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Lawyer and his wife are making the most of their second shot at parenthood

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By Tom Kirvan



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A 1991 graduate of the University of Texas School of Law, Singley specializes in the areas of workers' compensation and employer liability. He currently serves as an executive council member for the Workers' Compensation Section of the State Bar of Texas.

Tim Singley grew up in Killeen, Texas, in the shadows of Ft. Hood, one of America's largest military bases with a population of more than 200,000 personnel over a land mass covering 215,000 acres.

The youngest of four children, Singley was the son of an Army command sergeant major who did three tours of duty overseas, fighting in the Korean and Vietnam wars before returning to Fort Hood to retire when tragedy unexpectedly struck.

"He got out of the Army after 29 years, went to school while he was working, graduated, and died a month later of a massive heart attack at age 49," said Singley of his father, Harold. "I was in sixth grade at the time. It was a shock, but I came from a family where you put one foot in front of another. When something bad happens, you don't sit around and wallow in it. You move forward as best you can."

And for a promising athlete like Singley, that objective meant channeling his energies into excelling on the gridiron, which is hallowed ground for boys growing up in Texas.

By the time he reached high school, Singley had already developed the reputation as a budding football star, a two-way player who possessed college potential.

"I played pretty well in high school, well enough to get noticed by college recruiters," said Singley, a member and director in the San Antonio office of Thornton, Beichlin, Reynolds & Guerra, L.C., where he focuses on workers' compensation and employment liability matters.

Among those courting Singley for his football talents was Texas Christian

University Coach Jim Wacker, the 1984 AP Coach of the Year after leading the Horned Frogs to a No. 12 ranking and an 8-3 record.

"He was extremely charismatic, and he recruited the heck out of my mom (Wanda)," Singley said of Wacker. "As a result, I verbally committed to play at TCU. This was long before high school players had press conferences to disclose their college choice. Back then on signing day, you just went up to your (high school) coach's office and signed your letter of intent, simple as that."

While TCU appeared to be in the catbird seat for Singley's football services, the Killeen High School product also had another college suitor – Texas Tech, a Southwest Conference school located in Lubbock, a lengthy six-hour drive away.

"I was very blessed that on my high school team we had 18 players sign Division 1 scholarships that year," Singley indicated. "We were a talented team, and I was proud to be part of it. So, on signing day, my mom got all dressed up for the occasion in the coach's office. It was going to be a very special time for her."

But Singley suddenly had other ideas about his preferred college choice.

"Literally 15 minutes before I was scheduled to sign with TCU, I made a call to Lubbock to see if I still had an offer to go to Texas Tech," Singley recalled. "When they said 'yes,' I made the decision to go to Tech without telling my mom."

His about-face, not surprisingly, didn't sit well with the family matriarch, the woman who had her heart set on seeing her son suit up in the purple and white uniform of TCU, a private school located just two hours away.



Singley was a key contributor as a linebacker during his playing days at Texas Tech, a Southwest Conference school that cycled through three head coaches during Singley's time with the Red Raiders.

"Let's just say she was more than a bit upset," Singley said of his mother's response to his signing day switcheroo. "She wouldn't – and didn't – talk to me for two or three weeks."

Despite the family fallout, Singley maintains that he has "no regrets" about his college decision.

"It, in all honesty, was an impulse decision, but it also turned out to be the best decision I ever made because I had to grow up," he declared. "I had to start making my own decisions in life and that certainly was a very big one at the time.

Fortunately, my mom – rest her soul – eventually forgave me, realizing that I had some growing up to do and that Tech would be the place to do it."

It wouldn't be an easy task, as Tech was about to embark on a coaching carousel over the next four years.

"We had three different head coaches during my four years there," Singley explained, rattling off the names of Jerry Moore, David McWilliams, and Spike Dykes. "If I had called up my mom and told her that I didn't want any more of

that, she would have told me to 'suck it up buttercup.'"

And forge on he would, eventually starting at linebacker for the Red Raiders, who went to several bowl games during his playing days there.

"They weren't the big bowls, but they were bowls nevertheless," Singley said. "We started the streak of Tech going to bowl games, so I'm very proud of that."

Among his most memorable games at Tech were 1986 wins over two top 15 opponents, University of Arkansas and University of Texas. In the 23-21 victory over the Texas Longhorns in Lubbock, Singley made a particularly sterling defensive play.

"I can't remember the name of their running back that game, but I literally knocked him out with a tackle, right there on national television," Singley recounted. "But the announcer got so excited about the hit that he called me 'Tom Singley' instead. So, when I called up my grandmother in Pennsylvania after the game, as I always did, she said: 'Oh, honey, I didn't know that you had another Singley on the team.' Of course, I had to tell her that was really me who made the hit. My one claim to fame and it got shot in the foot."

Earlier that season, the Red Raiders hit the road to take on the No. 1-ranked University of Miami Hurricanes in the Orange Bowl. The Hurricanes featured a bevy of future NFL stars, including quarterback Vinny Testaverde, wide receiver Michael Irvin, running back Alonzo Highsmith, and safety Bennie Blades.

"We were a bunch of boys from West Texas who had never been anywhere like Miami," Singley recalled. "We were even more fortunate to being staying at the Fontainebleau Hotel. We were living large that weekend."

Then, when Singley and a few of his teammates were riding an elevator with a hotel housekeeper, they got a taste of the reality that was to come.

