as Sheehan has moved to evenings.

“It's chaotic, but it really works for our family,” Sheehan says.

A typical day begins with the ringing of Frankmore's alarm at 3 a.m. His newscast begins a few hours later, which means he's done for the day at about 1 p.m. In the meantime, Sheehan has awakened at 6 a.m. with both

Behind the scenes
KRN
V Channel 4 TV news personalities Bill Frankmore and Shelby Sheehan have learned to balance work and family. Here they are with sons Ryan, 2, and baby Jack, 9 months.

children. She goes to work about 45 minutes after Frankmore comes home — and after a nice lunch with the family. The boys nap for a few hours in the late afternoon while Sheehan is at work.

“Then I get a dinner break at about 6:45,” Sheehan says. “I come home, Bill has cooked something great, we eat, do baths and books, and then I put everyone to bed — even Bill,” she laughs.

Their staggered schedule means the boys have one or both parents all day long.

“You know, I never thought I’d be this content being a homebody, but I am.” — *Bill Frankmore*

“They don’t even know I’m gone, except those three hours in the late afternoon,” Sheehan says as she scoops up 2-year-old Ryan, who has just returned from an afternoon shopping excursion with his grandparents and is showing off his brand new, barn-red Gymboree shirt. After Sheehan inquires about the status of baby Jack’s diaper, it’s off to a reluctant naptime for the elder child.

“You know, I never thought I’d be this content being a homebody,” says Frankmore as he turns thoughtful watching Ryan walk off with grandma. “But I am. We make it a point to

truly remember how this all started — Ryan, Jack, this house — it all started from us, so we take time to nurture us.

“Like your job, love your wife,” Frankmore offers as the prescription for a healthy relationship where the personal and professional overlap.

But every relationship hits an occasional obstacle, especially one taking form in a pressure cooker like TV news. Sheehan recalls such a tumultuous time right after 9/11.

“We were living and breathing it,” she says. “We needed something to pick us up.”

Both are allergic to fur, so Sheehan visited a local exotic pet store, where she fell in love with a silver dollar-sized turtle.

“All the owner told me was that he would live a long time, which was just fine,” she says. What she didn’t say: This particular tortoise can grow to 200 pounds in the wild, living for 80-plus years.

“He’s part of our family,” Sheehan says as Dezzy the tortoise lumbers past the sliding glass window leading to their backyard. “We’re all about family, and he’s a big part of it.”

Literally.



◀ *Comforts of home*
Shelby Sheehan and Bill Frankmore wrestle with Ryan, 2, and Jack, 9 months.

DENTAL CLAN

For the Glover family, dentistry is more than just a profession: it’s a lifestyle.

And this lifestyle resides on multiple branches of the family tree. Joel E. (JF) and Joel T. (JT) Glover — “F is for father, T is for toddler,” JF jokingly notes — have been in practice together for 10 years in the form of Reno’s Glover Dentistry. JF’s wife and JT’s mom, Mary, used to work in the practice as well. And the Glovers’ daughter, Jennifer (known as “Jeffie,” a nickname JT issued when his toddler tongue tumbled over her name), is married to the son in another father-son dentistry practice in Reno — DiGrazia Dentistry.

“Dental mafia,” JF deadpans.

It’s a dynamic that makes for some “interesting” family gatherings, as the tight-knit group enjoys laughing, teasing, even harassing its members. Case in point: About five years after the duo went into practice together, Mary Glover’s son came to her with a surprise.

“He said, ‘I’m about to make your fondest wish come true,’” Mary recalls. “He said, ‘You’re fired.’”

“I was fired by my own son,” she jokes, feigning incredulity over the welcome termination. While father and son were happy in practice together, Mary was looking forward to retirement.

“Of course, it was nice when they fired me, because they replaced me with three people,” Mary says, clearly vindicated. Further evidence that the split was amicable: Mary still calls her son her dentist; he also is his sister’s dentist.

