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Teresa Gerringer Flies Through Life With Purpose

By Jean Follmer



Teresa Gerringer Photo provided

If you've been to Lafayette, chances are you've seen Teresa Gerringer. When she's not with her family, Teresa can be found serving in a number of volunteer positions. Some of her regular positions include Lafayette School Board member (since 2000), California School Boards Association Region 7 Delegate, CSBA Legislation Committee Member, Lafayette Library & Learning Center Foundation Trustee, Lafayette Community Foundation Board member and a Sunday school teacher at Lafayette United Methodist Church. Some of her past volunteer activities and accomplishments include Co-Chairing the "Yes On J" Parcel Tax Campaign Committee, Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Advisor, Founder of the Las Trampas Creek Council PTA Legislative Network Email Alert System, various PTA and PFC leadership roles as well as "a variety of Lafayette Arts & Science Foundation, school site, classroom, and Girl Scout roles." The list is by no means complete.

Teresa was raised in Sheridan, Indiana, and her parents separated when she was a young girl. Teresa and her four younger siblings were raised by her grandparents. Teresa credits the generosity of her grandparents with the fact that she is "drawn to kids who are underserved. I care so much about getting as much for our kids as we can. Probably my grandmother taking us on was the ultimate call to give back and to get things done." Teresa received her undergraduate degree in Public Administration from Indiana University. At the time, she planned to go on to law school and focus on juvenile law; but she changed her mind. She said it was an "interesting twist of things, coming back full circle," that her undergraduate degree is so applicable to her current activities.

After college, Teresa moved to Southern California to live with her mother. She ended up working for Security Pacific Venture Capital. She started as the assistant to the President and rose through the ranks to Chief Information Officer. She completed her MBA at Pepperdine University while working for Security Pacific. It was during an MBA accounting course at Pepperdine that she met her husband to be, Bay Area native Michael Gerringer. Teresa said she and Michael "spent a lot of time together on a group project" but they didn't start dating for awhile. At the time, Michael was working at Hughes Aeronautics. He later went to work for Security Pacific Venture Capital too. After dating for four years, Teresa said they were married in 1986 at a friend's home in Rancho Palos Verdes overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Their first daughter, Mackenzie, was born in 1990 and Teresa left work to be home with her.

Security Pacific went through a period of downsizing and Michael was offered a position with Bank of America in St. Louis. They moved to St. Louis for two years before returning to Southern California with the bank. In 1995, Michael was transferred to San Francisco and the Gerringers settled in Lafayette. They have since welcomed their second daughter, Madison, to the family. Both girls have attended public schools in Lafayette. When they first attended Springhill Elementary, "I helped all the time in the classroom the first year", said Gerringer. She increased her involvement at Springhill by handling

the weekly newsletter and chairing the science fair. Teresa became close with then current PFC President, Kate Davis. Teresa said Kate told her "I see you're into everything. I'd love for you to be my Vice President next year." Teresa accepted the Vice President position and became the PFC President the following year. Teresa was PFC President during the ribbon cutting ceremony of the new Springhill Elementary School building.

"After being PFC President, Shane Silva and others (on the Lafayette School District Governing Board) were getting ready for the 1999 Parcel Tax," said Gerringer. Gerringer had been attending Governing Board meetings because "I felt it was important to be there and to know what was going on," said Gerringer. Shane (still a current Governing Board member) encouraged Teresa to become involved and Teresa ended up co-chairing the Parcel Tax effort with Janet Tittiger and Maudie Silverman. During that time, Teresa worked a lot with the Parcel Tax consultant and "became really aware of the budget and where it comes from," said Gerringer. This insight motivated her to become further involved in school-related efforts. In 2000, "a seat became open on the board," said Gerringer. Teresa was one of three applicants. After a public interview, it was moved and seconded that Teresa be appointed to the Governing Board.

Due to her active schedule, Teresa has experienced periods in which she's taken on too much. "I admire people who can set boundaries. I'm now able to say 'no,'" said Gerringer. "It's really easy to want to do things in Lafayette because of the volunteer spirit. It's why we want to live here," continued Gerringer. Her family has been very involved in her volunteer pursuits. She said "My kids sacrifice for it...they've made calls with me and their lives have changed." It would seem Mackenzie and Madison are following in their mom's footsteps. Madison is currently the President of Opportunity Knocks volunteering program at Stanley Middle School and both girls have run for many school positions throughout the years. Mackenzie graduated from high school last spring and is now attending Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. When asked how she is doing with the separation, Teresa said "We have really long phone conversations. I'm doing fine because she's doing fine." When asked about future aspirations, she hasn't ruled out political ones. However, her personal priorities dictate that she would wait until Madison leaves home for college. "I am first and foremost a mom," said Teresa.

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