

Bailey

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Those are lyrics, however, that come with edits: “I KNOW I can, I KNOW I can . . .”

Stella’s migration to Calhoun came via Cordele – one of those South Georgia towns that seem to produce by the gross nice folks with accents so appealing one can almost taste the molasses – to the University of Georgia, all the way to a masters degree, and then here. She was destined from birth, she says, to attend UGA, a happenstance so matter-of-fact and borne of natural progression that she bleeds red and black and still knows all the words to the alma mater. Her mother is a UGA graduate and provided the not-so-subtle push toward Athens, and her father passed along football tickets that the family has held since 1949.

Before college she won Cordele High School’s best-all-around award so many times that she could have retired the title, was a cheerleader and otherwise so active she makes Betty Co-Ed look like a stumbling sophomore. Stella loves Cordele still, the high school and the town, and long ago helped to establish a scholarship for graduating seniors to the local technical school. They can’t hold a reunion without her and, the fact is, they wouldn’t want to.

Her progression to the sprawling campus in Athens that is UGA produced similar academic and extra-curricular results. She was an outstanding student, voted most outstanding freshman, was president of her dorm, earned two degrees and punctuated her masters with a thesis entitled, “Child-Rearing Practices of a Middle Class Father.” Following graduation, she earned her keep with an assistantship working with infants, this behind a two-way mirror so that students could observe. Some might have found that inhibiting; Stella thrived in the limelight.

Earlier in her college career, she met Bill Bailey, who engaged her in almost daily conversation prior to an English Lit class that both attended. He slipped into a seat otherwise assigned beside her, although he had to yield it before a professor called the class to order.

“What’s your name?” she asked during their first conversation.

“Bill Bailey.”

“C’mon. Nobody’s named Bill Bailey.”

“Well, I am. Want to go to a football game with me?”

A romance developed and evolved and, ultimately, there not only was a Bill Bailey, but a Mrs. Bill Bailey, the two soon beating a career path to Calhoun, where Bill now serves as the city attorney. They raised a family that includes William Douglass, now 36, and Charles Palmer, 32, both former Calhoun High School athletes and current fanatical sports and Bulldog supporters and called by mom Stella “my best accomplishment.” Ironically, both now are involved in insurance. William operates an All State agency in Americus, Palmer

is in sales in Macon.

There is no doubt that Calhoun is now “home” for Bill and Stella, although Stella’s business and UGA involvement carry her to Atlanta, Athens and other cities and towns throughout the state.

It was here, early-on, that she met an energetic and interesting lady who became a role model.

“Helene McCall,” says Stella, smiling. “What a great lady, so colorful and interesting. She allowed me to live my fantasy. She was my teacher, my mentor. She let me be a kid again. She was a Rockette, lived in New York, was friends with so many interesting and colorful people that she liked to talk about and that I loved hearing about. Helene could be tough in her teaching, but she cared about her students and her friends. I learned so much from her that helped me as a person and in my business.”

There were other role models, including grandmothers, the maternal one studious and smart and a strong college advocate, the other fun and less serious. Both personalities reflect in the adult Stella Bailey. A speech teacher was helpful along the way, as were others as the pupil listened and learned. Most of all there were Mom – a stay at home parent who taught her family values, social graces and dependability, and Dad – a serious, studious, industrious fellow who taught her the value of hard work and stick-to-it-tiveness.

Today, Stella Bailey gives back. She serves on the UGA executive alumni board, is active on numerous committees and recently delivered a well-received speech at the Georgia School Counselors meeting in Madison, Ga. She also has input in student scholarship awards to UGA as a member of local Bulldog Clubs.

Her pet project, perhaps, or at least one of her most meaningful, is the work she does in the fight against cancer. Participation in the annual Relay for Life event includes emceeing and helping to put together a fashion show that involves Reese’s Fashion Gallery, Biddie Boutique and the Elkettes and is chaired by close friend Barbara Clark.

“A great team of hard workers and passionate people,” she says. Also, Stella helps with Helen Jones’s annual golf tournament from which proceeds go to fight the disease.

She is an active member and teacher at Calhoun First Baptist Church, saying, “That is my extended family. I don’t know where I would be without them.”

So, this effervescent, energetic, fun-but-serious Lady About Town continues to function at a fast and furious pace, finding time to enjoy life and its people. She is spontaneous, yet a planner. She is accomplished, yet wants to do more. She is student and teacher, learning and sharing as she goes. Through it all, Stella Bailey smiles that engaging smile.

Hers is a shared happiness, and people who know and work and play with her are grateful.

STELLA BAILEY’S JOB INTERVIEW TIPS:

1. Know the company with which you interview.
2. Bridge your talents to the company’s (perceived) needs.
3. Show you are a well-balanced person; don’t be afraid to sell yourself.

Stella Bailey’s Public Speaking Tips:

1. Visualize yourself making the speech and doing it successfully.
2. Be yourself; tell your story.
3. Keep it short.



Stella Bailey plants her sign as a hole sponsor at the annual Helen Jones Golf Tournament from which proceeds go to fight cancer. She is also a volunteer in the yearly Relay for Life event, emceeing, helping to plan and put together a funds-raising fashion show.

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