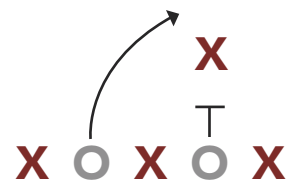




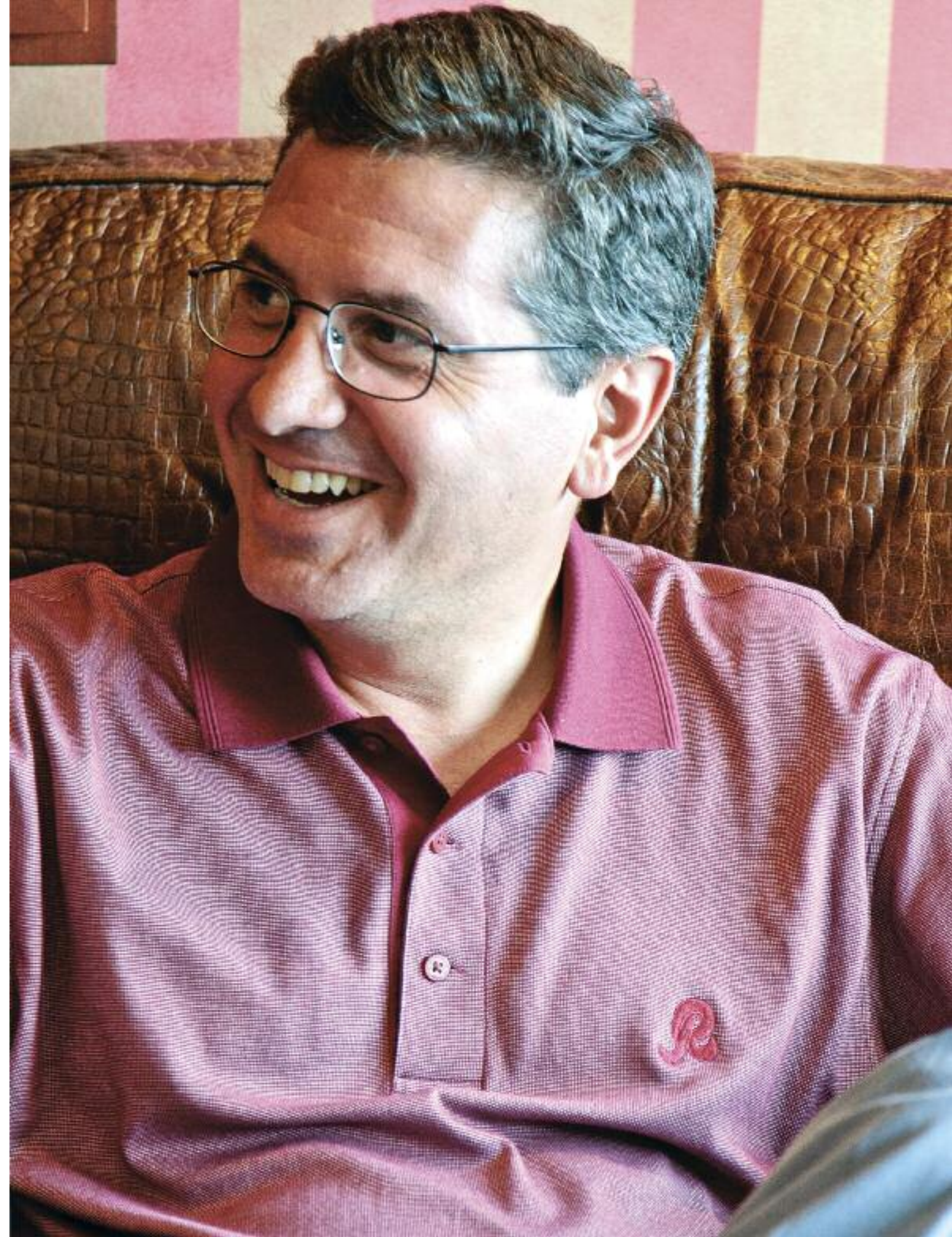
HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE

Surrounded by Family and Friends,
Native Son Daniel Snyder Still Happily
Calls Montgomery County Home



BY KATE McDERMOTT
Photography by Marc Weinberg

Training camp is in full swing at Redskins Park, and the place is a flurry of activity. Massive men file into the main building lobby—some visibly showing the aches and pains of two-a-days—while staff dressed in everything from shirts and ties to team attire scurry about with the singular purpose of North Pole elves on Christmas Eve. Except this is Ashburn, Va., and the temperature outside is a sweltering 98 degrees. And instead of prepping Santa’s sleigh, everyone is preparing for a new NFL season.





