

David Cox interviewed by Wanda Bruce Graham - August 26, 2013



David Cox joined the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity of Williamson County in July 2013. He was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana where he graduated from Belaire High School in 1984. He attended Louisiana State University and graduated in 1988 summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance. He then moved to Washington D.C. to attend law school, graduating cum laude from Georgetown University Law Center in 1991. David is a member of the Nashville Bar Association, Tennessee Bar Association, Texas Bar Association, and the American Bar Association.

After graduating from law school, David Cox began his career as an attorney with a law firm in Dallas, Texas. David left Texas in 1994 to join the firm of Harwell Howard Hyne Gabbert and Manner—also known as h3gm - in Nashville, Tennessee. David became a partner at h3gm in 1998 and has served on the h3gm Executive Committee for several years. From his company's website I found these words, "David Cox is a sought-after adviser to senior executives, boards of directors, and private equity investors in public companies, as well as emerging and growth private and public companies. He focuses his practice on mergers and acquisitions, private equity transactions and equity offerings. When faced with game-changing events, David's clients look to him for advice on how to strategically grow and finance their businesses." His recognitions include an AV rating by Martindale-Hubbell; Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business - Corporate/M&A (2005-2013); and Best Lawyers in America - Corporate Law, Corporate Governance Law, Mergers & Acquisitions Law, Securities/Capital Markets Law (2005 - 2012).

David met his wife and best friend, Lisa Ellis Cox, during their first year of law school at Georgetown Law School Center. Lisa practiced law in Buffalo, Dallas and at the Nashville law firm of Levine Mattson until their first child, Spencer was born. Today, they live in Franklin with their 16-year old son, Spencer, and their 13-year old daughter, Grayson. Spencer attends Franklin High School where he is in the IB program and is involved with Habitat High. He also is an avid photographer. Grayson attends Grassland Middle School and is active in Model UN. She loves all things British, including Dr. Who, Sherlock, and the "famous" English bloggers Phil and Dan. The entire family came out on August 24, 2013 to assist at the HFHWC Board and Staff Build Day on the Fall Community Build.

Laughter is the central feature of the Cox house. David admits that it's a goofy household filled with any antic that is likely to bring a laugh, including bad singing, worse dancing, talking animals and nutty special effects, with Lisa occasionally providing the only semblance of adult supervision. Favorite activities include a vacation to anywhere. Favorite vacation spots include Disney; the beach at Indialantic, Florida; and hiking destinations in Alaska and Yosemite. They also have travelled extensively throughout Europe.

When asked what have he has done that no one would guess by looking at him, David laughed and said "Well, I learned how to ripstick with my kids. A ripstick essentially is a two

wheeled skateboard that the kids learned how to ride in a day and a half. It took me a month of pain and suffering to stay on it but now we can ripstick together! I also had a string of odd jobs when I was young, including valet parking cars at a hospital, selling knives door to door, and washing the same 32 cars every day on a dirt and gravel used car lot.”

David and his family attend First Presbyterian Church in Franklin where they enjoy the inspiring messages from Pastor Chris Joiner. David and his family are long-time supporters of SchoolAid International and other local organizations that focus on improving opportunities for children in the Nashville area.

David Cox's Habitat experience began on builds in Dallas, Texas during the early 1990's. In 2000, on its 25th anniversary of being in business, h3gm sponsored an entire home build for Habitat for Humanity of Davidson County. When asked about his favorite part of the Habitat volunteer experience David said, “Meeting the families is very special. They work hard and have great stories and determination. To meet and work with the families on the builds is so much fun; you get to see just how much the families want to better their lives through home ownership. For instance, Kelvin (our newest homeowner) was out last Saturday working as hard as anyone on his house, as well as constantly explaining how to do certain things that he learned from his work on other Habitat homes. I also love having my kids participate. I want them to understand how fortunate we are and that every single one of us has been blessed in some way with the support and encouragement of friends, family, and community to get us to where we are. I want them to see and experience the value of helping our Williamson County neighbors reach their goals.”