An overarching sense of connection permeates the experience for anyone who encounters the clan, as father and son talk at length about their bond since joining forces.

“It has truly strengthened our relationship,” JF says. “He’s not only my son and business partner; really, he’s my best friend.”

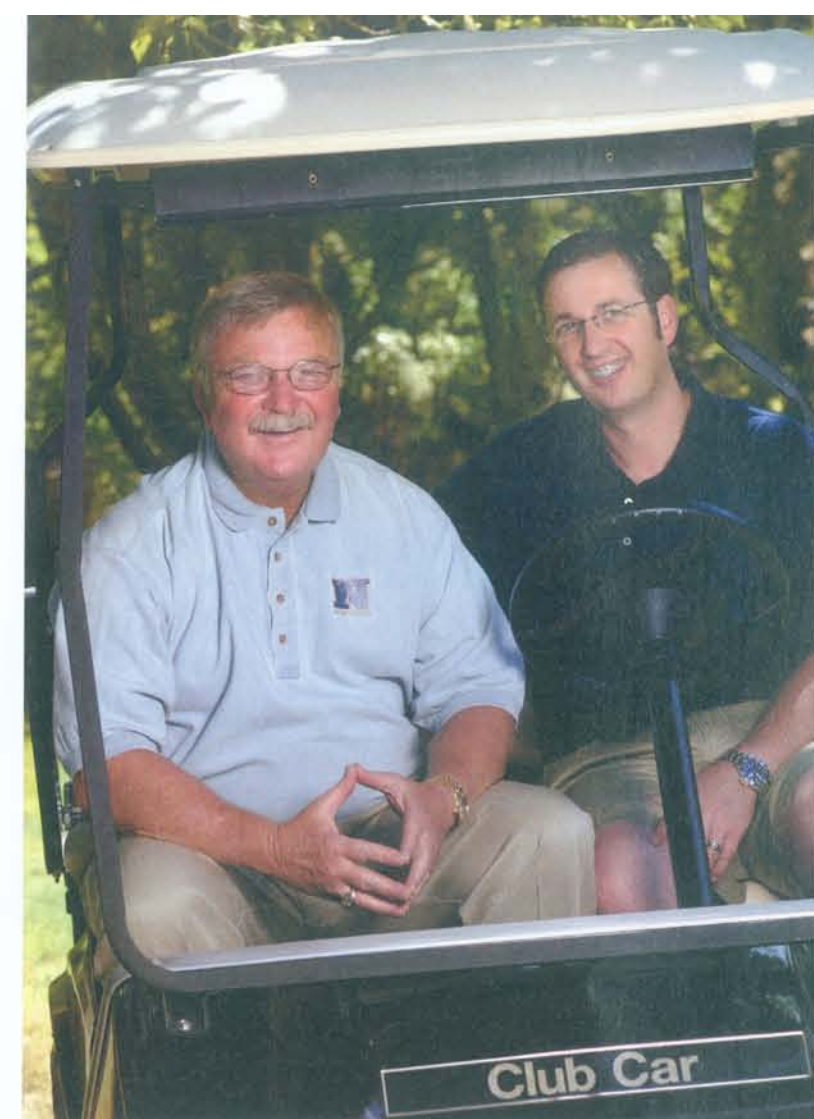
JF says the concept of families in dentistry is common, but increasingly, those partnerships are underscored by friction. His clearly is not, which he attributes in part to advice offered by a colleague.

“He said, ‘Your son’s a great dentist. Don’t try to teach him anything,’” JF says. “And you know what? He has actually taught me a lot.”

JT also heard feedback from his own peers.

“Many people warned my father would tell me what to do, that I’d have no freedom,” JT says. “But I’ve found just the opposite to be true. He has allowed me to spread my wings and truly grow the practice to a different level.”

While JT largely focuses on day-to-day operations, his father has spent the last several months campaigning for the presidency of the American Dental Association, which he, unfortunately, did not secure. While JT admires his father’s political aspirations, he says he’s not sure he’ll follow in those footsteps.



