

## THE FAMILY DISPATCH

*Spring 2017*

**Profile:** Brenda Teague

**Affiliated Department:** Keizer

Brenda Teague prefaced her interview with the assertion that she was atypical for a Chief's wife, a little quieter in the community than some.

But quiet, of course, harbors its own brand of strength.

Brenda and her husband John, current Chief of the Keizer Police Department, met by chance at a small college for biblical studies in the Willamette Valley.

"We grew up in agnostic military families and separately came to have similar viewpoints on life," Brenda said.

Faith would remain an integral pillar of the Teague family as it expanded, eventually reaching a total of seven.

As her children grew, Brenda strove to maintain a welcoming and unified home—both for her family's wellbeing and that of her marriage. She homeschooled their four daughters and one son, making the Teague household not only a place of nurturement, but one of learning, as well.

"Having a system is very important," she explained. "It's important to have a routine, and to be transparent and communicative with each other."

One of the routines Brenda curated was focused on the conclusion of her husband's workday. Whenever possible, the kids would welcome their father home with a song. As soon as Chief Teague walked through the door, he was greeted with smiles and the familiar tune—a tune so infectious that it has occasionally been carried into adulthood. The tradition offered a simple, yet clear, boundary between work and home.

"I tried to make the house a sanctuary," Brenda said. "It's very important that your home is different from the homes and situations he often sees at work."

For the Teagues, a shared family meal became the hallmark of their own sanctuary. If hectic schedules prevented a mutual dinner, breakfast or lunch simply became the focal point of the day.

Brenda recommended books like "The Marriage Builder" by Larry Crab to help guide couples adjusting to new roles and responsibilities in law enforcement. But just as important as advice from the experts, however, is advice from one's peers.

Brenda noted that each role a law enforcement officer assumes creates new challenges and needs for his or her loved ones. The kind of support she found most vital while her husband was a

patrol officer, for example, varied greatly from the kind she best appreciated during his time as a captain and now, Chief.

“Particularly when your kids are little,” she said, “you need that sounding board. Things that used to scare me, I found myself able to eventually laugh about with another wife.”

And while Brenda noted that other states have been hit harder by a public distrust of law enforcement, she understands the fear that so many first responders’ spouses—including herself—frequently encounter.

Such considerations were part of the reason the Teagues chose to remain living in Monmouth when Chief Teague took his current position with the Keizer Police Department. Uncomfortable pressures and situations can often arise for children living in the same city their father patrols.

“People demanding tolerance can often become the least tolerant,” Brenda lamented. “We didn’t really want the kids to grow up in that environment.”

And while their living situation may have, in her own words, kept Brenda “out of the spotlight” more than perhaps the average Chief’s wife, she found other ways to support the department and community.

“I love people and am very interested in other peoples’ cultures and languages,” Brenda said. It was her passion for culture that led her to study human behavior and co-head the Foreign Students Association while in college. She finds joy in sharing and sparking similar interests in others, from her children to community members.

Perhaps it was this high level of empathy that contributed to Brenda’s swift response when asked what characteristics she most admired about her husband in his law enforcement role. She said that she was proud of the way he conducted himself in the community, always offering his best to ensure that community members were treated justly.

“He’s not really a ‘warm fuzzy’ kind of guy,” Brenda said with a smile, “but he can be counted on to do the right thing, even when it’s not popular.”

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