

Mayor Thrower & Family

The First Family of Milledgeville

Native to Milledgeville, Mayor Gary Thrower was born at the Baldwin County Hospital, in 1959, to parents Robert (Bob) and Betty. Their journey to Georgia came by way of the veterans' hospital in Lexington, Kentucky, where Bob was in recovery from being seriously wounded in World War II. It is there that he met Howard Kirkpatrick-of the Kirkpatrick Bakery in Milledgeville-and formed a friendship that would lead the Thrower family to the Old Capitol.

“My parents were originally from Alabama,” said the Mayor. “My dad was one of fourteen children and was raised in farming before going to war.”

Kirkpatrick offered Bob a job at the bakery, but due to his war injuries he was not able to stand on his feet for the long hours needed to run the business. He acquired a position at the physical plant at Georgia College (GC) and later took over management of the campus book store.

Mayor Thrower says it was this change in his father's career that impacted his own life in many positive ways. “I got to grow up around GC which was wonderful. It was a beautiful and safe place for childhood adventures.”

The mayor speaks of his parents with great pride and admiration. He remarks that his father really did belong to the “Greatest Generation” that fought so bravely. He adds, “My dad was wounded and for his valor received the Purple Heart.”

Betty, a secretary at West End Elementary School, was known for her sweet tea and biscuits-considered the best in their neighborhood. It was these southern staples that drew countless friends to dine nightly with the Thrower family.

Per Mayor Thrower, although his parents made a modest living, he and his brother, State Court of Baldwin County Judge Alan Thrower, never felt deprived of anything due to the sacrifices made by their parents.

“Although my dad was a wounded veteran, he always worked hard to provide for his family,” said Thrower. “Both parents ingrained a strong work ethic in my brother and me.”

The Thrower family attended First Baptist Church of Milledgeville where Gary was taught to live by the Golden Rule-treat others as you would like to be treated. “Our parents modeled the Golden Rule for us every day of their lives,” he adds.

Later in life, after the death of his father, Betty would accompany the mayor on business trips. “I consider the time spent traveling with mom as one of the greatest gifts in my life,” said Thrower. “She always strived to find the positive side of situations.”

Mayor Thrower attended both Baldwin High School (BHS) and Georgia Military College (GMC). He graduated from BHS and serves on the Milledgeville City Council with several fellow Braves. He holds a Bachelor of Business Management '88, from Georgia College (GC).

His first job right out of college was with Horton Homes in Eatonton. He credits this job, which he stayed in for five years, with instilling a solid work ethic that has followed him throughout adult life. He reflects: "That job taught me what hard work is and everyone is responsible for their own life."

The First Family

When it comes to family life, Mayor Thrower gets overwhelmed with emotion speaking of his wife, Sally, and their two sons, Rob and Jon. The oldest son Rob is employed at the Georgia State Capitol, and attends law school at Georgia State University. He is engaged to be married later this year. Jon, a GC graduate, is currently in nursing school in Atlanta.

"Sally and I have known each other since childhood and attended GMC together," he added. "We both worked at my mom's school when we began dating and were married in 1986."

A marriage that has lasted thirty years is a great achievement. Sally says the secret to a successful and lasting union is to face everything as a team. “If you confront life’s daily challenges together, and with never ending grace for each other-that’s more than half the battle.”

Mayor Thrower has a rather simplistic view to sustaining a happy marriage. He concludes: “I simply agree with my wife. Always.”

Sally adds that finding the comedy in life is also an asset in marriage. “It helps that we can find the humor in anything,” she observes. “We laugh. That’s the best medicine for everything in the world. If you can’t find humor, then you might miss some of the joy.”

As the First Lady of Milledgeville, Sally has been given a new view of the city which she has called home since birth. “I’ve met many new people and witnessed how they are striving to do their part to make Milledgeville/Baldwin County the best it can be,” she said. “My main role in supporting Gary comes from a place of pride and knowing the importance of doing all we can to make this city a wonderful place to live for each one of us.”

Recognizing that parenting is tough no matter the profession, the Throwers always made family a priority when the boys were children. “We had to strike a

balance,” says Sally. “Our boys understood that we both needed to work, but no matter what, at least one of us could be there when our boys needed or wanted us.”

To his sons, Mayor Thrower is not only a wonderful father but is the lasting moral role model that guides them every day. Each have taken the life lessons learned under their father with them into adult life.

“I look up to my dad and I would do anything in this world for him,” says Jon. “He has shaped me into being the man I am today, and is always there for me and my family, no matter what the circumstance.”

On reflection, Jon recognizes that his father always has his best interest at heart and openly receives his sage advice. “I am truly blessed to call Gary Thrower my dad,” he states. “When people say, I act like him, I take it as a compliment because he is the only person I look up to; in fact, he inspires me to be more like him. I can only hope that I will become at least half the man my father is and one day when I have a family of my own, I hope to continue his legacy. That’s why I love my dad.”

Rob also holds his father in very high esteem and quickly shares his dad’s merits. “In everything he has done, he puts others before himself,” he observes. “If you ask for his help, he will do whatever he can in his power to help you succeed. Whether it was coaching my 5th grade football team or being the Mayor of Milledgeville, he always pours his heart into everything he does.”

He also sees his father as one who does not seek credit in achievements. He is an individual who wants all to succeed. “What makes him such a great person is that he just listens to people,” says Rob. “He doesn’t care what your background is, where you stand politically, or whether the two of you have disagreed in the past. If you have a suggestion to make or just want someone to vent to, he always makes time to talk.”

Service to Our City

Before running for the city’s top position, Mayor Thrower reveals he never thought of getting into politics. “I just saw a need for someone to step up and help out,” he states.

When reflecting on his experience in the job so far, he credits the positive working relationships he has built with assisting in the transition of becoming mayor. “I have been so impressed how everyone, within the city government and the county, pull together to help each other-especially during a crisis.”

Milledgeville City Manager Barry Jarrett is one of the people who works closely with the mayor on all matters related to the city. He affirms that positive working relations are key to the city’s successful future.

“Mayor Thrower has been a pleasure to work with. He has displayed a genuine concern for the needs of our community and he brings a fresh perspective on how

we deal with issues,” says Jarrett. “I look forward to continuing our amicable relationship as we expand our efforts to promote economic development and quality of life for the residents of our great city.”