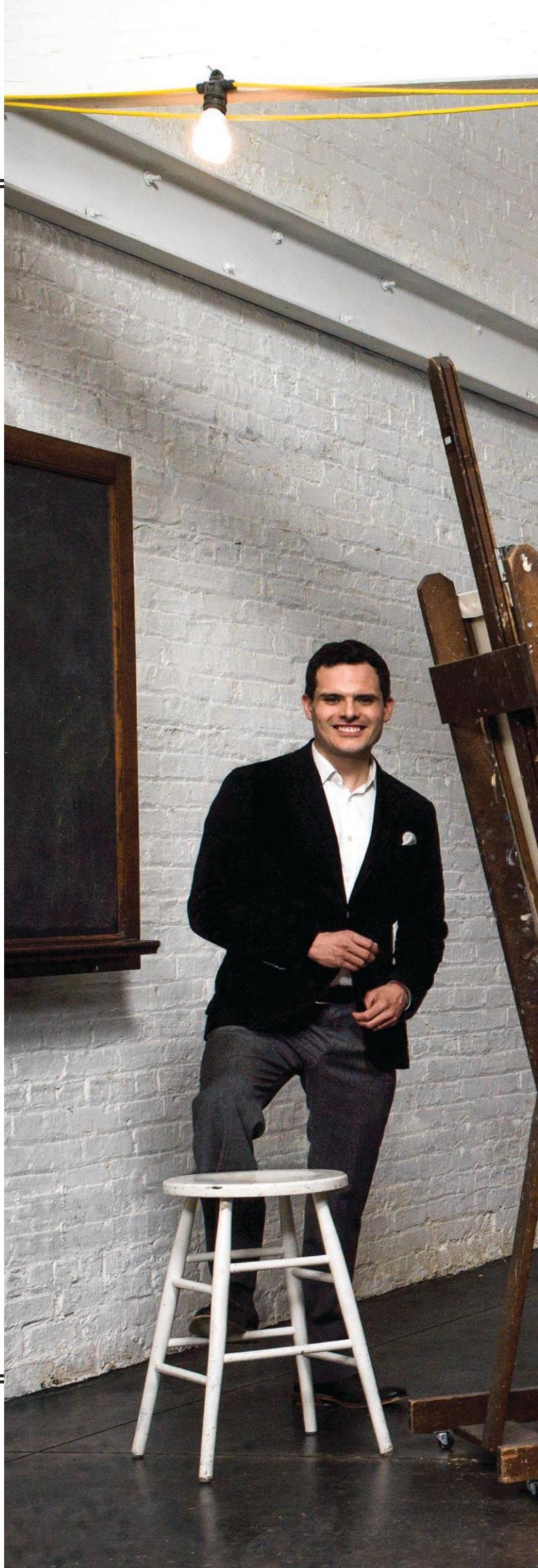


# Chicago's Power Families

*CALL IT INFLUENCE. CALL IT TRADITION. CALL IT STYLE. THESE LEADING CLANS HAVE THAT AND MORE. FROM THE ESTABLISHED POLITICOS AND THEIR SCIONS TO DINING DYNASTIES TO FRESH YOUNG FAMILIES STRIVING TO BETTER THE WORLD, HERE'S A LOOK AT THE TRIBES THAT MAKE CHICAGO A FAMILY AFFAIR.*

*By Laura Hine, Korey Huyler, Andrea Mills,  
Katie Anne Orr, Sarah Ryan, Jessie Sardina and Lisa Shames*

*Portraits by Frank Ishman  
Hair and makeup by Jennifer Brown*



## MEDIA MAVENS

*The Ponce family  
communicates creativity.*

The Ponce family has charisma in spades, and that isn't surprising given that the family is a mini media empire in the Windy City. Phil Ponce, current host of *Chicago Tonight* and former supporting anchor on *The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer*, and his wife, Ann, a portrait and landscape artist, have clearly instilled a love of creativity in their three children. Daughter Maria is an established photographer (she's shot everyone from Joe Manganiello to Common),

while sons Anthony and Dan have followed in Phil's journalistic footsteps on NBC 5 and WGN-TV, respectively (you probably saw Dan, also the founder of a capella group Straight No Chaser, belting out his version of "Let it Go" on air during last year's brutal winter).