REDSKINS PARK

Located on 162 acres in Ashburn, Va., the team's year-round home includes four football fields, strength training and sports medicine centers, offices and meeting rooms.

he admits. "I wanted to start a business."

He took his own love of travel and began marketing alumni tours and spring break trips for college kids. Soon thereafter, he began publishing a magazine to a demographic he knew well: college kids. Before long, Campus USA was being read by more than 1 million students on some 600 campuses. Not bad for a 20-year-old who admits he never had a formal business plan. "It was a seat-of-the-pants type of thing," he admits today—and he was hooked.

"The businesses kept growing and it was fun," he says. But there were some setbacks along the way. The margins in publishing are razor thin. The financial losses

mounted and Campus USA eventually folded.

Never one to throw in the towel, however, Snyder was undeterred. He pressed forward, starting a direct marketing business that eventually snowballed into Snyder Communications, Inc. It was a display of tenacity that continues to fuel his success today. "The idea is you never quit," he says. "It is hard because things are difficult sometimes but you keep trying every day to move forward."

Snyder's "never-say-die" attitude paid off handsomely in 2000 when Snyder Communications was acquired by the French firm Havas Advertising SA for more than \$2 billion. It was a deal that enabled Snyder to pursue other ventures, including a marketing firm for the pharmaceutical and life sciences industries called inVentiv Health; Red Zebra Broadcasting, which

operates radio stations in Maryland, Virginia and the District; and RedZone Capital, an investment firm that owns the Johnny Rockets restaurant chain and Dick Clark Productions, Inc., producer of the Golden Globe and American Music Awards, as well as the popular television series "So You Think You Can Dance?"

So ... is there a chance we will see Snyder in sequins tearing it up on the dance floor as another sports owner, Mark Cuban of the Dallas Mavericks, did



"TO GROW UP ROOTING FOR YOUR TEAM AND HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUY THE TEAM IS AN UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCE," HE ADMITS.

on "Dancing with the Stars"? "No, no, no!" Snyder says with a laugh. "I would describe myself as a crummy dancer."

He prefers to leave the fancy footwork to those who star in another one of his businesses: the Washington Redskins.

"Sorry to keep you waiting. I'm Dan," Daniel Snyder says to his guests, correcting one of those who greeted him as "Mr. Snyder." "Mr. Snyder was my father," he says politely.

Dressed casually in slacks and a Redskins collared shirt, he hardly comes across as the power broker who has been pilloried in the press since he bought the team in 1999. In fact, on this day Snyder is simply a proud father who is trying to convince his 12-year-old daughter to come out of his private office and greet his conference room full of visitors. "Brittanie, come out and say hello," he implores. But Brittanie, like millions of other tech-savvy tweens, is setting up her dad's new computer and can't be bothered.

He may not be able to sell his daughter on the idea of making an appearance, but that might be about the only thing Snyder can't sell. By all accounts, he is a marketing genius, a self-made billionaire who is a poster child for the great American dream.

But at 45, he's also a little bit grayer, wiser and more patient than the young kid from Rockville who scored big with his bold ideas and boundless energy.



Scoring Big on an Audible Snyder grew up in Montgomery County and graduated from Charles W. Woodward High School in 1982. Although his family lived for a time in England and New York, Snyder declares himself a proud Montgomery Countian. "I grew up in White Oak," he says, "so I have always considered this home."

It is also where his entrepreneurial aspirations took flight.

At a time when most of his peers were launching quarters into beer mugs, Snyder was launching his first business. Although he attended the University of Maryland for a time, "College wasn't my strong point,"



Hail to the Redskins “My dad took me to my first Redskins game when I was six,” Snyder recalls. “They were playing the Giants at RFK, and I can remember walking into the stadium, holding my dad’s hand and just being blown away by the noise, the whole deal.”

It was the beginning of a love affair that nearly 30 years later would lead to the owner’s box, a progression that Snyder knows is a dream come true for any NFL fan. “To grow up rooting for your team and to have the opportunity to buy the team is an unusual circumstance,” he admits. “I am very, very fortunate.”

Fittingly, the split screen TV in Snyder’s office is tuned to CNBC and the NFL Network. But Snyder says the Redskins are much more than simply another business venture to him. “Football is different to me,” he says. “This is not really a business as much as stewardship. It’s an honor.” An honor that he admits can be “heartbreaking,” but also “wonderfully fulfilling.”

