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Bradbury a man of many parts: County engineering employee also a chaplain, announcer at L.C. Bird 6

BY AMANDA CREASEY ON OCTOBER 2, 2018

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ABOVE: Bradbury is pictured with a U.S. flag his daughter gave him after she served in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is wearing football championship rings from Bird High School and a shirt from his daughter's volleyball team.

Dallas Bradbury is reluctant to talk about himself, but ask those who know him and they are eager to sing his praises.

Bradbury performs duties as chaplain through the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at L.C. Bird High School.

"He has an especially soft heart toward kids [who]are having a rough time, and he helps them and their families however he can," his daughter Callie Gajdica said. "He is always encouraging others to do better and to depend on God."

When pressed, Bradbury will tell the story of a good deed or two.

"Last year, we had a football player who needed a certain type of brace, but his family couldn't afford it. I took care of that," Bradbury said. "I talked to some people I know, and we worked it out."

Because of Bradbury's efforts, the student was able to get the brace he needed. Principal Adrienne Blanton said Bradbury "has immersed himself in the Bird culture and supports all of our athletes in growing their love and belief

in themselves, their sport, and their faith. He is a true Skyhawk at heart, and he is a valued member of our Skyhawk family.”

In addition to his role as chaplain, Bradbury has been the public address announcer for the Lady Skyhawks volleyball team for as long as his daughter, Jessica Bradbury, can remember.

“He was such a big part of my volleyball life at Bird, as well as part of my teammates’ lives,” she said. Bradbury teared up when he related the story of one volleyball player on his daughter’s team. He had taken his daughter and her teammate to a pancake supper fundraiser for the football team. “I was hugging both of them,” he said, and when someone asked his daughter’s friend if Bradbury was her father, Bradbury recalled her answer: “I don’t have a father, but Mr. Bradbury is the closest thing I have to a dad.’ I still think about that,” Bradbury said.

Bradbury holds a degree in business management and economics, and although he began his career as a stockbroker, he now works as assistant drainage superintendent for the Chesterfield County Engineering Department. His true calling, though, is helping others in any way he can.

“I know that God’s spiritual gift to me is encouragement and I try to do that everywhere I go,” he said. He credits Ron Woody, his former coach and high school teacher, with helping him realize this calling.

“Coach Woody was always there for me,” Bradbury said. “He always called me back to reality and refocused me. He was a man outside my home [who]cared about me, and I try to be that for others. That’s his legacy. I owe him a lot.”

According to Blanton, Bradbury succeeds in his efforts to encourage others. “We are truly blessed at Bird High School to have Dallas Bradbury as our chaplain,” she said. “He is a great role model for our students, and he lets all of them know they are loved, and he is proud of them.”

Bradbury has done his best by his own brood as well. Bradbury is divorced, and said he raised his children on his own for the past 11 or 12 years. “That taught me humility,” he said. “I had to learn to go out and buy sports bras for my youngest daughter — and all the other stuff that comes with raising girls.”

He is a busy man. Bradbury has announced every Lady Skyhawks volleyball game for over a decade, acted as chaplain for high school sports teams, and faithfully attended services at Second Branch Baptist Church for the last 15 years. When asked how he manages all his activities while working a full-time job for the county, Bradbury said matter-of-factly, “I’m most cheerful when I’m busy.” Then he added with a chuckle, “My boss likes to say, ‘an idle

Dallas is the devil's tool.' You know the saying, 'If you wanna get anything done, give it to a busy person?' I've always been [able]to make things work out."

Bradbury looks up to Winston Churchill "because he stood alone to save the world." Bradbury named one of his cats Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, or Winston for short.

Despite his daughter's suspicion that he would be reluctant to admit his love for cats, Bradbury said, "You don't really own cats. They're there because they like you."

In addition to Churchill, Bradbury's children are his heroes. Gajdica, who now lives in Colorado, served in the Army and spent a year each in Iraq and Afghanistan. At one point, she even volunteered to serve in place of a newly-married soldier and a soldier whose wife was about to deliver their first child.

"She's the real hero to me," Bradbury said, pulling a coin from his wallet. It bears the 23rd Psalm, and Bradbury explained that his daughter gave it to him just before she was deployed in 2011. He has carried it with him ever since. "All of my kids have been overcomers, and I am so proud of them for that."

His son, Daniel Bradbury, remembers his dad's frequent advice to him, quoted from the film A League of Their Own: "There's no crying in baseball." Daniel Bradbury explained, "It was a way to show courage and humility to me in not only sports, but life as well."

Jessica describes her dad as "unstoppable and courageous," a description that jives with the life philosophy Bradbury espouses: "You don't give up. You don't quit. It's hard to beat a person [who]won't quit. You keep working. You trust God for the outcome."

"I admire many things about my dad," Daniel said, "but the biggest thing is the size of his heart."

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6 COMMENTS

ELISE PAILTHORPE on OCTOBER 2, 2018 6:24 PM · EDIT

Dallas Bradbury is a gem of a man. I'm blessed to call him a very dear friend!

DAVE MOSS on OCTOBER 2, 2018 7:40 PM · EDIT

The best friend anyone could have.. He has always stood by me. Thank you my friend.

ROGER J. CLIFTON on OCTOBER 2, 2018 10:10 PM · EDIT

I have the privilege of being a co-worker of Mr. Bradbury. If ever there was a selfless person, it would be Dallas Bradbury. He is a pleasure to work with and be around. Kudos to you for all that you do sir!

LORRAINE. CARY on OCTOBER 2, 2018 11:01 PM · EDIT

Dallas is a wonderful and caring person.

PAM CAHOON on OCTOBER 5, 2018 12:28 PM · EDIT

WOW!! VERY TOUCHING

CONNE JARRELLE on OCTOBER 5, 2018 7:09 PM · EDIT

A amazing person indeed.. I know when my Dad passed, he gave me a hug at the funeral home, as if it was my Dad himself. He deserves every bit of this regonition and then some, in all that he does for all

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