▲ *Fits like a glove* Father and son Joel E. and Joel T. Glover share a dental practice in Reno. They say the relationship works because they give each other freedom to grow.

“I live vicariously through my dad,” he says. “I see the good and the hard side of politics. I think I’d need thicker skin, which I don’t think I have.”

What he does have, however, is a wife and a daughter, Claire, who he says is firmly entrenched in the “terrible 3s.” “She questions everything,” JT offers.

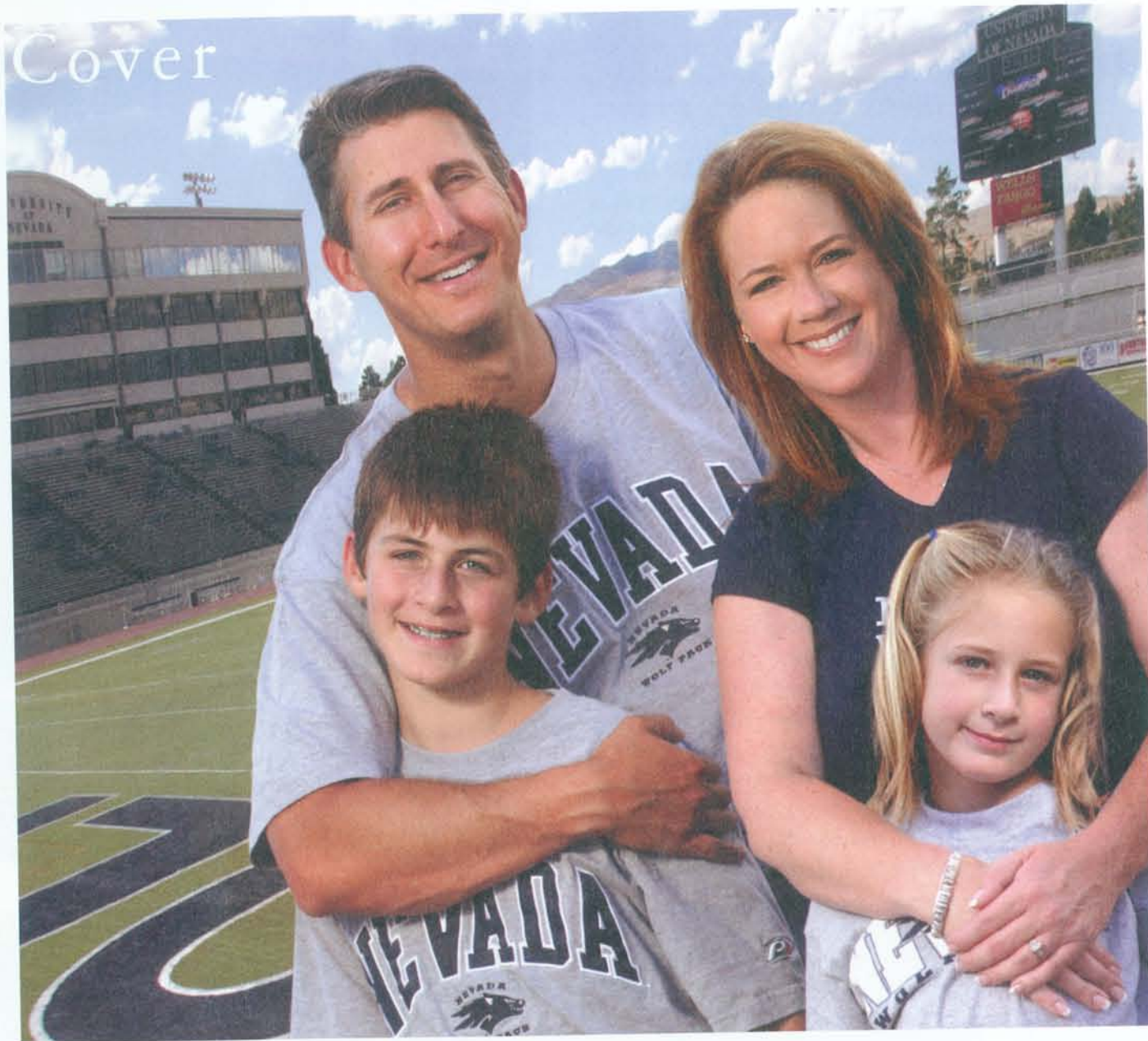
And if one could peer into a crystal ball, predicting the future for the Glover family, it’s easy to imagine Claire utilizing those questioning skills as she probes the mouth of a patient, numb with Novocain.

