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THE LOVE OF THE GAME





IT'S A SUNNY APRIL MORNING IN CHICAGO. On the North Side, fans line up outside Wrigley Field for the Chicago Cubs' 150th season. There is hope in the air, the kind that has defined Cubs baseball for generations. Across town, the Chicago Blackhawks are wrapping up their centennial season, reflecting on a century of hockey history while preparing for the franchise's next era.

In many ways, these two iconic organizations tell the story of Chicago sports itself: tradition and transformation existing side by side. Quietly woven into both stories is the influence of two Baylor University graduates whose careers have helped shape modern sports business from behind the scenes.

Sports has never simply been about wins and losses for Colin and Jaime Faulkner. It has been about stewardship.

"The fans really own the franchise," Jaime said. "We're just the caretakers of it when we're in these roles."

That perspective extends well beyond sports. Throughout their careers, the Faulkners have viewed leadership as an opportunity to strengthen organizations that will outlast them. Whether preserving historic franchises, investing in employees or creating lasting value to communities, they measure success not simply by what they accomplish, but by what they leave behind for those who follow.

That mindset has shaped nearly every chapter of the Faulkners' careers. Today, Colin serves as chief commercial officer for the Chicago Cubs, overseeing revenue-generating operations ranging from ticketing and sponsorships to media through Marquee Sports Network. Jaime is president of business operations for the Chicago Blackhawks, leading a sweeping transformation of one of the NHL's Original Six franchises.

COLIN FAULKNER

BBA '98

CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER; CHICAGO CUBS

JAIME FAULKNER

BBA '98

PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS; CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

But long before they helped shape two of Chicago's most recognizable sports brands, they were Baylor students brought together through a setup that almost paired them with different people entirely.

The couple first met during their final years at Baylor after being introduced on

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a double date. Ironically, they were not initially paired together, but by the end of the evening, they gravitated toward one another.

They married three days after graduation in 1998. Jaime, an Economics major, and Colin, a Marketing major, would go on to build a partnership that would eventually take them to two of professional sports' most recognizable franchises.

Colin's journey began with the Dallas Burn, Major League Soccer's Dallas franchise, before moving to the Texas Rangers and Dallas Stars organization, where he spent a decade growing through ticketing, marketing and sales leadership. Eventually, a call from the Cubs presented an opportunity that was difficult to ignore.

"I just decided to get outside my comfort zone and take a little bit of a risk," Colin said.

Jaime's route was even more unconventional. After graduating from Baylor, she joined Arthur Andersen and then KPMG, where she helped build a sports consulting service centered on optimizing the business using data and analytics.

After the birth of their first child, Jaime stepped away from the workforce to focus on their family while continuing occasional projects. What could have looked like a career pause became the foundation for her biggest professional breakthrough.What could have looked like a career pause became the foundation for her biggest professional breakthrough.

As the Faulkners relocated to Chicago following Colin's move to the Cubs, Jaime consulted on a concessions and hospitality project for the Cubs. That work led to a conversation with Levy Restaurants CEO Andy Lansing, who recruited her to build a strategy and analytics capability within the organization.

That effort eventually became E15 Group, now one of the premier strategy and analytics firms in sports and entertainment.

"The idea behind E15 was twofold," Jaime said. "One, how do we enable Levy with analytics so it can be better partners to its sports teams and operate better. And the second was utilizing our E15 team to service those sports teams beyond food and beverage to improve their own business operations."

Jaime's work placed her behind the scenes at some of the world's largest sporting events, and one memory from the Cubs' 2016 World Series stands out. During games 6 and 7, a group of executives jokingly began eating Levy's chocolate cake whenever the Cubs needed a big moment. When the Cubs won, the superstition became part of the World Series lore.

"When we went into rain delay in Game 7, everybody started eating cake," Jaime said. "We obviously won the World Series in 2016. And to this day, I





don't think I can eat that chocolate cake again in my life."

For Colin, the World Series remains one of the defining moments of his career. But another project stands out for its impact on the Cubs fandom.

"The obvious answer is the 2016 World Series," he said. "But I really think being a part, and a very small part, of helping save Wrigley Field is something I take a lot of pride in."

The project to restore Wrigley Field was far more than a renovation. It was an effort to preserve one of baseball's most iconic landmarks while modernizing it for future generations. This included structural repairs, expanded concourses, updated clubhouses and improved fan amenities, all while carefully protecting the historic character that has made Wrigley beloved for more than a century.

The challenge was balancing progress and preservation, Colin said. The Cubs were not simply upgrading a ballpark. They were safeguarding a place deeply tied to the identity of the franchise and the city.

Jaime carries that same long-term perspective into her work with the Blackhawks, where she has overseen sweeping changes to the organization's business operations, analytics infrastructure and community development efforts. She helped lead acquisitions of additional hockey franchises, expanded development around the team's practice facility and emphasized fan-centered decision-making throughout the organization.

That work extends beyond the arena walls. When the Blackhawks expanded their practice facility on Chicago's West Side, Jaime and her team intentionally designed the project alongside the surrounding community rather than simply for it. The organization met extensively with youth hockey families, nearby schools, senior living centers and neighborhood leaders to ensure the facility felt welcoming and accessible.

Looking back, the Faulkners hope their legacy is measured by more than executive titles or championship seasons. They hope the organizations they served are stronger, the communities they invested in are better and the people they worked alongside are equipped to build on that foundation. For them, leadership has always been about leaving something meaningful behind.

For all their professional success, though, both Colin and Jaime point back to the same foundation: faith, family and integrity.

"We've always said God first, marriage, kids and then jobs," Jaime said.

Those priorities have guided them through demanding schedules, overlapping sports seasons and the constant pressures that accompany leadership roles in professional sports. Both describe marriage not as something that simply happens naturally amid busy careers, but as something requiring intentionality, communication and sacrifice.

"We've always supported each other by putting the other person first," Colin said. "If both people are doing that, I think you're in a good position."

Like any partnership, their careers have required different seasons of sacrifice. At times, Colin's responsibilities demanded more of his time. At others, Jaime stepped away to focus on raising their family. Through each season, they remained committed to putting one another first.

Still, after decades in professional sports, the Faulkners continue to approach life the same way they did as Baylor students just beginning their journey together: as partners.

"We've been married longer than we've not been married," Colin said.

Neither claims to have everything figured out. In fact, both openly admit they are still learning how to navigate the ever-changing rhythms of work, family and leadership.

"We're making it up as we go and we're figuring it out as we go," Colin said. "Nobody has it all figured out."

And perhaps that is what makes their story resonate beyond sports.

Behind the packed stadiums, the historic franchises and the executive titles are two Baylor graduates who still prioritize faith, family and each other first, even amid the bright lights and constant demands of Chicago sports. ■