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NEWPORT COAST LIVING



**Meet Courtney Shepard
& Reuben Gullede**

*A Life Built on Partnership
& Purpose*

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A Life Built on Partnership & Purpose

BY KYM WHITNEY | PHOTOS BY JENN CASTRO, NOVA MEDIA HOUSE



For Courtney Shepard and Reuben Gullede, Newport Coast is not simply where they live; it is where their shared history, professional passions, and community ties have taken root. Together for 23 years and residents of Newport Coast for nearly as long, they have built a life together that reflects longevity, intention, and a deep appreciation for the life they have built side by side.

Originally from Chicago and raised in Huntington Beach, Courtney's path eventually led her to Newport Coast through both education and career. Reuben, meanwhile, has deep local roots, having been raised in Newport Beach after being born in Provo, Utah. Their worlds first intersected at a friend's wedding at the Ritz-Carlton in Dana Point. A fitting setting, as the bride was a childhood friend of Reuben's and someone Courtney had met years earlier while in college. That moment marked the beginning of a partnership that continues to thrive more than two decades later.

Education and professional growth have been defining themes for both. After graduating from Marina High School in 1996, Courtney attended UCLA, where she earned a degree in Political Science, and later completed her Juris Doctor at Whittier Law School. While still a law student, she clerked for a family law judge, an experience that would shape the course of her career. Following the bar exam, she joined a family law firm in Santa Ana as an associate and later advanced to partner at a second firm. Today, she is a partner at Burch Shepard Family Law Group, APC, in Newport Beach, where the firm employs approximately 25 people.

With 20 years of exclusive family law practice, she is also a Certified Family Law Specialist and a respected leader within the legal community. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Association of Certified Family Law Specialists as Treasurer and is Chair-Elect of the Orange County Bar Association's Family Law Section, with plans to serve as Chair in 2027.

What continues to drive her work is the opportunity to help people through some of life's most challenging transitions. Family law clients often arrive during periods of emotional and financial uncertainty, and she finds meaning in helping stabilize children's lives, secure appropriate support and protect those facing abuse. The practice's complexity and strategy, where no two cases are ever the same, keep the work intellectually engaging. Known around the courthouse as "*Tiny but Mighty*," a nod to her 4'10" stature, she has earned a reputation for strength, effectiveness and resolve.

Reuben's career reflects a similarly dynamic path. A 1996 graduate of Corona del Mar High School, where he was voted Most Inspirational Player on the varsity baseball team, his connection to Newport runs deep and extends beyond his professional life. Family also plays an important role in his story, as he is one of six brothers, five of whom were raised in Newport Beach and graduated from Corona del Mar High School between 1978 and 1998. He went on to earn a degree in Economics from UC Irvine before attending Whittier Law School, graduating summa cum laude.

Reuben began his professional life as a real estate agent in Newport Beach, a role he held for 15 years before graduating from law school. After passing the bar, he spent a year as a law school professor and has spent the past decade working as a sales manager for local real estate brokerages. His leadership within the real estate community is extensive. He currently serves as Vice President of the Newport Beach Association of Realtors, Director-At-Large of the Laguna Board of Realtors and Director of the California Association of Realtors. He was named Realtor-of-the-Year for Newport Beach in 2021.



Outside of work, the couple enjoys a lifestyle of simple pleasures and local traditions. Favorite activities include golfing at Strawberry Farms and Pelican Hill, morning walks through Newport Coast, hiking Buck Gully, and taking Duffy rides around the bay. Seasonal outings to Roger's Gardens—both during Halloween and the holidays—are long-standing favorites. Travel, reading and time spent with family and friends round out their downtime.

Food and shared experiences have also shaped their journey. Their very first date in 2002 was dinner at Javier's in Laguna Beach, followed by a movie at Fashion Island—a memory that still holds special meaning. Over the years, favorite local dining spots have included SideDoor, Wasa, Sugarfish, Farmhouse, Javier's, The Quiet Woman and Eddie V's before it closed. Weekend routines often involve walking to breakfast at Mustard's or Zov's,

Giving back has long been central to their lives. Together with Courtney's family, they have supported the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation for 25 years. The cause is deeply personal as her brother Todd passed away at age 18 from Ewing Sarcoma, a childhood cancer. The loss has shaped her perspective and reinforced a lifelong commitment to resilience, compassion and community involvement.

Today, life in Newport Coast reflects the balance Courtney Shepard and Reuben Gullledge value most: demanding careers paired with time for one another, long-standing traditions and the everyday moments spent enjoying their local community.

Fun Facts:

- Courtney once served as a coxswain for a men's crew team
- Reuben sported a mohawk his entire 6th-grade year at Harbor View Elementary
- Both are Pittsburgh Steelers fans from long before they ever met.