Being in the same field doesn't lead to competition, however; it is a source of inspiration. "I've done joint art shows with my mom, fashion shoots with my husband and sister-in-law, and my brothers perform together and co-host events with my dad," says Maria. "It leads to some cool ways to connect as a family." —SR



ON THE FAMILY STAGE  
From left: Dan Ponce,  
Ann Ponce, Maria Ponce  
Berre, Phil Ponce and  
Anthony Ponce



**HORSE SENSE**  
Michelle Durpetti, a  
strong advocate for  
horse rescue  
organizations, pictured  
with her horse Reese  
and her parents, Marion  
and Tony Durpetti

## Matriarchal Legacy

*The city's oldest steakhouse  
is a Durpetti family tradition.*

If you know Gene & Georgetti, you know Durpetti. The city's oldest steakhouse, born in 1941, was passed down in 1989 from Gene and Ida Michelotti to daughter Marion and her husband, Tony Durpetti. With a bedrock of quality and consistency (and strong women), the legacy restaurant has seen the likes of Frank Sinatra and Lucille Ball throughout the years—and now it is being passed to the next generation: daughter Michelle Durpetti. With a thriving event-planning company and philanthropic heart, she's already become a beloved fixture in the city. In 2014 alone, her company helped raise more than \$350,000 for various charities. "I grew up with two parents who made a few things absolute priorities," Michelle says. "One: Remember to be thankful every day. Two: Hard work results in more blessings. Three: Whenever possible, give back to your community and to those who are not as blessed as you." —KAO



Gov. Bruce Rauner, the first Republican elected as Illinois governor in more than a decade, and wife Diana share a moment during last year's hectic campaign season.

## NEWLY ELECTED

*Bruce and Diana Rauner have arrived.*

On Jan. 12, multimillionaire Republican businessman Bruce Rauner became the 42nd governor of his native state of Illinois. Armed with an MBA from Harvard, and loaded from his investment-company history (he was a founding partner of GTCR), Rauner has pledged to reform Illinois and the way it does business. Along with his wife, Diana, a Democrat, they have contributed millions of dollars to charter schools and education programs, including the Ounce of Prevention Fund, the nonprofit organization where Diana serves as the unpaid president. The Rauners own nine homes, but they have chosen to relocate to Springfield to live in the executive mansion. Currently, the decrepit Civil War-era home is in desperate need of repair. The Rauners will foot the majority of the bill themselves to restore the historical property—you could say they are already reforming Illinois one household at a time. —AM



From left: Kendall Wirtz, James Wirtz, Art Wirtz, Rocky Wirtz, Danny Wirtz and Hillary Wirtz

## CHICAGO'S WINNING TEAM

*Wirtz family is beloved for championship Blackhawks.*

Currently No. 64 on *Forbes'* list of richest American families, with an estimated \$4.2 billion, the Wirtz family earned its money through real estate and a nationwide wine, spirits and beer distributorship.

It's best known, however, for its ownership of Stanley Cup champions the Chicago Blackhawks. The wins in 2010 and 2013 ensured the Wirtz family's position as both beloved and powerful in a city otherwise starved for recent titles. The family enjoys the city's affection also because of the generous Blackhawks Charities program, which makes grants to organizations all over town, making the Blackhawks not just a winning but also a giving team. —KH

## DIVERSE DYNASTY

*The colorful Pritzker clan has diverse wealth, interests and giving.*

In Chicago, the Pritzkers seem to be everywhere. The family's fortune started with the Pritzker & Pritzker law firm nearly a century ago and grew with the founding of Hyatt Hotels Corporation to now be worth an estimated \$30 billion. Benefactors to many, its philanthropy runs as deep as its pockets—the Pritzker Pavilion, Pritzker School of Medicine and the Pritzker Galleries of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism—to name just a few of their contributions to Chicago. —KAO