"She asked who we were in town to play," Singley said. "When we told her the Hurricanes, she looked at us with a smile and said, 'Oh, honey, they're gonna kick your ass.'"

Which they did, 61-11, en route to an undefeated regular season record.

"We were humbled," Singley said of the shellacking. "They were unlike any team we'd ever played – bigger, stronger, faster. I particularly remember being on the punt return unit and getting picked up by one of their guys and tossed like a ragdoll. It was embarrassing."

And yet, Singley confessed that despite the setbacks, the sacrifices, and the assorted injuries that he suffered during his football career, he has a conscience clear of any regrets.

"Physically, I've got plenty of issues because of football," he acknowledged. "Both my knees have been cut on. I've got three herniated discs in my back. I had a three-level fusion in my neck, a pin in my shoulder, and various other problems. And when people ask me now whether I'd elect to play again, I always say, 'You bet – in a New York second.' It's all about the friendships; the lifelong friends I've made because of football. Those are the treasures that have been with me for a lifetime." 



Singley and his wife, Sherri, were all smiles on the wedding day of their son, Travis, in the spring of 2018.

Lawyer and his wife are making the most of their second shot at parenthood

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The skyline of San Antonio features the Tower of Americas, the second highest observation tower in the United States at 750 feet. It was built for the 1968 HemisFair, which celebrated the city's 250th anniversary.

When Tim Singley became a grandparent for the first time, little did he know that it would be his ticket to being a parent once again.

If that scenario sounds strange, Singley is the first to admit so after he and his wife, Sherri, had two children and then suffered the loss of a baby girl just days after she was born with a rare heart condition.

Their children, Travis and Shelbi, each have one child of their own, Sonora and Luke, respectively. The Singleys, who have been married for 37 years, can only wonder if the daughter they lost in infancy, Savannah, would have blessed them with even more grandchildren.

“There’s a hole there that will never in anyway be filled – ever,” declared Singley of the death of his baby daughter. “Every Christmas, every birthday, we ask, ‘What would Savannah be doing?’ Those questions will be with us for the rest of time.”

But despite living with an ache in their hearts over the loss of their youngest child, the Singleys were firmly dedicated to being the best parents they could be for their other children. That desire even extended to their support for St. Jude’s Ranch for Children, a nonprofit that assists abused and neglected girls and boys.

“My wife volunteered there for years, and she has always made our house a welcoming place for children to gather,” Singley explained. “A lot of people talk about helping people, but talk is talk and action is action. Thanks principally to my wife, we’ve done our best to help others throughout our marriage.”

And then, on December 17, 2017, the Singleys got the surprise of their lives when their daughter, Shelbi, gave birth to a son while a student at Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia. They received



The wedding day of Travis and Katie Singley in 2018 was a joyous occasion for Sherri and Tim Singley, pictured with their daughter, Shelbi, and grandson, Luke.

the news in an unexpected fashion after she was taken to a hospital ER by her boyfriend after experiencing severe stomach pains.

“We got a call from him that Shelbi was in the hospital and that they didn’t know what was the matter with her,” Singley related. “So, I said to him, let me talk to the doctor. And then in the background, I hear, ‘Oh my God, it’s a baby!’”

Not surprisingly, Singley and his wife were in disbelief, especially after seeing their daughter less than a month before when she came home for Thanksgiving.

“There was no sign of her being pregnant at that time,” Singley said. “No sign at all. She looked like the typical college coed, wearing the tight leggings, the T-shirt. She looked like a normal girl.”

But, in fact, she was an expectant mother who was unaware she was pregnant. She was in the midst of what is known medically as a “cryptic pregnancy,” a pregnancy that is not detected by the mother until she is in labor. While the so-called “hidden pregnancy” is uncommon, experts suggest that about 1 in 2,500 pregnancies are not discovered until delivery.

“Of course, I didn’t believe any of that at the time,” said Singley, who admitted that his initial fury at hearing the pregnancy news soon gave way to overriding concern about the health of his daughter and new grandson.

“Just the year before, in 2016, Shelbi almost died of a heart condition and it looked like she might need a heart transplant until she was put on an experimental medication that helped save her life,” Singley noted. “And so, at that point in time, my focus went from being mad, to ‘we want this new (grand) kid scanned from stem to stern to make sure he is okay’ because there were no

studies on the effects of the experimental medication on fetuses or children.”

Fortunately, said Singley, the new addition to the family is “perfectly normal,” and for the past eight years has been living with his mom under the roof of his grandparents.

“He was meant to be here,” Singley said of his grandson, Luke. “My wife and I have discussed that this isn’t quite how we envisioned our future, but we are so grateful that this is how our life is turning out. For me personally, I choose to look at it in a way of how many granddads get the

chance to spend this much time with their grandson? It’s priceless, and I’m going to enjoy every second of it until I pass.”

As a prime example, Singley accompanied his grandson on a Cub Scout camping trip in October in the Texas Hill Country, not far from the site of the catastrophic flash flood on July 4 that claimed the lives of 27 campers and counselors. For Singley, the camping trip with his grandson brought back flashbacks to a similar weekend outing with his son, Travis, years ago.

“The very first campout I took my son on when he was in Cub Scouts, our tent

got flooded during a heavy rainstorm,” Singley recalled. “This most recent time camping with my grandson, the same thing happened when it started raining like crazy one night. Luckily, where we camped was on high ground, so we got through it safely even though our tent got swamped during the storm. Apparently, it’s now a rite of passage for us.” 



Singley with grandkids Luke and Sonora.

