

Lauralyn Lovell McCarthy Sandoval

At a Glance:

Born: August 21, 1969, Los Angeles, Calif.

Maiden Name: McCarthy

Race/nationality/ethnic background: Caucasian

Married: Brian Sandoval, August 11, 2018

Children: No children. “Bonus friend” to Brian Sandoval’s three children, James, Madeline, and Marissa

Primary city and county of residence and work: Reno, Washoe County and Las Vegas, Clark County

Major fields of work: Gaming Industry

Other role identities: executive, entrepreneur, innovator, advocate for individuals with disabilities



Photo provided by Lauralyn Sandoval

First Lady had roles in gaming industry, charitable advocacy

Lauralyn Sandoval was born on August 21, 1969, in Los Angeles, California to Joy and Charles McCarthy. Her father “Chuck” was a World War II veteran and received his undergraduate and law degrees from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois on a special program designed for veterans. Her mother, Joy, received dual degrees from the University of California, Berkeley. Chuck and Joy met, married, raised their family, and lived out their lives in Los Angeles. Both of Lauralyn’s parents have passed and Lauralyn speaks lovingly of her parents and is grateful she had a close relationship with them.

Lauralyn is one of seven McCarthy children, the middle child and the first girl. She attended grammar school in Encino, California and graduated from Louisville High School in Woodland Hills, California. She accepted a tennis scholarship from the University of Nevada, Reno. In 1992, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from the University of Nevada, was on the Presidential Honor Roll, received the School of Journalism's Advertising Professionalism Award and the Phi Beta Phi Sorority National Change Leadership Award.

Lauralyn credits her degree in journalism as the foundation for her success in business as it enhanced her critical thinking skills and taught her to focus on what is most important. She started her career in gaming at International Game Technology as an international management trainee just a year after graduation. Her first professional position was in Latin America where she was involved with starting gaming businesses in emerging countries.

Her 30 years in the gaming industry have included working for multi-billion-dollar corporations and as an entrepreneur. As of this writing, [January 2022] she is Vice-President of New Markets at Aristocrat Technologies Inc., an Australian-based games company with a current market cap of 29 billion dollars.

Lauralyn's first date with then-Governor Brian Sandoval was in 2018. They became engaged in 2018 and married in 2018. Lauralyn related buying their wedding rings from a street vendor on the Santa Fe Plaza in Santa Fe, New Mexico and planning their Lake Tahoe wedding in less than three weeks. She said, "her father used to say life is a series of miracles," and meeting and marrying Brian was certainly a great miracle!

Marriage to a sitting governor brought new responsibilities and interests. While First Lady, in addition to the standard duties of that office, she used her platform to create "Level Up, a program designed for men and women to assist women to become the most they can be in their careers of choice." She also became a "bonus friend" to Brian's three children, two of whom were young adults at the time of the marriage while the youngest was just entering high school.

Lauralyn's "Pinch Me" moments include being sent to Latin America at age 23 to open new gaming markets and offices for a company headquartered in Reno. She co-founded the Cancer Research Racquet that funds cancer research and because of that initiative, got to know the iconic Billie Jean King. She gave the 2018 commencement address at the University of Nevada, Reno.

She is an activist for people with disabilities, as two of her siblings were born with severe developmental disabilities. Lauralyn sits on Opportunity Village's Foundation Board in Las Vegas, as well as the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. In addition to her work with people and disabilities, Lauralyn is a board member of the Davidson

Academy for highly gifted students and an honorary board member of the Women's Research Institute of Nevada a UNLV.

In her "spare" time, she enjoys reading, hiking, tennis, friends, family and of course cheering for the Nevada Wolf Pack, Las Vegas Golden Knights and Las Vegas Raiders. As a graduate of UNR, she believes the "Fremont cannon should always be blue and housed at UNR!"

When asked if she thought the position of First Lady was necessary, she stated, "the 'spouse', or 'significant other' of the person who is governor, is in a unique position to do good. That person has an unparalleled opportunity to accomplish great things for people directly and for community at large. For me, it was creating "Level Up," for others it will be something else. If we are lucky enough to have a governor who has a partner who cares about impacting people's lives for the better, that can only be a good thing, maybe even 'necessary.'"

Lauralyn is now her husband's partner in working for Nevada in yet another capacity – that of wife of the 17th president of the University of Nevada, Reno. Her contribution to the state of Nevada will continue.

Researched and written by Marcia Bernard Cuccaro,

with the kind assistance of Lauralyn Lowell McCarthy Sandoval.

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