

## **Celebrating from the Dug Out of The Dillard House**

Last year, Labor Day weekend was a sporting bonanza for me and my boys: three auto-races, a dove shoot, Georgia football and the Braves. This year my wife was in Victory Circle. I attended no sporting events, and the whole family was sequestered at the Dillard House in Rabun County to celebrate our 30 years of marriage, and the best country cooking in Georgia.

To see what got me in trouble, let's start at the beginning...with all the babies. Most folks know I have seven children, ages 13 to 25. I get teased throughout the state for my failure to understand how we got into this predicament. Am I Catholic, am I Mormon, or am I just crazy? I laugh and remind people that big families are good for the economy. To document our craziness, we're paying private tuition to five different institutions right now. Don't even ask me about the car insurance.

Thirty years is a milestone though—especially in these times. My wife has stuck with me through years of travel, 11 different moves, starting a national youth ministry, and then running for office. And did I mention those seven children and her continual “mothering extraordinaire” which has included some homeschooling, car-pooling, counseling, nursing, coaching and cheerleading. She deserves much more than the fried okra.

That's why we booked four motel rooms at the Dillard House and paid for all the kids to join us with their spouses. We love to get everyone together, and celebrating 30 years of marriage and family was a worthy occasion. But my kids were raised inside the Bulldog bubble, and there was nothing that would keep them from watching that ill-fated UGA game with Clemson that weekend.

But truth be told, this is a celebration of the best decision I have ever made in my life. Windy Davis Echols is a woman of great character and capacity. And she is the picture of faithfulness. I am lucky to have her.