From left: David Morton, Amy Morton, Debbie Morton, Michael Morton and Stephanie Morton

## A FAMILY OF FOODIES

*For the Morton family, restaurant innovation spans generations.*

The Morton family is one of Chicago's great restaurant dynasties. Late patriarch Arnie was the right-hand man of Hugh Hefner during the launch of the *Playboy* empire and opened Arnie's and Morton's; daughter Amy currently owns and runs Evanston's award-winning Found Kitchen and Social House; and son David (with business partner Michael Kornick) started DMK Restaurants, which includes the uberpopular DMK Burger Bar, Fish Bar, Ada Street, MK, County Barbeque and Henry's Swing Club. Other notable children of Arnie include Peter, who started Hard Rock Cafe and Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, and Michael (co-founder of N9NE restaurant group). Needless to say: This family knows how to run a successful restaurant.

And, in this food-crazy city, the Mortons' restaurants set the standard. —KH

## ===== HOLLYWOOD CRED =====

*Acting is all in the (Cusack) family.*

The Cusack clan is all about show business: Late patriarch Dick Cusack was an actor (*The Fugitive*) and writer, while son John and his siblings, Joan, Ann, Bill and Susie, are all in the family business. John, one of Chicago's most famous actors, was nominated for a Golden Globe for his role in *High Fidelity* (which he also co-wrote) and is often spotted at sporting events and restaurants around town. Joan owns Old Town's Judy Maxwell Home and is raising her two sons in Chicago with husband Dick Burke, the former president of apartments.com. "The Cusacks' contribution to Chicagoland has been extensive in so many areas, as recognized by their receiving the Commitment to Chicago Award in 2000," says longtime friend Joyce Piven. —KH



SIBLING REVELRY Brother and sister sharing a Hollywood moment

## ===== POWER BROTHERS =====

*The Hynes brothers wield behind-the-scenes influence.*

Chicagoans may not realize how the Hynes family has played a role in their daily lives. Pensions, schools, taxes, even our favorite goat-cursed Chicago baseball team—they have all been impacted by decisions made by brothers Matt and Dan. Matt was Mayor Rahm Emanuel's director of legislative counsel, and Dan served as Illinois comptroller before running for Senate (he finished second in the primary election, leaving room for a win by a certain up-and-coming community organizer). With a political pedigree passed down by their father, Thomas Hynes—former Cook County assessor, Illinois Senate president and Chicago mayoral candidate—the brothers have long been part of the inner circle that gets things done in this city. Though they've since moved into the big-time financial sector, Matt at Grosvenor Capital Management and Dan at Ariel Investments, the word is that, when they want it, they still have the mayor's ear. —KAO