“I’d love it if Claire would join me in practice,” JT says. “It’s a super profession for women, and I think that female persona often handles some of the more threatening procedures with a softer touch.”

Hard to imagine a softer touch than those of the pair who says their patients are like family.

“Our patients take care of us, and we take care of them,” the elder Glover says. And, pointing to his son, he adds, “And of course, we take care of each other.”

Cover



A Playing the field Brian and Amy Lessinger with son Zack, 10, and daughter Sydney, 6, in the University of Nevada, Reno grandstands.

HOME SHARE

Brian and Amy Lessinger met on campus at the University of Nevada, Reno. Like many college sweethearts, they enjoyed cheering on the Pack, hanging out with friends, and living the life of a young couple in love.

"Except Amy isn't willing to wait for anything," Brian quips. "So about a year after we started dating, she started asking, 'What are we doing?' 'What's our future?'"

"I wasn't issuing an ultimatum, really," Amy clarifies. "I was just questioning whether or not we had a future."

Clearly, a future was in the cards for this couple, as one visit to Re/Max Realty Professionals in southwest Reno affirms. The couple co-owns the office — she as broker/owner and Realtor, he as owner and Realtor. They have been married for 13 years, and they made the plunge into a business partnership right after

the birth of their second child — Sydney, now 6 and in first grade. Their son, Zack, is a 10-year-old fifth-grader.

Their offices are mere steps away from each other, but on this day, our afternoon appointment is the first time either has seen the other.

"There are days when I don't see her until we get home," Brian says. "It sounds odd, but we schedule appointments with each other all the time — both for personal and professional reasons."

Date nights are planned routinely, but business often sneaks in as an unexpected side dish during a quiet dinner out.

"If we have to take a phone call, we do," Amy says. "I know we're violating some sacred relationship rule, but I just don't see how you can get around it. We talk business all the time."

Relationship lore may suggest that "happily married" and "business partners" are contradictory concepts, but this couple

feels confident in the arrangement.

"Ninety-eight percent of the time, it's really, really good," Amy says. "The remaining 2 percent, it's a doozy."

That potential for turbulence, they say, can mean that the concept may not work for everyone.

"You have to really, really examine your relationship," Amy says. "If you have two driver personalities, and there's only one steering wheel, you'll be in trouble."

"True," Brian says. "At work, she drives. At home, I drive."

They seem to defy tradition and gender stereotypes, as Brian often takes the lead in cooking meals, packing lunches, and tending to the children. He even drove a minivan, until "Amy made me get rid of it," Brian laughs.

And Amy?

