

9<sup>TH</sup> UNPLUGGED

CATHY STEPHENS

JUDICIAL ASSISTANT

FEBRUARY 9, 2021

HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

MS. STEPHENS: And I'm Cathy Stephens.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you are listening to 9<sup>th</sup> Unplugged.

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So before we get unplugged, tell me what your job title is and the department that you work for.

MS. STEPHENS: I'm a judicial assistant to Judge John E. Jordan and right now we're in business court.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And how long have you been a judicial assistant?

MS. STEPHENS: I have been a judicial assistant for 15 years and before that I was a clerk for five years.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All righty. And you transitioned from the Clerk's Office over to becoming a judicial assistant, is that correct?

MS. STEPHENS: Yes. Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. How do you like that position?

MS. STEPHENS: I love it. I've loved this job since day one.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What's the best thing about being a judicial assistant?

MS. STEPHENS: I think it's actually feeling like you're helping people. And you never know what's going to happen five minutes later --

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. STEPHENS: -- on that phone call.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah. Yeah. That phone call makes a difference, doesn't it? All right, so we're going to get unplugged and we're going to stop talking about work. And we're going to talk about what you do outside of work. And what do you enjoy doing the most when you're not at work?

MS. STEPHENS: I am a mother of five and I have three that are grown and married. So I am all about planning family outings, family holidays, anything that will bring my family together.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, and do you have an extended family, like a large, extended family outside of your children.

MS. STEPHENS: I have just a brother and a sister, not much. But my parents are still living and they're here and so they -- we incorporate them in it as well.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you get a chance to visit and spend time with them also.

MS. STEPHENS: Every opportunity we can.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So tell me about when you were growing up. Where did you grow up?

MS. STEPHENS: I grew up in Hutchinson, Kansas. I was a farm kid. We grew every vegetable you could think of.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. STEPHENS: And lots of animals. And just worked hard, morning to night.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you miss that? Do you miss that farm life?

MS. STEPHENS: I enjoyed it then. I was just a kid and didn't know a whole lot any better, but I enjoyed – I think it taught me a lot about working hard and seeing things that you worked hard for, actually get something from it. And so I do. I think it made me who I am.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What's a fun thing that kids do on a farm that you don't see kids in the city doing? I didn't grow up on a farm so I would love to know what you all do for something exciting.

MS. STEPHENS: I remember my sister and I would just – we had a pony that – we had horses, but we had a pony that we were allowed to ride anytime we wanted. And so we would go get on the pony and just ride it around the yard. And pretty soon when it got tired of us, it would walk up next to a tree and knock us off. And it would go to the barn. We just knew we were going to the barn to get it again.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You just knew he had enough.

MS. STEPHENS: Yeah, and we had sheep and we had lambs. And it was fun to play with the lambs. And we had bunnies and chickens and –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you have pets now?

MS. STEPHENS: We have two dogs.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right.

MS. STEPHENS: That's it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's it. Okay, how did you end up in Orlando?

MS. STEPHENS: My sister and brother already lived here and our older three children were getting into college age. And we wanted a little more opportunity college-wise for them. So we moved here so they could finish high school here, and go to college.

JUDGE LATIMORE: If you could change the world, how would you do that?

MS. STEPHENS: Well, right now, I'd like to get rid of COVID.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That would be nice, wouldn't it?

MS. STEPHENS: But I think for the most part, I would really like to get people to work together more. I think as – if everybody brings their knowledge together, I just don't see anything we can't fix.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah.

MS. STEPHENS: And I don't think we work together very well.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah.

MS. STEPHENS: Sometimes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I agree with you on that. So there was something really special about your dad and when you grew up. Can you share that with us?

MS. STEPHENS: My dad was our – was the president of USA Boxing and he took – he promoted boxing tournaments all over the United States and did the nationals, and even went to the Olympics a few times and took boxers to the Olympics.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wow.

MS. STEPHENS: And as kids, we just kind of tagged along and got to be a part of that for years.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, so was there anyone in particular that you remember meeting in the boxing world?

MS. STEPHENS: I met Leon Spinks. That dates but he had a little boy who had a –

JUDGE LATIMORE: I was enchanted by Leon Spinks.

MS. STEPHENS: He had a little boy who did a 7-UP or Sprite commercial with him but I remember seeing him run around the ring. And Mike Tyson, I remember him as a little kid doing the Golden Gloves and went on to pro.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Did you go to the Olympics?

MS. STEPHENS: I never got to go. We had a grandmother that would come and stay with us.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right. Do you miss, I mean, do you still enjoy boxing now or do you watch it?

MS. STEPHENS: I don't really watch it now. I will watch it if it's somebody that I know – my dad is still recognized, he has retired, but he is still recognized in a few places. And I will watch if he's part of that. My mom was a judge too and so it's been in our family for a long time.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, where was she a judge?

MS. STEPHENS: She was a – no, a judge for boxing.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, a judge for boxing.

MS. STEPHENS: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, neat.

MS. STEPHENS: And so –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is that how they met?

MS. STEPHENS: No. No. They're high school sweethearts.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, that's beautiful. That's beautiful. So what is the – how is it that you pick yourself up after you make a mistake? Teach me.

MS. STEPHENS: I think you first have to be okay making the mistake. You just recognize you made a mistake, and we're all human and it's a good thing because we're not a robot. And it kind of reminds you that you're not anything where special – more special than the person you're sitting next to. Everybody can make the mistake and just try to learn from it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah. So you mentioned COVID, and so I'm curious as to – what is it that you found yourself doing the most when we were on lock down from the pandemic?

MS. STEPHENS: Working. We still – I'm in business court. We kept working.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, we all kept the courts up and running. We needed to do that.

MS. STEPHENS: Right. I still worked. We never did stop.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And if you had to pick your favorite type of music, what would that be?

MS. STEPHENS: I like the old 50s and 60s music. I grew up with my grandmother playing the Big Band.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Big Band.

MS. STEPHENS: And so –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you know how to swing?

MS. STEPHENS: No.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I wish I could know how to – I wish I could swing.

MS. STEPHENS: I wish I could. It looks like so much fun.

JUDGE LATIMORE: It does. I wish I could. I actually love Big Band and that type of music too. People get in my car and they kind of look at me sideways.

MS. STEPHENS: It's really great to clean house to.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, okay.

MS. STEPHENS: It can really get you going.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Get you going. I heard that. What is the scariest thing that you've experienced other than this pandemic, of course?

MS. STEPHENS: Yeah, I think it's really letting go of my kids and letting them make their own mistakes. It's hard. It's so hard to watch them do – make a choice and go, oh, I really – not that one, pick something else. But I have to let them make their own choices and that's scary for me.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, let's talk about your favorites. So what's your favorite car? Make and model?



MS. STEPHENS: I like Mustangs.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's a good car.

MS. STEPHENS: I do. Yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, that's a good car. What's your favorite dessert?

MS. STEPHENS: Cheesecake.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And do you recall your favorite movie?

MS. STEPHENS: Yes, Without a Paddle.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I've never seen that one. Is that a comedy?

MS. STEPHENS: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: It is.

MS. STEPHENS: Um-hum.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Who's in it?

MS. STEPHENS: I really don't know.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. STEPHENS: But I enjoy – I watched it like four or five times.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, Netflix?

MS. STEPHENS: I don't know if it's on Netflix or not. I have the DVD. We probably stuck the DVD in and watched it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. Well, I'll let you know if it's on Netflix because I'm going to go see if I can find it, okay. Thank you for being unplugged with me. It was wonderful speaking with you.

MS. STEPHENS: Thank you.

(Music)