## ===== PRESIDENTIAL CLOUT =====

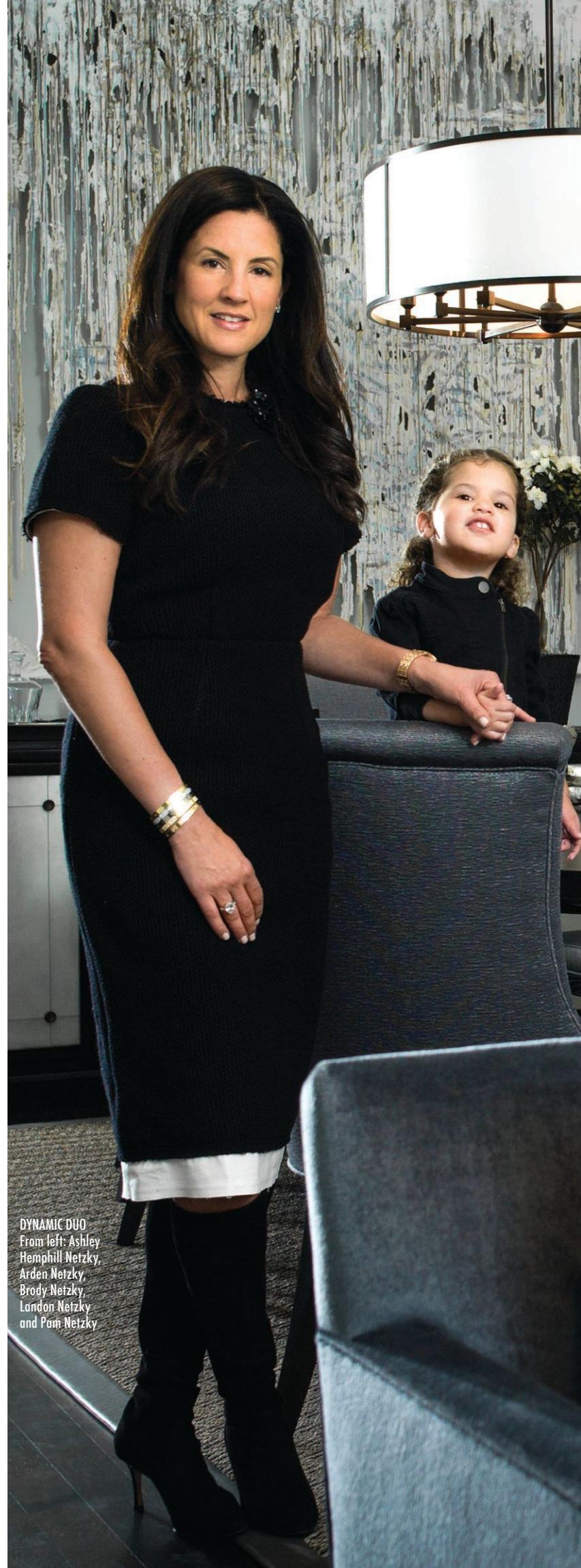
*Chicago awaits the Obamas' return.*

While they may be the nation's ultimate power couple, Chicagoans will always claim Barack and Michelle Obama as our own. And rightfully so, given the couple's deep Chicago roots; despite the lengthy hiatus in D.C., the longtime Hyde Park residents—who fell in love after meeting at a downtown law firm—still maintain their home here. As there is no doubt their good work will continue once he's out of office, Chicago can't wait to welcome this power couple—and potentially the Obama Presidential Library—back to the city. —SR



FIRST FAMILY The Obamas will be on their way to Chicago soon—we promise!

OBAMA FAMILY PHOTO BY BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/GTY IMAGES; CUSACK PHOTO BY FRAZER HARRISON/GTY IMAGES FOR RELATIVITY MEDIA; NETZKY FAMILY PHOTO BY FRANK ISHIVAN



DYNAMIC DUO  
From left: Ashley Hemphill Netzky, Arden Netzky, Brody Netzky, Landon Netzky and Pam Netzky



## TASTEFUL GIVING

*The Netzky family is popping up in influence.*

Pam Netzky, a savvy health-food entrepreneur, and Ashley Hemphill Netzky, a philanthropist-slash-hockey mom, are a power couple to be reckoned with, and a fresh addition to the ever-changing landscape of influential Chicago families. Pam is the co-founder of SkinnyPop, the guilt-free version of our city's favorite snack—a craze that has “taken off like a rocket ship” according to Pam and continues to grow in popularity among calorie counters and ceaseless munchers alike. Ashley retired from her 16-year career in investment banking to take care of the couple’s three kids and divides her days between shuttling miniature athletes to practice and flexing her philanthropic muscle (she’s on the board of the Chicago Children’s Museum, is a trustee of the Erikson Institute and chairs the Lynn Sage Cancer Research Foundation).

And the kids—Brody, 8; Landon, 6; and Arden, 3—are already joining in, from participating in the LSCRF’s annual 5K and frequenting the museum with Ashley to winding down with Pam on the golf course. —JS



From left: Jerrod Melman, Richard Melman, Molly Melman and R.J. Melman—the family who loves to entertain (and feed) you!