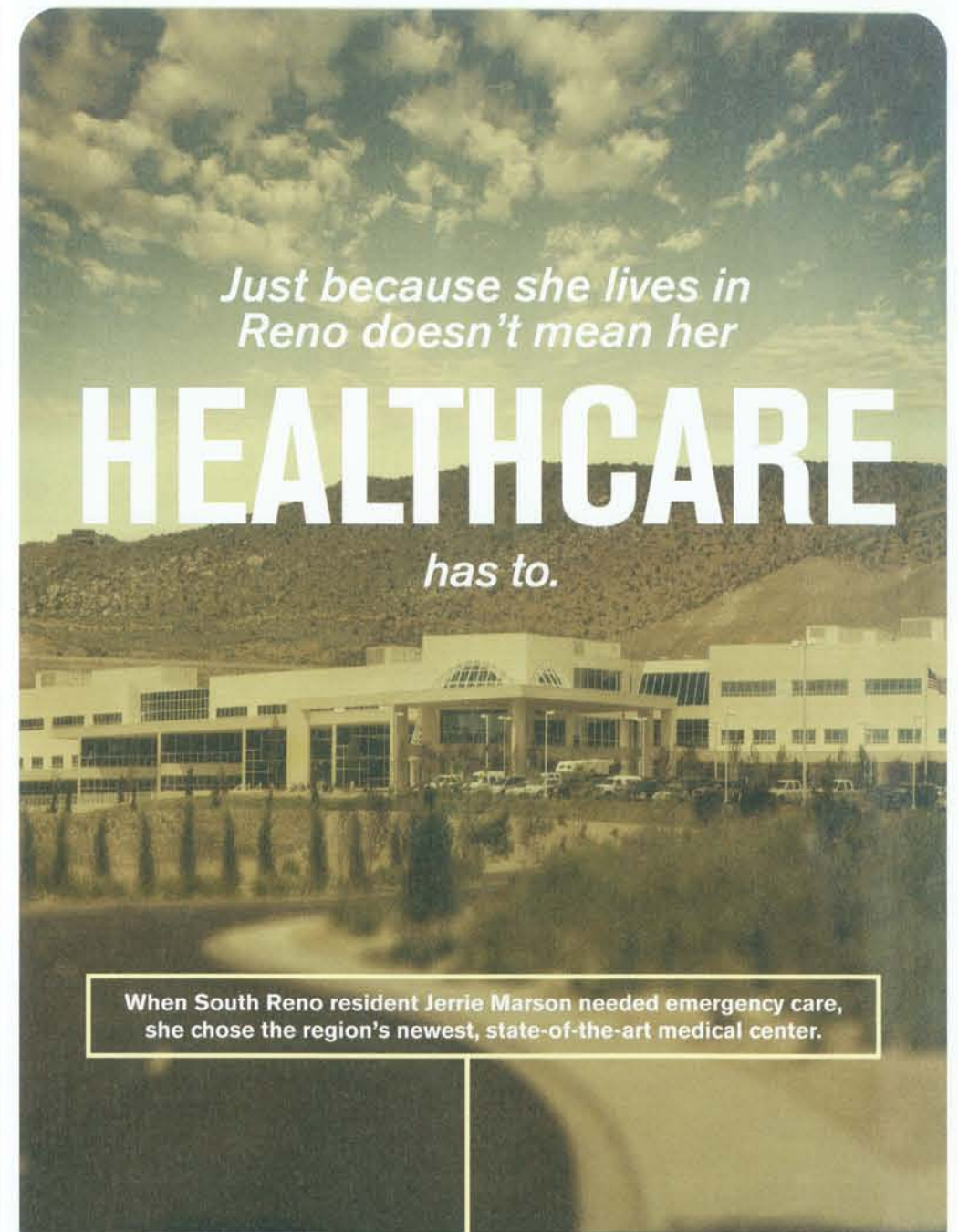
"She drives a truck, and she's the home-improvement master in our whome," he acknowledges.

Their professional partnership has allowed for benefits that typical working parents may not realize. She frequently works early, going in at about 6 a.m. but leaving early to pick up the children. He often comes in after dropping off the children at school and leaves later. Their staggered schedule is one-part sacrifice, many-parts beneficial.

"It requires a lot of juggling," Amy says. "But I really feel our kids get more face time with us than most kids get with their parents."

Perhaps the one thing the Lessingers do apart is what most families do together: vacationing. While they also take family vacations, they make sure to spend at least a week apart each enjoying their individual hobbies.

"I go golfing, she goes horseback riding," Brian says. "And the only rule: Don't call — and have fun, of course."



Just because she lives in Reno doesn't mean her

HEALTHCARE

has to.

