

Five Forks

Neighbors

December 2023



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The Adleys:
**THE GIFT OF FAMILY
& COMMUNITY**

The Adleys:

THE GIFT OF FAMILY & COMMUNITY

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Photography by Darien Marie Photography
and submitted by the Hardaway Family



**WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK
MCKINNEY MAZDA FOR BRINGING
YOU THIS MONTH'S COVER STORY**

Brigitte and Brandon Adley met on New Year's Eve 1994 in Shreveport, LA, the result of a blind date arranged by mutual friends. If they're being honest, neither Brigitte nor Brandon really wanted to go on the date, and they both considered canceling altogether. A cancellation wasn't in the stars for these two, though. Brigitte and Brandon rang in the New Year together, and they've been inseparable ever since. They married in 1999 and are each other's biggest supporters.

One of the many things that bind Brigitte and Brandon together is that they share a solid work ethic. They both find great fulfillment in working hard and helping others.

Brandon graduated from LSU Baton Rouge with a bachelor's degree in zoology and a minor in chemistry. He went on to earn a graduate degree from the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine. During his undergraduate years, he also served in the Army National Guard during Operation Desert Storm. Brandon has over 20 years of experience working as a small animal veterinarian in NC and SC. With his wide range of experience and business expertise, Brandon recently opened his own veterinary practice in the Five Forks area. River Oak Vet Clinic opened in July 2023, keeping him (and Brigitte) very busy in the very best way.

Brigitte graduated from LSU Shreveport with a bachelor's degree in marketing, concentrating in human resource management. Brigitte is skilled at many things; being idle is not one of them. While still in college, Brigitte was hired as a campaign scheduler for Brandon's father, who was running for governor of Louisiana at the time. When the campaign concluded, she took an internship with The American Diabetes Association (ADA), which led to a full-time position after graduation. Working for the ADA is what ultimately brought the Adleys to Greenville.

"We knew when we came to the Upstate to visit for my job that this was where we wanted to put down roots," Brigitte tells me.

Brigitte stayed with the ADA for a few more years, then started her own business, a gift and interior store called Satter's Creek. She also co-owned Southern Panache Events with good friend Kim Carmichael and worked in the non-profit sector with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

In 2011, after 12 years of marriage, Brigitte became pregnant. She and Brandon were beyond happy, imagining what life would

be like with their new baby. The happiness was short-lived, however, as, sadly, Brigitte miscarried. The loss was very difficult for the couple, and it was hard to think about trying again and risking another loss. For the first time, Brigitte and Brandon considered adoption as a way to have a child.

Having just seen the family of Brigitte's close friend and business partner, Kim, go through the adoption process, the Adleys had a bit of an idea of what would lie ahead. Once they made the decision to move forward, things went very quickly.

"In February 2012, we began the home study process and working with the law office of Ray Godwin," Brigitte tells me. "Much to our delight and surprise, within a few weeks, we were matched with a birth mother in Auburn Hills, MI."

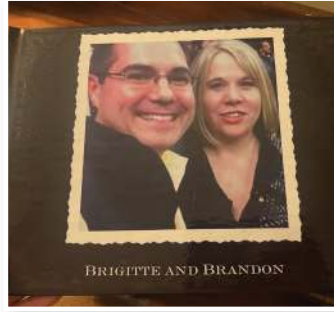
Brigitte traveled early to Michigan so she could be present when her daughter's birth mother went into labor. Brandon arrived in Michigan on the day of their daughter's birth. Maddie Grace was born on May 22, 2012.

"We are beyond grateful to Maddie Grace's birth mother for blessing us with the greatest gift on earth," Brigitte says.

As part of the adoption process, Brigitte and Brandon created a book for prospective birth mothers to share more about their lives, their upbringing, and the life they hoped to provide for a child. They'd been told that often a birth mother will connect with what may seem like an insignificant detail when considering a family

for her baby. For the Adleys, Maddie Grace's birth mother took it as a sign that her baby would be with a family that included the names Brandon and Izzie (Brigitte and Brandon's goddaughter is named Izzie). Those are the same names of her own children that were in her custody. The adoption book is now a beautiful record of Brigitte and Brandon's life before their daughter joined them and the hopes and dreams that they had for their family then and now.

The first page of Brigitte and Brandon's adoption book is a letter to the prospective birth mother, and starts with, "Thank you so much for your courage." The miracle of Maddie Grace's life and the sacrifice her mother made is not lost on the Adley family. Maddie Grace is fully aware of the circumstances that brought her to her family and



The cover of Brigitte and Brandon's adoption book



MG is often a helper with Brigitte's many volunteer activities



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entertaining and a good gathering!”

The Adleys have a handful of beliefs that guide them. They believe in finding the positive in every situation. “It’s not always easy, but it truly makes a difference in how your day can go!” Brigitte says.

They never give up. There’s an understanding that you must earn what you get. Above all, they strongly believe in doing things together and supporting each other as a family. Whether it was Brigitte’s work events, her volunteer commitments, MG’s activities, or Brandon’s vet clinic, they take a team approach with everything.

“Brandon and I both learned much of what we know in life from being involved with our parents’ work and businesses. We love having the opportunity to involve and teach MG about life and work by engaging her in the day-to-day work and volunteering that we do,” Brigitte says.



her parents are willing and ready to talk with her any time she has questions. While their situation may be unconventional, every day together as a family is a blessing, and it is clear that Maddie Grace is right where she was meant to be.

Today, Maddie Grace (MG) is a thriving 6th grader with boundless energy and the same solid work ethic as her mom and dad. A gymnast since the age of 3, she is a member of the Optional Gymnastics Team at Acrosmith Gymnastics. She competes as a Level 6 gymnast and spends over 15 hours a week in the gym, loving every minute. If you ask her, she would say that she wants to be a gymnastics coach one day. She also competes on swim team in the summer and just started playing violin as part of her school electives.

“MG loves to have people around,” Brigitte says. “She’s just like her mom and enjoys



Brigitte has been extremely active with the PTA at MG’s schools, Oakview Elementary and Riverside Middle (she served two terms as President at Oakview and is President-Elect at Riverside). She’s put her event planning talents to use for many people and organizations in our area. Brandon has gotten to know countless families as he has cared for their much-loved pets.

The Adleys’ team approach and supportive mindset spill over into their work within the community as well, which is something they’ve seen come full circle. All the connections they’ve made over the years they’ve been in Five Forks have provided them with an incredible support system for their daughter, their business, and the beautiful, busy life they’ve built together.

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