## AN APPETITE FOR SUCCESS

*The Melman family rules Chicago's dining scene.*

With its hippie-dippie decor and tongue-in-cheek menu, Lincoln Park's R.J. Grunts doesn't look like much of a trendsetter. But what started as an offbeat idea in 1971 for a casual, hip and healthy eatery by Richard Melman and his then-partner, Jerry Orzoff, helped launch Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, a nationwide mini-empire of almost 100 restaurants, ranging from all-American burgers (M Burger) and Spanish tapas (Cafe Ba-Ba-Reeba!) to sophisticated seafood (Shaw's Crab House). Rich, who got his start working in his family's deli business when he was 14, now works alongside his children. R.J., Jerrod and Molly have made a name for themselves, first with Hub 51 and more recently with RPM Steak. As a family, the Melmans have an uncanny knack for knowing what we want to eat before we even know it ourselves. "A leader, innovator and creative entrepreneur, Rich Melman's impact on the restaurant industry is indelible, both locally and across the nation," says Sam

Toia, president and CEO of the Illinois Restaurant Association. "With Rich's children following in his footsteps, the Melman family remains at the forefront of the industry." —LS

## RAISING CAPITAL

*The Reynolds family rises from the South Side.*

Though the Reynoldses are wrapped up in civic engagements and high finance, it's with humility and remembrance of their roots. James Reynolds

Jr., founder, chairman and CEO of Loop Capital, gives profoundly as thanks for all he's received. Reynolds once turned over a \$100,000 stipend to a nonprofit providing scholarships to youths raised in public housing—similar to his own upbringing—and he's currently working on a \$50 million anti-violence fundraising initiative for the city. Along the way, he's formed a deep friendship with President Obama—running Obama's first (and only unsuccessful) campaign. Reynolds and wife Sandy have three children, and, not surprisingly, the two oldest are reportedly already looking at pursuing careers in finance after college. —KAO



From left: Howard Polk, Sandra Polk Guthman and Bruce Bachmann at the announcement of the Polk Bros. Foundation gift to Navy Pier and the naming of Polk Bros Park

## FOUNDATION OF FUNDING

*Navy Pier gets a makeover, thanks to the Polk family.*

The Polk Bros. Foundation, headed by Sandra Polk Guthman and with funding from the family's furniture stores, has grown to become the third-largest funder of Chicago nonprofits, but 2014 marked a whole new level of city prominence for the family with a \$20 million gift to upgrade Navy Pier's western entrance. "This is another example of the Polk family's ongoing commitment to Chicago's array of cultural treasures along our shoreline," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel at a press conference announcing the gift. "It's a testament to an immigrant family that has made good." —KH



From left: Pete Ricketts, who lives in Omaha, Neb., is pictured with local siblings Laura Ricketts, Tom Ricketts and Todd Ricketts. Chicago is hoping for more celebrating in 2015.

## PLAY BALL

*Can the Ricketts clan end the curse?*

Plenty of Chicago residents have stories about their devotion to the Cubs. One of them is Tom Ricketts—who met his wife in the bleachers at a day game—but few of those uberfans have the financial resources to buy the lovable losers and hopefully lead them to win the franchise's first World Series in over a century. The Ricketts siblings, whose wealth comes from patriarch Joe's founding of TD Ameritrade, are living that fantasy. Siblings Tom, Laura and Todd—who own homes just blocks from each other in Wilmette—are tackling not only the team's record but also the crumbling and beloved Wrigley Field, all in hopes that this will be the year the Series ticker tape parade graces Chicago's North Side. —LH



## POSITIVE REALITY

*The Rancics bring their star power to Chicago.*

Being darlings of the reality-TV world and Chicago's food scene, we are proud Bill and Giuliana Rancic view

Chicago as their second home. Their obvious mutual adoration and respect has led to an enviable marriage—one that started with a romantic proposal in a private helicopter on a holiday-light tour over Michigan Avenue. Somehow they juggle their young family, their own television show, her career as an E! News host and his public speaking tours while still finding time to check in—with each other and their Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises collaborations:

RPM Italian and RPM Steak. You could say they represent Chicago in Hollywood, and we will always see them as stars on our sidewalks. —AM

MEDIA DARLINGS Bill and Giuliana Rancic still have that love connection.