When South Reno resident Jerrie Marson needed emergency care, she chose the region's newest, state-of-the-art medical center.



Jerrie and Al Marson

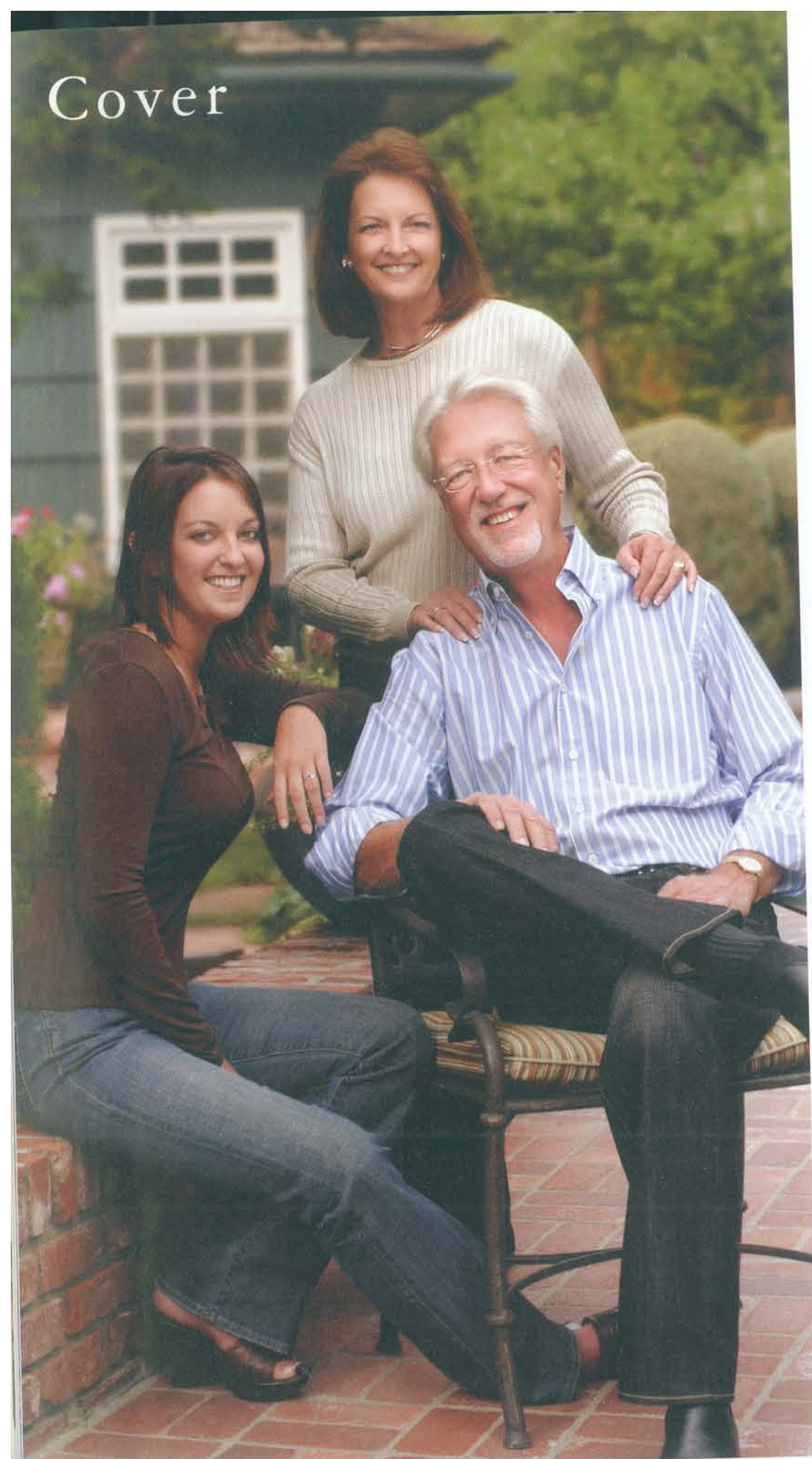
A few months ago, Jerrie Marson fell and badly injured her shoulder. When the paramedics arrived, she insisted on going to Carson Tahoe Regional Medical Center.