Although owning the team involves a special emotional bond, Snyder has applied the same business acumen to this venture as he has to his other businesses. The franchise has nearly doubled its value since Snyder bought it in 1999, coming in at fourth on Forbes

2010 list of the most valuable sports franchises in the world. But Snyder credits much of this success to the NFL. “It’s not what I did as much as the fact that the NFL has done a great job of becoming America’s favorite sport,” he says. “It’s a tribute to the NFL, not me.”

Snyder is the majority owner of the Redskins, with several other close friends and family members (including his mother Arlette and his sister Michele) rounding out the ownership group. Yet criticism of any management decisions always seems to fall squarely on his shoulders. “When you own a football team, you are responsible,” he says. “If you hire the wrong person, you are going to get blamed for it and you deserve it. That’s what happens. It comes with the territory.”

Even so, other members of the Redskins’ ownership group believe much of the criticism is unfair. “People forget that history shows it is extremely difficult to put

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SUPER BOWL TROPHIES

The Washington Redskins were Super Bowl Champions in 1983, 1988 and 1992.

Dan Snyder says, “It’s all about adding more Super Bowl trophies to that case in the lobby. It is what we are striving for every day.”





REDSKINS TRAINING CAMP

Every summer, the public is invited to watch the team train at Redskins Park. Admission and parking are free, but fans must go to www.redskins.com to get a Training Camp Invitation.

together a championship NFL team," says Frederick W. Smith, chairman and CEO of FedEx, pointing to the inability of once-dominant teams to maintain their glory years. "Look at the 49ers," he says.

"Dan is a highly competitive individual—I've watched the guy play flag football," Smith says. "I don't think he has ever done anything other than try to put a great product and winning team on the field. He recognizes, perhaps a lot more than other owners, that the fan base of an NFL team considers that team to be their own. He is very sensitive to that public responsibility."

That is why Snyder believes hiring Mike Shanahan is "one of the best things I've ever done" and that the man he describes as a "demanding, perfectionist, Hall-of-Fame" coach will help him reach his ultimate business and personal goal for the Redskins: "It's all

about adding more Super Bowl trophies to that case in the lobby," he says. "It is what we are striving for every day."



Home Is Where the Heart Is

Despite having business interests that could easily draw him away from the area, Snyder remains close to the people and the region that have supported him from the beginning.

His mother and sister live nearby, as does his childhood friend Tony Roberts. Roberts is the Redskins' team eye doctor, a position Snyder is quick to remind him of if one of his receivers drops a ball: "I tell him (Roberts), 'You blinded him!'"

The only person who is not around to share his success is Snyder's father, Gerry, who passed away in 2003 and after whom Snyder's eight-year-old son is named.

"I miss him every day," he says softly.

In the early days when Campus USA was losing money and Snyder was borrowing as much as he could, his father stepped in to help keep the fledgling operation afloat by taking out a second mortgage on the family apartment. It proved to be an emotional and financial boost that the younger Snyder was thrilled to be able to repay 16 years later. "When we (Snyder Communications) went public," he adds, "he did OK."

So, too, have many local charities with which Snyder has shared his riches. These include the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, where he funded the construction of the Daniel M. Snyder and Family Communication Center, as well as another local



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institution that holds special significance for him and his wife Tanya.

When the couple's oldest daughter, Tiffanie (who is now 15), was born prematurely, the Snyders witnessed the lifesaving work that is performed daily at Children's National Medical Center. It was an experience that ultimately moved them to make a gift to the hospital's \$40 million "Campaign for Children," a gift that enabled the facility to build the state-of-the-art Snyder Family Emergency Medicine and Trauma Center.

The Snyders' contribution was "one of the largest and most strategically important gifts" to the campaign, according to John Wm. Thomas, retired CEO of the Children's Hospital Foundation. It was also a true reflection of the man Thomas has come to know—not the man so many have read about.

"Dan has a really good heart and really does care," he says, wishing that those who judge Snyder would take a minute to think about how they may

have changed over the years as well. "I think, like all of us, Dan is growing and finding his style, and that doesn't happen overnight," Thomas says. "He continues to gain perspective from the people around him. I think he's just starting to hit his stride."

But will his "stride" eventually take him away from the place where it all began?

Not a chance, Snyder says.

Given the role Montgomery County and the Washington area have played in shaping his past and present, it should come as no surprise that this is where he is forging his future as well. "We love it here," he says, noting Montgomery County's excellent educational system and safe, small-town atmosphere despite its proximity to "the most powerful city in the world." His kids go to school in the county, and it's here that this proud father enthusiastically cheers on his kids in the county's sports leagues.

"It's a great place to grow up and raise a family," he says. "It's our home." 📍