## PUBLIC SERVANTS

*The local Kennedys fight hunger.*

The eighth of 11 children of two American legends, Robert and Ethel Kennedy, Chris Kennedy is American royalty. Yet he has made his mark on Chicago away from the family business. Kennedy, a father of four who lives on the North Shore, worked as president of commercial-property management firm Merchandise Mart Properties from 2000 to 2011 before leaving the business to start a local nonprofit, Top Box Foods ([topboxfoods.com](http://topboxfoods.com)), with his wife, Sheila. “Chris’ father,

Sen. Robert Kennedy, famously said, “The purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better,” explains full-time

Top Box volunteer and Wilmette resident Suzy McNamara.

“Whether it’s ordering produce, meeting with community organizers or walking boxes of fresh produce to customers’ cars, Chris and Sheila have a commitment to making things better.” —KH



**LAKEFRONT LIVING** From left: Clare Kennedy, Chris Kennedy, Sarah Kennedy and Sheila Kennedy. Not pictured: Kate Kennedy and Chris Kennedy Jr.

## ===== DISTRIBUTING GOOD =====

*The Reyes family's golden touch goes beyond burgers.*

The ultrasuccessful quintet of Reyes brothers—Christopher, Jude, David, James and Tom—has made its fortune on golden lagers and golden arches. Reyes Holdings is a food and beverage distribution giant with clients including McDonald's and Coca-Cola. But while its bread and butter is built upon bottles and burgers, its reputation is built upon quiet humility. The Reyes' fortune—around \$8 billion—has been shared generously with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago, After School Matters and Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, to name just a few. —KAO



From left: Michael J. Madigan marches with his daughter Lisa Madigan in the St. Patrick's Day parade, an annual ritual for nearly every local politician.

## ===== SOUTHSIDE SWAY =====

*Decade after decade, the Madigan political machine stays strong.*

Few Chicago families hold such political prominence as the Madigans. An omnipresent name on any of the city's powerful people lists, Michael J. Madigan is the longest-serving speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives in state and national history, and daughter Lisa is the first female attorney general in the state. With such sweeping influence, it's safe to say that the Madigan name will continue to appear on our lists—and ballots—for years to come. —JS



From left: Lester Crown is pictured with Renee Crown, Nancy Crown and Steven Crown. Steven is one of the seven Crown siblings who continues the family legacy of business sense and philanthropy.



In October, Michael and Cari Sacks accepted the Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service.

## ===== MAKING A DIFFERENCE =====

*The Sacks family helps power art and education.*

Michael and Cari Sacks make an impact in Chicago. Hedge-fund honcho Michael is chairman and CEO of Grosvenor Capital Management and vice chairman of World Business Chicago, and is a trusted unofficial economic advisor to the mayor. Cari—a Museum of Contemporary Art trustee—recently designed Curate, an app that helps collectors envision how art will look in their homes. But it is the Sacks' extensive philanthropic endeavors that really set this pair apart. Most notably, the couple committed a \$5 million gift to Northwestern University (where Michael is a trustee), of which \$3.6 million is dedicated to giving scholarships to Chicago Public Schools graduates. Clearly, this pair knows a thing or two about smart investments. —SR

## ===== RAGS TO RICHES TO ROYALTY =====

*The Crowns are a jewel of Chicago elite.*

The Crown family rose up from the grit of American industrialism. In the 1920s, Henry Crown, a son of Lithuanian immigrants, began investing in railroads, hotels, coal and meatpacking, Chicago staples all, and eventually modernized his interests with aerospace and recreation investments. He enjoyed spectacular success, and by the time son Lester took the helm of the Henry Crown & Co. firm, the family was staked in Hilton Hotels & Resorts, the Chicago Bulls, the New York Yankees, Aspen ski resorts and Rockefeller Center. Today, the seven children of Lester and wife Renee run the businesses under their parents' watchful tutelage, and some reign over spinoff empires of their own. —KAO