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FRIENDLY COMPETITION

For a slight twist on the concept of families working together, consider this: What if you owned a company that competed for the same services offered by your spouse's company? Then imagine your offspring also joining the business — first working for your company, then your spouse's. This family dynamic sets the stage for a conversation with Valerie, John, and Kelly Glenn.

John and Valerie met in the 1970s when both were working for KOLO Channel 8 — he as general sales manager, she as a college intern. Through a recommendation, he helped her secure employment at a big-time Bay Area advertising agency.

She returned to Reno a few years later with agency experience under her belt and an entrepreneurial spirit to foster, soon starting an advertising sales representation firm with a few partners. At the time, he already had started his own advertising agency, DRGM.

"It really was quite symbiotic," Valerie explains. "In fact, he was one of my clients."

They were married in 1981. But in 1989, she jumped headlong into competition with her husband when she joined her father's advertising agency, forming Rose/Glenn.

◀ Getting ahead in advertising

From left, Kelly, Valerie, and John Glenn share family and work lives. They also share a competitive spirit.

"Being diplomatic, our first consideration was that we just couldn't work together," John says.

"We both just like to do things our own ways," Valerie offers. "So I went for it, with one rule from very early in our marriage: We don't talk business at home."

Nor do they acknowledge the traditional concept of competition.

"Everything I'm doing is for the betterment of my family, and same with Valerie," John explains. "And since we have the same goal, how can that be competition?"

Logical enough, but reality dictates that the couple often goes head to head for the same clients. Their first experience was when the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada was seeking agency representation.

"You won that one," Valerie says. "But we won the next."

Fun typically evolves from this couple's collective competitive spirit — despite the scorecards. Case in point, Valerie recalls both agencies vying for one particularly big client, the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority — an extremely public, high-stakes competition.


"As every good businesswoman should, I had planned what I was wearing to the presentation," Valerie says. "When I came out of the closet that morning, John said, 'You're not going to wear that, are you?'"

Such spirit is a necessity when couples are competing. But when their daughter, Kelly, joined the family fracas, "spirit" reached a new level.

"My mom dragged — well, took — me to her events when I was 7," Kelly notes.

