

## Yes, I do have a normal family.....mostly!

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If you're a regular on my site, you've read stories about the loss of my beloved brother Paul. You've read some stories about the troubles with my Dad so please let me now say.....YES, I really do have a wonderful, grounded and loving family! ha! (You can put a face with a name at the bottom of this post!)

Let me introduce you:

You've read about my husband John. He's a wonderful man who truly adores our whole family! He is a second generation State Farm Agent and a third generation Baylor Grad. He's a sports freak....mostly football, but I'm guessing he'd watch competitive Bass fishing if that's all

he could find. He loves being involved in Fantasy Football. He's extremely handy to have around the house and probably owns at least one of every power tool made.

I have two children.

Kelsey, my daughter is 25 years old and is married to Daron. She is a Teacher and he is a Data Analyst. They live in an adorable house that completely reflects their artistic personalities! Kelsey is becoming quite the cook. Daron is a diehard KC Chief's fan and he is a pretty major sports hound too. Both Kelsey and Daron are musical and met one another because of music....but that is a story I will tell another time.

My son Clint is almost 20. He has an apartment in Dallas and is a student. He hopes to study film at the Dallas Art Institute soon. Clint is a free spirit who is also extremely creative. He is at a stage of life where his favorite hobby is socializing.

I have two wonderful step sons:

Thomas is 15 and plays football for his school. He loves sports and is a chip off the old block. He thinks he would like to attend Baylor to follow in his Dad and Grandfather's footsteps. Thomas and I enjoy cruising around in my convertible with the music up and we love watching movies together.

Lawson is 11 and he too is a little sports junkie! He loves baseball and is a great catcher! Lawson is learning to play the guitar and he also loves to cook! He is our little tool-man in the making because he LOVES doing things with power tools with his dad.

At home, the boys LOVE challenging John and I to games of Scrabble or dominos. Clint comes over most Sundays and plays games and watches movies with us. Thomas and Lawson especially love our annual trip to Silverton CO to 4-wheel and do outdoorsy-guy-stuff. They are crazy about doing things with their dad and he eats up every minute with them! We have a really wonderful family life that is somewhat reminiscent of the Cleaver's in a blended-dysfunctional sort of way. We actually sit together for meals and spend a lot of time doing "family" things. We have normal boys who zone out on video games during the week (actually, that includes Kelsey and Daron too) but on the weekends, we mostly have a "NO GAMING" zone around the house and we do things together.

My goal is to one day have Daron and Clint working for my company with hopes they'll take it over so I can retire. Lawson and Thomas stake their claim to leading either of our family businesses as well. John and I hope all 4 will take over our hard work one day while he and I travel!

My mom, Sherry, has been happily married to my Stepdad, Art for more than 25 years now. My mom was the anchor of our family growing up and I attribute my business sense and occasional spells of level-headedness to her! She is a Vice President of a private Bank and has been in Banking all of her career. My stepdad is an Architect by trade and has his own consulting firm. He also works with my company as our staff architect when we need his expertise. He is my real father in my heart and I have been blessed to have him for more than 25 years now. Both mom and Art are involved with the Boot Camp as Trainers.

I have some wonderful other family members:

My Grandmother, (Grams) Alice is one of my heroes. She lives in Tulsa OK and is still very active. My Grandfather, Ed would probably be my favorite human of all time. I absolutely adored him and he adored me! He passed away in 1997 leaving a legacy of the church he loved and built in Tulsa. He Pastored his church for more than 30 years before he retired. My Granddad also LOVED horses! He raised quarter horses and when he wasn't at the church, he did whatever people do with horses as much as he could! Their Church is still going and in 2007 celebrated it's 50th Anniversary. Grams still serves at the Church as the queen of hospitality! She still tends a large garden in the summers and makes the best peach cobbler on the planet!

My Sister-in-Law Melissa, remarried after my brother Paul died. She and Paul had a daughter, Rachel. She and her husband Richard, have a son Marshall who is 15. Richard lost his battle with Diabetes in 2004. He was a wonderful man, husband and father man who loved his wife

and kids and accepted us all as his own family. Melissa is a music therapist who oversees the needs of students in an entire school district.

Of course, there is my niece Rachel. She is a full time student now and hopes to one day be a paramedic. She is a bright talented and very witty girl who has streak of independence just like her Aunt Dana. I love that about her! My Nephew Marshall is a very talented musician but hasn't quite figured out what he wants to be when he grows up!

I have wonderful cousins that I adore! See the photo below of the "cousins" at my Grandparent's 50th Church anniversary. These are all the cousin's with the exception of course of my Brother and also, my cousin Mike who lives in Denton but couldn't be there. In the photo are my cuz's, Kris, Patricia and Phillip along with our sweet Grandmother (Grams). Kris and Patricia are sister's. They have a brother Mike and are the children of my mom's sister, Judy. Kris and Patricia are probably more talented than any of the rest of us. Kris paints, draws and designs amazing interiors. Patricia is a paralegal by day and a culinary whiz by night. My cousin Phillip is the only child of my mother's baby brother and my favorite Uncle, Jim. Phillip is the brains of the family with his 2 degrees in things I can't even explain and is also musically gifted as a drummer!

My cousin's and I are all artistic in one way or another though the common denominator in our family would probably be music. Almost every member is musically talented and we all cut our teeth on Southern Gospel music. Today, our musical choices probably vary from head-bangin rock to classical but we all love music.

I have an adorable Father-in-law, John (Sam) who lives in South Texas and stays extremely busy working disaster recovery with Texas Baptist Men. He runs circles around us and we marvel at how he just goes and goes. John talks to him almost daily just to try to keep up with where he is.

Family is so important to me. Through the tragic loss of my brother I learned to LOVE with my whole heart.....all the time! I try every day to take nothing and no one for granted and never let a chance pass to say "I love you". It's easy to focus on the losses and family tragedy, especially when you're a story teller like me, So I write this special entry to let you know that I am blessed with a wonderful life and family!

Here are some photos from my family album.