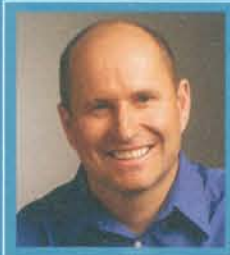
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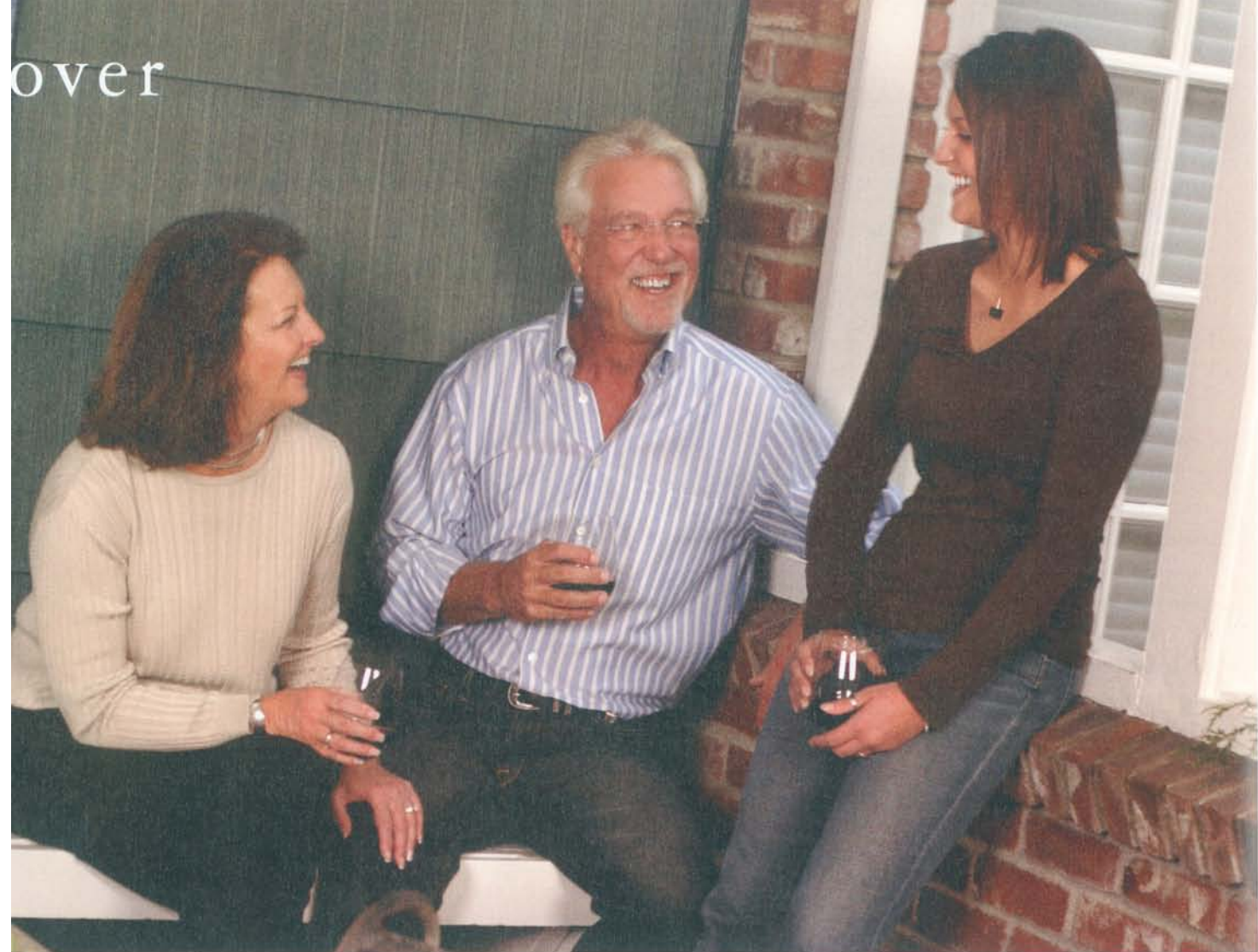
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A Moments to treasure Valerie and John Glenn have both employed their daughter, Kelly, in their businesses. Both parents saw her talents early on.

“We have the same goal, how can that be **competition?**”

— John Glenn

She formed an early affinity for the industry, and both parents saw her natural talents. Valerie was first to snap her up to work in her agency. Then upon her recent graduation from UNR, her father's company offered her a job.

“Neither parent has ever been my direct boss, which is why this works,” Kelly says. “Of course, everyone jokes about it, especially at Rose/Glenn — saying I went to the dark side — but it's always in good spirit.”

Kelly, playing every bit the part of a neutral third party, says she sees parts of both parents in her own personality.

“I'm really a 50/50 split,” she says.

“But in recent years, I've really seen more of her dad's personality coming through,” Valerie says.

“And that's a good thing, right?” John asks playfully.

“Of course it is, dear,” Valerie acknowledges.

As Kelly watches her parents, it is as though she is on the sidelines at Wimbledon, following the banter like a neon ball.

“We have fun, as you can see,” she says, coyly smiling.

“The bottom line: We have a blast together,” John says.

“There is a fundamental love and respect among us all, and we're all enjoying the ride.”

Mikalee Dable is a freelance writer and former managing editor of RENO Magazine. She met her husband while both were working on the air at a local radio station. Their professional partnership lasted all of a few months, but their marriage: a decade and counting.